An Introduction

Jainism

Jeffery D Long

I.B.TAURIS

Jeffery D Long is Associate Professor of Religion and Asian Studies, and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies, at Elizabethtown College, Pennsylvania. He is the author of *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism*, published by I.B.Tauris in 2006.

'This highly readable book provides an excellent introduction to an ancient and complex tradition that predates the birth of the Buddha. The author skilfully explores Jain doctrines regarding the nature of the soul and the observance of nonviolence, placing Jainism within the context of Hinduism and Buddhism. He also highlights the influence that Jainism had upon the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. The book corrects misperceptions that have characterised Jain ethics as extreme, and discusses how Jainism is being practised globally, including in the US heartland.' – ***Christopher Key Chapple, Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles***

'Jeffery Long's book admirably accomplishes two goals. The first half of *Jainism: An Introduction* does exactly what his subtitle indicates. Long provides a succinct and accurate overview of the history, beliefs and practices of the Jains that draws in an excellent manner upon the most recent scholarship. The second half of the book - in a fine example of the practice of comparative theology and comparative philosophy of religion – moves beyond description to engage with what Jainism has to say to anyone living on Planet Earth in the twenty-first century. In particular, Long is concerned to explore what the Jain philosophical doctrines of "relativity" can contribute to the pressing problem of how people respond to the fact of profound religious diversity. *Jainism: An Introduction* will therefore be of interest to anyone interested in the global religious history of humanity, and additionally to anyone striving to construct a morally responsible stance on how humans can learn to live together in all their religious differences. The book will also be a fine choice for undergraduate students in a variety of fields, including religious studies, south Asian studies, the history of religion and comparative philosophy.' – ***John Cort, Professor of Asian and Comparative Religions, Denison University, and author of* Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India**

Daoism: An Introduction
Ronnie L Littlejohn
HB: 978 1 84511 638 5
PB: 978 1 84511 639 2

Jainism: An Introduction
Jeffery D Long
HB: 978 1 84511 625 5
PB: 978 1 84511 626 2

Islam: An Introduction
Catharina Raudvere
HB: 978 1 84885 083 5
PB: 978 1 84885 084 2

Zoroastrianism: An Introduction
Jenny Rose
HB: 978 1 84885 087 3
PB: 978 1 84885 088 0

I.B.TAURIS INTRODUCTIONS TO RELIGION

Jainism

An Introduction

by

Jeffery D Long

I.B.TAURIS
LONDON · NEW YORK

Published in 2009 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010
www.ibtauris.com

Distributed in the United States and Canada Exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

I.B.Tauris Introductions to Religion

ISBN: 978 1 84511 625 5 (HB)
ISBN: 978 1 84511 626 2 (PB)

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library
A full CIP record is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: available

Designed and Typeset by 4word Ltd, Bristol, UK
Printed and bound in India by Thomson Press India Ltd

Contents

Acknowledgements vii

Note on Diacritical Marks and Pronunciation of Indic Terms ix

Introduction: An Overview of this Book xi

Chapter I: What is Jainism? 1

Chapter II: Mahāvīra and the Origins of Jainism 29

Chapter III: Jain History 57

Chapter IV: The Jain Path 83

Chapter V: The Jain Doctrines of Relativity: An Intellectual History 117

Chapter VI: The Jain Doctrines of Relativity: A Philosophical Analysis 141

Chapter VII: The Jain Vision and the Future of Humanity 173

Recommended Reading: A Brief Survey of the Literature on Jainism 185

Jain Chronology 189

Glossary 193

Notes 207

Bibliography 225

Index 231

For my students: past, present, and future

Acknowledgements

Writing this book has been a humbling experience. The challenge of writing a textbook on any topic is that one has to cover areas beyond one's expertise. I, for example, have been trained chiefly as a philosopher of religion. The focus of my work on Jainism has been Jain philosophy, due to what I find to be its many exciting applications to pressing questions about truth, diversity, and inter-religious relations. This intellectual interest of mine, as well as the fact that I teach courses on Indic religions to undergraduates, has sparked a broader curiosity and a need to learn about the Jain tradition as a whole, in all its rich historical complexity. But it would be an imposture to say that I am anything like an expert on all things Jain. (If such a person does exist, it is probably Paul Dundas, on whose work I have relied heavily in the writing of this introductory text.) I have learned much about Jainism in the course of writing this book. But, at the risk of using a well-worn cliché, the main thing I have learned is how little I know about this tradition and the community – or rather, the *communities*[1] – to whom it belongs.

Those to whom I owe an enormous debt of gratitude for their assistance in the writing of this book include scholars whose works I read or with whom I corresponded or conversed before I ever even knew I would someday be writing a textbook on Jainism. If I fail to mention anyone who is conscious of having informed me on any topic covered in this book, I apologize for the omission.

While some may have been inadvertently omitted from these acknowledgements, others may be surprised to find their names mentioned because we have never actually met or corresponded. But I am grateful to them nevertheless because of the degree to which I have relied upon their expertise as found in their written work. And some of the people I mention here are, sadly, no longer with us.

With all that being said, I would like to thank Paul Dundas, P.S. Jaini, Nathmal Tatia, Chris Chapple, Kristi Wiley, Kendall Folkert, Whitney Kelting, Phyllis Granoff, Steve Heim, Pravin K. Shah, Sulekh Jain, Vastupal Parikh, Pankaj Jain, Nick Gier, Shugan Jain, Naresh Jain, Dilip Bobra, Yashwant Malaiya, Anne Vallely, Lawrence Babb, and Saman Śrūtaprajñā.

I would like to thank my editor at I.B.Tauris, Alex Wright, for conceiving of this book, and for his great patience and support throughout the writing process. The ink had barely dried on our contract when I was forced by unforeseen circumstances to take on the responsibility of chairing my department at Elizabethtown College. This delayed my delivery of the manuscript by several months. Alex's willingness to work with my many time constraints and his faith in my ability to produce a worthwhile volume at the end of it all, despite the unfinished nature of the first draft of the manuscript, has made this book possible.

A special note of thanks goes to John Cort, whose careful reading of the first draft of the manuscript and extensive comments thereon have made me feel as if he should be listed as co-author of this book. Few people are as committed to the study and teaching of Jainism as John, and he took this project as seriously as though it were his own. I am especially grateful that, despite its flaws, he saw sufficient promise in the manuscript to recommend that I.B.Tauris and I persist with it. Whatever flaws it retains are of course my responsibility, not John's.

As always, I thank my wife, Mahua, for her boundless support for my work, and Billy the cat, my constant companion. Both this book and my first one, *A Vision for Hinduism*, were written with Billy (whose name, in Hindi, means 'cat') at my feet.

Jai Jinendra!

Jeffery D Long
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

Note on Diacritical Marks and Pronunciation of Indic Terms

In this book I have used the standard international system for transliterating Indic words into the Roman alphabet, with the exception of modern names with a common Roman spelling (e.g. Ramakrishna instead of Rāmakṛṣṇa, Mahatma Gandhi instead of Mahātma Gāṃdhī, etc.).

Regarding the correct pronunciation of Indic sounds:

a This is pronounced 'uh', as in 'bud'.
ā This is pronounced 'ah', as in 'father'.
i This is pronounced like the 'i' in 'bit'.
ī This is pronounced like the 'ee' in 'beet'.
u This is pronounced like the 'oo' in 'book'.
ū This is pronounced like the 'oo' in 'pool'.
ṛ This is pronounced like the 'ri' in 'rig' with a slight roll of the tongue, though not as hard a roll as in the Spanish r.
e This is pronounced like 'ay' in 'say'.
ai This is pronounced like 'aye' or 'eye'. However, in the case of the important word 'Jain', it is not uncommon in contemporary India to hear this pronounced like the English names 'Jane' or 'Jan', depending upon the region from which the speaker hails. These pronunciations are of course similarly extended to the words 'Jains' and 'Jainism'.
o This is pronounced 'oh', as in 'Ohio'.
au This is pronounced like 'ow' in 'how'.

Consonants are pronounced as in English, but consonants with a dot under them (e.g. ṭ) are pronounced with the tongue touching the roof of the mouth.

Consonants immediately followed by an 'h' (e.g. th, dh) include an exhalation – that is, the 'h' is pronounced, producing somewhat of a softening of the consonant.

The sounds ṣ and ś are almost indistinguishable, even for many Indians (ṣ being pronounced with the tongue at the roof of the mouth, while ś is not). They sound like the 'sh' in 'she'. So the name of the Hindu deity Śiva is pronounced 'Shiva', and not 'Siva'.

The only Indic sound that is not pronounced phonetically (i.e. exactly as it is spelled, according to the above system), is 'jña', which is pronounced either as 'gya' or, less frequently, as 'nya'. It is *not* pronounced 'ja-na'.

When Sanskrit names and terms are rendered in Hindi or Gujarati (two languages commonly spoken by Jains), the inherent short 'a' following the final consonant in many words is dropped. Mahāvīra, for example, becomes Mahāvīr; *nirvāṇa* becomes *nirvāṇ*, and so on. Even though most Jains will probably be more familiar with these names and terms in their modern forms, without the final 'a', for the sake of consistency I have used the more archaic Sanskrit (or Prakrit) forms throughout my text. One notable exception to this is the word *Jain* itself, which I have employed instead of the Sanskrit *Jaina*. I have also followed the convention of using the word *Brahmin* when referring to a member of the Hindu priestly caste. This is for the sake of clarity, to distinguish Brahmins from the ultimate reality (*Brahman*), the creator-deity (*Brahmā*), and a set of Vedic texts called the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Also, whenever I have cited another text, I have followed the standard convention of retaining the usage found in that text. If an author I am quoting makes a reference to 'Mahāvīr', for example, or 'Mahavira' (without diacritical marks), I trust the reader will understand that this is not a misspelling, but rather an alternative spelling of 'Mahāvīra'.

Introduction
An Overview of this Book

Jainism vs. Jains

This is a book about Jainism: a fascinating and ancient religion of India which, despite its vast age, and despite its having some features that many in the West would regard as exotic, is in many ways highly relevant to the contemporary world. It is a religion that has a great deal in common with Buddhism and the dominant Hindu traditions of India, with which it has co-existed for at least two and a half millennia. But it is also a religion that has many of its own distinctive features and insights that distinguish it quite clearly from these other traditions.

When speaking of Jainism – or any *ism* – there is a tendency to speak in ahistorical terms. An *ism*, in other words, is a system of ideas. These ideas bear certain relations to one another and to similar ideas developed in other systems. When one is examining the relations of ideas to one another within a tradition, one is engaging in a *philosophical* or *theological* study of that tradition. Philosophical approaches generally evaluate ideas in terms of logical coherence and consistency with widely available human experiences, like sensory perception. Do the ideas in question contradict one another? Are they consistent with other things that we know about the universe? A theological study uses these same criteria. But it also employs criteria that are internal to the tradition – such as consistency with its scriptures or its ritual practices. Theological study is generally, though not necessarily, carried out by scholars who inhabit the tradition in question. When one is examining the ideas of one tradition in relation to similar ideas from other traditions, one is engaging in *comparative* philosophy or theology.

Historical studies of a religion, on the other hand, are concerned with description more than evaluation. Unlike the philosopher or the religious practitioner, the interest of the historian of religion is less in

the coherence or the truth of religious ideas than in the people who develop and maintain these ideas as central to their identity.[2]

Some scholars in the field of Jain studies may note this book's tendency to focus, as its title suggests, on *Jainism* more than on the Jains themselves – on ideas more than on people, on philosophy more than history.[3] For the dominant trend of recent scholarship in Jain studies has been away from presenting an abstract system of ideas called *Jainism* and toward highly contextualized and richly descriptive representations of living Jains acting in history. Revealingly, the title of the most influential and comprehensive work on this tradition is not *Jainism*, but *The Jains*, by Paul Dundas.[4]

This current trend is a welcome one for many reasons, not least being that abstract presentations obscure the complex realities of religious communities that more historical approaches reveal. Also, more abstract, less historically focused representations tend to fuel hegemonic ideologies – that is, worldviews that promote the interests of a particular social group over others. Such ideologies often downplay the diverse points of view in a particular tradition, silencing and marginalizing dissenting voices in the name of a more unified picture that supports the dominant group's view of things.

Due to the emergence of these considerations, the authors of recent works on the Jains avoid representations that abstract an ahistorical unity from the complexity of Jain realities. Self-aware about their power to shape Jain realities, these scholars wish, quite rightly, to avoid depicting these realities in ways that minimize their historical diversity and complexity. Presenting Jainism as a system of ideas, with little or no reference to the history of the emergence of these ideas, or the areas in which these ideas are contested or their interpretation disputed, has fallen out of fashion. Scholars have instead taken the historical route, which has little room for eternal and unchanging truths.

There is, however, an irony in this situation; for when Jains speak of themselves and their traditions, they typically do speak in terms of eternal and unchanging truths – of *Jainism* as a unity that is handed down age after age by the community of Jain ascetics.[5] A self-understanding among Jains as being bearers of unchanging, history-transcending truths is in fact a widespread and representative one.

The historically nuanced work of contemporary Jain studies is not necessarily at odds with this self-understanding. But it is foreign to it. While scholars seek to represent Jain self-understandings accurately,

their work does not itself typically proceed *from* a Jain self-understanding.[6] Scholars of Jainism do not explicitly contest Jain perceptions of Jainism as eternally true, but neither do they endorse them. Rather, the fact that there are Jains who think in this way is simply one more piece of data about Jain communities.

I am not pointing out this situation to recommend a return to an earlier style of representation of Jainism as an artificial unity; for it remains true that there are *different* understandings of Jainism among the Jains themselves – even including among those who see Jainism as eternal and unchanging.[7] Presenting Jainism as a unitary set of ahistorical truths must therefore still involve choosing and privileging one such picture over the rest.

On the other hand, in an introductory text which aspires to be usable not only by teachers and scholars outside of Jain contexts, but by Jains as well, there is a sense that, in areas where there is broad uniformity across the various Jain communities (and these are not inconsiderable), it might be desirable to accommodate the Jain sensibility which perceives these fundamentals of Jainism – if they can be called that – as expressing eternal, unchanging features of existence. I am speaking here of such basics of Jainism as Jain karma theory (in its broad outlines), the fundamental entities (soul, matter, space, time, the principles of motion and inertia, etc.), the centrality of *ahiṃsā*, and so on. Although diverse views exist among Jains on aspects of each of these topics, it would be the rare Jain who would not see these ideas as expressing basic Jain – and in fact, universal – truths.

Of course, the very judgment that these concepts represent 'basics' of Jainism is contestable in a variety of ways. My colleagues in the field of Jain studies would likely point out that such concepts are only 'basic' if one looks at Jainism as an abstract system of ideas rather than as an historically emergent phenomenon. What often really matters, and is therefore, in that sense, 'basic' for many Jains, are elements of their tradition, such as in the area of practice, where they have significant differences with their fellow Jains.[8]

This point is well taken. Because I approach Jainism from the perspective of a philosopher of religion, I do tend to look upon it as an abstract system of ideas. Again, I welcome the trend of recent scholarship on the Jains, and certainly see its value. And I do not see myself in this book as championing a reversal of this trend. But while my approach may appear, at first glance, idiosyncratic or retrograde –

writing about *Jainism* in contrast with *Jains* – as a philosopher of religion, my interests are, in some ways, closer to those of the Jains themselves – those who write about and present Jainism as an ahistorical system of ideas – than to those of my colleagues in the field of Jain studies. I feel greater kinship to the aims and interests of Haribhadrasūri, for example, a Jain scholar-monk of roughly the eighth century CE, than to those of Paul Dundas – much as I respect both.

My interest in Jain philosophy, my point of entry into this field, was sparked not by an historian's interest in how concepts like *anekāntavāda* developed over time, but by a philosopher's and theologian's interest in religious pluralism and how it might logically be defended. The question, 'Is *anekāntavāda* true?' is not one that I find raised in most contemporary scholarly writing on Jainism (at least outside of philosophical circles). But for me, as for many Jains, it is *the* question. And it is one we answer in the affirmative.

I have written this book because I think that many Jain ideas are not only true, but urgently relevant to humanity's contemporary situation. If I have accommodated Jain sensibilities by presenting Jainism as an internally coherent and unified system of ideas, it is because it is as such that these ideas can be made most readily available to those who are outside the Jain tradition. My work differs from much contemporary writing on the Jains to the degree that I see myself as explicitly endorsing these Jain ideas, rather than as a disinterested outsider. In those areas in which Jains disagree amongst themselves, I have sought to present various points of view even-handedly and disinterestedly – and, as a non-Jain, I truly am not invested in such disagreements. But in areas in which there appears to be some unanimity, at least according to the sources and knowledge available to me, I have presented that unanimity much as Jain sources do: as a unified system of ideas.

I do not wish to overstate or further belabor the differences between the approach I have taken and the dominant one, but to signal my awareness of these differences. I do not find an interest in philosophy to be incompatible with rigorous and carefully nuanced historical work, and I have sought to do justice to both approaches to the best of my abilities.

What this Book is Not

My main goal in this book is to make the Jain tradition accessible to the average Western reader, on the assumption that knowledge of this tradition will be of global benefit. It is not a book for experts on Jainism or on Indic religions who are already familiar with the basic literature and concepts in this field of study. It does not presuppose that one knows a great deal about Jainism, or that one is conversant with South Asian religions or their philosophical terminology. Nor is it an exhaustive or comprehensive account of Jainism, a reference work in which one can find anything one ever wanted to know about this tradition. Such books already exist, and some will be described in the survey of literature on Jainism at the end of this book. But this book is not one of them.

It is also not a detailed monograph about a single aspect of Jainism that the author has been studying for a number of years – though I do give special attention to my area of greatest expertise in the chapters on the Jain doctrines of relativity. But this book also covers a number of other aspects of Jainism, and is not restricted to my own specialized area of research interest. Again, such specialized books on particular facets of Jainism do exist, and a number of them will be mentioned in my literature survey.

Finally, this book is not by a Jain author who is seeking to promote a religiously authoritative vision or understanding of Jainism – a book that would explain to Jains how they should view their own tradition. I do hope that Jains will find this book an accurate and fair representation of their tradition. Undoubtedly, some will find it so, while others will not. On the topic of religion, one can hardly expect universal agreement. But I am not trying to tell Jains what to believe. At least as far as Jains are concerned, my goal here is to *describe*, not to *prescribe*.

But this is not to say that this book is a dry, objective account of Jainism, with no perspective of its own. Any book inevitably reflects the point of view and the disposition of its author toward its subject matter. In the case of this book, the author is neither a practicing Jain nor someone who was raised as a Jain. But the author *is* someone who is sympathetic to Jainism, and who views both the Jain tradition and the Jain community as embodying ideals and practices that have relevance for all human beings.

And the author is not the first non-Jain to so view this tradition; for, as we shall see, Jainism, throughout its long history, has had a significant impact upon the Hindu and Buddhist traditions that have been its primary interlocutors, despite the fact that the Jain communities make up less than 1 per cent of the population of India – as they probably always have, though this is certainly a question open to debate and speculation.

What is offered here is at least as much of an interpretation as a description – even though its primary mandate, again, is to describe Jainism as accurately and as fairly as possible. But why write a book about Jainism?

It is the view of this author that a global extension of the influence of Jain ideals would be a welcome development: that Jain principles like nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), non-attachment (*aparigraha*), and non-absolutism (*anekāntavāda*), as well as this tradition's relatively non-anthropocentric* conception of humanity's relationship to nature, are vitally important, globally relevant principles that have a great deal to recommend them, even to those of us who do not fully embrace a Jain path as our way of life. In other words, one does not need to be a Jain in order to learn valuable lessons from Jainism.

This has certainly been the case for me. As readers of my first book will know, I am a practitioner of Hinduism, in the Ramakrishna Vedānta tradition. My tradition, like Jainism, teaches nonviolence, detachment, and a non-absolutist attitude toward the many religions of the world – that is, not seeing one's own religion as the only true path. But I have found in Jainism an internally consistent, relentlessly logical system for explaining and arguing for these views, and presenting them as alternatives with global relevance.

Indeed, Jainism has already emerged as a global influence through the celebrated life and work of Mahatma Gandhi. As we shall see, Gandhi, though he was not himself a Jain, was heavily influenced by the Jain vision of existence, particularly through his interactions with

* I say *relatively* non-anthropocentric because there are senses in which Jainism is quite anthropocentric, such as in its doctrine that the human form is the most suitable for the attainment of *mokṣa*, as well as its doctrine of the *lokapuruṣa*–that the cosmos, in its totality, has a shape which is roughly that of a human being. But it does not assert, for example, that only human beings have souls, or that the souls of human beings are intrinsically different from those of all other living things, or of greater value. Indeed, given the doctrine of rebirth, one can say that there is no such thing as a *human* soul, per se, in Jainism, or in most of the Indic traditions. There are only souls that are temporarily inhabiting human bodies, which likely have and will again in the future inhabit non-human forms. And the reverse is of course true as well.

Raychandbhai Mahetā.[9] Through Gandhi's life and work, Jain influence has subsequently extended indirectly to such figures as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, César Chavez, Thich Nhat Hanh, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and numerous others who have taken up the path of nonviolence in order to bring about positive social and political change.[10]

Jainism can thus be likened to a pebble that has been tossed into a pond. Though it is itself quite small, the ripples it sets off reverberate far and wide.

My Intended Audience

So much for what this book is not. What, then, *is* this book? It is primarily, as its title suggests, an introduction to Jainism. Its intended audience consists of people such as my students at Elizabethtown College, who, before taking my courses, know nothing about Jainism, and precious little about Hinduism or Buddhism. It may also be useful to those who are not formally students, but who have a general interest in comparative studies of religion and would like to have a handy guide to the basics of Jainism, or who have come across Jainism in the course of their studies of Hinduism or Buddhism. If Jains find it to be a fair representation of their traditions and practices, and useful in explaining these to others in at least an introductory fashion, I will be delighted. It will be an honor for me should this turn out to be the case.

The primary use to which I anticipate this book being put is as an undergraduate textbook for courses on world religions or the religions of South Asia. My hope is for it to be as accessible and user-friendly as possible. I have striven to make my explanations clear and non-technical, while at the same time not overly simplistic, given the inherent richness and complexity of the subject matter. This is the 'Middle Path' all instructors seek to tread, between the extremes of technicality and oversimplification.

Challenging Western Assumptions: A Recurring Issue in the Classroom

The most frequently recurring issue that I have confronted in my teaching of Jainism to undergraduates has been the tendency among

many of my students to react somewhat negatively to the Jain tradition, at least in comparison to their reactions to other traditions that I teach, such as Hinduism and Buddhism.

What I mean by a negative reaction is that the divide between the students' own worldviews and practices and those of Jainism seems to be far greater and less easy to bridge than is the case with either Hinduism or Buddhism. On some level, they seem to be put off by it. This negative reaction occurs despite my own highly positive regard for this tradition, which comes through in my presentations no less than my enthusiasm for Hindu and Buddhist traditions. Puzzled, I have investigated the causes that seem to underlie this negative reaction and have tried to address them in this book.

I have found that many, if not most, of the students who take a survey course on religious traditions other than their own tend to make at least some attempt to imagine themselves practicing the traditions in question. Indeed, some are drawn to take courses of this kind precisely because they are in the process of questioning their own beliefs and are seeking possible alternative worldviews. This type of student in particular tends to be quite open to the traditions that I teach, in contrast with those who are perhaps already committed to a fundamentalist worldview of some kind, and so look upon all traditions other than their own with suspicion, or who are deeply skeptical of all forms of religion. But even relatively open-minded students seem to have a harder time relating to Jainism than they do to Hinduism or Buddhism.

A cynical reading of the aversion some of my students express for Jainism is that, as materialistic, hedonistic Americans, they are of course put off by a tradition that prizes renunciation and asceticism to the degree that Jainism does. For Jainism, even more so than Hinduism and Buddhism, places tremendous emphasis on ascetic practices centered on avoiding violence and promoting compassion toward non-human life forms.

But while this is no doubt true for at least some students, I think such a reading is simplistic and misses an important insight. For the issue, I think, is not simply one of materialistic Westerners encountering a deeply ascetic Indic tradition, although this is an important component of the equation. For these same Western students can develop deep and abiding interests in Buddhist or Hindu practices and beliefs, adopting the practice of meditation, for example,

with an admirable degree of self-discipline and appreciation for the transformative nature of such a practice. In the case of already religiously committed students, they can modify earlier negative attitudes toward Indic traditions in the face of family or peer pressure – a pressure which, in some cases, can be surprisingly intense – to believe that all Indic traditions are demonic, and that all non-Christians are destined for eternal damnation. It is not, in other words, that the students are incapable of seeing and even growing beyond their existing worldviews and cultural presuppositions. But there is something about Jainism that seems to put this ability to the test.

The issue, I strongly suspect, is that Jainism, more than any other Indic religious tradition, explicitly and dramatically embodies not only a rejection, but a *reversal* of the values that are dominant in contemporary Western society – values which are increasingly global in reach – although all of the Indic traditions do this to some extent, with greater or lesser degrees of explicitness and intensity. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism all assert that egotism – and by logical extension materialism and consumerism – lies at the root of all suffering, and that a life spent in the constant pursuit of physical comfort and pleasure is ultimately a life spent in vain. Such an understanding goes against the grain not only of secular Western hedonism and consumerism, but also of a type of Christian spirituality quite strong in contemporary America – and certainly among many of my students – that is characterized by a degree of narcissism: that God loves *me*, that Jesus died for *my* sins, that *I* am unique and special (which implies that I am divinely entitled to all the material comforts with which American society is 'blessed'). The idea that the life of an insect might be every bit as valuable as my own is, to say the least, foreign to such a sensibility.

What I suspect my students are reacting to negatively when they encounter Jain beliefs and practices is a perception – one that may not even be fully conscious – that some of their most cherished and foundational assumptions are being implicitly challenged – and found wanting – by this unusual tradition from far away India. I have my students watch a video interview in my class of a wealthy Jain industrialist – in every way a success in the terms of American society – who expresses a sincere and heartfelt regret about the deaths of insects and microorganisms in his factories, as well as a deep desire to eventually give up 'all of this' once he retires.[11] The class discussion

that follows this video often raises uncomfortable questions about my students' career choices, and the environmental implications of their lifestyles. I once had a student comment that before studying Jainism, she thought she was a good person; but now she found herself examining all of the little ways in which she was bringing harm to others, human and non-human alike.

One of my goals in this book is to make the challenge of Jainism to the Western world explicit, and to suggest ways in which a dialog between Jain and Western values might be enlightening. Without suggesting that our students convert *en masse* to Jainism, we can ask how a Jain-informed Western civilization might look. To what degree might the Jain critique of Western materialist and consumerist mindsets and habits be not only valid, but beneficial, not only to the West, but to the entire world?

At the same time, without contradicting or taking back anything that has been said thus far, it is also the case – and an ongoing source of frustration for scholars and teachers of Jainism – that the radical asceticism that underlies the distinctively Jain vision of reality can be presented in an overstated and distorted fashion that is also partly responsible for the negative reactions of many students to Jainism as it is often presented in textbooks on world religions. The more radical ascetic practices that often elicit negative reactions in students, such as the ritual pulling out of the hair undertaken every six months by the Jain monks and nuns, or, most radical of all, the holy fast to the death – *sallekhanā* or *santhārā*, undertaken as the ultimate act of nonviolence – are far from being typical of Jain behavior.

As Paul Dundas writes, Jainism is:

> … [A]ll too often being interpreted as either colourless and austere or with reference to a few 'exotic' customs such as the permanent wearing of the mouth-shield (*muhpattī*) to avoid violence to minute organisms living in the air, a practice hardly universal within the religion … More generally, there has been a failure to integrate Jainism adequately into the wider picture of Indian society and a concomitant lack of scholarly willingness to allot it a recognizable place amongst the world's religions.[12]

The Jain practices that may appear, from a Western perspective, 'exotic', although they do serve to underscore the radical otherness of Jainism from the dominant value systems of the West – as well as its

implicit radical critique of these – can be fixated upon to a degree that can leave students with a distorted picture of Jainism comparable to the view of Christianity that one would have were one to focus upon the snake handlers of Appalachia, or to the view of Islam that one would have – and that many Westerners sadly do have, due to the preoccupations of the news media – were one to focus on Al Qaeda.

One could argue, of course, that the Jain community commends practices such as *keśa locana* (the pulling out of the hair) and *santhārā*, while snake handling and suicidal acts of terror are seen as aberrant and even sinful in the mainstream Christian and Muslim communities. But these Jain practices are nonetheless rare, and this rarity should suggest that the ordinary Jain is not *that* different in his or her sensibility from the ordinary practitioners of other religions. This has certainly been my experience with lay Jains.

The conceptual problem that underlies the negative perceptions of Jainism that an excessive focus on radical ascetic activities can generate is a tendency for Westerners to conceive of all moral injunctions in universal terms. When a Westerner is presented with a religious act or claim, a common assumption is that the person performing this act or making this claim is saying, either explicitly or implicitly, that all human beings should perform this act or give assent to this claim. When American college students read about an act such as ritual self-starvation, they thus assume that the community in which this act occurs is in fact recommending it for everyone, at least as an ideal. And when these same students, quite understandably, do not wish to starve themselves to death, they recoil.

The assumption that the same injunctions apply to all human beings all of the time is, however, foreign to Indic religious perspectives.[13] The Hindu concept of *svadharma*, that we each have our own duty to perform that varies depending upon our social location and the stage of life that we inhabit, is a perfect illustration of this principle. The clash between the Indic approach and Western universalism is illustrated in an exchange I once had with a student when we were reading the *Bhagavad Gītā*, in which the Hindu deity Krishna enjoins the hero Arjuna to fight his relatives in battle. Krishna includes among his justifications for this the fact that the true self – the soul or *ātman* – cannot be destroyed. My student asked, 'Is Krishna saying that it's okay for us to kill people because the soul doesn't die?' I said, 'No. He is saying that *Arjuna* has to kill – *has* to kill – *these people* because it's

his duty. He is softening the blow of this news for Arjuna by emphasizing the immortality of the soul. But fighting the Kauravas is Arjuna's duty, not ours.'

The tendency among Western students to generalize, to presume that all religious injunctions – including, therefore, all Jain injunctions – are, like the Ten Commandments, of a universal nature, is a misunderstanding that needs to be corrected, not only because it is a misunderstanding, but also because it helps produce the distorted picture of Jainism to which students react negatively. The differences between the expectations appropriate for a Jain monk and those appropriate for a Jain layperson are considerable, and need to be given emphasis. The balancing act for the instructor in this case is not to downplay or to minimize the force of the Jain ascetic vision, while simultaneously not presenting Jains in a distorted and overly exoticized manner. One ought not to diminish the radical nature of the Jain path; for in so doing we deprive our students of the opportunity to gain insight from a worldview profoundly different from their own. But one also ought not to create the false impression that all Jains are expected to pull out their hair or starve themselves to death – and that they would like for the rest of us to do so as well – when, in fact, nothing could be further from the truth. As with technicality and oversimplification, the Middle Path is most desirable in presenting Jain asceticism, and is the path I have sought to tread.

The Inclusion of Material on Hinduism and Buddhism

This book does not presuppose extensive knowledge of Hinduism or Buddhism. I have devoted some space – more than might be expected in a text on Jainism – to discussion of these two traditions as well. I have included material on these two traditions because no religious tradition or community exists in a vacuum. This is especially true for Jainism, which has always existed as a minority tradition in a cultural context dominated by the complex of religions that are today called Hinduism and, in ancient times, by Buddhism, with which it at one point had a major rivalry. Jainism grew up in constant interaction with these traditions. It is therefore essential, if one is to understand Jainism, even in an introductory fashion, that one also have a grasp of Hinduism and Buddhism – a grasp that I hope to provide, at least to the degree that it is useful for elucidating Jainism.

I have also found in my teaching that comparison is a useful pedagogical tool, and that the traditions that lend themselves most naturally to comparison with Jainism are the Hindu and Buddhist traditions. It is also the case that knowledge of these two traditions is more widespread than knowledge of Jainism. But because I do not wish to presuppose extensive knowledge of Hinduism or Buddhism among my readers, I have included some material on these two traditions in order to make my points of comparison clearer.

To again cite Paul Dundas, in contemporary Western scholarship: 'there has been a failure to integrate Jainism adequately into the wider picture of Indian society and a concomitant lack of scholarly willingness to allot it a recognizable place amongst the world's religions.'[14] I have sought to situate Jainism within the larger conversation of which it is a part – that is, within the cultural world of the much better known Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and as interconnected with the histories and self-understandings of these two traditions. Indeed, I hope to show that, just as it is true that one cannot claim to understand Jainism fully without understanding Hinduism or Buddhism, it is equally true that one cannot understand Hinduism or Buddhism fully without understanding Jainism. In a sense, this is a book about all three of these traditions.

A potential danger of my approach – situating Jainism within its wider, primarily Hindu, context – is that I will set up Hinduism as a norm of which Jainism is a variation. I could be giving the impression that Hindu philosophy is what really matters and that what makes Jainism matter is its engagement with Hindu philosophy. My efforts to show the areas of continuity among the Indic traditions could obscure important differences among these traditions. This is a danger to which I personally may be particularly susceptible, given my Vedāntic commitments, which emphasize the importance of finding harmony and unity amongst traditions, though not, hopefully, at the expense of distinctiveness.

As readers of my first book will be well aware, I am an outspoken critic of Hindu nationalism, and have drawn upon Jain philosophy precisely to re-articulate the Vedāntic teaching of the harmony of religions in a way that does not obscure the distinctiveness of traditions – that does not obliterate difference in the effort to affirm unity.

My hope is that the remedy for any potential tendency to obscure distinctiveness, either of Jainism within the wider context of the Indic

traditions, or internally to the Jain tradition itself, will be found in my mention of areas where there are differences between Jains, Hindus, and Buddhists, and among the Jains themselves.

Conclusion

Readers come to a text with a host of backgrounds and motivations. Some may read this book simply out of curiosity. What is this strange tradition about which the West knows so little? Some may already know about the Jain commitment to nonviolence and come looking for greater insight into this subject. Others may be interested less in Jainism than in various issues to which Jainism is relevant. They may be trying to understand Indian culture as a whole, or religious views on nonviolence or ecology. This book has been written in the conviction that Jainism is a tradition that has great importance for all of humanity in the twenty-first century. Wider knowledge of the distinctive wisdom of the Jains is well worth sharing, so the ripples of its influence may continue to expand.

Chapter 1
What is Jainism?

Introduction

Jainism is an ancient tradition of nonviolence and, according to many of its contemporary adherents, deep ecological wisdom.[15] Originating in India and having many affinities with Hinduism and Buddhism, it is a tradition that is relatively unknown in the West.

Like Hindus and Buddhists, Jains affirm the reality of a universal moral principle of cause and effect called *karma*. Derived from a Sanskrit word meaning 'act', karma governs all action.[16] It can be likened to Newton's Third Law of Motion: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. But traditional Indic worldviews do not make the sharp distinction, so typical of modern Western thought, between the realms of fact and value. Karma thus manifests not only in the form of physical laws, such as gravity, but also as a moral law governing action. If one engages in actions that are violent, or motivated by hatred, selfishness, or egotism, the universe will respond in kind, producing suffering in the one who has caused suffering to others. Similarly, if one engages in actions that are benevolent, pure, and kind, the universe will respond benevolently, and one will have pleasant experiences. There are Western expressions that convey a similar sensibility to that of the idea of karma: You reap what you sow. What goes around comes around.

Like Hindus and Buddhists, Jains deduce from the principle of karma the idea of rebirth, or reincarnation.[17] All religions must address the issue of why bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people. Why, if there is universal justice – which is essentially what karma amounts to – does the world in which we live appear to be as unjust as it does? Indic religions explain this phenomenon in terms of past and future lives. Today's joy or suffering may be the fruit of karma from a previous life. And the actions one takes today will inevitably bear fruit, if not in this life, then in a future one.

Like Hindus and Buddhists, Jains see the ultimate good as escape from the cycle of rebirth – *mokṣa*, or liberation from karmic bondage, or *nirvāṇa*, as it is also called in all of these traditions, a state of absorption in unending bliss. But, as for most Hindus and Buddhists, this final goal is widely conceived as remote and difficult to attain, the more immediate goal of religious activity being merit-making: the acquisition of 'good karma'.

Like Buddhists, and unlike most Hindus, Jains do not affirm the idea of a God, at least as this idea is understood in the Abrahamic religions – a creator and moral arbiter of the universe.[18] Karmic 'reward' and 'punishment' is a wholly impersonal process, and we are each responsible for our own joy and suffering. There is no divine judge. It is up to us to follow the path that leads to ultimate freedom, or not.

Unlike Hinduism, but like Buddhism and other world religions, Jainism does have a founding figure. But this figure is a 'founder' in only a limited sense; for, according to Jainism, he is not so much the 'founder' of a tradition as a re-discoverer and re-initiator of eternal truths and an eternal path that have been re-discovered and re-initiated again and again throughout beginningless time. Mahāvīra, the 'Great Hero', lived at about the same time and in the same region as the Buddha: approximately 2500 years ago in the northeastern region of India that recent scholarship has designated 'Greater Magadha'.[19] One could call Mahāvīra the founder of the Jain community as it exists today. But Jain tradition tells us that he is the 24th in a series of *Tīrthaṅkaras*, or 'fordmakers': beings who discover the way across the river of rebirth to the further shore of liberation and build a *tīrtha*, or ford, that others may use to make their way across as well. This *tīrtha* is the Jain community.

This metaphorical usage of *tīrtha* to refer to the Jain community has become so prominent over time that it has gradually eclipsed the original meaning of the word – a ford or crossing over a river – to the point that today it simply means 'religious community'. Among Jains today, Mahāvīra is said to have established four *tīrthas*: Jain monks, Jain nuns, Jain laymen, and Jain laywomen.[20] These make up the fourfold Jain community, often symbolized by the four limbs of the *svāstika*.[21]

For those Westerners who have heard of Jainism, it may bring to mind images of ascetics – of monks and nuns – wearing what appear to be surgical face-masks in order to protect insects and microorganisms

from being inhaled, and sweeping the ground in front of them with a broom or whisk to protect tiny creatures from being stepped on – a practice of nonviolence so radical as to defy easy comprehension.

But though this picture is not an inaccurate one, it is one-sided. The commitment of the Jains to a radically ascetic practice of nonviolence should not be minimized; but it should also not be exaggerated. A tiny percentage of Jains are actually monks or nuns who practice the kind of nonviolent asceticism most Western representations of Jainism bring to mind – a life of constant mindfulness of what one could call one's environmental impact. Though such asceticism evokes great admiration and reverence from the typical, lay practitioner of Jainism, it is not uncommon to hear lay Jains admit, quite frankly, that such asceticism is beyond their own, current ability to practice. One also hears the hope expressed that the layperson may someday, perhaps later in life or in a future rebirth, feel the call of renunciation and take up the life of the Jain ascetic. The point is that although, as Jains, laypersons understand and admire what Jain ascetics do, they regard such ascetic practice much as many non-Jains do: as extraordinary and extremely difficult.

In addition to its valorization of asceticism, Jainism is also a vibrant and colorful religion of devotion – no less so than either Hinduism or Buddhism – a point that I hope the cover of this book makes clear, with its dramatic depiction of Jain laypersons celebrating the *abhiṣekha*, or anointing, of the massive image of Bāhubali at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa, an important Jain pilgrimage site in Karnataka, in southern India. Bāhubali was a son of the first Tīrthaṅkara of our cosmic era and, some say, the first human being to attain mokṣa.[22]

One can see from the cover photo that, far from practicing a grim religion of unrelenting austerity, as the mixture of water, milk, and brightly colored powders rains down upon them, these celebrating Jains are clearly in a state of spiritual ecstasy – of profound and reverent joy. Many of them are also, undoubtedly, having a great deal of fun.

And why should they not be? The religions of the world are full of festivals that are not only serious spiritual occasions, but are also occasions for joyful celebration. The surprise this image might evoke in some is perhaps due to a preconception that Jainism is purely a religion of austerity. That it might also have an ecstatically festive dimension is thus a bit unexpected. Clearly, an exclusive focus upon Jainism as a relentlessly ascetic tradition is one-sided.

A Jain Event in Central Pennsylvania

Jainism is, in its origins, a South Asian religious tradition, part of the larger milieu that is also home to Hinduism, Sikhism, and, originally, Buddhism – though Buddhism died out in India around the year 1300 CE, and was only reintroduced less than a century ago.

For most of their history, Jain communities have remained largely confined to the Indian subcontinent, which is where most Jains continue to reside today. Though there are no restrictions on the movement of Jain laypersons analogous to those imposed on the Brahmins in some of the law books, or *Dharma Śāstras*, of Hinduism, Jain ascetics have traditionally observed very strict rules that have kept the community from traveling very far.[23] These restrictions, as we shall see, are connected with the strict observance of nonviolence to which Jain ascetics are required to adhere.

However, along with many other Indian religious communities, Jains have, in the modern period, spread far and wide across the globe. Small, but nonetheless thriving, Jain communities exist in such countries as the UK, the USA, and Canada. Because Jains are no longer confined to India, Westerners may increasingly find them among their neighbors, their co-workers, their teachers, or their fellow students.

Indeed, one can find Jains in the most unlikely places. On the evening of 11 April 2006, my wife and I drove to the Hindu temple in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, just outside the state capital of Harrisburg. We have been members of this particular temple, the Hindu American Religious Institute, since moving to Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania in the year 2000, from Chicago.[24]

To say the transition from the urban jungle of Chicago to the rolling, rural hills of central Pennsylvania was a cultural shock would be, to say the least, an understatement. But through the Hindu American Religious Institute, my wife and I met many of our friends and became connected to a surprisingly large Indian community, hailing not only from Harrisburg but also from other nearby towns, with names like New Cumberland, Camp Hill, York, Lancaster, Mechanicsburg, and, of course, Elizabethtown.

It was my career that brought us to Elizabethtown. Having finished my doctoral degree at the University of Chicago, I went on the job market and had the good fortune to be quickly hired by

Elizabethtown College, where I continue to teach in the Department of Religious Studies, and where my wife teaches Japanese.[25]

What brought us to the Hindu temple on that particular evening in April was my ongoing interest in Jainism, a tradition I had been studying since my time as a graduate student at the University of Chicago. I had written my doctoral dissertation on *anekāntavāda*, the Jain doctrine of the complexity of reality, and its implications for arguments for religious pluralism.[26] More recently, I had just finished writing my first book, in which I argued that *anekāntavāda* is a very useful tool for arguing for the view – taught in my own religious tradition of Ramakrishna Vedānta – that there is truth in all religions, and that we should view different religions and philosophies not as contradictory and competing, but as expressing complementary views of different aspects of an infinitely complex reality. This view of the Vedānta tradition is difficult to defend logically. It involves claiming that traditions making a variety of mutually incompatible claims can all be, in some way, true – a counterintuitive notion, to say the least. My goal was to give it a logical defense.

My initial interest in Jainism was largely intellectual – a function of having found, in *anekāntavāda*, a useful and compelling logical tool for expressing my own worldview, which had already been shaped by Ramakrishna Vedānta. But as I studied this idea in its original Jain context, I grew more and more interested in Jainism itself, as a whole. What in the Jain worldview led Jains to develop a concept so similar to Vedāntic pluralism?

I began studying Jainism in graduate school as a convinced practitioner of modern Vedānta, which I remain. But I also discovered that *anekāntavāda* cannot be completely abstracted from the total Jain vision that gave rise to it, and that Jainism, not only as a philosophy, but also as a way of life, has much insight to offer all human beings.

But why search for Jainism at a Hindu temple in rural Pennsylvania? The answer is one that sheds a light on the relationship between Jainism and Hinduism; for, at least in the Indian community in the United States, there does not seem to be anything like a hard and fast division between Jains and Hindus.

As a dramatic illustration of the closeness of these two communities, I noticed, the first time I went into the Hindu American Religious Institute, that in a niche in the wall, in a place of honor no less than that bestowed on the mainstream Hindu deities – such as Śiva, Sri

Krishna, and Mā Durgā – there sat a *mūrti*, or image, of Mahāvīra. This was in the year 2000, just a couple of months after our arrival in the area. It was not something I had expected, to see a Jain Tīrthaṅkara in a Hindu temple!

The particular event that we were attending on that April evening in 2006 was the first in a week long series of lectures held at the Hindu American Religious Institute in celebration of Mahāvīra Jayantī, one of the holiest days in the Jain calendar – the day that commemorates Mahāvīra's birth.

Jains follow the same lunar calendar traditionally followed by Hindus. Months are divided into a 'bright half' (*śukla pakṣa*) and a 'dark half' (*kṛṣṇa pakṣa*). The bright half is the period when the moon is waxing – moving from its new to its full phase – and the dark half is the period when the moon is waning – moving from full to new. The bright half is generally regarded as more auspicious than the dark half, a better time in which to undertake new or important activities. Mahāvīra Jayantī is held on the 13th day of the bright half of a month called *Caitra*, which overlaps with the second half of March and the first half of April on the dominant Gregorian calendar.

Two short rituals preceded the lecture, which was the evening's main event. First, at 7 p.m., the *āratī* was held. At the Hindu American Religious Institute, the *āratī* is conducted daily at noon and again at 7 p.m. *Āratī* is a ritual performed by both Hindus and Jains before the *mūrti*, or image, of a representation of divinity. At the HARI Temple, the central deity is Lord Rām, or Rāma, flanked on his left by his wife, Sītā – an incarnation of the Goddess Lakṣmī – and on his right by his brother, Lakṣmaṇa – literally, Rāma's 'right hand man', as I am fond of explaining to my students whenever I bring them to the temple for field trips.

The *āratī* involves rotating a plate of five candles, or *dīyā*, in front of the image of the deity and singing a song, the most popular variant being *Om Jaya Jagadīśa Hare*, or 'Om, Victory to Hari (Viṣṇu), Lord of the Universe!' (Rāma is an *avatār*, or incarnation, of Viṣṇu, the Preserver of Dharma, the cosmic order, so the singing of a hymn to Viṣṇu in front of Rāma's *mūrti* makes sense.) Some devotees rotate the *dīyā* clockwise an odd number of times (usually three times, but sometimes five, and sometimes more) while others trace the Sanskrit character *Om* in the air (ॐ), before passing the *dīyā* to the next person so they can offer their devotions. After this 'offering' of the candle

flames to the deity, people approach the *dīyā* and bless themselves with the flame, holding their hands over the flame and then touching their forehead, their eyes, or their heart, or rubbing their hands through their hair – or some combination of these actions – usually three times.

The symbolism of the *āratī* is rich with meaning, with a variety of interpretations being given to each aspect of the ceremony. The flame of the candles is evocative of the most ancient of Hindu rituals – the kindling of the sacred fire in Vedic ceremonies, a fire personified by Agni, the deity of fire. Flame symbolizes purification, as well as the light of knowledge and the power of creativity, personified as the goddess Śaktī, wife of Śiva. When the flame is offered before the deity, accompanied by singing and the ringing of a bell, this symbolizes offering one's devotion. In return, the deity bestows blessings. The worshipers receive these by waving their hands over the flame and touching their heads.[27]

At least in the West, many Hindus take great pains to explain that, despite the appearance of polytheism, the deities – Rāma, Agni, Śaktī, Śiva, etc. – are all forms of one supreme God. We shall see, too, that a heterodox interpretation of Jainism has emerged which also conceives of the Tīrthaṅkaras as forms of this same supreme deity. This kind of thinking, though at odds with a more traditional Jain self-understanding, has facilitated the kind of easy interaction between Jains and Hindus and the sharing of worship spaces observed in North American temples such as HARI.

I noted that the Jains who had gathered for the event all participated in the *āratī* – singing and clapping their hands and offering the flame of the *dīyā* with as much evident fervor as the Hindus who were present. There appeared to be no conflict between being a devout Jain and celebrating Mahāvīra Jayantī while also offering the *āratī* to Lord Rām, a Hindu deity.

Similarly, I recognized that a substantial number of those who had come were Hindus (because I knew them personally), who clearly had no problem with coming to celebrate a Jain holy day and listening to a spiritual lecture by a Jain monk. This was an attitude that I had come to expect in the Hindu community, in which I had frequently heard the view expressed that all religions are paths to the same goal, roads going up the same mountain, rivers flowing into one ocean, and so on – a view often expressed by such influential figures in the modern Hindu tradition as Ramakrishna and Mahatma Gandhi.

I was able to distinguish the Hindus from the Jains at this event only because I knew them personally. There were no distinctive sectarian marks or modes of dress that set the two communities apart from one another. Though such sectarian marks do exist, none were in evidence that day. Most of the participants were Gujarati, hailing from the western coastal state of India from which Mahatma Gandhi hailed. Most of the women wore traditional Indian dress. Some of the men wore the traditional Indian long shirt, called a *kurta*, while others wore casual Western business attire: button-down shirts and slacks. The guest speaker – the Jain monk – was clearly distinguishable from the rest of the group by his white robes, as well as by the clear deference with which he was regarded when he entered the room and took his seat to begin his lecture.

I have heard HARI described as a 'universal temple', where all the major Hindu deities are honored and the members of all Hindu communities are welcome. Bengalis celebrate Durgā Pūjā there, for example, and everyone else is welcome to participate. At HARI, the typical pattern is that, on a given holy day, the sub-community for whom that day is particularly special sponsors the *pūjā* appropriate to the occasion, as well as the meal and some kind of cultural event or lecture. The rest of the community is welcome to participate, and many typically do, sometimes even to the point of becoming involved in food preparation, decorating of the temple, emceeing, and so on. The community is a kind of microcosm of the Hindu community as a whole, with each subgroup maintaining its distinct identity, while at the same time mixing quite easily with the rest.

At the Mahāvīra Jayantī celebrations, the Jains appeared to be one more group of Hindus at our temple. They had come to celebrate the holy day of their particular deity, Mahāvīra, just as the members of the Marathi community turn out in large numbers each year to celebrate Gaṇeśa Chaturthi and Mahāśivarātrī (Gaṇeśa and Śiva being popular deities in Maharashtra), and just as many GujaratiVaiṣṇavas come to celebrate Krishna Janmāṣṭami (the birthday of Krishna – Krishna being, like Rāma, an *avatār* of Viṣṇu), with the rest of the temple community being welcomed and encouraged to participate as well.

As the reader may surmise, the Hindu community is made up of a great variety of sub-communities, each predominant in a different region of India, and each having its own preferred deities, Durgā being popular in Bengal, Krishna in Gujarat, and so on.

After the usual *āratī* to Rām, the community moved from the center of the temple to the adjacent wall niche where the image of Mahāvīra resides. In front of the image, a small, stepped altar, draped with a red cloth, had been set up. On it had been placed a set of 14 silver items, which I recognized as representations of the 14 auspicious objects seen by Mahāvīra's mother, Triśalā, in a series of dreams that she had prior to his birth.[28] In front of these, rice patterns had been traced, on which had been set a coconut, a photograph of a departed loved one, and some money.

In other words, this small, impromptu altar had been set up for *pūjā*, or worship. I had previously seen similar altars, set up in similar ways before the various Hindu deities at HARI on their appropriate holy days. At this altar, another *āratī* was performed, this one being dedicated to the Jina – or spiritual conqueror – Mahāvīra.

The symbolic meaning of the *āratī* for Jains overlaps, but is not identical to, its meaning for Hindus. As we shall see, this is the case with many shared Jain and Hindu customs and traditions.

First of all, the *āratī* is not, for Jains, evocative of Agni, the Vedic fire deity, nor of the kindling of the fire for the Vedic offering. As a non-Vedic community, Jains reject the idea of sacrifice found in the *Vedas*. Jains typically perform *āratī* at the end of a temple ceremony in the belief that the *āratī* removes any negative karma that might have been incurred during worship.[29] This idea of fire as purifying is found in many religions, and is shared by both Jains and Hindus in their respective understandings of *āratī*.

After the *āratī* to Lord Mahāvīra, I noted that the Jains greeted one another with the expression *Jai Jinendra* – 'Victory to the Lord of the Jinas!' I had been introduced to this greeting a couple of years earlier, while participating in the 111th anniversary of the first Parliament of the World's Religions, in Barcelona.[30] I spent a good deal of my time at the Parliament with the various Jain representatives and enjoyed the familiarity of hearing this greeting again, which is distinctive to the Jain community. The Hindus that evening did not employ it.

To the right of the altar with the 14 auspicious objects and the main *mūrti* of Mahāvīra set in the wall I noticed what appeared to be a multi-tiered brass mountain with a temple on top, the entire assemblage being about my height (between five and six feet tall).[31] I had seen this object before. It is normally kept near the back of our

temple. But it had been brought out and placed between the wall *mūrtis* of Mahāvīra on one side and Śiva and Śaktī on the other.

Enthroned in the temple at the top of the mountain was a much smaller *mūrti* of Mahāvīra. I noticed that this *mūrti* was speckled with dried yellow sandalwood powder. Clearly, the brass mountain had been brought out and placed in a central location for the purpose of performing the *abhiṣekha*, or anointing, of the *mūrti*, which would take place on the actual day of Mahāvīra Jāyantī, which was scheduled for later in the week. For the sake of cleanliness, the community does not perform an anointing of the large wall *mūrti*, so this smaller *mūrti*, which is portable and more easily cleaned, serves this purpose.[32] A similar practice is observed in some Jain temples in India.

The symbolism of the *abhiṣeka* is a royal symbolism. In ancient times, kings in India were formally made kings not, as in medieval Europe, through coronation, but with a ceremony of anointing.[33] The anointing of the image of Mahāvīra expresses, through a ritual performance, Mahāvīra's *spiritual* supremacy by using the symbolism of ancient Indian *political* supremacy. This anointing, consecration, or ritual bath – all of which are possible translations of the word *abhiṣeka* – is performed daily in some Jain temples in India. At other temples it is performed only on special occasions, like Mahāvīra Jayantī. The basic *abhiṣeka* involves pouring water, then milk, then water again, and then yellow sandalwood water, and then water again, over the image.[34]

More elaborate versions of this ceremony involve the 'five nectars' (*pañcāmṛta*), which can consist of either (1) coconut juice, (2) sugarcane juice, (3) milk, (4) yellow sandalwood water, and (5) red sandalwood water, or, alternatively, (1) milk, (2) yogurt, (3) water, (4) yellow sandalwood water, and (5) red sandalwood water. More elaborate still are nine-pot or 108-pot *abhiṣekas*. The most elaborate *abhiṣeka* of all is the 1008-pot *abhiṣeka* of the image of Bāhubali at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa, partially depicted on the cover of this book.[35]

The reader may note that the more elaborate *abhiṣekas* are all performed either with nine pots or with numbers of pots whose decimals add up to nine: 108 and 1008. In Jainism, as in Hinduism, these are regarded as sacred numbers. The chief significance of the number nine for Jains is that it is three times three. The number three is sacred due to there being three components of the spiritual path: right faith, knowledge, and conduct.[36]

Performing *abhiṣeka* on the *mūrti* of Mahāvīra is especially appropriate on Mahāvīra Jayantī because, according to Jain tradition, the infant Mahāvīra was given a special bath by the gods shortly after his birth. Indeed, this *abhiṣeka* was performed by Indra himself, the lord of the *devas* or Vedic deities, on the sacred Mount Meru, the axis of the world according to traditional Indic cosmology – a cosmology which is shared, albeit with variations, by Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists.

With the 14 auspicious dream-objects seen by his mother, Triśalā, prior to his birth being put on display in the days leading up to Mahāvīra Jayantī, and with his image being anointed – just as he was – on Mahāvīra Jayantī itself, one can see the entire week-long celebration as a ritual re-enactment of the events leading up to and including Mahāvīra's birth and anointing.

This re-enacting of sacred events is also universal to the world's religions. The celebration of Mahāvīra Jayantī can be seen as analogous to Advent and Christmas in the Christian tradition, Passover in the Jewish tradition, or Ramadan in Islam. All of these celebrations re-create a sacred time, regarded by the community as foundational both to its self-understanding and its existence. Mahāvīra's birth is a sacred event. By coming into this world, re-discovering the path to liberation, and establishing his community to perpetuate that path, Mahāvīra makes the possibility of liberation available to all of his followers. In commemorating this event, the members of the community not only remind themselves of the values of their tradition, re-dedicating themselves to the path Mahāvīra has set forth. The community also, in a sense, ritually reconstitutes itself by re-enacting the events without which it would never have come into existence.

At the event I attended, after the Jain *āratī* had been performed, the community gathered before a small stage where the guest speaker, a Jain monk, Saman Śrūtaprajñā, sat and delivered his lecture in Hindi (ably translated for me by my wife). His lecture consisted mainly of highly practical advice on how to avoid unnecessary stress. At one point, he led the assembled listeners in a chant of *Om* and a short meditation, preceded by yoga exercises. He emphasized not only the spiritual dimensions of yoga and the ability of yoga and meditation to calm the mind and control negative impulses such as fear and anger, but also the very practical, physical benefits of a life free from stress. Referring jokingly to the various cardiovascular benefits of yoga and

meditation, he exclaimed, in English, 'Bypass the bypass!'. (He was referring, of course, to avoiding cardiac bypass surgery through living a healthy lifestyle, with minimal stress.)

Indeed, throughout his talk, Saman Śrūtaprajñā made very frequent use of humor. Belying the image a Westerner might have of a Jain monk as a serious ascetic – and therefore someone likely to be very stern and probably deeply judgmental of those whose lifestyles are not as strict as his own – his manner was easygoing and highly approachable. He took questions from the audience on both practical and profound matters and did not, at least to all appearances, discriminate between Hindus and Jains. In fact, I was struck by the fact that he quoted more than once from the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, texts very sacred to Hindus, as well as from the Jain scriptures and stories from the lives of various Jain saints. The sense, though, when he quoted scripture was not that he was citing an authoritative source of knowledge to which all must give assent, so much as illustrating his points with stories everyone could understand and relate to. My sense when he was quoting from the *Gītā* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in other words, was that he was drawing upon shared cultural resources to which his audience could relate. The *Mahābhārata*, of which the *Bhagavad Gītā* is a part, and the *Rāmāyaṇa* are widely known stories in India, even beyond those in the Hindu community who regard them as sacred. It is therefore not at all uncommon to find them cited as folk wisdom, even by members of other traditions.

How was Saman Śrutaprajñā able to come to Pennsylvania to give us his lecture? As mentioned earlier, the movements of Jain ascetics have traditionally been limited by a very strict set of rules. In the name of avoiding even accidental injury to small life forms, the only acceptable mode of transportation for Jain monks and nuns has been walking. If a monk or nun were to ride in a vehicle of any kind – an oxcart, a chariot, or an automobile or airplane – he or she would bear part of the guilt for the destruction of tiny life forms that such modes of transportation inevitably entail. Being constrained by the distances they are capable of walking, Jain monks and nuns have therefore never traditionally traveled very far. This is one of the reasons Jainism has remained confined largely to the Indian subcontinent, in contrast with Buddhism, which spread, in premodern times, from India to Southeast Asia, China, Tibet, Korea, and Japan.

The movement of lay Jains is not restricted in the way the movement of ascetics is. Long a merchant community, Jain businessmen were known, even in ancient times, to travel far and wide for trading purposes. In the modern period, many more Jains began to travel and settle abroad, along with other Indian communities, for economic reasons. In 1980, aware of the growing need to serve the spiritual needs of a lay Jain community that had become global in extent, Ācārya Tulsī, a leading monk in the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī Jain community, established a special order of Jain ascetics, to which Saman Śrūtaprajñā belongs. This group of ascetics has been given special permission to use modern modes of transportation, as well as flexibility with regard to other traditional monastic rules that would make it difficult for these ascetics to function and travel in the Western world. One could say that these male and female ascetics – *samans* and *samaṇīs*, respectively – are an intermediate group, occupying a space 'between' the traditional roles of laypersons and ascetics.[37] Their function is to serve the spiritual needs of the increasingly global community of Jain laypersons. But they also promote Jain ideals to the broader outside world. This seemed to be the central mission of two *samaṇīs* who attended the Barcelona Parliament of World's Religions, who were among the prominent Jains that I met there.

Who are the Jains?

Based on my observations at the HARI temple during the Mahāvīra Jāyantī celebrations of 2006, one can deduce several things about Jain identity, at least in North America.

First, Jains are overwhelmingly Indian, in terms of ethnicity and national origin. I personally know of no current Western or other non-Indian converts to Jainism – though in the first half of the twentieth century, an Englishman named Herbert Warren did convert to Jainism, under the guidance of a Jain teacher named Virchand Gandhi, writing a book on the subject entitled *Jainism in Western Garb as a Solution to Life's Great Problems*.[38] No Jain-based popular movements have emerged in the West comparable to Hindu- or Buddhist-inspired movements such as Transcendental Meditation or Zen.

Today, there are approximately 4.2 million Jains in the world.[39] Although there are Jain communities in the UK, North America, and

elsewhere – such as the community in central Pennsylvania – the vast majority of Jains continue to live in India, where they have existed for over two and a half millennia as a small but highly influential minority.

Secondly, one notices – again, at least in North America – a very easy relationship between Jains and Hindus, even to the point of utilizing the same worship facilities and participating in one another's rituals – although the Jain and Hindu rituals remain distinct. There are currently 17 'Hindu-Jain' temples operating in the United States. One of the oldest and most prominent of these, the Hindu-Jain Temple of Pittsburgh, was built in 1981, initially as a Hindu temple, and dubbed a 'Hindu-Jain' temple in 1986.[40]

One should not deduce from this, however, that all Jains or Hindus are necessarily happy about such arrangements. And one generally does not find such arrangements in India. Scholars have identified three orientations toward Jain belief and practice that are operative in the modern period. These are *orthodoxy*, *heterodoxy*, and *neo-orthodoxy*. As Paul Dundas describes these, orthodoxy

> … is the type of Jainism which would be recognizable to traditional followers of the religion in India, involving ritual, recitation of prayers and mantras, full acceptance of the authority of Mahāvīra and his teachings, and a concern with correct practice and sectarian exclusivity, all typically associated with women and old people.[41]

Heterodoxy, on the other hand,

> … involves an interpretation of Jainism as theistic and free from the metaphysical complexities which many feel to be a feature of the religion, with the fordmakers [enlightened teachers, such as Mahāvīra] being viewed as in some way the manifestations of a supreme deity and endowed with the capacity to intervene directly in human affairs and offer assistance. Here, God-focused devotion plays an important part and the Jains who have espoused this heterodoxy see no incongruity in, for example, worshiping in Hindu or Sikh temples.[42]

Finally, neo-orthodoxy

> … presents itself as modern and progressive, with an emphasis on those aspects of Jainism which can be interpreted as scientific and rational and can therefore be accommodated to and encompass western modes of thought.[43]

Depending on the degree of their attachment to orthodoxy, some Jains object to holding Jain ceremonies in the same facilities which house Hindu deities, where Hindu rituals are also performed. Again, one does not typically find such arrangements in India. Nor does there seem to be much of a precedent for them in the premodern era, unless one counts the ancient Jain tradition of worshiping goddesses such as Saraswatī and Lakṣmī, who are also prominent objects of Hindu worship.

Based on my own observations, it seems that the three orientations – orthodoxy, heterodoxy, and neo-orthodoxy – reflect more general trends, rather than being absolutely fixed identifications. In other words, I have met many Jains who have been, in varying ways and to varying degrees, both heterodox and neo-orthodox – though orthodoxy in the strict sense remains, as Dundas points out, confined largely to India, being dependent on relations with traditional monks and nuns that are not possible for Jains who are living in the West. But to the degree that a Jain practitioner wishes to maintain orthodoxy, sharing worship facilities with Hindus could be seen to be problematic. As we shall see, the ideas underlying Jain worship are quite distinct from those involved in most Hindu worship.

Though clearly, given the presence of 17 Hindu-Jain temples in the United States, close Hindu-Jain co-existence is religiously possible for at least some members of both communities. But it is possible that such cooperation has been at least as much a matter of necessity as of choice. Given the relatively small size of both communities in North America and their various commonalities, cooperation of this kind makes sense. But it is also the case that, when Jains have been able, they have built their own, separate temple facilities. Similarly, Hindu subgroups have also been known to split off from the more 'universal' temple communities when their resources have enabled them to do so.[44] The 'universal' Hindu temple, incorporating all forms of Hinduism, as well as Jainism, is largely a product of Hindu modernity combined with the immigrant experience of Hindus and Jains living in the West. In India, such temples are much less common, though their numbers are increasing.[45]

Diverse Jain Identities

A common stereotype of the Jains, in both India and the West, is that they constitute a highly affluent merchant community. In fact,

although many Jains do practice business professions – and many have been quite successful in these pursuits – there are also Jains who practice other professions, such as farming, and whose level of material wealth is relatively modest.

And then there are of course the Jain *sādhus* and *sādhvīs*, or monks and nuns, who have practically no material possessions to speak of, and who live a life of deliberate simplicity and nonviolence. Indeed, the strict commitment to *ahiṃsā*, or nonviolence, which the Jain monks and nuns embody, is the source of another stereotype of the Jains as a whole: that all Jains wear a face-mask to avoid accidentally ingesting insects, or that they carefully sweep the ground free of insects to avoid treading upon them as they walk. Only monks and nuns practice nonviolence to such a strict degree.

Indeed, not even all Jain monks and nuns observe precisely the same practices. The *muhpattī*, or face-mask, for example, is generally worn only at certain times. Only two monastic sects – the Sthānakavāsīs and the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthīs – are required to wear it at all times, and many monks do not wear it at all. Even within the same sect, differences exist in the realm of practice between monastic lineages, or *gacchas*. Many of these lineages have arisen by splitting off from other lineages over disagreements in regard to practice, which has been at least as divisive for Jains as matters of belief have been, historically, for Christians.

Jain identity, like all identities, is criss-crossed with a variety of affiliations, such as class and profession – as just mentioned above – caste (distinct from class), gender, and sectarian affiliation. Though Jainism, like Buddhism, arose partly in reaction to the caste system of Hinduism, Jains, like many other minority communities in India, are organized into castes – hereditary communities that tend to practice a particular occupation and that determine whom one may marry. And there are of course male and female Jains.

Finally, the Jains are also divided into sub-sects. The two most ancient ones, the Digambaras and the Śvetāmbaras, differ mainly with regard to issues relating to monastic practice: specifically, with regard to whether a monk should wear clothing and whether a woman can practice monasticism to the extent available to a man. Indeed, the names of these two groups are indicative of the issues on which they differ. The word *Śvetāmbara* means 'white-clad', and Śvetāmbara monks and nuns wear very simple white robes. In addition to wearing

these white robes, a Śvetāmbara monk or nun will also typically carry a begging bowl, from which he or she will eat food provided by the Jain lay community, and a small broom for the purpose of gently brushing aside small insects that may be in their pathway. The modest dress of Śvetāmbara ascetics is a symbol of their detachment and their status as ascetics in the Jain community. Śvetāmbaras make up, by far, the majority of Jains.[46] Most live in the western and northern states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. They are also the community that maintains the scriptural tradition in which are found the earliest references to and teachings of the Jina Mahāvīra, though the Digambaras contest the authenticity of this collection of texts.

Digambara means 'sky-clad'. Digambara monks, figuratively speaking, 'wear' the sky: they wear no clothing at all. They do not carry a begging bowl, but eat only that much food as they can hold in their hands. Some carry the small broom that is also used by the Śvetāmbaras for the purpose of protecting small creatures from accidentally being stepped or sat upon; but this is not personal, but community property. In any event, the broom exists to protect other beings – unlike clothing, which protects one's own body.

From a Digambara perspective, the wearing of clothing suggests that one is overly attached to the body – that one wishes to protect it. It also suggests that one has a sense of shame that implies a lack of spiritual maturity, of awareness that it is the soul and not the body that is of ultimate significance. A critic could of course ask, if the body is not what is important, why it matters whether one wears clothing or not. But for the Digambaras, practice is a necessary measure of spiritual attainment.

What of Digambara nuns? Digambara nuns do wear clothing, but are regarded, for that very reason, as incapable of practicing non-attachment to the degree of which a man is capable. Digambara Jains therefore traditionally believe that only men can attain *mokṣa*. A woman must await rebirth as a man in order to aspire to this goal. From a Digambara point of view, Digambara nuns and Śvetāmbara ascetics of both genders are nothing more or less than pious laypersons. Śvetāmbara monks are not true monks, from a Digambara perspective, due to their attachment to the wearing of clothing.

Women are barred from the practice of monastic nudity due to the fear that a nude female ascetic would be vulnerable to sexual assault.

Rebirth as a woman is therefore an unfortunate state, since it prevents one from engaging in monastic practice to the degree necessary for attaining liberation – from the practice of monastic nudity. Though there are Digambara nuns, who practice celibacy and other ascetic observances, they are not held within the Digambara tradition to be on the same level as the monks.

The immediate salvific aspiration of these women, like that of any Jain layperson, is therefore a better rebirth – meaning, in their case, rebirth as a man. Liberation is a more distant goal, requiring the practice of monastic nudity – a practice available only to males.

From a Śvetāmbara point of view, it is the attitude of detachment, rather than the actual practice of nudity, that is of ultimate importance in one's pursuit of liberation from the rebirth cycle. Women are as capable as men of attaining *mokṣa*. Indeed, Mallinātha, the 19th Tīrthaṅkara, is believed by the Śvetāmbaras to have been a woman (though this is regarded as having been the result of bad karma, due to her having deceived her fellow monks, in her prior lifetime, by secretly practicing more asceticism than they had all agreed together to practice, so it is not exactly an endorsement of feminism).

The debates between the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras over the necessity of actual monastic nudity versus an attitude of detachment, as well as debates regarding the related issue of the possibility of spiritual liberation for women, have been extensive. An entire literature has been produced as a result.

This literature displays a gradual development of an increasingly more sharply defined sense of sectarian identity on the part of both groups. Over time, one finds a hardening of attitudes between the two communities. The Digambara texts begin to state that it is not only the non-availability of monastic nudity to women that bars them from liberation, but certain aspects of the female anatomy. Some texts claim, for example, that more microscopic organisms inhabit the female body than the male body, making the biological processes involved in a female incarnation more violent than those involved in rebirth as a male, thus making birth as a woman unfortunate.[47] Menstruation in particular is seen as involving the destruction of microorganisms on a massive scale.

The Digambara rejection of the Śvetāmbara scriptural tradition is primarily due to the fact that the Ardha-Māgadhī Prakrit texts depict a variety of episodes incompatible with a Digambara understanding

of Jainism. Mahāvīra himself is depicted as practicing monastic nudity, though this is presented as more of an accident than a deliberate choice. (Mahāvīra was so detached from his body that his simple white loincloth simply slipped off one day without his noticing it.) Women – Mallinātha and Mahāvīra's mother, Triśalā – are depicted as achieving *mokṣa*. And, as discussed earlier, Mahāvīra is represented as engaging in speech and other normal activities after his *nirvāṇa*.

Although the names *Śvetāmbara* and *Digambara* refer to the clothing worn (or, in the case of the Digambaras, not worn) by their respective ascetics, the laypersons making up the vast majority of Jains of both sects also refer to themselves using this terminology. The average Śvetāmbara or Digambara Jain is a layperson, and not an ascetic: white-clad or otherwise.

It is not clear precisely when or how these two groups separated, but the schism occurred some time before the second century of the Common Era, and may have been a gradual process. Until the fifteenth century, there was also an 'intermediate' group called the Yāpanīyas, who practiced monastic nudity much as the Digambaras do, but they wore a simple white cloth when in public.[48]

According to one Digambara tradition, the division between the two communities occurred less than two centuries after the life of Mahāvīra. At this point, the community of Jains was centered in the northeastern region of India, where Mahāvīra had lived and taught. Due to a famine in this area, the community split, with one group migrating to the northwest and the other to the south. The northwestern group eventually became the Śvetāmbaras, with the southern group becoming the Digambaras. After many years of mutual isolation, when these two groups again encountered one another, they found that differences had emerged between their practices, with the ascetics of the northwestern group wearing simple white robes and the male ascetics of the southern group practicing nudity. Because this is a Digambara account, 'The northern monks are portrayed as … out of weakness taking to the heretical practice of wearing clothes.'[49]

Digambaras have traditionally lived in southern India, predominantly in what is now the state of Karnataka and southern Maharashtra. However, there is also a northern Digambara community centered in the northwestern states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. These

northwestern states are also the traditional location of the Śvetāmbaras. Of the two groups, the larger group by far is the Śvetāmbaras. Roughly 80 per cent of all Jains are Śvetāmbaras.[50]

The Śvetāmbaras are further subdivided into three main groups. More than half are Mūrtipūjakas, who, as their name suggests, engage in *pūjā*, or worship, using images, or *mūrtis*. The other two, more recently formed Śvetāmbara groups, are the Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs. They differ from both Digambara Jains and Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbaras regarding the propriety of *mūrtipūjā*, which they do not engage in.

The Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs were inspired, but not technically *established*, by Loṅka Śāh, a fifteenth-century Jain reformer who held that the monastic practices of his time did not live up to the vision of the Jain scriptures, particularly in regard to the observance of *ahiṃsā*. Loṅka regarded *mūrtipūjā* as a violation of *ahiṃsā*, because of the destruction of small organisms involved in temple building and in the ritual of *pūjā* itself.

As mentioned previously, like Hindus, Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jains practice *pūjā* – the act of giving worship to a deity through offerings of flowers, fruits, water, milk, a sacred flame, and various other sacred substances to the form (or *mūrti*) of that deity, usually through the medium of a statue.[51] Unlike the Hindus, whose worship is typically devoted to forms of divinity like Viṣṇu, Śiva, or Śaktī (the Mother Goddess), Jain *pūjā* is devoted to liberated beings, such as Mahāvīra and the other Tīrthaṅkaras, as well as to other respected ascetics of the Jain tradition. Some of the most beautiful and ornately constructed temples in India are Jain temples, devoted to the worship of the Tīrthaṅkaras.

The building of temples and monasteries, however, has not been uncontroversial in the Jain tradition. In favor of such construction, it has been argued that the spiritual benefits, particularly to laypersons, of visiting temples and worshiping the Tīrthaṅkaras far outweigh the destruction of life necessarily involved in construction activities such as digging, carving, and so forth.

The Sthānakavāsīs and the Terāpanthīs, however, argue that such reasoning is flawed, revealing an attachment to physical acts that is spiritually counterproductive. If one also takes into account the possibilities for destruction of microscopic life inherent in physical acts of worship, they claim, it is clear that a far more productive form of

worship is to visualize and worship the enlightened Jinas mentally and internally rather than using physical means.

The Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs maintain a high level of strictness in their ascetic practices, which include the constant wearing of the *muhpattī*. The older of the two groups, the Sthānakavāsīs' name refers to their ascetics' practice of dwelling in special halls (*sthānakas*) set apart from temples. This signals their protest against the practice of monks dwelling in temples. The phenomenon of monks dwelling in temples was quite old in Jainism at the time of the formation of the Sthānakavāsī movement. But the Sthānakavāsīs see this practice as inadequate to the strictures of the Jain monastic code.

Because of their rejection of *mūrtipūjā* and the temples in which it occurs, they see it as inappropriate for Jain monks to countenance such activity by residing in such an establishment. Their objection, and that of the Terāpanthīs, to *mūrtipūjā* and temple building is due to the violence to small creatures that these activities inevitably involve – the same objection that motivated Loṅka in his attempts to reform the Jain practice of his time. The motivating principle of aniconic movements in Jainism is nonviolence and not, as some have argued, the influence of Islam – though Islamic influence was prominent in South Asia during Loṅka's time.[52] The Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs emphasize mental worship (*bhāvapūjā*) over physical acts of worship using images, or *mūrtis*.

The Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī community was established in 1760 by a monk of the Sthānakavāsī tradition named Ācārya Bhikṣu. The name *Terāpanthī* 'is interpreted in two ways: (1) Path of Thirteen (teraḥ), signifying the thirteen monks who were the first followers of Ācārya Bhikṣu, or (2) Your (terā) Path, which is the thirteen-fold path of Mahāvīra,' which includes five ascetic vows, five comportments, and three restraints.[53] It is not uncommon for Jain literature to be addressed to Mahāvīra in the second person, referring to 'your path' or 'your teaching'. A number of classic Jain texts by luminaries of the tradition such as Samantabhadra and Hemacandra are composed in this way.[54]

Terāpanthī monks and nuns are noted for their exceptionally strong commitment to the Jain ascetic vision, as symbolized, again, by their constant wearing of the *muhpattī*. Interestingly, though, the Terāpanthī commitment to asceticism does not preclude some degree of engagement with the world. Terāpanthī monastic leaders such as

Ācārya Tulsī and Ācārya Mahāprajñā have been in the forefront of promoting Jain values beyond the boundaries of the Jain community – as in Ācārya Tulsī's *anuvrata* movement – and ongoing reform of Jain practice – as in Ācārya Mahāprajñā's promotion of *prekṣādhyāna*, or insight meditation, among both ascetic and lay Jains, both of which shall be discussed in greater detail later.[55] The 'intermediate' *saman* order of Jain ascetics mentioned earlier, designed to increase the visibility of Jain values in the modern world, is a Terāpanthī innovation.

Though fewer in number than the Śvetāmbaras, the Digambaras of northern India are also divided into several sub-groups, the two main ones being the Bīsapanthīs and the Terāpanthīs (who are a different group from the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthīs just mentioned).

The split between the Bīsapanthīs and the Digambara Terāpanthīs was mainly over the authority of *bhaṭṭārakas*. *Bhaṭṭārakas* are Digambara monks charged with the administration of monastic institutions. Again, as a central expression of their practice of non-attachment, Digambara monks traditionally do not wear clothing. But *bhaṭṭārakas* do wear clothing to facilitate their administrative functions, which can involve extensive interactions with laypersons. Terāpanthīs therefore do not regard them as true monks. The word *Bīsapanthī* means either 'twenty-fold' path or 'universal' (*viśva*) path.[56]

Some recent northern Digambara movements include the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth, the Kavi Panth, and the Kānjī Svāmī Panth. Tāraṇ Svāmī (1448–1515), a Digambara monk who rejected *mūrtipūjā* and was critical of the institution of *bhaṭṭārakas*, established the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth. The Kavi Panth is the relatively loosely organized following of the teachings of Raychandbhai Mahetā, also known as Śrīmad Rājacandra (1867–1901), who influenced Mahatma Gandhi. Finally, Kānjī Svāmī (1889–1980), a Sthānakavāsī monk who converted to Digambara Jainism, established the Kānjī Svāmī Panth.[57]

The southern Digambaras, in contrast with the northern Digambaras, are relatively unified. They do utilize the services of *bhaṭṭārakas* and engage in *mūrtipūjā*.

The divisions within the Jain community can be represented schematically in the following way:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Jains</td></tr>
<tr><td>Śvetāmbaras</td><td colspan="2">Digambaras</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Mūrtipūjakas
Sthānakavāsīs
Terāpanthīs
(Śvetāmbara)</td><td rowspan="3">Southern Digambaras</td><td>Northern Digambaras</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bīsapanthīs
Terāpanthīs
(Digambara)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Recent movements:
Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth
Kavi Panth
Kānjī Svāmī Panth</td></tr>
</table>

Are Jains Hindus?

An issue less central to Jain identity, but perhaps of interest to students of Jainism, is the relationship of Jain identity to Hindu identity, and of Jainism as a religious practice and worldview to the vast family of practices and worldviews that is designated by the term *Hinduism*. As we shall see, this is a complex and controversial issue.

Are Jains Hindus? Or are they sufficiently different from Hindus to be regarded, as they typically are in textbooks like this one, as a separate community? The question is a divisive one for Jains, some of whom insist passionately that they are *not* Hindus, and some of whom are quite happy to be identified as Hindus, even to the point – particularly outside of India – of sharing the same religious facilities with Hindus, as we have seen in the case of the Hindu American Religious Institute and the other Hindu-Jain facilities in North America.

At one end of the spectrum of views on this issue are those Jains who, in a spirit of heterodoxy, see their practice as a form of theistic Hindu devotion. But at the other end there is a group of northern Indian Digambaras who went to court in 2006 in order to have Jainism formally declared a minority religion. This was in direct response to a bill, introduced to discourage conversion from Hinduism, which declared Jains to be Hindus.[58]

This issue is divisive and politically charged due in part to the character of Indian secularism. In the United States, *secularism*, at its most basic, is the separation of church and state enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution and in subsequent court

decisions which have upheld this wall of separation. The idea of a court being involved in deciding whether a particular tradition is a minority religion or part of another religion is quite foreign to an American understanding of secularism. Are Mormons Christians? Or are they members of a separate, distinct tradition that happens to share a good deal of Christian symbolism and terminology? In a secular society, as this is understood in the United States, this is a private issue, to be settled, if ever, by the Mormons themselves, and not by the government.

Coming from such a cultural context, one might well ask why Jains should care whether others regard them as Hindu or not. Isn't each person free to define his or her own religious identity?

The intensity of this issue is fueled by the character of Indian secularism, which is quite different from American secularism. The trajectory of American secularism has been very much in the direction of the relegation of religion to the private sphere. This is in keeping with a social ethos that is more individualist than communal in nature.

In contrast with the American Constitution, which seeks to separate the realms of religion and government, the Constitution of India is set up to protect *group* rights – in particular, the rights of religious minorities. This, of course, involves defining who is a religious minority. The majority religion of India has been defined as Hinduism. If a particular religious group is not Hindu, it is therefore, by definition, a minority, and is thus eligible for state protection and a variety of government benefits.

At the same time, there is a widespread cultural and political movement of Hindu nationalism in contemporary India, which identifies India as a Hindu nation and so sees minority identities as not fully Indian – much as the Christian right defines the USA as a Christian nation and perceives non-Christians as un-American.

There are therefore very intense social pressures on certain religious communities in India to see themselves either as Hindu or as minority traditions. If one defines oneself as Hindu, one avoids marginalization and is able to identify with the culturally dominant tradition. But if one defines oneself as a minority tradition, one can receive government benefits and protections. Clearly, there are advantages and disadvantages either way.

This situation can lead to what can appear to an outsider (and often to insiders as well) to be very odd scenarios. Christianity and Islam,

as non-indigenous traditions, are seen as very clearly distinct from Hinduism. So as minority groups, evangelical Christian organizations, often based in the United States, can receive government support in India not available to Hindu organizations.

And because Hinduism is so internally diverse, Hindu groups can argue, based on their distinctive features, that *they* are also minority traditions, and not Hindu, in order to receive similar benefits. My own Ramakrishna tradition tried, without success, to obtain recognition as a minority religion in the 1980s, in order to be protected from having its schools taken over by the government.[59]

Passions can run very high when questions of religious identity are at issue. The wisest and most ethical strategy, it seems to me, is to leave the question of whether or not Jains are Hindus for Jains to decide, noting only that there are significant overlaps and interconnections, as well as important differences and discontinuities, between the beliefs and practices of Jains and those of other Indic religious communities, including those that are generally regarded as constituting Hinduism.

The most common response to this issue that I have received from Jains is that they view 'Hinduism' as the common culture in which all Indians participate, but that the Jain tradition is *religiously* distinct from the other *culturally* Hindu traditions. When they give specific examples, they seem to be pointing, with this distinction between religion and culture, to a distinction between practices aimed at transcendence – distinctively Jain practices – and shared practices of a more this-worldly and, to use Babb's terminology, *transactional* character. The Jain who engages in such practices 'is certainly on the road to liberation, but … is headed down a detour of worldly felicity along the way', engaging in worship as a kind of transaction, either with deities (sometimes Hindu deities) or with powerful ascetics 'who can and do intervene in his or her worldly affairs'.[60]

Their basic sense, in other words, seems to be that there is a considerable range of beliefs and practices that Jains share with non-Jains, but that the practices in particular tend to be oriented around goals that are of a generally this-worldly character: ceremonies related to birth, marriage, death, moving into a new home, starting a new business, and so on. But with regard to what is most integral to Jainism – its path of transcendence and release from the cycle of rebirth – the Jain tradition is distinct.[61]

Jains, for example, celebrate the holiday Dīvālī along with Hindus – for many of whom it is the biggest single holiday of the year. Jains even participate in the worship of Lakṣmī, the primary deity honored during this holiday, who is associated with bestowing prosperity and this-worldly success upon her devotees.

But Jains also celebrate Dīvālī as Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa Divas, commemorating the physical death and final *nirvāṇa* of Mahāvīra, a practice that is unique to the Jains. Jains can thus be seen as, in one sense, Hindu and, in another sense, as distinctively Jain – and beyond that, distinctively Digambara, Terāpanthī, and so on.

From a Western religious perspective, such a seeming 'dual identity' must appear quite odd, given that Western religious loyalties are generally mutually exclusive. From a Western perspective, it would seem quite odd for a devout Methodist, for example, to regularly attend synagogue and Catholic mass, participating in the rituals as fully as the regular members of these communities. But in Asian settings, particularly in India, such crossing of religious boundaries is not at all uncommon. As Paul Dundas explains:

> Religious identity in India has not invariably had a fixed 'all or nothing' exclusivity attached to it and there can be identified consistently throughout South Asian history a commonality of religious culture which has operated across what are ostensibly sectarian divides. So, for a Jain lay-person to worship occasionally or regularly a markedly Hindu deity such as Hanumān or Bhairuṇjī does not betoken abandonment of Jainism and consequent adherence to Hinduism, but rather an easy participation within and desire to confirm linkage to a South Asian religious world richly populated with figures redolent of power, prosperity and transcendence who are accessible to all.[62]

Whether or not to call this shared 'South Asian religious world' *Hindu* is, again, a highly politically fraught issue. Many Jains with whom I have spoken have no quarrel with such a deployment of terminology. Though ardently devout Jains, they are happy to identify themselves as 'culturally Hindu', due to their participation in the shared South Asian religious world with which the term *Hindu* is not infrequently identified. Some even express this cultural identification politically, supporting Hindu nationalist parties and policies.

Other Jains, however, disagree quite strongly with such a stance, perceiving the various differences between Hinduism, defined as the

Vedic tradition, and Jainism to be of sufficient consequence to merit seeing Jainism as a completely separate and distinct tradition from Hinduism. Politically, this can involve seeking status as a minority group, with the various benefits this can involve to the community under the Indian version of secularism.

Both views of Jains – as either a Hindu or non-Hindu religious community – have some merit, and both ultimately hinge upon the still much disputed question of how to define Hinduism – a question with, as we have seen, both religious and hotly contested political implications.

The easy crossing of religious boundaries that one often observes in India – or at the HARI temple, for that matter – can be explained in a number of ways. One often hears it said that Hindus cross religious boundaries in this easy way because of the widespread belief that all religions are one, or that they all lead to the same ultimate goal. While it is no doubt true that this view is widespread in contemporary Hinduism – I have heard many Hindus express it in answer to questions about this crossing of boundaries – it is more of a rationalization than an explanation. I have heard Jains make similar claims about their tradition: that Jainism, too, sees all religions as one, thus allowing the kind of sharing of facilities and participation in one another's ceremonies observed in US temples.

My own suspicion is that this puzzle of the crossing of boundaries is a function of a peculiarly Western way of conceiving of religious boundaries. Because the West erects boundaries in a particular way, and behaves accordingly, Westerners naturally expect that others will behave in the same way. This is the problem of extending Western categories such as 'religion' to non-Western societies. I would suggest that Hindus and Jains might be crossing lines that only Westerners can see. For Hindus and Jains, there may be no lines – or at least different lines from the ones a Westerner would draw – with the idea of distinct religious traditions participating in a broader, shared religious culture.

Conclusion

So, who are the Jains? They make up a distinctive religious community with a complex set of relations to the larger Hindu culture from which they can be distinguished, but in which they also, in various ways, participate. They are a small community – 4.2 million, in contrast

with Hinduism's approximately 900 million. Most Jains live in India, though a thriving Jain diaspora exists in the West – having reached even rural Pennsylvania. They are, on the whole, an affluent community, which has exerted a considerable influence on the larger culture of Hinduism, despite their small numbers. They are divided not only by sect, but by caste as well – despite, as we shall see, the ostensibly anti-caste character of Mahāvīra's teachings.

Finally, they are an ancient community, to whose long history we now turn.

Chapter II

Mahāvīra and the Origins of Jainism

Mahāvīra

Most histories of a religious tradition begin with a discussion of the life and teachings of the religion's founder. So who is the founder of Jainism? The answer to this question is in one sense straightforward. But in another it is not. Conventional Western histories of religion generally tell us that the founder of Jainism is a figure called Mahāvīra, whose name means the 'Great Hero', and who lived in the fifth century BCE, approximately, in the northeasterly region of India that was also the home of the Buddha.

But, according to the Jains, Mahāvīra was not exactly the founder of Jainism, at least not in the sense that is generally understood in the West. He was not its originator, in the sense of creating something completely new, based on a vision or divine revelation. According to Jain tradition, Mahāvīra was the 24th in a series of *Tīrthaṅkaras*. A Tīrthaṅkara is one who fashions or creates a *tīrtha* – a ford or a crossing – over the waters of *saṃsāra*, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. A Tīrthaṅkara, in other words, is one who makes it possible for others to attain liberation – or *mokṣa* – from the cycle of rebirth by teaching the path to liberation and establishing a community to perpetuate that path.

According to Jainism – and indeed, all of the major Indic traditions – the universe is a beginningless and endless process, passing through an ongoing series of cosmic cycles, each of which is billions of years in duration. During each cycle, or *kalpa*, according to the Jain version of this model, 24 Tīrthaṅkaras appear.

Mahāvīra, as the 24th Tīrthaṅkara of our current cycle, is not, therefore, strictly speaking, the founder of Jainism, but rather its rediscoverer and re-initiator, after the path had declined during the period between his time and the time of his predecessor, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara, who was named Pārśvanātha.

Pārśvanātha, according to modern scholarship, very likely was an actual historical figure that lived around the eighth or ninth century BCE – roughly 250 years before the time of Mahāvīra, according to Jain tradition.[63] Pārśvanātha is said to have taught a path of asceticism and self-restraint consisting of adherence to four basic moral rules: nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), and non-accumulation of possessions (*aparigraha*).[64] He is often depicted as a yogī in meditation, protected by a benevolent seven-headed cobra with its hoods spread wide behind him.

From a Jain perspective, the fundamental truth of Jainism cannot have a founder, strictly speaking, because it is the eternal and essential nature of existence. Tīrthaṅkaras can be likened to scientists who discover something about the universe and then teach the knowledge they have discovered to others. As the objective truth of the universe, Jainism really has no 'history', as such. When we speak of the history of Jainism we are, from a Jain point of view, speaking of the history of this truth as taught by Mahāvīra and his followers – as well as his predecessors throughout cosmic time. The history of Jainism, in this sense, is the history of the universe. As Paul Dundas explains:

> For the Jains…Mahāvīra is merely one of a chain of teachers who all communicate the same truths in broadly similar ways and his biography, rather than being discrete, has to be treated as part of the larger totality of the Universal History and as meshing, through the continuing dynamic of rebirth, with the lives of other participants within it.[65]

'Mahāvīra' was not Mahāvīra's given name. Like *Buddha*, 'the Awakened One', *Mahāvīra* is a title of respect.[66] Mahāvīra's given name was Vardhamāna. His family name was Jñātṛputra – rendered in the Prakrit of the Jain and Buddhist scriptures (in which he is also mentioned) as *Nātaputta*, a possible meaning of which is 'having a wise son'.[67]

In the Buddhist scriptures, Mahāvīra is known as *Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta*. 'Nigaṇṭha' means 'one who is without bonds' (Sanskrit *nirgrantha*). *Nigaṇṭha* appears to have been the name by which the Jains, or at least Jain ascetics, were known in ancient times: those who are without bonds, who have renounced all impermanent, worldly attachments. The reputation of Jainism as an ascetic tradition is clearly an ancient one.

The fact that Mahāvīra and the Jains – under the names *Nātaputta* and *Nigaṇṭha*, respectively – are mentioned prominently in the *Tipiṭaka*,

the earliest Buddhist scriptures, is a very significant one for historians of religion. Early Buddhist accounts of Mahāvīra and his followers are sources of information about Jainism that are independent from the Jain tradition itself, and so serve to confirm certain basic understandings the Jains have of their history: that Mahāvīra existed, that he was a contemporary or near contemporary of the Buddha, and that he established a community of strict ascetics who practiced a highly rigorous path of detachment and mental purification in order to become liberated from the cycle of rebirth.

Our Sources of Knowledge about Mahāvīra's Life

As with many other great religious founding figures, like the Buddha and Jesus Christ, our knowledge of the life of Mahāvīra is dependent upon texts written down many years after the events they describe. In the cases of the Buddha and Mahāvīra, the intervening time between their lifetimes and the texts describing them can be measured in centuries.

But while this may initially be discouraging, in terms of any attempt to develop a reasonably accurate historical reconstruction of the lives of these men, two things should be kept in mind. First, India has long had a highly developed system of memorization and oral recitation of text. The Vedic literature has been passed down for centuries in the Brahmanical tradition largely unaltered. It is therefore not impossible that the earliest accounts of the lives of the Buddha and Mahāvīra contain reliable information.

Indeed, written transmission is arguably a less reliable means of transmitting text from one generation to another. When a single scribe makes a transcription error, that error can become embedded in the text forever after, especially if many of the copies of the original wording are lost and the erroneous version becomes the basis for many future copies. The oldest preserved copies of the Bible, for example, have slight discrepancies, and it is difficult to determine which of the versions we have, if any, reflects the original wording of the text.

Secondly, as mentioned earlier, Mahāvīra and the Buddha are each mentioned in the scriptural traditions of one another's communities. We therefore have independent sources of information about both men in the form of what their respective traditions each say about the other, as well as information, especially from the Buddhist

scriptures, about historical figures and events that have been verified archeologically.

However, this still leaves us with relatively little to go on in terms of information that would pass the muster of contemporary historical methods. All that can be said with confidence is that both men lived, that they inhabited roughly the same region of northern India at about the same time, and that they were spiritual teachers in an ascetic tradition called the *śramaṇa*, or 'striver', movement. A *śramaṇa* is one who strives for liberation.

Of course, there are sayings attributed to each in their respective scriptures that they could well have uttered. And one cannot rule out the possibility that there are events described in these texts that actually occurred or are based on similar actual occurrences. But whatever historical truth may be in these scriptures, they are not 'historical' texts in the modern sense. Nor is this their apparent intent, spiritual instruction being their aim.

Our sources of knowledge about Mahāvīra's life consist of a set of scriptures held by the Śvetāmbara Jains to be genuine. The authenticity of these texts is challenged by the Digambaras for reasons that we shall explore in detail later, but which pertain to the attribution of actions to Mahāvīra in these texts that are incompatible with a Digambara understanding of acceptable Jain monastic practice and the nature of a Tīrthaṅkara.

According to Śvetāmbara tradition, the oldest Jain scriptures date back to the time of the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara, Pārśvanātha. These 14 texts, called the *Pūrvas* (the 'Old Texts') are all regarded as extinct. Their contents, though, are described in later Jain texts. As Jaini writes:

> They seem to have included the most ancient Jaina speculations on the nature of the cosmos, doctrines pertaining to the bondage of the soul by matter, and polemics against contemporary philosophical schools. They also contained a great deal of Jaina astrology and astronomy, as well as esoteric methods of attaining yogīc and occult powers.[68]

Apart from the 14 *Pūrvas*, about which we can do little more than speculate, there are 12 *Aṅgas* (11 of which survive), 12 *Upāṅgas* (texts subsidiary to the *Aṅgas*), six *Chedasūtras* (rules of ascetic conduct), four *Mūlasūtras* (fundamental, 'root' texts), ten *Prakīrṇasūtras* (miscellaneous texts), and two *Cūlikāsūtras* (appendices). They constitute a considerable body of literature on Jain ethics, history, and cosmology.

Many of them focus on the duties of Jain monks and the correct observance of the principle of nonviolence. Others contain accounts from the life of Mahāvīra and his early followers.

According to contemporary scholarship, the oldest of these texts are the first and second *Aṅgas*, or 'limbs' – the *Ācārāṅga* and the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*:

> Both of these books seem to have originated around the third or the second centuries BCE, although an earlier dating in the case of the *Ācārāṅga* and a later one in the case of the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* cannot be ruled out, and they are generally taken as representing the most ancient stratum of Jain textual material.[69]

Mahāvīra's biography is first presented in the *Ācārāṅga*. Given the traditional dating of his life from 599 to 527 BCE – the date of his death being the basis for one of the oldest calendars in South Asia – this would place the first complete biography of Mahāvīra 300–400 years after the events it relates to.

Another important ancient source for events from Mahāvīra's life is a set of texts called the *Bhagavatī Vyākhyāprajñāpti*, or 'Exposition of Explanations'. The *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, as it is also called, is a truly vast collection of texts. It is one of the *Aṅgas*, and it contains a number of stories from the life of Mahāvīra not found elsewhere, as well as a good deal of highly detailed teaching regarding the nature of the cosmos and the various creatures that inhabit it: their life spans, where they live, what they eat, and the kind of actions that lead to rebirth as one of them.

The *Kalpasūtra*, a text from the second or first centuries BCE, is the first to list Mahāvīra as the 24th Tīrthaṅkara and to discuss the lives of some of the other Tīrthaṅkaras in detail.[70] This text is publicly recited during *Paryuṣaṇa*, the Rainy Season Festival, which honors the cultivation of ascetic practice.[71]

Parallel Lives: Mahāvīra and the Buddha

The picture of Mahāvīra that emerges from this textual tradition is one that parallels quite closely – while also diverging in significant ways from – the life of the Buddha as depicted in traditional Buddhist sources.

The first parallel that one notices is with regard to the sources themselves. Both, of course, record events that occurred anywhere

from four to two centuries before being set down in writing. Śvetāmbara tradition, again, has Mahāvīra being born in 599 BCE and attaining his final *nirvāṇa* in 527 BCE. A prominent Buddhist tradition locates the Buddha from 563 to 483 BCE, which is consistent with the testimony of both scriptural traditions that these two were contemporaries. However, a variety of archeological and other data has led to the conclusion that the Buddha's dates should be moved forward by a century, placing him in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BCE. Given that there are more references to externally verifiable events in the Buddhist scriptures than in the Jain scriptures, the dates of Mahāvīra's life should also be moved forward accordingly.

While this goes against the traditional dates assigned to the two men by both of their traditions, it also places both of them closer in time to the oldest texts that claim to describe their lives. The time lag becomes only a century or two rather than three or even four centuries. Thus, while this re-dating of Mahāvīra and the Buddha –to roughly 499 to 427 and 463 to 383 BCE, respectively – conflicts with the dates given in both traditions, it also allows us to view their respective scriptural accounts as perhaps more reliable than the traditional dates allow, being closer in time to the events they describe.[72]

Another parallel between the two textual traditions is that neither is written in the common language of intellectual activity in ancient India – namely, Sanskrit – but in more localized languages, related to Sanskrit, called *Prakrits*. The Jain scriptures were written in a Prakrit called *Ardha-Māgadhī*, while the Buddhist scriptures were written in *Pāli*.[73] It is likely that the actual language spoken by both Mahāvīra and the Buddha was another Prakrit called *Māgadhī*, related to the *Ardha* or 'half' Māgadhī of the Jain scriptures.

Sanskrit, the language of the *Veda*, was already an ancient and sacred tongue by the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, used primarily by the Brahmins in the performance of Vedic ceremonies. It was no longer a language of daily usage. The languages of daily use were the Prakrits, which, over the course of centuries, would develop into the many languages spoken today in northern India: Hindi, Bengali, Gujarati, and Marathi, to name only a few.

The language of the Jain and Buddhist scriptures is significant, because the choice of composing these texts in Prakrits and not Sanskrit was a deliberate one, and points to the ideological split

between the Jains and Buddhists – the *śramaṇas* – on one side and the Brahmins on the other.

In keeping with one widely held view among Western scholars – that the *śramaṇa* movement, of which Jainism and Buddhism were part, was a kind of Hindu 'Protestant Reformation' – it was long presumed that the scriptures of Jainism and Buddhism were deliberately written in the common tongue in order that ordinary people might understand them. This was in contrast with the Sanskrit of the *Veda*, which was jealously guarded by the Brahmins. The parallel being drawn in this view is between the *śramaṇas* and the Protestant Reformers of Christianity, like Martin Luther, who translated the Bible into the languages of the common people, in contrast with the Latin used by the Roman Catholic Church, which parallels the Sanskrit of the Brahmins.[74]

Recent scholarship, however, suggests that the Prakrits in which the Buddhist and Jain scriptures were written were not the languages spoken by the Buddha and Mahāvīra, respectively, but were themselves highly technical and specialized languages that served for the Buddhists and the Jains the same purpose that Sanskrit served for the Brahmins – as an 'in-group' code, typically learned only by initiates. Ardha-Māgadhī, for example, served for Jains as 'a specifically Jain scriptural dialect, a sacred language which could be differentiated from Sanskrit, rather as the Jains were later to develop their own systems of Sanskrit grammatical analysis to show their independence from brahman learning.'[75]

It is, of course, possible that when Buddhist and Jain texts were first composed, they *were* written in the common tongues of the regions in which they were composed at the time (though these were, again, *not* the languages of the Buddha and Mahāvīra, the Pāli of the Buddhist scriptures being a tongue of western, not northeastern, India, and Ardha Māgadhī a later form of Māgadhī). They gradually became specialized languages as the spoken languages continued to develop over time, while the texts remained fixed. As spoken Prakrits continued to evolve, the Prakrits of the texts remained the same.[76]

It is worth noting that both Jains and Buddhists in India eventually did begin to compose texts in Sanskrit, possibly in order to reach a wider audience; for by this later period, in the early centuries of the Common Era, Sanskrit had become not only the sacred language of the Brahmins, but a language of scholarship and high culture (which

is what *Sanskrit* means) which transcended regional and sectarian boundaries. The Jains and the Buddhists did not, however, abandon their respective Prakrits as they ventured into Sanskrit composition, but continued to compose literary works in these languages as well for the consumption of their own intellectual and religious communities.

The *Śramaṇa* as a Spiritual Warrior

Both Mahāvīra and the Buddha are said to have been born into the warrior caste and to have been the sons of kings. Martial imagery pervades both of their traditions to a degree that is surprising, given the emphasis of both on nonviolence. The image of the ascetic as spiritual warrior is pervasive in Jainism. *Jain* means follower of the *Jina* – the Conqueror.

This title, *Jina*, which is also bestowed on the Buddha in the Buddhist tradition, designates one who has conquered not a physical territory, but the *spiritual* territory of the self: the ego. Mahāvīra and the Buddha, though both born to the caste of warriors, renounced their worldly status in order to become spiritual warriors: Jinas, or conquerors of the realm of the spirit. And asceticism – renunciation – is the primary tool, the spiritual weapon, by which they achieved their conquest – a conquest that consisted of self-mastery rather than mastery of the material world. The ascetic is a spiritual warrior.

One could speculate that the *śramaṇa* movement reflects a conflict between the Brahmins and the Kṣatriyas – the priests and warriors, respectively, of traditional Hindu society. This ideological struggle for authority and spiritual and social supremacy would have pitted the Brahmanical concept of purity through birth against a Kṣatriya ideal of virtue through individual achievement.

One finds a number of *śramaṇic* themes in the later Vedic literature – a set of texts called the *Upaniṣads* – including a critique of the orthodox Brahmanical idea of birth caste as a measure of spiritual evolution. But one finds indications of a Brahmanical-Kṣatriya ideological struggle in these texts as well. Indeed, the *Upaniṣads* appear surprisingly sympathetic to the Kṣatriya side of this hypothetical ideological conflict, given that these are Vedic texts, and so central to Brahmanical orthodoxy. One finds several dialogs between Brahmins and kings in the *Upaniṣads* in which it is the kings, the Kṣatriyas, who

teach the Brahmins, and not the other way around, as an orthodox Vedic model would have us expect.

One such king, Janaka, becomes synonymous in the later Hindu tradition with lay spirituality – the ability of someone who is not a renunciant, who is still 'in the world', to rise, by having the right attitude of detachment, to the same spiritual heights as one who has renounced the world in the full sense. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Janaka is represented as the father of Sītā – the heroine of the epic and wife of Rāma. He is said to have been the king of Mithilā, which is located in the same northeasterly region from which Mahāvīra and the Buddha hailed during the historical period – a region Indologist Johannes Bronkhorst has dubbed *Greater Magadha*.[77]

Was there a movement among the Kṣatriyas of this region to reject Brahmanical spiritual authority and appropriate it for themselves? Or was this an attempt to maintain a spiritual authority that they saw the Brahmins as attempting to usurp? Is this the struggle reflected both in the *Upaniṣads* and in the warrior imagery of *śramaṇa* traditions such as Jainism and Buddhism?

It is certainly the case that Hindu kings of a much later period saw themselves as being ritually assimilated to major deities, such as Viṣṇu and Śiva, and as spiritual as well as temporal protectors of their people, though this assimilation required Vedic rituals, performed by the Brahmins, in order to be effected.[78] The two most popular Hindu epic narratives – the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* – are centered upon Kṣatriya protagonists, Rāma and Krishna, who are revealed in these texts to be divine persons and, in the case of Krishna, sources of spiritual instruction (in the famous *Bhagavad Gītā* interlude of the *Mahābhārata*). And in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, at least according to some interpretations of this text, military imagery is used to symbolize the struggle for spiritual enlightenment.

Military imagery, put to a symbolic use, is also pervasive in both the Buddhist and Jain traditions, as one might expect if it is the case that the *śramaṇa* movement emerged from a Kṣatriya milieu. As Dundas writes:

> Terms employed in Jainism and Buddhism to describe groups of ascetics such as *gaṇa*, 'troop', and *saṅgha*, 'assembly', are used in early Vedic texts to refer to the warrior brotherhoods, the young men's bands which were a feature of Āryan nomadic life, and the stress found in the

> old codes of monastic law on requirements of youth, physical fitness and good birth for Jain and Buddhist monks, along with the frequent martial imagery of Jainism and its repeated stress on the crushing of spiritual enemies, may point to a degree of continuity with these earlier types of warrior. Certainly it is noteworthy that both Mahāvīra and the Buddha were members of the warrior caste.[79]

Another piece of evidence that reflects a Kṣatriya animus against the Brahmins as at least one element in the emergence of the *śramaṇa* movement is a rather unusual story that is told of the birth of Mahāvīra. According to this story, found in Śvetāmbara texts, Mahāvīra was conceived by a Brahmin couple, Ṛṣabhadatta and Devānandā:

> But Śakra [Indra], king of the gods, found this situation unacceptable and transferred the embryonic Jina-to-be to the womb of the kṣatriya woman Triśalā; the baby she had been carrying was placed within Devānandā. It is well known in the Jaina tradition, as well as in the Buddhist, that only a member of the warrior caste can become a 'monarch', whether spiritual or temporal. But this tenet itself reflects the underlying conviction that, contrary to the ordinary caste hierarchy which places the *Brahmins* at the apex, it is in fact the kṣatriya who are highest … The brahmanical tradition, of course, rejects any such notion.[80]

Furthermore, in the text of the original story, Indra refers to birth as a Brahmin as a 'low' birth, completely inappropriate for an advanced spiritual being like a Tīrthaṅkara. Quite clearly, a good deal of hostility is being expressed here toward the Brahmanical view that birth in the Brahmin caste is an indicator of a high degree of spiritual evolution, as well as a preferential view toward the Kṣatriya caste.

These observations give a new wrinkle to the question of *śramaṇic* origins. Does the institution of renunciation emerge as an alternative to – and critique of – the idea of the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmin-by-birth? How better to refute the claims of spiritual supremacy on the part of Brahmins than by surpassing them in heroic acts of self-denial?

Finally, in a society in which warrior virtues are admired, how better to establish not only to society, but to oneself, that one truly has 'the right stuff' – the inner qualities necessary for the attainment of the

highest spiritual goals – than to rival and even exceed actual warriors in self-discipline? As Paul Dundas observes:

> The career of Mahāvīra in particular, and countless Jain ascetics after him, bears witness to a form of spiritual heroism and struggle which struck an empathetic chord within an ancient Indian cultural world where the martial values of the warrior were widely esteemed.[81]

The Ascetic Ideal

Both Mahāvīra and the Buddha are said to have had a keen sense, as young men, of the impermanent and ultimately unsatisfactory character of material existence. Both sought liberation from the process of rebirth, undertaking the ancient practice of renouncing home and family to live a life of solitary wandering and contemplation. Both came from a cultural context in which asceticism was seen as an acceptable, if radical, response to such an existential crisis.

In undertaking a life of renunciation, Mahāvīra was participating in a pre-existing culture of asceticism. Indeed, according to the Śvetāmbara scriptures, Mahāvīra's parents were proto-Jains: followers and devotees of Pārśvanātha, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara, mentioned earlier.

As mentioned before, Pārśvanātha is often depicted as a seated ascetic in a yogic position (*āsana*) with a seven-headed cobra rearing up behind him and using its hoods to protect him from the elements as he practices meditation. There is a similar story about the Buddha having been protected by the Serpent King, Mucilinda – another element that is suggestive of the common cultural wellspring of Buddhism and Jainism.

The *śramaṇa* movement was, above all else, an ascetic movement, based on the ancient Indic ideal of *sannyāsa*, or renunciation of worldly ties – and, as mentioned above, an ancient name for the Jains was *Nigaṇṭha*, one who is without worldly ties. It is not clear whether *śramaṇas* such as the Jains and the Buddhists were in continuity with a Vedic tradition of renunciation, or whether it was renunciation that came first, as a Greater Magadhan institution that influenced the authors of the *Upaniṣads*. Whatever its origins, the ascetic ideal is an ancient and powerful one in the Indic religious imagination.

An ascetic in any tradition is one who gives up worldly goods in pursuit of a spiritual goal. A Roman Catholic who gives up sweets

during Lent and a Muslim who fasts during Ramadan are both practicing asceticism. But *sannyāsa*, or renunciation in the Indic sense, is probably the most radical form of asceticism of all: to leave behind not only the comforts of home, but one's very identity as a part of society.

What is the purpose of such radical asceticism? Interpretations of course vary in different traditions. *Sannyāsa*, broadly speaking, reflects the idea that if one remains 'in the world', as a member of society, one is obligated to engage in various kinds of action – to have a family, to fulfill one's duties to one's family, to be economically productive, and so on. Such activities are distractions from the spiritual life.

But activities also lead to inevitable effects according to the law of karma, the law of cause and effect, with karmic effects leading to rebirth. If one wants to be liberated, action must be reduced to a minimum. This requires one to withdraw from one's social duties. Attaining liberation from rebirth – and the suffering that inevitably accompanies the fleeting experiences of this world – requires one's complete attention and dedication.

Shirking one's social obligations, of course, is a major source of negative karmic effects – of 'bad karma'. How, then, can one renounce these and not end up having a very bad rebirth, not to speak of liberation? This is where the truly radical nature of *sannyāsa* becomes apparent. One cannot, as oneself, give up on one's obligations. They are part of one's identity. One must therefore completely give up one's social identity – one must, in a sense, die and be reborn, in order to be a renunciant.

This is why, in Hindu ascetic traditions, the ceremony of taking *sannyāsa* includes one's own funeral. One ritually 'dies', giving up all former obligations and ties. This is, quite clearly, a serious undertaking. One is not simply avoiding work or shirking duty. One is giving up all connections to family, friends, and community and becoming a new person. The *sannyāsī* takes a new name and is often required to have no further contact with the people from his or her old life. One can see why early Jain ascetics were called *Nigaṇṭha* – without ties or bonds to the community. The Jain ritual of taking renunciation, however, is more celebratory, being modeled not on funerary rites, but on wedding rites. One's old life is ending, but a new one is also beginning, which is a cause for joy.

The asceticism of the *sannyāsī* does not end with leaving home and giving up old social bonds. Indeed, this is only the beginning of a

lifetime of renunciation. The reason the renunciant leaves society in the first place is to pursue ascetic practices full time, with the aim of achieving liberation from rebirth. Ascetic practices in India have sometimes reached extravagant levels of self-denial, leading to the stereotypical image of the yogī sleeping on a bed of nails, or walking across glowing hot coals.

Interestingly, Mahāvīra's family is said to have approved his choice to renounce, and a great crowd of human and celestial beings is said to have seen him off on his great journey. His parents are said to have been Jains (though this term is not used in the earliest Jain scriptures) in the tradition of Pārśvanātha, the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara. As such, their approval of his choice to renounce is understandable. But it is also consistent with the more celebratory attitude toward renunciation that is typical of Jainism.

The attitude of Mahāvīra's family toward his renunciation, and the claim that they were devotees of Pārśvanātha, is an indication, even at this early stage of the tradition, that Mahāvīra is not establishing something new, but treading an already ancient path set out by others. The Buddha, in contrast, is said to have had to sneak out of his father's palace at night, with the help of the gods. His path is different from that of Mahāvīra in the sense that he does not have the support of his family in his pursuit of renunciation. In fact, he must overcome their active opposition with divine help. Nor, unlike Mahāvīra, is he part of a pre-existing spiritual tradition. Buddhist texts do represent him as vowing to become a Buddha in his previous life as Sumati.[82] His *bodhisattva* vow was administered by Dīpaṅkara, the previous Buddha, thus establishing the Buddha-to-be in a pre-existing spiritual lineage. But the earliest accounts of the Buddha's life give emphasis to the fact that he finds *nirvāṇa* on his own, without the aid of a spiritual teacher. Indeed, he seeks out several teachers, but finds them, in various ways, deficient. The achieving of *nirvāṇa* through one's own effort distinguishes a Buddha from other enlightened beings.

Mahāvīra finds liberation through his own efforts as well. But he is part of a pre-existing Jain tradition. The Buddha's search for enlightenment takes six years, whereas Mahāvīra's takes 12. Both leave home at the age of 30, with the Buddha attaining *nirvāṇa* at the age of 36 and Mahāvīra attaining it at the age of 42. Both teach their path of awakening to others, taking on disciples and establishing communities of lay and ascetic followers. Mahāvīra dies at the age of

72, and the Buddha dies at the age of 80. According to the Buddhist scriptures, the Buddha was informed of Mahāvīra's death.[83]

Another tradition traces the practice of lighting *dīyās*, or lamps, on the Hindu holy day of Dīvālī to a proclamation of the king in the region where Mahāvīra died that, since a great light had gone out of the world, lamps should be lit in his honor. As mentioned previously, Jains celebrate Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa Divas on Dīvālī, in honor of his death. And, like Hindus, Jains perform Lakṣmī Pūjā on this day.[84]

It is interesting that, through this story, the Jains are able to claim credit for one of the holiest of Hindu holidays. It is similarly claimed that Neminātha, the 22nd Tīrthaṅkara, was a cousin of Sri Krishna, who taught Krishna all the wisdom that Krishna later passed on to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. It thereby becomes permissible for Jains to cross sectarian lines, as discussed earlier – to celebrate Dīvālī, for example, and read the *Gītā* appreciatively, citing it as a text with some measure of spiritual authority. 'It is not unknown today for Jain ascetics', such as Saman Śrūtaprajñā, as mentioned in the last chapter, 'to compare the *Bhagavad Gītā* favourably with Mahāvīra's teachings'.[85]

We can see that even at their earliest historically verifiable stages, the Jain and the Buddhist traditions are thoroughly intertwined with one another – and both are intertwined with the Vedic tradition, against which they are sometimes said to be reactions or internal reform movements. In addition to the similarities that can be seen between the life stories of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, there is also a good deal of technical terminology that both traditions also share. Like Mahāvīra, the Buddha speaks of the 'influx' (*āsrava*) of karma, and the need to cut off such karmic influx as a necessary precondition for *nirvāṇa*. And of course the term *nirvāṇa* is shared by both traditions as one designation for the highest state of realization. Both the Jain and Buddhist communities are made up of four sub-communities of male and female ascetics and laypersons. Yet both traditions also retain distinctive features, which differentiate them from one another.

What Else Do We Know about Mahāvīra?

The rest of the information we can discern about Mahāvīra from the Śvetāmbara sacred literature is contentious because, as we shall see, the Digambaras reject much of it. The Digambara tradition claims

that upon his attainment of enlightenment – or *kevalajñāna* – he no longer walked, talked, or moved about as a normal human being. After his having become a *kevalin* – an omniscient, enlightened being[86] – his body spontaneously emitted a sacred sound, or *divyadhvani*, which his 11 closest disciples, the *gaṇadharas*, were able to interpret and on the basis of which they taught the Jain path.

The Śvetāmbara texts present Mahāvīra as having a far more conventional career, including traveling to various places, teaching, and, in a famous case, engaging in a battle of paranormal powers with another *śramaṇa* – Makkhali Gosāla – who is represented as an arch-villain in both the Jain and the Buddhist canonical texts.

Makkhali Gosāla was the leader of the one other *śramaṇa* sect, besides the Jains and the Buddhists, about which there is any extensive surviving information. This sect, called the *Ājīvikas*, existed until the medieval period. They seem to have eventually been absorbed into the Digambara Jain community.[87] In the Śvetāmbara scriptures, Gosāla is a disreputable character, falsely claiming to have achieved enlightenment, and even taking up residence with a woman 'under compromising circumstances'.[88]

Gosāla is attributed by both Jains and Buddhists with a teaching that might help explain the aversion shown to this *śramaṇa* in both scriptural traditions. He supposedly taught 'that fate or destiny (*niyati*) was the central motive force in the universe against which no human effort could have any effect'.[89] It is said that he carried a ball of string, which he would unwind in order to dramatize the point of his teaching. This string is said to have symbolized the duration of a being's bondage in *saṃsāra*. This bondage would last as long as it was fated to last, and there was nothing the being could do about it. No human effort could bring one any closer to liberation. It was only a matter of time, of waiting for the string to unwind, for fate to take its course.

Both Jains and Buddhists found such a teaching dangerous and inimical to the spiritual path. Why make any effort toward liberation if it is eventually going to happen on its own? Why worry about karma, about doing good and avoiding evil, if all that happens to us is simply a matter of destiny, beyond our control? This is a teaching that would clearly need to be discredited if people were to take seriously the need to improve themselves and strive for liberation. 'Striver', again, is the very meaning of the word *śramaṇa*. It may be that

the stories of Makkhali Gosāla's alleged wickedness are meant to dissuade those who hear them from taking up such a dangerous doctrine.

On the other hand, as Dundas points out, it is difficult to conceive of such an idea becoming the foundation for a spiritual path. By all accounts (including the Buddhist and Jain accounts), the Ājīvikas were ascetics every bit as rigorous as the Jains, having quite a few affinities with the later Digambara tradition. Why would one practice such strict asceticism if liberation were simply a matter of waiting? The accounts also suggest that the Ājīvikas had quite a large following, rivaling those of both Mahāvīra and the Buddha. Does communal rivalry underlie the prejudicial accounts of Gosāla's life and teaching in Jain and Buddhist texts? A very ancient text, the *Sayings of the Seers* (*Isibhāsiyāiṃ*), which includes teachings attributed to a number of ancient Indian sages – Jain, Buddhist, and Brahmanical – suggests that Gosāla did not teach fatalism, but rather advocated 'the virtue of imperturbability in the face of the continued change and modification which were seen to be in the world'.[90] Advice of this kind could well be misinterpreted as fatalism, particularly by rival communities invested in wooing potential converts.

Johannes Bronkhorst has argued that the depiction of Ājīvika doctrine as fatalism is in fact a misrepresentation in the form of a half-truth. His claim is that, whereas the Jains teach that one can both stop the influx of new karma and rid oneself of old karma through ascetic practice, Gosāla taught that one could only stop the influx of new karma. The karma one has already accumulated is already fixed and must run its course. Ascetic practice can be effective in preventing further karmic influx, which helps to explain the otherwise inexplicable fact that the Ājīvikas did practice asceticism. But one must accept one's current karma and bear with the experiences it will inevitably bring.[91]

Bronkhorst's analysis has the virtue of reconstructing the Ājīvika doctrine in a way that is far more credible in light of the available historical data. The ascetic practice of the Ājīvikas makes sense, as an attempt to prevent karmic influx. And the popularity of the Ājīvika doctrine in ancient times, such that it could rival that of both Jainism and Buddhism, also makes sense if this doctrine was really not so radically different from these traditions as its presentation in Jain and Buddhist sources suggests.

The Origins and Character of the Śramaṇa Movement: Three Theories

Two theories of the relationship of *śramaṇa* traditions such as Jainism and Buddhism to the Brahmanical Vedic traditions have dominated scholarly literature on ancient India.

One, already mentioned, which we can call the 'Protestant Reformation Theory', is that Mahāvīra and the Buddha were essentially reformers within a commonly shared north Indian Vedic tradition.

The other, which one could call the 'Indigenous Reaction Theory', is that the *śramaṇas* represent a reassertion of an older, pre-Vedic, non-Indo-European, indigenous Indic tradition. This theory of course presupposes the widely held view that the Vedic traditions are not native to the subcontinent, but were brought to South Asia through an Indo-European migration.

A third, more recent theory, developed by Johannes Bronkhorst, is that the lives and teachings of Mahāvīra and the Buddha reflect the interactions of two distinct Indo-European cultural traditions: the Vedic traditions of northwestern India and the cultural traditions of the northeastern Greater Magadha region.[92]

Which of these theories best explains the origins and character of the *śramaṇa* traditions? While a thorough examination of the relevant evidence is beyond the scope of an introductory textbook such as this one, a brief overview will shed light on the cultural environment from which Jainism emerged, as well as connecting Jainism with the Indic thought-world that has shaped it and that it has, in turn, shaped.

Mahāvīra and the Buddha were born, lived, taught, and died in the northeastern part of India now made up of the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, and the eastern half of Uttar Pradesh (as well as, in the case of the Buddha, what is now southern Nepal). Both were critical of the Vedic traditions – later identified with Hinduism – that were predominant in northwestern India: west of the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā rivers, extending into what is today Pakistan. This geographic consideration has led some scholars to view Jainism and Buddhism, and the *śramaṇa* movement as a whole, as an indigenous reaction to a foreign Vedic tradition gradually encroaching from the northwest.

But these traditions also share basic terms and assumptions with Vedic schools of thought and operate from worldviews similar to views

found in the late Vedic scriptures known as the *Upaniṣads*. Specifically, they share with late Vedic traditions a belief in the principle of *karma*, or cause and effect, and in *saṃsāra*, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. The Jain and Buddhist scriptures are also populated by many of the same deities found in Vedic literature: Indra, Brahmā, and so on. While these beings are subordinated to both Mahāvīra and the Buddha in their respective traditions, they are not opponents or villains, but helpers and supporters of these two aspiring *śramaṇas* on their quest. Indra, the lord of the Vedic deities, to whom a significant number of the hymns of the *Ṛg Veda* are devoted, plays something like the role of a guardian angel in the lives of both men. He oversees the transfer of Mahāvīra's embryo in the Śvetāmbara scriptures, and ensures that Siddhārtha, the aspiring Buddha-to-be, is able to escape unhindered from his father's palace when he undertakes his renunciation.

Even the criticisms of the Vedic tradition that the *śramaṇa* traditions express are not without precedent in the Vedic tradition itself. The late Vedic texts, the *Upaniṣads*, were composed over the course of the first millennium BCE, encompassing the period of the rise of the *śramaṇa* movement, and, as mentioned above, they share many of the same concepts, including a questioning of birth caste as a measure of spiritual evolution.[93] As mentioned previously, these internal criticisms of the Vedic tradition appear to reflect an ideological contest between the Brahmins, the keepers of the tradition, and the Kṣatriyas, the warrior caste.

What is caste? Derived from the Portuguese word *casta*, or 'color', this word is a translation of the Sanskrit term *varṇa*. Long believed by Western scholars to refer to skin color – a projection of the racialist preoccupations of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries onto ancient India – *varṇa* is an ancient division of society into occupation-based classes. The first literary reference to this social structure is found in a late hymn of the *Ṛg Veda* entitled the *Puruṣa Sukta*, or "Hymn of the Cosmic Man."

In this hymn, found in the *Ṛg Veda*'s tenth *maṇḍala*, or book, the entire universe is described as having arisen from the sacrifice of a primordial cosmic being called 'the Man', or *Puruṣa*. In the verses of this hymn, a variety of natural phenomena and deities are described as coming from this being's body parts:

> The moon was born from his mind; from his eye the sun was born. Indra and Agni came from his mouth, and from his vital breath the

> Wind [Vayu] was born. From his navel the middle realm of space arose; from his head the sky evolved. From his two feet came the earth, and the quarters of the sky from his ear. Thus they [the deities who performed the sacrifice] set the worlds in order.[94]

In addition to natural phenomena and deities, the various groups making up late Vedic society are also described as having emerged from the sacrifice of the cosmic man: 'His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms were made into the Warrior, his thighs the People, and from his feet the Servants were born.'[95]

The degree to which the hierarchical grouping sketchily described in the *Puruṣa Sukta* reflects the social order that existed at the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha is a topic of debate among scholars. Indeed, some have questioned whether this system has ever been present in the idealized form that is found in many Hindu texts.

If caste-related practices of recent times are any indication of ancient practices, this has been a remarkably fluid and variable system – more of a 'process' than a 'system'. M.N. Srinivas coined the term *sanskritization* for this process, which involves upward social mobility accomplished by the adoption by lower caste groups of Brahmanical ritual practices.[96] Given the phenomenon of sanskritization, it is likely that groups regarded at one point in time as high caste were, at an earlier point, low caste, achieving their current status by adopting specific Brahmanical practices.

In addition to change over time, there is also regional variability in regard to the status of particular caste groups. Groups located at one place in the caste hierarchy in one part of India will have another location in the hierarchy in another region, so that it almost ceases to make sense to speak of a single hierarchy at all.

Over time, the *Puruṣa Sukta*'s ideal society in which Brahmins, the intellectual and priestly caste, are located at the top, followed by warriors (*Kṣatriyas*), the common people (*Vaiśyas*), and the servants (*Śūdras*), became increasingly central as an organizing principle of Indian society, as reflected in the later *Dharma Śāstras*, or legal literature of the post-Vedic, classical period. But even during this later period, it is difficult to tell to what extent the *Dharma Śāstras* reflect social reality. It is possible to read the *Puruṣa Sukta* as referring to such a social reality in the late Vedic period. But it is unlikely that the caste system existed in its fully developed form at this stage.

Scholars have noted the resemblances between this fourfold hierarchy and similar threefold social structures found in other Indo-European societies, consisting of a priestly intellectual class, a class of warriors, and a class of commoners. The addition of a fourth, servant class in the Vedic system has been interpreted by some as evidence of an Indo-Āryan invasion or migration, in which the indigenous peoples of India were made into a servant class subordinate to the three Indo-European classes. But this theory is debated, and there is evidence that the relations amongst the classes of Indian society were more complex in ancient times than a reading of late Vedic and post-Vedic texts might suggest.

Varṇa, again, means 'color', and is the Vedic term for the four primary categories of ancient Indian society: the Brahmins, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas, and the Śūdras. An earlier generation of scholars saw this term – 'color' – as still further evidence that the caste system reflected an invasion of ancient India by an ethnic group with a lighter skin tone than that of the indigenous population. This theory, too, is debated among scholars, some of whom point out that the colors traditionally assigned to the four *varṇas* are not skin tones, but are derived from the system of *guṇas*, or qualities, derived from the ancient Sāṃkhya system of Hindu philosophy. Each *varṇa* is believed to have a particular set of characteristics, derived from the mix of *guṇas*, or fundamental qualities, that constitute it. *Varṇa* as skin tone may be a projection of Western racial theories, which were prominent at the time Vedic texts were first translated into European languages, onto these texts.[97]

Brahmins are thus characterized, according to later Vedic literature, by the *sattvic guṇa*, which is associated with consciousness and intelligence, and is symbolized by the color white. The warrior class, appropriately, is characterized by the *rajasic guṇa*, which is associated with ambition and energetic activity, and is symbolized by the color red, and so on.[98]

How was *varṇa* determined in late Vedic India? The system which predominated by the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, and which was already ancient by this time, was a system of assigning *varṇa* through birth, or *jāti*. Caste, in other words, is a hereditary system. One is a member of the caste of one's parents. This system of birth caste has predominated in India ever since, albeit not in the rigid, monolithic form often depicted in textbooks on Hinduism, but as a constantly negotiated and variegated social process.

That such a system was questioned by some members of the society is clear from texts such as the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, a part of the late Vedic corpus, where a story is found in which a young man of indeterminate caste approaches a renowned Brahmin for Vedic instruction, a privilege reserved exclusively for Brahmins. When the young man is truthful regarding his lineage, the Brahmin accepts him as a student, exclaiming: 'Who but a Brahmin could speak like that!'[99]

A possible interpretation of this story is that the Brahmin regards caste not as a matter of birth, but as a matter of individual character. Such an attitude, suggested in the *Upaniṣads*, is made explicit in *śramaṇic* texts; such as when the Buddha is attributed with saying 'One is not a Brahmin by birth, nor by birth a non-Brahmin. By action is one a Brahmin, by action is one a non-Brahmin.'[100]

It is significant to note that in this passage the Buddha does not reject the use of the caste term *Brahmin*. Rather, he redefines it to be based on one's individual character as evidenced by one's deeds. The *śramaṇa* movement did not reject caste as a principle for organizing society so much as it rejected the notion, promoted by the Brahmins, that the caste of one's birth was a measure of one's purity and spiritual evolution.

The fact that the *śramaṇas* did not reject caste as a means of organizing society, but only the interpretation of this social hierarchy as reflecting a hierarchy of spiritual and moral purity, helps make sense of the fact, often puzzling to students of these traditions, that Jains, like Hindus, organize themselves into castes.

From a Jain and Buddhist point of view, caste is a purely this-worldly structure, having no bearing on one's spiritual level of advancement. If one says simplistically that Jains and Buddhists 'reject caste', one is hard put to explain why there are Jain – and, in some parts of Asia, Buddhist – castes.

This is consistent with Bronkhorst's theory, according to which the northeastern culture of Greater Magadha from which the *śramaṇa* movement arose was, while Indo-European, not Vedic. It organized its society according to the principles of caste, but did not sacralize this system as the Brahmins did. It also seems to have placed the Kṣatriyas, and not the Brahmins, at the top of its particular local variant of the caste hierarchy.

The *śramaṇas*' attitude toward the *Veda*, the scriptures on the basis of which the Brahmins claimed their spiritual ascendancy, is at least

partially explicable in terms of their rejection of this claim. As already mentioned, and as we shall see again, much of the *śramaṇic* worldview is shared with the Brahmanical or Vedic worldview. But at the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha – and for many centuries afterward – only Brahmins had the privilege of learning the *Veda*. One notorious passage from a *Dharma Śāstra* says molten lead should be poured in the ears of a person of lower caste who hears the *Veda*.[101]

One can see the circular logic that was involved in the bolstering of Brahmanical authority. The Brahmins were holy people because they knew the *Veda*. But only the Brahmins – Brahmins by birth – were allowed to learn the *Veda*. To reject the *Veda* is therefore not so much to reject everything in it in its totality as to reject the pre-eminent symbol of Brahmanical spiritual superiority. If the *Veda* supports the absurd view that some people are spiritually more advanced than others simply by virtue of their birth caste, as the *śramaṇas* essentially said, then the *Veda* itself must be absurd.

Also of major importance in the *śramaṇic* rejection of Vedic authority was their rejection of the ritual of sacrifice that the *Veda* taught – especially the sacrifice of animals to the *devas*, or Vedic deities. Central to Brahmanical claims of spiritual superiority was the fact that the primary task of the Brahmins was to mediate between human beings and the *devas* through the ritual of sacrifice, which only Brahmins could learn or perform. A good many of the Vedic sacrifices involved the killing and offering of animals to the fire.

The *śramaṇas* argued that such a ritual observance was not only absurd, but also cruel, and productive of bad karma and a consequently bad rebirth.

In their emphasis on nonviolence, not only to human beings, but also to animals, the *śramaṇas* undoubtedly had their greatest impact on the Hindu later tradition. A large number of Hindus today are vegetarian due to their acceptance of the *śramaṇic* teaching of nonviolence and compassion toward all living things. The shift in Hindu attitudes in this regard can be traced in Hindu texts. The practice begins to emerge, for example, of whispering a *mantra* or prayer into the ear of an animal about to be sacrificed, so it will not feel pain and will be immediately reborn in heaven after its slaughter. Eventually, the sacrifice of animals dwindles to the point where most contemporary Hindus find the very idea disgusting. Many even argue that the Vedic verses that describe animal sacrifice are being

misread, and that this was not their original intention. 'Offering' of a cow or horse, as described in the *Veda*, is thus interpreted as giving a cow or horse as a gift rather than as slaying it and offering it in the sacrificial fire.

This same shift is evident if one looks at Hindu attitudes toward the Buddha. It is fairly well known that many Hindus regard the Buddha as an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, not unlike Rāma and Krishna. But the first appearance of this idea, in a story from the *Pūrāṇas*, has a strongly anti-*śramaṇic* intent. It is said that Viṣṇu descended to the earth to delude evil, demonic people into not performing the Vedic sacrifice, so they would not experience its benefits and would be reborn in hell. The anti-Buddhist implications of the idea of the Buddha *avatāra* are largely forgotten by contemporary Hindus.[102] But this was its original intent.

It is not uncommon for modern Hindu thinkers to interpret the Buddha *avatāra* as having purified Hinduism of an evil practice by speaking against the sacrifice of animals. From those skeptical of the *avatāra* doctrine, one finds a similar sentiment, according to which the Buddha was a great ancient Hindu reformer, speaking out not only against animal sacrifice, but also against the abuses and the evils of the caste system. Today, the sacrifice of animals is quite rare in Hinduism, and casteism is increasingly in disrepute, and seen as not being in the true spirit of Vedic philosophy.[103] Hindu thinkers critical of caste will either reinterpret it as being based on individual quality rather than birth or, in more radical cases, will reject it altogether.[104]

If Jainism and Buddhism emerged from the Vedic traditions as the 'Protestant Reformation' model claims, then their retention of many Vedic features and rejection of others is quite understandable. But if Jainism and Buddhism emerged from an alternate Indo-European, Magadhan tradition, then the elements they share with Vedic traditions are drawn from the common Indo-European roots of both traditions. It is not, then, that *śramaṇa* traditions have Vedic features, but that the Vedic and *śramaṇa* traditions have *Indo-European* features. The overlapping but not identical characters of the Vedic and *śramaṇa* traditions is thus a piece of evidence that fits best with either the Reformation model or Bronkhorst's Greater Magadha model.

How does the geographic evidence change this picture? Does it give any support to the Indigenous Reaction theory? The Vedic traditions, centered in the northwestern part of India, were not as deeply rooted in the northeast, into which they were gradually

encroaching at the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha. Also, the Vedic traditions tended to be stronger – and this remains the case even today – in more agricultural and rural areas.

In the northeast, large urban centers had begun to emerge, along with a prominent merchant class. The Vedic emphasis on *caste*, understood by the time of Mahāvīra and the Buddha to be a matter of birth, had less appeal for people of this new, urban merchant class, than philosophies based on the idea of improving oneself through one's own effort.

It was due at least in part to the prevalence of the merchant class in the northeast that the *śramaṇa* movement achieved the successes that it did in this region, challenging Vedic orthodoxy and the spiritual supremacy of the Brahmins, the caste responsible for upholding the Vedic traditions. *Śramaṇa*, again, means 'striver', and the leaders of this ascetic movement promoted spiritual paths emphasizing individual striving, or self-effort, over birth caste. In terms of their social vision, their philosophy is summarized in the famous sentiment of the Buddha that it is not by one's birth, but by one's deeds, that one becomes a Brahmin. Individual merit, not the caste of one's parents, should determine one's value and role in society.

If the Vedic traditions were not as strong in the northeast, this does suggest that they were foreign to the region, which might support the Indigenous Reaction Theory. At the same time, though, the rise of the merchant class and the more urban character of the region were key factors in the rise of the *śramaṇa* traditions, consistent with a Protestant Reformation model – for as the cities, with their merchant classes, arose, older, rural ways of life, including Vedic traditions, could have been abandoned without being understood as foreign impositions.

But the northeastern region did have, as Bronkhorst points out, distinctive cultural practices not shared by the Vedic traditions – such as the burial of the remains of religious leaders in round stone reliquaries called *stūpas*, which are sacred sites among Buddhists even today. And this was not only a Buddhist custom. A Jain *stūpa* found at Mathurā is one of the earliest pieces of archaeological evidence relating to Jainism, though Jains did not continue this practice for very long. The practice of honoring relics buried in *stūpas* is condemned in Brahmanical texts, suggesting it was foreign to the Brahmins.[105]

Again, Bronkhorst's model recommends itself as consistent with the widest range of evidence. The northeast did have a distinctive

culture. But this culture need not be regarded as wholly alien to the Vedic traditions in order to explain the existing evidence. It could have been a different branch of a common Indo-European cultural inheritance.

What can be said in favor of the Indigenous Reaction Theory? As we have seen, according to Jain tradition, Mahāvīra was not exactly the founder of the *śramaṇa* school of thought now known as Jainism, but was the 24th in a series of Tīrthaṅkaras. Some Jain scholars have sought to reconcile this traditional claim with the emergence of the *śramaṇa* movement in the middle of the first millennium BCE by suggesting that this movement might not have been something new – a Hindu 'Protestant Reformation', as it is often depicted – but that it might have been a reassertion of a pre-existing tradition.

As mentioned above, the Brahmanical, Vedic traditions were not as deeply rooted in the northeastern area in which the *śramaṇa* movement emerged. Perhaps the *śramaṇa* movement is not an internal critique, a 'Protestant Reformation', but instead continues an indigenous, pre-Vedic philosophy.

In support of this view, one can point to the existence in the remains of the Indus-Saraswatī or Harappan civilization of figures that appear to be in yoga postures, or whose features suggest a meditative state, much like Jain and Buddhist images from the more recent, historical period. The Indus civilization was at its height from roughly 2600 to 1900 BCE. If the widely held view that Vedic culture arrived in northern India through migration after the Harappan period, between 1900 and 1700 BCE, is correct, then one could argue, perhaps, that the Jain tradition of 24 Tīrthaṅkaras preserves a memory of a very ancient lineage of pre-Vedic spiritual teachers.

This view is supported by scholars in the Jain community, such as Dr. Vastupal Parikh, who argues that there are many affinities between Jainism and the culture of the Indus valley civilization, inasmuch as this can be determined from the existing evidence:

> Excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo Daro … have … unearthed statues, seals and figurines in naked meditative poses – sitting in what appears to be a lotus position or meditating in a standing *kayotsarga* position – poses used by later *Tirthankaras* iconography, and unique to the Jain tradition even today. Based on these seals, some historians have suggested a possibility that a philosophy of the purification of soul by

> ascetic and meditation practices existed at least 5000 years ago during the Indus Valley period.[106]

According to Jain tradition, Ṛṣabha, or Ādinātha, the first Tīrthaṅkara, was not only a spiritual teacher, but also discovered agriculture, and founded the first civilization. Do some of the seals found in the Indus valley represent this revered founding figure?[107] Interestingly, a Ṛṣabha is also mentioned in the *Ṛg Veda*, and is an epithet of Śiva, whom some Indus Valley depictions are also said to resemble. Ṛṣabha, like Śiva, 'is frequently depicted iconographically with a mane of hair down his back'.[108] Are these two the same figure? The word *ṛṣabha* also means 'bull', and the figure of the bull is a prominent one in the surviving Indus valley seals.

This is of course all highly speculative in the absence of more concrete data from ancient India. The most widely shared view about the religion of the Indus civilization among archeologists is that we know very little about it – too little on which to base any firm conclusions.[109] Tantalizing though the theories of confessional Jain scholars such as Dr. Parikh are, they require us to assume many things about the Indus civilization that are not yet firmly established to the satisfaction of most scholars. Yet the shared features of the *śramaṇa* traditions do suggest their emergence from a common, non-Vedic culture.

Conclusion

According to Bronkhorst's view, the *śramaṇa* traditions, with their antagonism to certain features of ancient Vedic culture – primarily Brahmanical spiritual supremacy, birth caste as a measure of spiritual purity, and the practice of animal sacrifice – are explained as the reaction of a distinctive northeastern Indo-European culture to the claims of a slowly expanding northwestern Indo-European Vedic culture. Because both cultures are Indo-European in character, they are able to tap into a shared store of terms and symbols – common deities, for example. One need not have evolved from or been an internal critique of the other. The emergence of *śramaṇic* ideals in later Vedic literature and the presence of Vedic terminology in *śramaṇic* literature (like the use of the term *Brahmin* to refer to a person who is spiritually accomplished, albeit not through birth) is explained through the gradual blending and mutual synthesis of both cultures.

This process continues today with the adoption by Hindus of *śramaṇic* practices such as vegetarianism and the adoption by Jains of certain Hindu holidays and forms of worship.

Bronkhorst's theory is appealing for a number of reasons. Because he does not conflate Vedic culture and Indo-European culture, but sees Vedic or *āryan* culture as only one Indo-European culture among others, he is able to establish a distinctive identity for *śramāṇic* traditions that does not see them as a mere offshoot of Vedic traditions, while yet explaining the fact that they share common elements. And he does so without having to speculate about the character of the not yet fully understood Indus valley civilization.

Finally, Bronkhorst's theory comports well with recent arguments by confessional Hindu scholars who, objecting to the notion that the Vedic terms *ārya* and *anārya* refer to racial differences, argue that these instead refer to *cultural* differences within a larger, common ethnic milieu.[110] Unlike the Indigenous Reaction Theory, his account of the distinctive elements of Vedic and Magadhan culture does not require the idea, rejected by confessional Hindu scholars, that Indo-European culture was brought to South Asia by a migration from Central Asia.

To be sure, Bronkhorst is not a confessional Hindu scholar, and his view does not involve the very ancient dating for the Vedic texts and the rejection of any notion of an Indo-European migration into India that these scholars advocate. His theory does not require the Indo-European migration theory because the data that he examines are from an era many centuries later than the Indo-European migration is presumed to have happened (between 1900 and 1700 BCE). Indeed, Bronkhorst proposes a date for the composition of the later Vedic texts that include distinctively *śramaṇic* ideas that is considerably more recent than not only traditional Hindu scholarship, but also most of modern scholarship, suggests. This is because he sees the incorporation of these ideas into the Vedic corpus as having come about after the extensive interactions of the Vedic and Greater Magadhan ideologies, and so after the time of both Mahāvīra and the Buddha.[111]

But Bronkhorst's theory does allow for an explanation for the distinctiveness of the *śramaṇic* traditions that does not involve unfounded speculation about whether or not either they or the Vedic traditions are indigenous to the subcontinent, or about the nature of the Indus valley civilization. It is based on close examination of Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain texts.

Politically, this theory also allows one to be neutral with regard to Hindu claims that Jainism branched off from Hinduism and Jain claims that Jainism is, in fact, older than Hinduism, being pre-Vedic. Perhaps both traditions emerged simultaneously and interdependently, initiating from points of origin centered in different regions of the sub-continent, through a process of dialog and mutual transformation and synthesis that continues to the present.

Chapter III
Jain History

The Establishment and Early Fortunes of the Jain Community

What happened to the Jain community after the time of Mahāvīra? What was its early structure? How did a small group of ascetics and their lay supporters in the northeastern, Greater Magadha region of India develop into the variegated Jain community of today, with its sectarian and regional divisions?

According to Jain traditions – Śvetāmbara and Digambara – Mahāvīra had 11 principle disciples, or *gaṇadharas*. The leader of this group after Mahāvīra's passing, Indrabhūti Gautama, is depicted as Mahāvīra's chief interlocutor in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, the very large compendium of early Jain teaching, mentioned previously, that forms an important part of the Śvetāmbara canonical literature. Indrabhūti Gautama becomes an important figure of Śvetāmbara devotion in later Jain history.[112] He is said to have attained the advanced spiritual state of omniscience – *kevalajñāna* – hours after Mahāvīra's death, on the first Dīvālī, in part through cultivating detachment by reflecting on the loss of his beloved, departed master. Interestingly, all 11 of the *gaṇadharas* are said to have been Brahmin converts. They are credited with the composition of the *Aṅgas*, the oldest extant Jain texts which are our principle sources of knowledge about Mahāvīra's teachings as understood by the early Jain community.

The term *gaṇadhara*, or disciple, literally means 'supporter of the *gaṇa*'. *Gaṇa* is a term drawn from Indic martial traditions. It refers to a "troop," or group of soldiers. In Jainism, with its adoption of such martial terminology, it refers to a group of monks. The *gaṇadhara* is the leader of such a group. This suggests that Mahāvīra's original disciples each became the head of a group of monks. Indeed, they may have assumed this function even while Mahāvīra was still alive.

The leadership of such groups was passed on by each *gaṇadhara* to his successor through a system of teacher-to-disciple succession known in most Hindu traditions as the *guru paraṃparā*, or teaching lineage. Lists of teachers, passing from one generation to the next, are prominent in the Jain scriptures, where they serve the function of tracing the teaching in the text from the immediate author back through the generations to Mahāvīra himself. Stone inscriptions of such lists have also been discovered at a number of places in India. These lists are important sources of historical information, particularly helpful in determining the relative chronology and likely dates of events in early Jain history.

In the earliest stages of Jain history, the term *gaṇa* continues to be used to refer to a group of Jain monks, though one also sees the term *kula*, or 'family', being used. This does not, of course, in a Jain context, mean 'family' in a literal, biological sense, monks being celibate. When one speaks of 'generations' of Jain monks and teachers, and of a 'lineage', this refers to the formal process of succession, as well as the relationship of ordination and initiation that locates a monk in a specific lineage. In Hindu ascetic traditions as well, it is not uncommon for monks to view the guru who ordains them as their 'father', and to refer to monks ordained by the same teacher as 'guru-brothers'.

Later, the terms *gaṇa* and *kula* are gradually replaced with the term *gaccha*. This word means 'tree', but it is 'traditionally given the derivation of "going" or "traveling together".'[113] It is plausible to see the original use of this term as referring to the 'branching' of ascetic lineages from the central trunk of Mahāvīra's original *gaṇadharas*.

Initially, the division of Jain monks into groups – and eventually, distinct monastic lineages – had no sectarian implications. The early *gaṇadharas* seem to have separated in order to propagate Mahāvīra's path far and wide, requiring the monks to split up in order to cover the widest possible geographic area. Later, however, *gacchas* would branch off due to criticisms that monks would have of the ascetic practices of their elders, the elders being perceived as deviating in some significant way from Mahāvīra's teachings. Today, *gacchas* are generally distinguishable due to differences in their practices.

Like the Buddha, Mahāvīra established both ascetic and lay communities, and the reciprocal dynamic between ascetics and laypersons is a prominent characteristic of Jain society. Because of their

commitment to the observance of strict, nonviolent asceticism, Jain monks and nuns require the material support of Jain laypersons in order to survive physically. They cannot cook their own food, for example, because of the destruction of tiny life forms that this would entail. The laypersons therefore provide the monks and nuns with food, water, and – except for the Digambara monks, who do not use it – clothing. The monks and nuns, in turn, provide the lay community with spiritual teaching, moral guidance, and the opportunity to receive religious merit or 'good karma' (*puṇya karma*) by providing for their material needs.

Because of their relations of mutual dependence, one can generally assume that wherever there have been Jain monks or nuns, there has been a community of laypersons to support them. Although it has not been uncommon in the Indic religious traditions for laypersons to give freely to ascetics with little regard for sectarian affiliation, the relations between Jain laypersons and their ascetics have been particularly close.

In the first couple of centuries of its existence – approximately the fifth and fourth centuries BCE – the Jain community was centered in the northeastern, Greater Magadha region of India, where Mahāvīra had lived and taught. This region would shortly rise to a position of central importance, not only for the Jains, but for all of Indian history. In the wake of Alexander of Macedon's invasion of northwestern India in 327 BCE, a power vacuum arose which was quickly filled by Candragupta Maurya.

Candragupta, the king of Magadha, seized power from the Nanda dynasty in 320 BCE and quickly expanded his holdings to include, by 293 BCE, most of northern India. His Maurya Dynasty would be the first to rule nearly all of India. His grandson, Aśoka, who ruled from 268 to 233 BCE, expanded the Maurya Empire to its geographic height, encompassing all of the territory of modern India except the most southerly and easterly states, and including modern Nepal, Pakistan, and portions of Afghanistan.

Aśoka is best known for his patronage of Buddhism. His father, Bindusāra, was an Ājīvika. But Candragupta Maurya, according to a Digambara legend, became a Jain monk near the end of his life, before handing the Maurya throne to Bindusāra. With the monk Bhadrabāhu, the leader of the Jain monks at that time, he is said to have traveled to the south and to have died fasting on the holy

mountain, Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa – the site of the Bāhubali monument where the great *abhiṣeka* depicted on the cover of this book occurs every 12 years, approximately. This southerly migration of monks is said to have led to the split between the Digambara and Śvetāmbara communities.

Whatever the historical veracity of this legend, it does point to two very important historical truths. First, royal patronage is something monastic communities have sought eagerly throughout the history of Indic religions. With royal support, even more than the support of other wealthy lay patrons, comes a measure of security, as well as a greater prominence for one's teaching, which can be more readily propagated with the material resources that such support entails. Kings in ancient India often supported more than one religious community. But they would also tend to prefer one group to the others. This tradition of patronizing many sects but giving preference to one is arguably paralleled in the Hindu practice of honoring many deities but giving preference to one's 'chosen deity'or *iṣṭadevatā*. It also evokes modern Indian state support for minority traditions.[114]

Secondly, we know that the Jains began to migrate relatively early in their history. Whether this was due to famine or other factors is not entirely clear. There is a version of the Digambara story of Candragupta accompanying Bhadrabāhu to southern India, which indicates that it was not Candragupta Maurya, the founder of the Maurya dynasty, but Samprati Candragupta, who actually migrated and fasted to death at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa.[115] Samprati Candragupta was the grandson of Aśoka (and so the great-great-grandson of the first Candragupta). If this account is true, then the migration of Jains from the Magadha region could have been due to political instability. It was in Samprati Candragupta's time that the Maurya Empire disintegrated, just before the beginning of the Common Era.

Although Jains today can be found all over India, and indeed all over the world, they do not live in unusually large numbers in the region that gave birth to their tradition, despite the presence in that region of important pilgrimage sites, such as Pāvāpurī, where Mahāvīra is said to have left his body and attained final liberation at the age of 72. As discussed earlier, most Jains live either in the northwestern states of Gujarat and Rajasthan – these being primarily Śvetāmbara Jains – or in the southern state of Karnataka and the

southern part of neighboring Maharashtra – these being chiefly Digambaras.

Though Jains are not today particularly prominent in Orissa, the region just south of Magadha, there is evidence of royal support for Jainism in that region in ancient times. There is an inscription from either the late first century BCE or early first century CE that tells of the king of the region invading Magadha to recover a Tīrthaṅkara *mūrti* that had been stolen by the Nanda dynasty.[116] This region was known in ancient times as Kaliṅga. It is the kingdom that, according to Buddhist accounts, was Aśoka's final conquest. The violence of the final battle for Kaliṅga is said to have caused Aśoka the profound remorse that led to his spiritual awakening and his commitment to Buddhism.

We know that Jain migration from the Magadha region began fairly early because of archeological evidence from the city of Mathurā. This city is near, but not inside, the region where northern Jains are currently predominant, and is also on the traditional route between that region and Magadha. The location of Mathurā on a prominent trade route, as well as the archeological evidence found there, suggests that the earliest Jain groups to leave Magadha were merchants, as Jain laypersons have often tended to be throughout history, and that they traveled for the purpose of trade.

The archeological evidence, which dates from roughly the second century BCE to the third century of the Common Era, consists of a Jain *stūpa* and a set of inscriptions that list lineages of Jain monks also found in the Śvetāmbara scriptures. It also includes depictions of Jain monks who are '"covering their nudity with a half piece of cloth (ardha-phālaka)'.[117]

This last detail is significant, for it is suggestive of the likely origin for the split between the Digambara and Śvetāmbara Jains. As mentioned previously, there was also a Yāpanīya community of monks who practiced Digambara-style nudity in the privacy of their monastic dwellings, but who covered themselves in public to protect the modesty of laypersons and avoid public harassment. It is possible that the Jain monks depicted at Mathurā were members of the Yāpanīya sect, though this is highly speculative.[118]

As we shall see, practices of this kind – compromising on ascetic nudity for the purposes of interaction with the laity – eventually led to the practice among Śvetāmbara ascetics of wearing simple white clothing at all times.

The Digambara-Śvetāmbara Schism

Which community's practice most closely represents that actual practice of Mahāvīra and his disciples? The Śvetāmbara scriptures present a picture that, interestingly, supports at least part of the Digambara claim in this regard. As Dundas explains:

> An examination of early Śvetāmbara literature would seem to leave little room for doubt that Mahāvīra and his male followers were naked monks. The *Uttarādhyayana* points to the fact that nudity distinguished Mahāvīra's monks from those of Pārśva … while the *Ācārāṅga* describes lack of clothes as being in full conformity with Jain doctrine … Another passage in the *Ācārāṅga* refers to the difficulties experienced by the naked monk and also to the fact that he does not need to beg for and repair clothes.[119]

But if their own scriptures suggest that Digambara practice is more faithful to the original practice of Mahāvīra (though they also indicate that Pārśvanātha's followers did wear clothing), how do the Śvetāmbaras justify their deviation from this earlier practice? As Dundas further elaborates:

> … [E]lsewhere in the *Ācārāṅga* the monk is advised only to restrict himself in the wearing of clothes through not possessing too many garments and to be either very lightly clad or completely naked during summer as a form of penance … Confirmation that there gradually arose options about the wearing of clothes by monks is provided by the *Sthānāṅga*, an encyclopaedic text important for its delineation of the parameters of Jain teachings in the early common era, which states that it may be permissible for a monk to wear clothes for reasons of embarrassment, the disgust he might cause to others or his inability to endure the afflictions which occur in the course of the monastic life.[120]

That the schism between Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras was a result of deliberate and self-conscious choices on the part of Jain monks is indicated by the fact that there have been northern Digambara Jains for at least as long as there have been Śvetāmbaras. Because Digambaras have tended to be more predominant in the south, while the Jains of the north have tended to be Śvetāmbara, it is tempting to see the split between these two as a result of the migration of Bhadrabāhu to Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa. The division could then be seen as

due to centuries of geographic separation, leading to a gradual divergence of ascetic practice. But the fact that the Śvetāmbara communities of the north have always been adjoined by northern Digambara communities suggests that the distinction between them was not a mere accident, due to lack of contact, but arose from the practice of Jain monks gradually taking on the wearing of clothing while in public – and eventually, all of the time – and of other Jain monks seeing this practice as a deviation from established Jain norms.[121] The pattern of new practices arising in response to changing situations, and of critique and rejection of these practices as inauthentic, is a pattern that characterizes the Jain ascetic community throughout its history, up to the present time, as further divisions have occurred in the various *gacchas*, or lineages, of Jain monks over issues involving what constitutes correct Jain ascetic practice.

Whatever its precise origins, the divide between the Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras was definitely in place by the second century CE, for it is at this point that Digambara figures emerge who are specifically identified as such in textual traditions – namely, the composers of the oldest recognized Digambara text, known as the 'Six-Part Scripture' (*Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*).[122] These were a Digambara monk named Dharasena and his students, Puṣpadanta and Bhūtabali, to whom Dharasena passed on all of his knowledge of the Jain scriptures out of fear that this knowledge would soon fade from the world.

As we shall soon see, this fear was well founded, for the forgetfulness of scripture was a major Jain theme of this period. The composition of this important Digambara text is traditionally dated at 156 CE.

Jain Textual and Philosophical Traditions

As mentioned earlier, the Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras are in agreement that the *Pūrvas*, the most ancient of Jain scriptures, ascribed to the 23rd Tīrthaṅkara, Pārśvanātha, were forgotten at a fairly early point in Jain history. It was also mentioned, in connection with the length of time between Mahāvīra and the earliest extant Jain texts, that the oral transmission of text is, in some ways, more reliable than written transmission, given the difficulty of sorting out which version of a written text is earliest if copying errors have crept into one or more of its variants.

But what written transmission lacks in reliability, it makes up for in durability. Books can live longer than people. The problem with oral transmission is that, if those who carry the knowledge of a text in their minds die before passing that knowledge on to others, or after passing it on only partially, that knowledge is forever lost. It is not unlike a situation in which every copy of a particular book is destroyed. This is why so much of the traditional knowledge of many cultures around the world has been lost. Having relied on oral transmission, many traditional cultures have lost much of their collective wisdom when their wise persons have died (or have been killed) before being able to pass on that wisdom.

This seems to have been the situation of the early Jain community, and the reason the decision was finally taken to put their textual tradition into a written form. Monks with full knowledge of the scriptural tradition were dying before imparting it to others. The monk Bhadrabāhu – the monk who is said to have been Candragupta's preceptor, and to whom the southern Digambara tradition looks as a founding figure – is believed to have been the last monk to have known both the *Pūrvas* and the *Aṅgas* in their entirety. Around the time of Bhadrabāhu's death, a council of Jain monks was held in which the remaining known scriptures were recited, in order to ensure their survival. This council was held in Pāṭaliputra (contemporary Patna), the ancient capital of the Mauryan Empire, in the heart of the Greater Magadha region.[123]

The Digambaras, however, do not accept the validity of this recension of the Jain scriptures, or subsequent ones developed at councils held in the fourth century CE in the northern cities of Mathurā and Valabhī. If the forebears of the southern Digambaras had already migrated by the time of the first council, the southern Digambaras were probably not aware of it. By the time of the second two councils, the schism between Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras in the north had already occurred.

The Digambaras, as mentioned before, reject the Śvetāmbara scriptures because they contain material incompatible with a Digambara interpretation of Jain doctrine with regard to ascetic practice and the nature of an enlightened being. The Digambaras have their own collection of texts, less voluminous than the Śvetāmbara canon, beginning with the 'Six-Part Scripture' of Dharasena. In addition to this text, there are four sets of *anuyogas*, or 'expositions', which give

further explanations of Jain doctrine, ethics, and history.[124] Much of this material agrees with the Śvetāmbara scriptures. The divergences between the two traditions are, again, largely with regard to ascetic nudity, the nature of a liberated being, and the implications of the ascetic nudity requirement for the spiritual liberation of women, who are banned from practicing it. In terms of issues of cosmology, metaphysics, ethics, and lay practice, the two traditions are virtually identical.

Both Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras accept the authority of one of the Digambara *anuyoga* texts: the *Tattvārthasūtra*, or 'Text on the True Nature of Reality' (also known as the *Tattvārthādigamasūtra*). This central text for Jain philosophy was composed by Umāsvāti (also known to Digambaras as Umāsvāmī), a figure from perhaps as early as the second century of the Common Era. Umāsvāti may have predated the formal schism between the Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras. Mention of it is not to be found anywhere in the *Tattvārthasūtra*, and both traditions claim him as an *āpta*, or authoritative figure. According to one account, Umāsvāti was inspired to write his text when he saw graffiti reading 'Faith, knowledge, and conduct are the way to liberation'. He corrected this to '*Right* faith, knowledge, and conduct', thus composing the first verse of his text.[125]

The *Tattvārthasūtra* has been commented upon by Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras alike over the centuries and is the closest thing available to a universally accepted Jain text. It is a concise summary of philosophical teachings found scattered throughout both the Digambara and Śvetāmbara canonical texts. Despite considerable internal diversity regarding ritual, ascetic practice, and monastic organization, the Jain traditions have been remarkably uniform with regard to issues that are of interest to philosophers, perhaps because of widespread acceptance of Umāsvāti's text. When scholars, Jain and non-Jain, describe 'the Jain worldview' in philosophical, metaphysical terms, the system described is essentially that set forth in the *Tattvārthasūtra*.

Finally, the *Tattvārthasūtra* is significant for having been composed in Sanskrit. During this period – the first few centuries of the Common Era – both Jains and Buddhists began to compose philosophical texts in Sanskrit, rather than restricting themselves to the Prakrits distinctive to each of these communities.[126]

Despite the unifying tendency of the *Tattvārthasūtra* in the area of metaphysics, a distinctively Digambara bent toward mysticism emerges

with Kundakunda, who may have lived as early as the second or as late as the eighth century CE.[127] By *mysticism*, I mean a focus in religious practice upon cultivating direct experience or realization of the ultimate reality – which, in Jainism, is the pure nature of the liberated soul, or *jīva*. As we shall see in more depth later, Kundakunda, a highly revered *ācārya*, or teacher, of the Digambara tradition, developed a distinctively Jain version of the 'two truths' doctrine, a doctrine articulated in the Buddhist tradition by Nāgārjuna (c. second century CE) and in Vedānta by Śaṅkara (eighth to ninth centuries CE). This doctrine fits well with mystical approaches to the highest reality, however it may be conceived; for it teaches that any concept of reality that can be expressed in words functions only in the realm of relative, or conventional truth, the ultimate truth being beyond words or concepts. On this view, the ultimate truth can only be experienced directly. Conceptual formulations, such as doctrines, can point the way to this truth. But they are not identical with it.

This idea of two truths – a relative truth and an ultimate truth – is controversial in the Jain tradition, and in other traditions as well; for it seems to diminish the importance of assent to the truth of particular religious teachings as merely 'relatively' true.[128]

Departing somewhat from the metaphysical realism insisted upon by the rest of the Jain tradition, Kundakunda develops what could broadly be called a gnostic stance toward the Jain spiritual path, emphasizing the realization of the true nature of the soul or *jīva* over ascetic practice as the true means to liberation. This emphasis places him closer to Buddhist and Vedāntic understandings of liberation, one could argue, than Jain thought normally goes. To be sure, Kundakunda does not dispute or deny accepted Jain doctrine. But doctrine operates only in the relative realm. It points to, but is not, absolute truth.

It should be added, though, that in practice, Kundakunda's followers are no less committed to rigorous asceticism than other Jains. Kundakunda's writings, particularly his *Pravacanasāra* or 'Essence of the Doctrine' and his *Samayasāra* or 'Essence of the Soul', continue to exert a strong influence on Digambara intellectuals, particularly in the modern period, in which his thought has experienced something of a resurgence.

Besides Umāsvāti and Kundakunda, a number of other prominent Jain intellectual leaders and authors thrived over the course of the classical and medieval periods of Indic cultural history, making

significant contributions not only to Jainism, but to the broader philosophical conversation that included both Hindu and Buddhist interlocutors as well. Among these thinkers, some of whom will be explored in greater depth later, were, from the Digambara tradition, Samantabhadra, whose *Āptamīmāṃsā* or 'Analysis of the Nature of the Authoritative Teacher' is central to understanding the Jain doctrines of relativity, and Akalaṅka, who is renowned for his incisive criticisms of the work of the Buddhist logician, Dharmakīrti. Samantabhadra lived around the fourth or fifth century CE and Akalaṅka in the eighth century CE. Claimed by both Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras (and possibly a Yāpanīya), Siddhasena Divākara was also a key figure in the development of the Jain doctrines of relativity who lived around the fourth or fifth century CE.

From the Śvetāmbara tradition, there is Haribhadrasūri (who probably lived in the eighth century CE), Hemacandra (1089–1172), and Yaśovijaya (1624–1688), all of whom were prolific writers and formidable thinkers who advanced the Jain intellectual tradition and contributed to the spiritual development of the Jain community.

In addition to the writings of these and other major Jain philosophers, there is a considerable story literature that comes to us from the wider Jain community – both lay and ascetic – and that gives us a rich picture of Jain interests and concerns and interactions with the wider culture of South Asia through the centuries.[129]

Fortunes of the Jain Community from the Ancient to the Medieval Periods

The prolific literary productivity of the Jains could not have occurred were the Jains not successful in promoting the political and economic interests of their community through the centuries. The available evidence suggests that the Jains have always been, as they are today, a minority community within a largely Hindu (and, until approximately 1000 to 1300 CE, Buddhist) environment – though Jain interaction with Islam is also significant, particularly in the north. Though there have been Jain kings and kingdoms, in both the north and the south, for most of their history, the Jains have tended to be an economically important merchant community living in sometimes tense but often symbiotic relations with the Hindu communities in the midst of which they have found themselves.

The period from roughly the second to the twelfth centuries of the Common Era was something of a golden age for Jainism. Except for the more recent Yaśovijaya, all of the prominent Jain intellectual figures mentioned above lived during this period. It was a period in which material conditions obtained for the Jain community that allowed these high philosophical and literary achievements to be realized. There was sufficient support not only from wealthy lay merchant communities, but also from the royal, warrior caste, to enable Jain institutions such as temples and monasteries to flourish. Jain scholarly monks enjoyed considerable prestige during this period and were able to compete with the Brahmins and Buddhists on a more or less equal footing for resources and followers.

The fortunes of the Jain community waned, and Jains became confined to being a small and largely mercantile class within the larger Hindu society, when the Jains lost the support of the warrior caste, either through the conversion of kings to devotional forms of Hinduism, or, near the end of this period, to their replacement by invading Muslim rulers.

A comparison of the Jain experience of the period from the time of Mahāvīra to around 1000 BCE with that of the Indian Buddhist community is instructive. Much like the Buddhists, the Jains tended to be concentrated among the merchant classes of Indian society. This is true of the Jains right up to the present day. Also like the Buddhists, the Jains spread far and wide across the Indian subcontinent. As noted previously, the Jains have been concentrated more in the southern and western parts of India. The Buddhists also spread south and west, but, unlike the Jains, remained concentrated in the Magadha region of their tradition's founding as well. This may have been due in part to the major patronage that Buddhism received under Aśoka.

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism did not spread beyond the Indian subcontinent until the modern period. Although Jain merchants traveled by sea for business purposes, the Jain ascetics were disallowed from travel for great distances, due to concerns about avoiding violence. Buddhism, however, traveled to East and Southeast Asia as far as Japan.

During the period of its existence as a major tradition in India, Buddhism went through a number of major transformations. Beginning around the second century BCE, the Mahāyāna movement emerged, which radically reconceived the nature of awakening and

the path to liberation. Along with the Hindu traditions of this period, beginning in the second century BCE and continuing through the first millennium of the Common Era, Mahāyāna Buddhism developed a strongly devotional dimension, centered on a pantheon of cosmic Buddhas and celestial Bodhisattvas, or 'Awakening Beings' on the way to final enlightenment. Jainism, too, evolves a devotional aspect during this period which, like Hindu and Buddhist devotionalism, finds expression in artwork. Jain temples and carved depictions of Tīrthaṅkaras and other Jain deities emerge during this time.

Many Buddhists also assimilated practices from the *tantric* tradition, a form of spirituality with Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain variants that emphasizes using the senses to overcome the senses. The specific methods by which this is done include the chanting of sacred verses, or *mantras*, the creation and the visualization of elaborate diagrams of the spiritual cosmos, *yantras* and *maṇḍalas*, and elaborate temples, or *mandiras*, designed to focus the minds of all of those who enter them on spiritual realities, using the physical vehicles of beautifully sculpted artwork and architecture.

Because of the existence of *tantric* practices that involved activities regarded as impure by traditional Indian society – including sexual practices – many Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain practitioners were wary of the entire orientation. Indeed, the word *tantra* has negative overtones in India even today. The purpose of the more outrageous practices is to embody the awareness of the practitioner of having gone beyond a dualistic mode of consciousness that divides the world into 'pure' and 'impure' substances and activities.

The *tantric* approach to the spiritual path was particularly difficult for Jains to assimilate, given the centrality of the ascetic ethos to a Jain self-understanding and the tradition's metaphysical realism, which, with the exception of Kundakunda's mysticism, has tended to look askance at views of reality which reject all conventional experience as illusory. An attempt to achieve liberation that would reject or suspend adherence to the norms of Jain morality would be seen as deeply misguided, and ultimately unproductive. The great Śvetāmbara intellectual, Haribhadrasūri, who lived at the time that *tantra* was starting to become prominent in Indic religious practice (c. 700–750 CE), was strongly critical of this path, despite his renowned openness toward non-Jain spiritual paths and philosophical systems. He writes, in his *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*, or 'Collection of Views on Yoga':

> Those who step into licentiousness are of excessive manner. Because of this, the ultimate [for them] resembles the flickering of a bird's shadow moving across the water.
>
> Subtle knowledge is obstructed by the dirtiness of destructive power. From this and in this teaching, nothing is ever born.
>
> Therefore, according to the illumination of scripture, this wayward perspective is not in accordance with the truth. Although it resembles a foundation, indeed, from it only sin is generated…
>
> Stepping into licentiousness is not stepping toward the highest goal. For, indeed, only stepping into sanctioned behavior is a step to be taken by *yogins*.[130]

The Jains, however, like the Buddhists, did adopt *tantric* practices that did not entail the violation of Jain moral norms, such as chanting and meditating on *mantras* and drawing *maṇḍalas* and *yantras*, often based on the distinctively Jain cosmography of the Śvetāmbara scriptures. And Jain temples are unrivaled as both artistic and architectural celebrations of elaborate and intricate beauty. But most Jains are not likely to acknowledge that such aspects of their tradition have a *tantric* pedigree, due to the suggestion of antinomian practices that this term typically evokes. A practitioner of *tantra*, in the minds of modern South Asians, is a practitioner of black magic, and probably a sexual deviant.

Between 750 and 1300 BCE, India suffered a series of invasions by the Turks. These invasions would prove to be devastating for Buddhism. So much Buddhist activity was centered in elaborate temple and monastic establishments that the Buddhist tradition as a living practice was irreparably damaged when these establishments were destroyed. With the temples and monasteries went the Buddhist monks and scholars who resided in them. Entire libraries of important Buddhist texts were destroyed, many of which are known today only through Tibetan or Chinese translations, and many of which were no doubt lost forever.

Though many Jain temples and monasteries were also destroyed, and continued to be either destroyed or threatened with destruction in the following centuries, Jainism, as a tradition, did not die out in India. Its fate is, in this sense, a mirror image of the fate of Buddhism. Buddhism died out in India (being reintroduced only in the modern period), but not before it had spread throughout Asia. Jainism

remained confined to India (until the modern period), but survives there to the present.

Many explanations for this are possible; but it seems likely that the relations of the Jain lay and ascetic communities had remained close in a way that those between the Buddhists and their monks had not. Perhaps because of discomfort in the Jain tradition with the idea of temple-dwelling monks (though such monks have existed at many points throughout Jain history), the survival of Jain monks never became as dependent upon the survival of such establishments as that of Buddhist monks evidently did.

Hindu traditions, too, suffered the destruction of temples and monastic institutions during this period, but also survived, as Jainism did. Hindu traditions not being, on the whole, as dependent upon the existence of monastic institutions as Buddhism were able to weather this storm. As mentioned earlier, what is often called *Hinduism* consists of a vast range of cultural practices that are all pervasive in traditional Indian society. Such a deeply rooted complex – including such elements as folklore, medical and other scientific knowledge, artistic conventions, and so on – could not be so easily destroyed.

During the medieval period, with the rise of Islam to prominence as a dominating force in Indian society, the fortunes of the Jain community varied depending upon their relations with their Muslim rulers: 'Jain relations with the new rulers were at some times friendly, at other times uneasy and conciliatory as the attitudes of the Muslims varied.'[131] The Jain political ascendancy that was possible in the earlier era, when there had been Jain kings, or when Jain monks, such as Hemacandra, had been key advisers to rulers, did not recur during this period – the period from roughly 1300 CE to the rise of the British Raj in the eighteenth century. During this time, the Jains 'although not totally excluded from political power, began … to assume the almost exclusively commercial role with which they have been associated to this day.'[132]

Seventeenth-Century Divisions and Controversies

Following a period of relative insecurity, the seventeenth century saw the further division of the Jain community, beyond that between Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, into several distinct sub-communities, based on differences relating largely to the realm of practice.

Recall from the first chapter that the divisions within the Jain community can be represented schematically in the following way:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Jains</td></tr>
<tr><td>Śvetāmbaras</td><td colspan="2">Digambaras</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Mūrtipūjakas
Sthānakavāsīs
Terāpanthīs
(Śvetāmbara)</td><td rowspan="3">Southern Digambaras</td><td>Northern Digambaras</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bīsapanthīs
Terāpanthīs
(Digambara)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Recent movements:
Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth
Kavi Panth
Kānjī Svāmī Panth</td></tr>
</table>

The most ancient of these divisions is of course that between the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras, which we have already discussed (and to which could be added the now-extinct 'intermediate' Yāpanīya sect). We have also mentioned the regional distinction between northern Digambaras, who inhabit the same region of India as the Śvetāmbaras, and the southern Digambaras.

In the seventeenth century, the northern Digambaras split into two sub-communities – the Bīsapanthīs and the Terāpanthīs. The primary issue leading to this division was the question of the authority of *bhaṭṭārakas*.

Bhaṭṭārakas first emerged within the southern Digambara community. It is not known precisely when this occurred, but the formal role of *bhaṭṭāraka* was definitely in place by the fourteenth century. *Bhaṭṭārakas*, 'venerable' or 'learned ones', are monks who are charged with the administration of monastic institutions. Again, as a central expression of their practice of non-attachment, Digambara monks traditionally do not wear clothing. But *bhaṭṭārakas* do wear clothing – typically orange robes – to facilitate their administrative functions, which can involve extensive interactions with laypersons. In other words, *bhaṭṭārakas* emerged among the Digambaras for much the same reason that ancient northern Jain monks around the beginning of the Common Era began to wear clothing, eventually

becoming the Śvetāmbaras – in order to facilitate social interactions with laypersons, who would likely be embarrassed by ascetic nudity.

Because of this compromise, Digambara Terāpanthīs do not regard *bhaṭṭārakas* as true monks.[133] The northern Digambaras who continue to recognize *bhaṭṭārakas* as true monks and legitimate Jain religious authorities call themselves Bīsapanthīs. The division between Terāpanthīs and Bīsapanthīs does not exist among southern Digambaras, among whom the authority of *bhaṭṭārakas* is not typically questioned.

Divisions also arose within the Śvetāmbara community during this period, with the rise of the Sthānakavāsīs and the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthīs. Both of these Śvetāmbara groups, as mentioned earlier, draw their inspiration from the fifteenth-century reformer Loṅkā Śāh. Loṅkā was a scribe who had extensive contact with Śvetāmbara scriptures and found the practices of his time wanting. His primary objection was to the worship of images (*mūrtipūjā*), a practice not mentioned in the scriptures, and which, as mentioned a short while ago, likely emerged after the time of Mahāvīra, with the rise of a devotional style of religiosity throughout the Indic traditions. One of Loṅka's followers was a monk who was a member of the Tapā Gaccha, an ascetic lineage that had broken away from the Vaṭa Gaccha in the thirteenth century (and is today the largest Śvetāmbara lineage). This monk, Muni Bhāṇa, broke away from the Tapā Gaccha to found the Loṅka Gaccha. The Loṅka Gaccha is practically nonexistent today. But it was members of the Loṅka Gaccha who established the Sthānakavāsī movement in the seventeenth century.[134]

Clearly, the seventeenth century was a time of great ferment in Jain communities, as Jains rethought their traditions and sought to bring them more into line with what some perceived to be a more authentic mode of practice. This was also the period of the figure sometimes regarded as the last of the great premodern Jain philosophers, Yaśovijaya. At this time, it seems, the Jains had recovered from the period of insecurity brought on first by the withdrawal of support by Hindu kings – particularly in the south – who had adopted an exclusive adherence to devotional forms of Hinduism (prominently Śaivism), and the coming of Islam to India as a major social and political force. By the seventeenth century the community had settled into an equilibrium that allowed for change and reform.

The Modern Period

Modernity – meaning a mode of thinking and ordering society based on experience and reason as opposed to the authority of tradition, and placing special value on the individual and individual rights – is, at best, an imperfectly realized ideal in the West, where it first emerged as an historical movement.[135] Historically, modern thought is a response to the authoritarian modes of thought that were promoted by premodern forms of Christianity – both Catholic and Protestant – and the successes of the scientific method in discerning the nature of the physical world and developing technologies on the basis of the knowledge thereby acquired. In response to the contesting claims of Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity – claims based on the authority, respectively, of the church or scripture, hence my use of the term 'authoritarian' in describing them – many European thinkers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries began turning to sources of knowledge other than scripture or church authority, such as reason reflecting on experience. If the premodern paradigm for knowledge was ancient wisdom handed down by church or scripture, the modern paradigm was the empirical, scientific method of investigating claims by means of observation and rational reflection upon what was observed. In recent years, a new, postmodern paradigm has also emerged, which questions the hegemony of any one form of knowledge, and argues for the multivalent and complex nature of truth.

While it may seem natural, given their nomenclature, to think of the premodern, modern, and postmodern paradigms as equivalent to historical epochs, and while it is true that one paradigm or another tends to predominate in a given society at a given time, it is also the case that aspects of each of these paradigms have co-existed in most societies at most points in history. In contemporary North American society, for example, there are many who operate in a premodern paradigm in the area of religion – taking the Bible, for example, as authoritative in spiritual matters – but remain thoroughly modern with regard to the technology they use. Premodernity, modernity, and postmodernity are not, precisely, historical periods, but, again, modes of thinking and ordering society.

Because each of these three paradigms is not identical with any specific historical phases, although each does tend to predominate at one time or another, it is possible for them to manifest differently in

different cultural contexts. Although premodernity has been the dominant mode in the Indic traditions – authority being vested either in the *Vedas* or in the teachings of enlightened sages, such as Mahāvīra and the Buddha – there have also been strongly modern, and even postmodern, dimensions of traditional Indic thought throughout history. The individualistic and experimental approach to truth evident in the lives of both Mahāvīra and the Buddha, for example, resembles a modern approach, and the Jain and Buddhist teachings, respectively, of *anekāntavāda* and *pratītyasamutpāda* – the multi-faceted nature of truth and the idea of interdependent origination – have a clearly postmodern ring.

With the colonization of the Indian subcontinent by the British in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both the European version of modernity and European forms of Christianity[136] were brought to India and had a massive impact upon the Indic traditions they encountered. In particular, Hindu thinkers, such as Rammohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, and Swami Vivekananda, to name only a few, began to articulate Hinduism in a modern form, making use of modern modes of thought. Rather than seeing the *Vedas*, for example, as the final authority in religious matters, these thinkers began to conceive of direct experience of the divine as the final authority, and to see the authority of texts such as the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads* as being derivative from the transcendental experiences of the enlightened sages who composed them. The modern idea that beliefs should be tested by reason and held to standards of universal applicability also led to movements for Hindu social reform, in order to improve the status and treatment of women and the members of the lower levels of traditional caste hierarchies. A perceived need to combat Christian missionary activity also motivated the Hindu reformers, who accepted the validity of many of the Christian criticisms of Hindu practices, while simultaneously affirming the fundamental truth of Hinduism – particularly of Vedānta philosophy.

Modern Jainism follows a number of the patterns followed by modern Hinduism. The emphasis on direct experience, in particular, has been a powerful one, leading to a variety of modern Jain movements that place less emphasis on the authority of scripture and the ascetic community and more on the direct analysis of experience. This emphasis on experience has led to a surge of interest in

Kundakunda, whose mystical teaching is very much in keeping with this emphasis. For this reason, perhaps, it is the Digambara tradition that has been particularly fertile in producing distinctively modern articulations of Jainism. Three prominent northern Digambara Jain groups have emerged during the modern period – the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth, the Kavi Panth, and the Kānjī Svāmī Panth – all of which, in various ways, seek to recover and put into practice the path of Kundakunda.[137]

Another prominent emphasis of modern Hinduism, shared by modern Jainism, is an emphasis on a non-sectarian universalism that seeks to transcend traditional religious boundaries. The two most prominent Hindu figures associated with this ideal have been Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Mahatma Gandhi, both of whom taught that religions should be seen as paths to a common destination rather than as competing worldviews or systems of practice. The Jain equivalent of this Hindu universalism can be found in the modern recovery by Jain intellectuals of the ancient teaching of *anekāntavāda*, or the doctrine of the multi-faceted character of reality, which will be explored in much greater depth in a later chapter. According to *anekāntavāda*, any given topic can be viewed from a variety of valid perspectives, with only an enlightened Jina being capable of perceiving the whole truth of the matter.

As we shall see, although certain classical Jain intellectuals, such as Haribhadra, saw this doctrine as implying something like the non-sectarianism of modern Hinduism, this was not its primary purpose or intent historically – which seems to have been to show that non-Jain perspectives reflect merely partial truth, whereas Jainism reflects the truth as seen from an enlightened, omniscient point of view. Modern Jains, however, see it as a form of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*', implying a non-absolutist attitude of universal tolerance.

Finally, there has been the emergence, as mentioned earlier, of what Dundas calls Jain heterodoxy and neo-orthodoxy – both of which are especially prominent among Jains outside of India, though neither are unknown in India as well. Jain heterodoxy is very much in the spirit of non-sectarianism just discussed, in which the differences between Jainism and Hinduism are elided, and Jains share worship facilities with Hindus, interpret the Tīrthaṅkaras as Hindu *avatāras*, and use God-language to describe the enlightened being and the *paramātman* – the soul in its true, pure state.

Though Jain heterodoxy is best characterized as an attitude or a broad trend, with little or no centralized or institutional direction, there are groups that could perhaps be characterized as heterodox Jain movements. One of the most prominent of these is the Akram Vijñān Mārg, established by Ambālāl Paṭel (1907–1988). Better known as Dādā Bhagavān, Paṭel, who was born into a Vaiṣṇava family in Gujarat, taught a spiritual path that could be characterized as a blend of Jainism and Hinduism. Influenced by Śrīmad Rājacandra and Jain philosophy as well as Hinduism, Paṭel 'stated that Dādā Bhagavān, the Lord for the Salvation of the World, who exists in everyone in a latent form, becomes fully manifested in a person with knowledge of the Self (jñāni-puruṣa) and that such a person becomes a living instrument for Dādā Bhagavān'.[138] In 1968, Paṭel began to refer to himself as the Jñāni and taught that *mokṣa* is available through the grace of Sīmandara Svāmī, a Tīrthaṅkara who could be accessed directly through his medium, Paṭel.[139]

Neo-orthodoxy is equally a modern development; for its chief proponents are not Jain monks, but Western-educated laypersons who have studied Jainism on their own, frequently through the lens of modern thought, and who have taken upon themselves the role of articulating and speaking for the Jain tradition – a role traditionally reserved for the ascetics. Neo-orthodox presentations of Jainism will often emphasize its 'scientific' and rational character, contrasting it with forms of religiosity that emphasize faith in a deity or other outside authority as opposed to a more experiential and experimental approach to truth.

Among the modern northern Digambara reform movements based on the teaching of Kundakunda, the oldest is the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth. Though it is technically premodern, having originated not after the Indian encounter with modernity through the British, but prior to that, in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, in many ways it prefigures and forms the prototype for later movements, and shares many of these characteristics of modern Jainism that I have described. It also thereby shows that 'modern' developments in Indian thought were not solely a product of Western 'influence' upon a wholly passive Indian culture, but that indigenous Indian precedents existed for many modern ideas – precedents that may in part account for the successes of modern thought in India. A fertile ground already existed, one could say, for concepts such as the epistemic authority of reason

reflecting upon experience, and of experience over dogmatic teaching, as well as social ideals of equality and individual rights.

Tāraṇ Svāmī, the founder of the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth, lived from 1448 to 1515. A northern Digambara monk, he was critical both of the institution of *bhaṭṭārakas* and the use of images in worship. His thinking therefore anticipated that of the Digambara Terāpanthīs of the seventeenth century and aniconic stance of his near contemporary, Loṅkā Śāh. He was heavily influenced by Kundakunda. While his followers do not worship images of Jinas, they do place upon altars and worship books written by Tāraṇ Svāmī, Kundakunda, and other authors of the Digambara mystical tradition.[140] The egalitarian and non-sectarian nature of his appeal is attested by the fact that, during his lifetime, 'He is said to have attracted many disciples from various social backgrounds, including lower castes. Some were from Jain families, and others were non-Jains, including Muslims.'[141]

The Kavi Panth is a modern movement in the truest sense of the term, having only the most tenuous of connections with the traditional Jain ascetic community and focusing chiefly upon the individual's direct experience of the soul. It is really not an organization so much as a broad following based on the teachings and writings of Rājacandra Mahetā, who lived from 1867 to 1901.

Mahetā's father was a Vaiṣṇava Hindu and his mother a Sthānakavāsī Jain. He was influenced by the writings of Kundakunda and was a close friend and mentor to the young Mohandas K. Gandhi. Their relationship, in fact, was so close that Mahetā is often referred to as 'Gandhi's guru'. He is a prominent figure in Gandhi's autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.

Mahetā in a number of ways epitomizes Jain modernity; for a variety of modern themes can be found in his life and teachings: the authority of direct experience, the ability of the layperson to think for him- or herself – and even attain enlightenment – without being dependent upon ascetics, non-sectarianism, and flexibility with regard to the details of practice. He remained a layperson throughout his life: 'His teachings emphasize the attainment of the knowledge of the true nature of the innate inner soul (ātman) and experiencing its purity through meditation. Rājacandra criticized the sectarian nature of Jainism and its emphasis on rituals, but he did not reject image worship, viewing it as beneficial for those who were in the early stages

of spirituality.' At the end of his life, he claimed, 'that he had attained direct knowledge of the inner soul'.[142]

Most recent of all is the Kānjī Svāmī Panth. Kānjī Svāmī lived from 1889 to 1980. At first a Sthānakavāsī monk, Kānjī Svāmī had a conversion experience when he read the writings of Kundakunda. In 1934, he gave up his ascetic vows and became a Digambara layperson. He continued to practice celibacy and spent the rest of his life traveling and teaching extensively.[143] Like Rājacandra Mahetā, and in the spirit of Jain modernity, his teachings emphasize direct, individual experience over dogmatism and sectarianism.

In addition to these northern Digambara developments, Śvetāmbara organizations also have been active in adapting Jain practice to modernity and articulating the relevance of Jainism to the modern world. The Śvetāmbara Terāpanthīs have been especially active in this regard, such as in the development of the 'intermediate' *saman* and *samaṇī* orders, the *anuvrata* movement, and the promotion of *prekṣā* meditation, mentioned earlier.

Two precursors of the establishment of the *saman* and *samaṇī* orders in 1980 by Ācārya Tulsi – groups of male and female ascetics, respectively, whose vows permit them to travel outside of India and interact extensively with Jain laypersons and non-Jains for educational purposes – were Chitrabhanu and Sushil Kumar.

Chitrabhanu is a former Śvetāmbara Mūrtipūjaka ascetic who, in 1970, broke the traditional ban on travel for ascetics in order to bring Jain teaching to the West. He established the Jain Meditation International Center in New York City and eventually left monastic life, marrying one of his students and becoming a householder: 'He is the author of numerous books on nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), world peace, meditation, and the practice and philosophy of Jainism.'[144]

Sushil Kumar (1926–1994) was a Sthānakavāsī monk who similarly broke the travel ban in 1975. In 1983 he established Siddhachalam in Blairstown, New Jersey, which serves as 'the headquarters for the World Fellowship of Religions, which he founded in the 1950s to promote unity and understanding among world religions, and for the International Mahavir Jain Mission', which Kumar established in 1978 to spread the teachings of Jainism.[145]

In addition to breaking with the traditional strictures regarding travel, Chitrabhanu and Sushil Kumar – especially the latter – are

distinctively modern in regard to their activist bent, re-orienting Jainism from being a path that gives its primary emphasis to individual spiritual enlightenment to being a philosophy of global transformation and engagement with suffering in the here and now.

Particularly striking in this regard is Veeryatan, an institution established in 1973 by Ācārya Candanā, a Sthānakavāsī nun, and the first nun in the history of Jainism to attain the rank of *ācārya*, or head teacher of a mendicant lineage. The goals of Veeryatan 'are to provide humanitarian service and education and to promote spiritual development'.[146] The organization runs a hospital with an eye clinic, a polio clinic, and a general outpatient clinic.

Conclusion

The history of Jainism since the time of Mahāvīra has been one of diversification in the area of practice, leading to a constantly increasing number of Jain ascetic lineages, sects, and ways of being Jain. But this diversification has been coupled with a remarkable unity in the area of worldview, in terms of the basic Jain conceptions of cosmology and metaphysics.

In the ancient period, we saw the division of the Jains into the Digambara and Śvetāmbara sects. For centuries, these communities flourished, with support from the mercantile and royal classes. With the withdrawal of royal support, due to the appeal of theistic Hindu devotionalism and the eventual replacement of Hindu kings with Muslim ones, the Jains entered a period of insecurity. But by the seventeenth century, the social situation was stable enough to allow for reflection and reform, leading to more diversity as varied interpretations of the tradition emerged.

The modern period has seen the rise of ever-greater diversity among the Jains, as reform movements have emerged and fresh interpretations of ancient traditions have come into being in reaction to new circumstances. The stimuli for these developments have been internal to the Jain community – such as reflection on the meaning of the Jain scriptures and what it means to be faithful to Mahāvīra's teachings in the contemporary world – and external, such as the encounter between Indian cultures and traditions as a whole and the West, an encounter in which Jains have participated no less than Hindus.

More recently, there has emerged the looming environmental crisis, which has led some to cast Jainism as a potential source of urgently relevant ecological wisdom.

Finally, another modern development apparent in many religions has been the increasing emergence of laypersons as spokespersons for the tradition. The proliferation of information and modern education has emboldened Jain laypersons to write texts on Jainism and to form Jain organizations, promoting their own, frequently neo-orthodox perspectives on Jain teachings and the relevance of these teachings to current events.[147]

But beyond this diversity, what unifies the Jain community? What makes a Jain a Jain? Let us turn now from our study of the Jains as an ever-diversifying historical community to an examination of the Jain path – the set of beliefs and practices that unify the tradition whose history we have traced, in a broad and schematic way, in this chapter.

Chapter IV
The Jain Path

What is Jainism?

In the first chapter, I made some references to divisions internal to the Jain community: between those who are affluent merchants and those who are not, between laypersons and ascetics (monks and nuns), between castes, between men and women, between sects of Jainism, and between those Jains who view themselves as Hindu and those who do not. And in the second chapter, I explored the history of this community and its traditions.

But what makes a Jain a Jain? Mahatma Gandhi once famously said that there are in fact as many religions as there are people – that everyone, even members of the same tradition, will tend to interpret the beliefs and practices of their traditions differently, or pursue their practices in subtly different ways.

But allowing for the inevitability that Jains, like all other religious persons, will disagree amongst themselves on certain issues, what can be said by way of a reasonable generalization about the set of views and practices called *Jainism*?

Let us begin by discussing the views and practices shared between Jainism and other Indic traditions, and situating Jainism in its context. Then we can narrow down our examination to the variations on these common themes that are distinctively Jain.

In Jainism, as well as Hinduism and Buddhism, one encounters a universe without beginning or end. According to this cosmology, we have all been undergoing a process of birth, life, death, and rebirth since time without beginning. Though Buddhism adds a layer of complexity to this model, with its *anātman* or 'no self' doctrine, the basic idea is that the physical body is not our true self. The body, rather, is the vehicle of that which is even more fundamental to us – the *jīva*, or *jīvātman*, which corresponds roughly to what Western religious traditions call the soul.

Unlike the body, which is impermanent, the soul has no beginning and no end. In the Indic traditions, it is the soul, and not the body, with which we ought to be primarily concerned. What will happen to us after the body dies? And where were we – if the soul is what we really are – before this body was born? How is the nature of our rebirth, the type of body we inhabit, determined?

According to the Indic traditions, a universal law called *karma*, which governs all action, determines the nature of our rebirth. As I mentioned in the introduction, karma could well be compared to Newton's Third Law of Motion: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Everything we do produces a corresponding effect upon us. But karma is not merely a physical law. It is also a moral law. Our every thought, word, and deed carries with it a degree of what could be called moral force, for good or ill. Just as applying force in the physical world produces an equal force pushing back upon us, similarly, according to the principle of karma, the moral force of our thoughts, words, and actions comes back to us in the form of either pleasant or painful experiences, depending upon the moral character of the force we have exerted. Good deeds produce good effects. Evil deeds produce evil effects. We reap what we sow.

Karma, the net effect of all of our previous choices, produces the experiences of the present moment, in which we are currently making the choices that will produce our future experiences. In effect, we are all creating and re-creating the universe at every moment with our collective choices. This includes the type of body we inhabit. At the time of the death of the body, the karma of the soul will determine what kind of body the soul will inhabit next, including the location of its birth, its social circumstances, etc. One is therefore, in effect, choosing the nature of one's next rebirth all of the time. Good karma, *puṇya karma*, will lead to a good rebirth, in circumstances conducive to spiritual advancement. Bad karma, *pāpa karma*, will lead to rebirth in painful circumstances. Of course most of us, having a mix of good and bad karma, are born into circumstances in which we feel pleasure and pain, freedom and limitation, in various measures.

All of this depends, again, on our karma, which is changing to some extent at every moment, as we make moral choices and engage in action based upon them. It is not only in the afterlife that karma has its effects. These can occur in this life as well.

According to such a worldview, what should one do? Clearly, one should engage in good activities – do good works – so the karmic effects that one experiences will be good ones, and a great deal of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain religious activity is centered around the earning of merit, or good karma, through good actions.

But the philosophy of renunciation that all of these traditions share is based on the insight that the highest good does not consist of making an endless effort toward bettering and maintaining the karmic situation of one's soul. Is there no rest for the soul? Is there no higher aim to give life a purpose and a meaning? Is it not the case, given that we are limited beings, that even the most heroic good deeds will produce karmic effects that will eventually wear out, and that we will again have to continue doing good works in order to maintain our karmic state?

The Buddhist tradition expresses this idea with its First Noble Truth: that existing in *saṃsāra*, experiencing karmic effects, inevitably involves *dukkha*, or suffering. This is an idea shared by Hindus and Jains as well. *Dukkha* does not mean that we are always unhappy. But it means that the highest happiness available to us through the karmically conditioned experiences of this life is limited and impermanent. As the George Harrison song says, 'All things must pass. All things must pass away.'

According to the *śramaṇa* traditions and the Vedānta philosophy of Hinduism as found in the *Upaniṣads*, true happiness, lasting happiness, consists of liberation from the otherwise endless cycle of engaging in action and experiencing its karmic results, a cycle which we experience as the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, or *saṃsāra*.

But how, if karma is a universal law, is such liberation to be achieved? This is the central question on which the various Indic traditions diverge; for each conceives of the basic cosmological vision outlined above in subtly different ways.

The Darśanas: The Systems of Indian Philosophy

There is a very ancient way of categorizing the various Indic systems of thought, which is a useful tool for contextualizing the Jain worldview in terms of its similarities to and its differences from other South Asian worldviews – indeed, a more useful tool than the basic threefold division of these systems into the categories Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain.

The systems of Indian philosophy are traditionally called *darśanas*, or 'views' – or, as this term could reasonably be translated in this

context, worldviews. The main division in the traditional Indian categorization system is between those darśanas, or philosophical systems, which accept the authority of the *Veda* and those that do not. The former set of systems is also called *āstika*, or orthodox, while the latter are called *nāstika*. The *āstika* systems – using the dominant modern definition of Hinduism as Vedic religion – could be called 'Hindu' systems of philosophy (though such a usage would be anachronistic when speaking of the classical period in which this categorization system was developed). The *nāstika* systems are generally listed as three: *Jaina* (or Jain), *Bauddha* (Buddhist), and the *Cārvāka* or *Lokāyata* system. The *āstika* systems are listed as six, though it is useful to think of them as three pairs, since each pair has extensive overlap, and at least one pair – that made up of the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems – eventually fused over time.

To clarify one question that has probably already occurred to observant readers, we seem to have shifted from a discussion of Jainism – which is a religion – to a discussion of philosophy. Two things should be mentioned here. First, the rather large gap between the activities called, in the West, *religion* and *philosophy* – the former being a matter of personal faith and requiring little or nothing in the way of specialized training, the latter being a highly technical discipline largely practiced by university professors, often seen as antagonistic to religion – did not apply to premodern Indian cultures. Nor, for that matter, does it apply particularly well to premodern Western cultures either. Philosophy in ancient Greece was originally an holistic enterprise, a spiritual path encompassing what we now know as both religious practice and the scholarly pursuit of knowledge.[148]

The distinction between religion and philosophy is largely a rather late product of the European Enlightenment. It serves an ideology that views knowledge which is not derived from or reducible to sensory experience with deep suspicion. It thereby relegates religion to the realm of the irrational, or the purely subjective. Philosophers are thus able to differentiate their 'objective' pursuit of knowledge – a pursuit that takes the physical sciences as its model, and indeed privileges science as a hegemonic form of knowledge – from what is regarded as the fanciful realm of religious belief.

Indian traditions have ritual and what could broadly be called faith or devotional dimensions that are quite similar to what Westerners today call *religion* and conceptual dimensions that are similar to what

Westerners call *philosophy*. But they have not tended to sunder these apart after the fashion of contemporary Western thought, except to the degree that this same Western ideology has infiltrated Indian culture. To use the Indian terminology, there is *dharma* – a total way of life, which includes but is not limited to the elements that a Westerner would recognize as *religious* – and there is *darśana* – the more or less technical worldview in terms of this way of life is conceptualized, the concerns of which overlap with many of the traditional concerns of Western philosophers, such as the nature of reality, the process by which valid knowledge is acquired and propositions are defended, the character of language and the impact of language upon thought, and so on.

Traditional Indian philosophy is conducted largely in the service of the practice of a spiritual path, being therefore more akin to what many in the West would call *theology* – though Indian theology is often quite different in content from Western theologies. And the idea that a spiritual path would not require rational argument and logical justification is similarly foreign to a traditional Indian sensibility. So Indian philosophy is both more theological and Indian religion more rationalistic than either corresponding Western form of activity – though there are exceptions on both sides to this very broad generalization. Western philosophy and religion have tended to grow up in opposition to one another. Indian philosophy and religion, on the other hand, are almost indistinguishable.

To the degree that these two *are* distinguishable, Indian philosophy shares with its Western counterpart the quality of being highly technical in nature, and so also tends to be the preserve of trained experts. In Jainism, these experts tend to be ascetics, although there has also been an extensive tradition of lay *paṇḍit*s among North Indian Digambaras for the past 500 years.[149]

Indian systems of philosophy are passed down from teacher to student. Each of the philosophical systems has its own root text, or *sūtra*, which encapsulates in extremely concise form the basic teachings of the founder of the tradition. Indeed, the *sūtras* of the various darśanas are so concise that they are practically undecipherable without the aid of a commentary. Traditionally, this commentary would be provided orally by one's teacher. But numerous written commentaries exist on the *sūtras* of the various systems, as well as commentaries upon commentaries (or sub-commentaries), sub-sub-commentaries, and,

in some cases, sub-sub-sub-commentaries. As one might guess, the chief literary genre in which Indian philosophy is communicated is the commentary, or *bhāṣya*. The goal of the commentary, unlike the doctoral dissertation of Western scholarship, is not to argue for anything new, but to draw out the implications of the *sūtras*, which are seen as containing all relevant knowledge. To be sure, new issues arose all of the time as the adherents of various Indian systems of philosophy engaged one another in debate, or as the members of a particular school would struggle with the implications of their own tradition. But the adherents of these schools had to be able to show the connections between whatever view they defended and the teachings of their system's founder.

The three pairs of *āstika*, or Vedic darśanas, are the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems, and the Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta systems. These three pairs are called Vedic essentially because they do not explicitly deny the authority of the *Veda*. The degree to which they positively *affirm* Vedic authority varies greatly, and has no particular bearing on their philosophical content, given the great variety of positions that are possible based on the Vedic corpus of literature.

The Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems are only nominally Vedic. Indeed, the root texts of neither system actually refer to the *Veda* at all. But they do not reject it, and so were incorporated into the Vedic fold, and many Sāṃkhya and Yoga concepts can be found in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* – such as the idea of *guṇas*, or qualities, discussed in the previous chapter in relation to the *varṇa*, or caste system.

The Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems do mention the *Veda* explicitly and argue for its validity. Interestingly, however, they do not typically invoke its authority in order to justify their claims, relying instead on *tarka*, or logic, to substantiate their claims. Logic, not the *Veda*, is primary. These two systems could be called forms of Vedic rationalism.

Finally, Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta are truly Vedic, taking as their primary goal the interpretation of Vedic texts, and taking the truth of these texts as axiomatic. Mīmāṃsā can be characterized as the continuation into the classical period of the Brahmanical orthodoxy against which the *śramaṇa* traditions reacted. Its chief preoccupation is the correct performance of Vedic ritual. The Mīmāṃsakas, as they

were called, developed an elaborate philosophy of language on the basis of their belief in the power of the Sanskrit verses of the *Veda* – if recited in the correct way and in the correct ritual context – to have actual effects in the world, such as bringing about long life, prosperity, success in battle, and so forth.

The Vedāntins, on the other hand, were chiefly preoccupied with the later portion of the *Veda*, the *Upaniṣads*, and the pursuit of *mokṣa*. Vedānta eventually became the dominant form of Hindu philosophy (or theology), which it remains today, absorbing the concepts of Sāṃkhya, the practice of Yoga, and the methods of logical argument used in Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika.

The *nāstika* systems include Jainism and Buddhism and a third system that was, in many ways, the 'odd man out' of traditional Indian philosophy. The followers of the Cārvāka system – or the Lokāyata system, as it was also known – were materialists. They denied not only the authority of the *Veda*, but the reality of karma, rebirth, and liberation.

Consequently, the texts of all other systems – Vedic, Jain, and Buddhist – condemn the Cārvākas quite strongly. Only fragments of real Cārvāka texts survive. Their central doctrine – a not uncommon view in modern Western thought – is that the only source of valid knowledge is sensory perception, and that claims to the contrary, by the Brahmins and *śramaṇas* alike, are designed to dupe ignorant people into giving them financial support.

Interestingly, the system closest to that of the Cārvākas, despite the deep faith in the *Veda* on which it is based, is the Mīmāṃsā system. Though Mīmāṃsā commentaries do not typically deny the reality of karma, rebirth, or liberation, the chief concern of the Mīmāṃsakas seems to be with achieving this-worldly happiness and success through the correct performance of Vedic ritual, and rebirth in heaven (*svarga-loka*). The Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas, too, give only a nod to *mokṣa* as an ultimate goal, taking it to be a kind of non-existence.

The systems with the closest affinities, in terms of their worldviews and ultimate goals – and this despite the fact that these affinities cut across the Vedic/non-Vedic divide – are Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Jainism, Buddhism, and Vedānta. Sāṃkhya, Yoga, and Jainism, in particular, have close affinities in terms of their metaphysical claims.

In regard to the earlier discussion of origins, some have taken the affinities of these three systems – combined with the fact that Sāṃkhya

and Yoga are only nominally Vedic – to suggest that, like Jainism, both Sāṃkhya and Yoga represent either a pre-Vedic or Greater Magadhan *śramaṇa* tradition. Sāṃkhya concepts appear in Vedic literature relatively late – in the *Upaniṣads*, and even more prominently, in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. And the figure traditionally attributed with the founding of the Sāṃkhya system, the sage Kāpila, is ancient – if an actual historical figure, possibly a contemporary of Pārśvanātha. The city in which the Buddha was raised – Kāpilavastu – was even named after him. This is clearly suggestive of his prominence as a cultural symbol of the philosophy of the Greater Magadha region.[150]

The Jain Vision

In the realm of practice, the religious tradition that probably has the closest similarities to Jainism is Theravāda Buddhism, particularly with its organization of the community into a fourfold schema of male and female ascetic and lay practitioners in relations of mutual dependence. As mentioned previously, Jainism and Theravāda Buddhism share a good deal of philosophical terminology as well, particularly with regard to the topic of karmic influx, and the cessation of this influx as a precondition for *nirvāṇa*.

But the distinctively Jain vision of karma, rebirth, and liberation is most similar to the nominally Vedic Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools of thought in conceiving of the universe in a way that is radically dualistic: that is, as consisting of two completely different types of entity called *jīva* and *ajīva*, or spirit and matter.[151]

Jīvas, according to Jain teaching, when in their pure, unobscured state, have the four characteristics of unlimited knowledge (*jñāna*), perception (*darśana*), bliss (*sukha*), and energy or power (*vīrya*) – sometimes called the 'four infinitudes' (*ananta-catuṣṭaya*). There are many *jīvas* – as many as there are living beings in the cosmos. The word *jīva* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *jīv*, which means 'live', suggesting that this concept is closely connected to the idea of a living being, as its essential 'life force'. But though there are many *jīvas*, each *jīva* is identical in terms of its four essential characteristics. They have the same nature, although they are numerically distinct.

This is an interesting point of comparison and contrast with several Hindu schools of thought. Much like Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems, and unlike Vedānta, Jainism claims that, although all *jīvas* have the same

essential nature (and are therefore, in that sense, identical), their numerical distinctiveness is final. In other words there is not, in Jainism, an 'oversoul', like a Vedāntic Brahman or *paramātman* – one supreme soul of which all individual souls are parts, or in which they participate, or on which they are strung like pearls on a thread[152] – although the Jain tradition does use the same term, *paramātman*, with reference to the *jīva* in its pure, liberated state.

This is the main *metaphysical* difference between Vedānta – in which all souls are ultimately one – and Jainism (though there is a dualistic or *Dvaita* Vedānta that is similar to Jainism and Sāṃkhya in its insistence on the ultimate distinctiveness of all souls). The unity of souls, according to Jainism, is a unity of *nature* or *essence*. All souls are 'one' in the same sense in which all apples are 'one'. There is not one 'supreme apple' of which all actual apples are different manifestations or appendages. But all apples share certain characteristics that mark them off as apples. In the same way, all the *jīvas* have the same four essential characteristics. But their numerical distinctiveness is not illusory.

Also like Sāṃkhya, Jainism is non-theistic. Jains, especially contemporary Jains, do use the word 'God' in their discourse. I have heard Jains say, very much like Hindus, that 'God dwells within you' or that 'God dwells within all beings', and I was once even told by a Jain monk, 'May God bless you'. Beyond the issue of heterodoxy, which does permit theistic language to creep into Jain discourse, there seems to be a concern in the Jain community to avoid the misunderstanding that because Jains are not theists in the conventional sense, that they are also necessarily materialists (materialism and atheism generally going hand-in-hand in the contemporary world). Jain atheism, in other words, is not to be taken as a denial of spiritual values, or of karma or rebirth.

What Jains deny is that there is a *creator* God. When the term 'God' is used in a positive sense (as in the examples I have given), it refers to the *jīva*. It is the soul, in its pure state – the *paramātman* – that is divine in Jainism. There is no need for a creator because the cosmos has always existed.

But why, if all souls have the same essential nature, are there different types of living being? Why are all our experiences different? Why are we not all omniscient, infinitely perceptive, infinitely blissful, and infinitely powerful? Why do we not experience our divinity? The

answer, according to Jainism, is that our *jīvas* have all been associated, throughout their beginningless existence, with *ajīva* – non-soul or matter – of a particular kind, and it is the disassociation of *jīva* from *ajīva* that is the chief aim of Jain asceticism.

Ajīva, according to Jainism, is the negation of *jīva*. Everything that *jīva* is, *ajīva* is not. *Ajīva* is not conscious (and therefore not blissful) and has no inherent powers of its own (though, as we shall see in a moment, it does exhibit certain behaviors as a result of impetus from the *jīva*). The differences among living beings are due to *ajīva*.

The particular type of *ajīva* that adheres to each *jīva*, producing the various kinds of experience that living beings have, is called *karma*. This is the same 'karma' to which the other Indic traditions refer when they are speaking of the universal law of cause and effect that governs all action.

In other words, karma is understood in Jainism to be a material substance which *produces* the universal law of cause and effect, which produces experiences in our souls according to certain regular patterns – an understanding unique to the Jain tradition.

As we have seen, Jainism shares with all the other Indic traditions (except for the Cārvāka or Lokāyata materialists) a belief in *karma*, *saṃsāra*, and *nirvāṇa* or *mokṣa*. So, like the Hindus and Buddhists, Jains believe that we wander from lifetime to lifetime (the literal meaning of *saṃsāra* being 'wandering about'), impelled by the law of cause and effect – *karma* – to be reborn until we attain liberation – *mokṣa* – from this process.

The particulars of this process differ, of course, in different traditions. In Advaita, or non-dualistic, Vedānta, we wander from life to life until we realize that what we really are – the *ātman*, or Self, is identical to Brahman. Not unlike the *jīva* of Jainism, which is pure bliss, perception, consciousness, and power, Brahman is described as infinite being, consciousness, and bliss (*sat-chit-ānanda*).

The difference, again, is that Brahman is one. There is no numerical division in it. It is thoroughly non-dual (which is of course the literal meaning of the word *advaita*). All other beings at least appear to be 'parts' of Brahman, through the power of *māyā*. Or they can be said to participate in it, as a universal consciousness of which all particular occasions of consciousness are illusory manifestations. But in Jainism the *jīvas*, though of one nature, are many, and this plurality is real, not illusory.

In theistic forms of Vedānta, in which the pre-eminent manifestation of Brahman is Īśvara – or God – the personal deity, it is by the grace of God that one becomes free from karmic bondage. In Buddhism, the term 'self' is avoided, but the process is arguably not fundamentally different from Advaita – the deconstruction of the empirical ego followed by the spontaneous arising of insight into the true nature of reality, leading to *nirvāṇa*, the state of freedom from suffering and further rebirth.

In Vedānta, however, karma is simply a universal law. 'For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction' – not only in the realm of physics, but in the realm of morality as well. In Buddhism, karma is more of a psychological reality. Instead of a self, it is karmic energy that is reborn, like a flame passing one candle to another. This energy must be resolved for *nirvāṇa* to occur, which is likened to flame being blown out.

But in Jainism, karma is actually a form of subtle matter, and the mechanism by which the bondage of the soul occurs, as well as the path to its eventual liberation, is the central concern of the tradition. According to Jainism, all *jīvas*, all souls, throughout their beginningless existence, have been bound to karmic matter.

How did this process begin? These traditions do not concern themselves with the question of the origins of the process. But one sometimes comes across the analogy of mud. When one encounters mud, one does not have to ask the question, 'How did dirt and water come together to form this mud?' to be able to sort out and separate the two. Similarly, one need not postulate an origin of how soul and matter (or on a Buddhist account, pure mind and false consciousness) came to be enmeshed with one another in order to discern a distinction between the two and initiate the process of their separation.

How does this process work? What is the path to the purification of the soul, of removing the 'dirt' of karmic matter from the 'water' of pure consciousness? According to the Jain account, karmic matter is attracted to the *jīva* by the arising of passions within the *jīva*. The passions are of two fundamental kinds: attraction (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) though neutrality or indifference can also be mentioned as a third.

A passion is a kind of deformation in the structure of the soul, which is otherwise, as mentioned above, inherently omniscient and blissful. The passions arise in response to stimuli: to experiences.

Experiences, in turn, are the effects of karmic matter previously embedded in the soul through the process of attraction by the passions.

In other words, karmic bondage is a vicious circle. At any given point in the journey of the soul through *saṃsāra* – its wandering process of birth, death, and rebirth in the material world – it contains karmic particles that it has attracted through its passionate responses to prior stimuli. As these particles produce their effects, in the form of various experiences, more passions are elicited, and more particles are attracted, which will lead to more experiences, and so on. Until the soul has purified itself of karmic matter, giving rise to pure knowledge (*kevalajñāna*) and pure bliss, the process will continue.

Different types of passion attract different types of karmic matter. Different types of karmic matter, in turn, produce different types of experience, and a vast and elaborate literature exists which analyzes the types of karmic matter, their effects, and the passions that elicit them. [153] A central concern of Jainism is cultivating control over the passions so the influx of karmic matter can be kept to a minimum.

It is not a deterministic system, however, because, like all systems that involve the notion of karma, there is an element of free will in the present moment in terms of how one is going to respond to one's current experience. In the terms we have been using, it is *not* the case that karma determines the type of passion that will arise in response to the experience that it produces. We are in control, ultimately, of how we respond to stimuli. It is this element of freedom that makes a path of liberation from karma possible; for this freedom opens up a space for human action that can shape the future of one's relationship to the karmic process. The literature on Jain karma theory exists precisely as a guide to the practitioner so that she may control her passions in such a way as to produce the most desirable karmic results, the most desirable ultimately being none at all. True freedom – *mokṣa* – is complete freedom from karmic determination.

Karmic particles are frequently referred to in Jain literature as 'seeds' (*bīja*). The analogy is a good one. Just as a seed falls into the soil, the karmic particle embeds itself within the soul. Just like a seed, the karmic particle eventually bears fruit (*phala*), in the form of an experience. And, like a seed, the precise timing and manner in which karma bears fruit depends upon a variety of factors. Different kinds of karma come to fruition in different ways and at different times, just like different seeds. But just as seeds need the right kind of soil to

grow and to bear fruit, as well as factors like water and sunlight, in the same way, the fruition of karma can be affected by the soul environment in which it finds itself. The function of much of Jain asceticism is to create an environment that is inhospitable to karmic fruition, but that can lead, rather, to the destruction of karma. The metaphor is often used, extending the seed analogy, of 'cooking' the seeds of our karma in the 'fires' of asceticism (*tapas*) so that they cannot grow or bear fruit.

So one dimension of Jain asceticism involves the purification and purgation of the soul, freeing it from the karmic matter that is already embedded in it, and which deforms it, obscuring its true nature as infinite knowledge and bliss, and threatening to attract more such matter through the passions its fruition can evoke.

The other dimension of Jain asceticism involves the prevention of the influx of more karmic matter through the control of the passions. This is where Jain meditation comes in: the practice of *sāmāyika*, or equanimity in the face of both joy and sorrow. As in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*'s recommendation of *karma-phala-vairāgya*, 'detachment from the fruits of action', the Jain tradition holds that experiences faced with equanimity, and the actions arising therefrom, do not attract additional karmic matter to the soul. Ascetics and laypersons both practice *sāmāyika*. The Jain layperson is said to be the most like an ascetic – to come closest to the ascetic state – while engaging in this practice.[154] Through the practice of *sāmāyika*, one learns not to give in to the passions which attract karma to the soul. One practices *not* automatically reacting to joy with attraction and sorrow with aversion, but reacting to both with equanimity – or in other words, *not* reacting to them.

The *jīva*, in its ideal state, could be compared to a smooth body of water – like a lake on a windless day – clear and untroubled by turbulence or waves. But the *jīvas* of most beings, non-liberated beings, are not in their ideal state. They are like lakes whose waters are filled with waves and whirlpools, which correspond to emotional states called, in Jainism, the passions (*rāgas*). These passions can be seen as deformations on the smooth surface of the soul. These deformations attract particles of karmic matter to the soul, further deforming it and making it 'sticky'. The passions' effect of drawing karma to the soul is sometimes compared to the way that wetting a cloth makes it attract dust.

The passions are essentially reactions to experiences, and are of three basic types: attraction, aversion, and neutrality. We either like an experience, wanting more of it; we dislike it, and so want to avoid it; or we are indifferent to it. Experiences are the result of karmic particles or 'seeds' (*bīja*) coming to fruition. These experiences, in turn, produce passions, which attract more karmic seeds, which also come to fruition, producing more experiences, leading to more passions, and so on. Again, no beginning to this process is posited in the Jain tradition. There was no 'fall' from a higher, spiritual state, in which originally pure souls began to be contaminated by karmic matter. It is simply the way things have always been, throughout beginningless time.

Put most simply, the goal of Jainism as a spiritual practice is the removal (*nirjarā*) of the karmic matter that obscures the true nature of the *jīva* and causes it to be bound (*bandha*) to the cycle of rebirth in the material world and to prevent (*saṃvara*) the further influx (*āśrava*) of such matter. The result of successful removal of karmic matter from the *jīva* and the prevention of further karmic influx is *mokṣa* – liberation from rebirth.

Because it is the passions that attract karma to the *jīva*, an essential component of the Jain path is to cultivate a disposition of detachment (*vairāgya*) or calm equanimity in the face of all our experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant. For this reason, many Jains, like Buddhists and Hindus, practice a form of meditation, in order to cultivate the calm mental state most conducive to spiritual freedom.

The distinctive Jain form of meditation, developed in the Śvetāmbara Terāpathī community, is known as *prekṣādhyāna*. It has become a prominent part of both lay and monastic Terāpanthī practice in recent times. This practice was long believed to be lost, but was rediscovered – or rather, reconstructed – by the Jain muni Ācārya Mahāprajñā, whose order has done much to promote it among both ascetics and laypersons.[155] As Dundas elaborates:

> This system, which takes its inspiration from scattered scriptural statements about perceiving the self with the self, while also drawing eclectically on a wide range of sources in other traditions, provides a meditative structure, similar in style to Buddhist insight meditation, for a religion that seems to have lost contact with its original system of contemplation at least one thousand years ago.[156]

But while meditation and equanimity – *prekṣādhyāna* and *sāmāyika* – can help one to avoid accumulating additional karmic matter, there are still karmic particles that need to be removed from the *jīva* if one is to achieve liberation. This removal is achieved through difficult ascetic activities (*tapas*), such as fasting, meditating for long periods of time in difficult positions – such as *kāyotsarga*, the distinctively Jain standing meditation posture – and the giving up of material comforts to which one has developed attachment.

In terms of karma, ascetic activities serve a double function. By helping the Jain practitioner to exert a greater control over the passions through self-discipline, they aid in reducing karmic influx. But because ascetic activities are inherently difficult, they also, in effect, substitute for the unpleasant experiences that one's bad karma would inevitably create anyway, given time. One essentially pays one's karmic debt in advance by taking on such difficult practices, and so accelerates one's progress toward liberation. Again, just as a seed, once cooked, cannot sprout, in the same way, a karmic seed has its effects negated by the voluntary suffering that is involved in the practice of asceticism. The seed is essentially brought to premature fruition, and so removed from the soul.[157] Without the aid of ascetic practice, one would have to wait for one's karmas to come to fruition on their own, which could take many lifetimes.

The Importance of *Ahiṃsā*

The strict asceticism of Jain monks and nuns is closely connected with the ethical ideal of *ahiṃsā*, which is generally translated as nonviolence, but which is actually much more radical than the English word 'nonviolence' might suggest. It is not simply a matter of refraining from actual, physical harm. *Ahiṃsā* is the absence of even a desire to do harm to any living being, in thought, word, or deed.

The Jain ethos of *ahiṃsā* is a direct outcome of Jain karma theory. The passions that attract karma of the worst kind – karma whose fruition leads to the greatest suffering – are those associated with violence. To practice *ahiṃsā* is to wish to harm no living thing, either deliberately (which of course produces the worst karmic effects) or even through one's carelessness (which, though not as bad as intentional violence, is still regarded in Jainism as carrying a negative karmic effect).

As I have discussed previously, there is a frank recognition in the Jain tradition that not all human beings are prepared for the level of asceticism that is required in order to purge the *jīva* completely from karmic matter and thus end its cycle of suffering the vicissitudes of *saṃsāra*. Some souls are still sufficiently deluded that they continue to choose the time-bound pleasures of the material world over the infinite bliss of a purified and liberated soul, seeing the asceticism of the Jain monk or nun as a terrible burden, rather than a path to freedom. This, in fact, includes many Jains, who deeply revere those who have undertaken the ascetic path, knowing that they themselves, in this life at least, could never take on such a difficult practice.

In the Jain community, the recognition of different spiritual levels, with different duties appropriate to each, issues in the construction of a fourfold community of male and female lay and ascetic practitioners. For the ascetic, male or female, the chief task is the practice of absolute *ahiṃsā*. For a very small number of such ascetics, this culminates in *sallekhanā* or *santhārā*, which is the complete renunciation of material sustenance, in the recognition that even the digestive process involves violence to microscopic organisms.

But for the layperson, male or female, there is an understanding that such a total renunciation is both impossible and undesirable. As in Theravāda Buddhism, the laity is devoted not so much to *nirvāṇa* as to the avoidance of bad karma and the accumulation of good karma (*puṇya*), in the hope that this will aid them in their spiritual path, leading to progressively better rebirths in which, eventually, they may feel the call of renunciation. *Nirvāṇa*, though ultimately desirable, is a more distant goal than a meritorious rebirth.

This is an important way in which Jainism (and Hinduism and Buddhism) differs from most Western religions. In Western religions, there is typically one good that is to be achieved – salvation – and that good is an all-or-nothing prospect: one is either saved and goes to heaven or is damned for all eternity. And there is only one lifetime in which the matter can be decided. In the Indic traditions, however, there is a hierarchy of goods that are not mutually incompatible. One hopes for this-worldly benefits – happiness, long life, prosperity, and so on – and an extension of these benefits into one's next life – that is, a good rebirth. Both of these goods – this-worldly benefits in this life and a rebirth in which more such benefits are forthcoming – can be achieved through meritorious action. They are effects of *puṇya*, or

'good karma'. And then there is the highest good, in which one gives up, or renounces, worldly goods in the pursuit of liberation. The idea of a hierarchy of goods is in fact formalized in the Hindu tradition, in which the *puruṣārthas* or 'aims of man' are ranked as pleasure (*kāma*), prosperity (*artha*), goodness (*dharma*), and, finally, liberation (*mokṣa*) – the ultimate good. To be sure, the last of these – *mokṣa* – is regarded as both intrinsically and infinitely more desirable than the first three. But it takes time to awaken to this realization, and there is no time limit imposed on the process of doing so.

The ethos of storing up merit leads to all manner of positive charitable activities, for which the Jain community is justifiably famous. But all such activities are ultimately in the service of spiritual liberation. To give, for a Jain layperson, is actually a mentally purifying act – a mini-renunciation – in preparation for the ultimate renunciation for which the layperson hopes eventually to be ready – if not in this life, then in a future rebirth.

Meritorious action is also a type of *ahiṃsā*. *Ahiṃsā* is not a negative ideal of only avoiding harm. It entails compassion for all living beings.[158] Western writers on Jainism, especially Christian missionaries, have often sought to criticize the Jain ideal of *ahiṃsā* on the basis of the claim that this ideal involves no positive ethic of helping suffering beings, but that it is only a matter of not hurting them – essentially, of doing nothing.[159]

This, however, is a distortion of the Jain tradition, ignoring, as it does, the high level of Jain involvement in charity.[160] Compassion is said to be essential to a right view of reality (*samyagdarśana*) – both a condition for and a product of spiritual evolution.[161]

The centrality of *ahiṃsā* to Jainism is difficult to exaggerate, though an exclusive focus on the ascetic *ahiṃsā* of the Jain monks and nuns can create a one-sided impression of the Jain community. *Ahiṃsā* is the central ethical principle of Jainism, embodied in the often-quoted statement *ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ* – *ahiṃsā* is the highest duty.

Why is *ahiṃsā* so central to Jainism? In terms of the Jain karma theory outlined above, a central Jain insight is that the worst passions, the ones that attract the heaviest, most obscuring karmic particles into the soul, are those that are involved in committing acts of violence. Acts of violence typically involve a high degree of intense passion, such as anger and hatred. Negative passions like these, which obscure our perception that all souls are essentially the same as our own, bind us even more

tightly to *saṃsāra*. In order to ensure a better rebirth, one in which we are more likely to make spiritual progress – and certainly in order to purify the soul and reach liberation – it is essential that we avoid any thought, word, or deed that involves *hiṃsā*, the desire to do harm.

According to a Jain understanding, however, it is very difficult to avoid doing any harm whatsoever to living beings. The universe is filled with microscopic organisms – a fact of which Mahāvīra, interestingly, was sharply aware in the fifth century BCE. The most basic of these are called *nigodas*.[162] For human beings, the very act of being alive involves the destruction of such tiny life forms. Eating, digesting food, breathing, sitting, and moving about: all involve the destruction of *nigodas* on a massive scale.

Such activities are generally not carried out with the intention of doing harm. One could argue that the requisite intent to do harm – and so the passion with which this intent is normally associated – is absent from such activities, and that they must therefore be without karmic consequence. But this is not a traditional Jain understanding. Once one is aware of the existence of tiny life forms in the air one breathes, in the water one drinks, and on the surfaces on which one travels and rests one's body, one becomes responsible for the harm that one does. Also, unlike Buddhism, which sees motive as the chief determinant of the morality of an act – of whether it involves a good or a bad karmic result – Jainism teaches that the actual consequences of action are always a major factor.

Jain monks and nuns therefore spend a good deal of their time in the effort to have a minimal negative impact upon their environment. Jain asceticism consists primarily of curbing activities that might lead to the accidental destruction of life, and to cultivating mindfulness of the life forms with which one shares the physical universe. A well-known symbol of this ascetic ideal is the *muhpattī*, a cloth that some Jain monks and nuns wear over their mouths to avoid accidentally inhaling or ingesting small organisms.

Central though the ascetic ideal of *ahiṃsā* is to the Jain community and its view of itself, it would be an exaggeration to suggest that all, or even most, Jains are constantly preoccupied with avoiding harm to microorganisms. There is a frank recognition in the Jain community, as in Buddhism, that most people are not yet at the spiritual level where they would wish to renounce life as a layperson and the activities that go with day-to-day existence.

Jain Lay and Ascetic Morality

Although the ascetic ideal informs even the life of the Jain layperson, it is not expected that the average Jain should follow the same strictures as those observed by Jain monks and nuns. Like Buddhism, Jainism involves a twofold morality, a set of moral principles observed to the letter by the monks and nuns, but observed only to the extent practically possible for a layperson.

The basic moral principles of Jainism are expressed in five vows. Jain laypeople do not typically take these vows formally. But they do define the ideal moral life that is generally expected of the Jain layperson. These *anuvratas*, or 'small vows', are:

1. Nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*): to refrain from directly and deliberately taking the life of any animal or human being.
2. Truthfulness (*satya*): to tell the truth and to engage in honest business practices.
3. Non-stealing (*asteya*): not to steal.
4. Sexual chastity (*brahmacarya*): to refrain from committing marital infidelity and to avoid pre-marital sexual activity.
5. Non-attachment (*aparigraha*): to avoid being possessive and materialistic.

As John Cort explains these vows:

> A layperson should not desire, intend, or act in such a way as to harm any moving creature, but instead try to protect them. A layperson should not act heedlessly in anger and beat living creatures. A layperson should not needlessly pierce the skin of a living creature. A layperson should not overlook either animals or people. A layperson should not kill beings by beating them. A layperson should not let people and animals in one's care go hungry … *Satya* for the layperson involves avoiding various types of lies, especially in the business field, and not bearing false witness. *Asteya* involves not stealing, not avoiding taxes, and fair business practices. *Brahmacarya* involves having sex only with one's spouse, as well as the avoidance of ardent gazing or lewd gestures, although most people, both mendicant and laity, would understand *brahmacarya* to mean total chastity. *Aparigraha* involves renouncing attachment to one's wealth, and limiting either the value of various types of possessions or of all one's possessions in total.[163]

Monks and nuns take stricter versions of the same five vows, called, in their case, the five *mahāvratas*, or 'great vows':

1. Strict nonviolence in thought, word, and deed, avoiding even accidental injury to any living being.
2. Absolute truthfulness.
3. Non-stealing (literally 'not taking what is not given').
4. Absolute celibacy.
5. Non-possession: not owning any possessions whatsoever.

These five vows can apparently be traced back to Mahāvīra, and constitute one of his main reforms of the tradition of Pārśvanātha, whose followers observed four vows – all five of Mahāvīra's except for the fourth. According to commentators, Pārśvanātha took sexual chastity to be implied in the idea of non-possession. Mahāvīra's innovation was to make this requirement explicit.[164]

What do each of these vows mean in the daily lives of those who undertake them? For a Jain layperson, *ahiṃsā* means being as nonviolent as possible while still pursuing a livelihood and being involved in the normal duties of a householder – providing for and raising a family, fulfilling outside social obligations, and so on.

In one sense, this is no different from the obligation enjoined in every religious community to avoid murder and other forms of physical violence, as well as the bad mental habits which lead to such behavior – the nurturing of grudges, anger, vengefulness, and so on. But again, *ahiṃsā* refers to nonviolence in thought, word, and deed. So the Jain layperson is expected, as much as humanly possible, not only to avoid any actual, deliberate killing, but to maintain a calm, cheerful frame of mind, as well as a friendly disposition toward all living beings. Unlike most Western religions, but like other Indic traditions, ethical behavior, in Jainism, is intended to transform one's consciousness.

Jain monks and nuns who instruct laypersons on how to remain within the limits of the five vows will often show how these vows are logically interrelated and mutually supportive. Saman Śrūtaprajñā, for example, in one of his books for laypersons, connects maintaining an attitude of *ahiṃsā* with the fifth vow, non-attachment or non-possession:

> [The] main thrust of … Jainism is nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*). One should not injure another through his mind, speech, and body. If one has a desire for possession (*parigraha*) then there is violence (*hiṃsā*). To practice *ahiṃsā*, one has to control his desires. Uncontrollable desires give birth to many negative things. To win over these negative aspects is the first step towards the practice of *ahiṃsā*. One can be a person of nonviolence … by being a householder [i.e. while nevertheless being a householder]. One begins the practice of *ahiṃsā* by purifying his *chitta* [mind]. The definition of *hiṃsā* is not limited to killing others. Anger, force, harsh words (even if they are truths), deceit, accumulation, negligence, etc. are all different forms of *hiṃsā*.[165]

Several things about Śrūtaprajñā's explanation are worth further attention. First, there is the strong connection he draws between passionate desires and violence. In the Buddhist tradition, too, desire is said to be the root of suffering. This is the second of the Four Noble Truths. When we desire to possess something we become angry if it is not possible for us to have that thing. If it is a person that has prevented our attaining our goal, that anger easily becomes directed at that person, in the form of violent thoughts, which can easily give rise, in turn, to violent words and violent deeds.

It is also worth noting that Śrūtaprajñā includes negligence in his list of forms of *hiṃsā* (violence). Recall that, according to Jainism, while the accidental destruction of life is not as harmful, karmically speaking, as deliberate, intentional harm, once one has become aware, through understanding and internalizing Jain teaching, of the prevalence of life everywhere, one is responsible for avoiding the taking of that life, and is guilty of any negligence that leads to its destruction. Knowledge of the true nature of existence brings a burden of responsibility.

For the layperson, of course, avoidance of the destruction of life on a microscopic level may be simply impossible. One needs to eat, to drink, and to prepare food both for oneself and for one's children, as well as for wandering Jain ascetics (though ascetics are forbidden from taking food prepared explicitly for them). Where do Jains draw the line? For the layperson, it is a matter of intention. One knows that one's daily actions involve the destruction of life on a microscopic scale. But one does not willfully or deliberately take the life of

any being. Even for laypersons, this is not simply a matter of behavior, but of cultivating an attitude of harmlessness toward all living things.

In practical terms, this means Jains overwhelmingly – if they are practicing and not merely nominal Jains – are vegetarian. Jains are not traditionally, as is sometimes thought, vegans, though in recent years a growing number of Jains have become vegan.[166] A vegan does not consume any animal products at all. Jains in India do drink milk and use milk products, since cows are not harmed in the process. But they do not eat eggs.

Jains are also forbidden to engage in activities for their livelihood which involve the direct taking of life. One will not typically find a Jain butcher or Jain executioner, for example. Indeed, the injunction to avoid direct taking of life is the reason so many Jains go into business professions. Trading in goods made by others is less likely to force one into situations where one must directly take life oneself.

But, the Jain ideal, as embodied in texts produced by monks for the instruction of the laity, is not necessarily a guide to the realities of Jain practice. As Dundas explains:

> Without discounting the role of the handbooks of lay behaviour, medieval and modern, in moulding and reinforcing a particularly Jain moral ethos, it would be unwise to use them as a touchstone for assessing the orthodoxy or deficiency of the activities of Jain lay people as observed today, for the preoccupations of the monks who produced these texts and the laity by no means always coincide. Perhaps the most obvious example is the respective ways in which lay people and ascetics envision non-violence. The layman is typically portrayed by ascetic writers as being by his very nature continually implicated in violence and destruction, even when he is acting from ostensibly pious motives. As one Digambara writer almost comically puts it, giving food to monks cannot be undertaken without killing life-forms owing to the need to light fires, boil water and so on, building a temple involves activities like digging the ground and chopping down trees while worship within the temple is performed by cutting flowers and pouring liquids, all activities which by the strictest standards involve destruction of life-forms. In addition, we are told, the curbing of the sexual drive will have an unfortunate psychological effect upon one's wife, while even fasting is likely to upset somebody in the household.[167]

Given the practical impossibility of living up to the Jain ideal as presented by ascetics, it should not be surprising if the realities of Jain lay life are not a perfect reflection of it:

> … Jain lay people, although maintaining a respectful attitude towards animals and lower forms of life, taking care to conform to traditional dietary prescriptions and following trades and professions which do not blatantly infringe the principle of non-violence, seldom exercise their imaginations greatly about the religious implications of their normal day-to-day activities, placing the emphasis instead, if challenged, on their purity of intention. Thus, agriculture … is not today seriously stigmatized for the destruction it causes to organisms in the earth. Jain industrialists do not speculate about the possible infringement of non-violence in their factories and workshops or through the transport of their products, nor do they agonize about their possible place in a manufacturing process which might culminate in, say the production of military weaponry. Furthermore, the Jain laity does not generally regard its attitudes towards matters of government policy, international politics or capital punishment as being conditioned by the doctrine of non-violence.[168]

Students sometimes ask whether the real-life application of Jain moral teaching is hypocritical – with Jain businessmen benefitting financially from the activities that others do, which may involve violence, while not engaging in these activities themselves, or with Jain monks and nuns surviving materially off of the generosity of laypersons, who are engaging in violence at some level in order to generate the economic prosperity that makes it possible for the monks and nuns to live and practice their path.

This question, while valid when coming from a Western ethical framework, is in a sense inappropriate if applied to the Jain tradition; for it presupposes that the same level of expectation applies to everyone – the Jain ascetic, the Jain layperson, and the non-Jain. Each of these people is at a different level of awareness with regard to the truth taught by Mahāvīra. Jain ascetics, at least ideally, are keenly aware of the presence of life forms all around them. Indeed, their daily practices are designed precisely to cultivate mindfulness of this very fact. The Jain layperson knows, one could say, theoretically that this is the case – that his or her daily actions are destroying life forms. But this knowledge, one may say, has not yet taken root to the extent

that it has issued in a truly felt compassion for the tiny forms of life that she or he is destroying. If it has, that person should become a nun or a monk. Finally, for the non-Jain, the existence of microscopic life is, at most, a topic of intellectual interest, but, more likely than not, a matter of no consequence whatsoever.

Now, while this means the non-Jain is considerably further from the highest level of realization necessary for liberation than the Jain ascetic, with the Jain layperson being somewhere in the middle, it also means the Jain ascetic is more culpable should she or he actually destroy a life form. The Jain ascetic, to put it bluntly, knows better, so his or her level of responsibility is higher. Non-Jains do not know better. So while our destruction of life certainly involves some negative karmic effect, it is not as great as what would be involved for a Jain monk or nun who, say, in a fit of anger, were to squash an insect. Jain monks and nuns are at a more advanced stage than non-Jains. But their situation is also more precarious. They have further to fall, as it were.

The appearance of hypocrisy is also a function of a Western ethical heritage that tends to see moral injunctions as divine commands. One should avoid certain activities because God has forbidden them. In Jainism, however, karma is a purely impersonal law. The 'should' of morality arises from a compassion which arises naturally as one evolves spiritually, as well as a sense of enlightened self-interest, given the possibility of accruing bad karma. One is responsible, ultimately, to one's own conscience. And the sensivity of one's conscience is itself a function of one's level of spiritual attainment.

In other words, Jains do not observe the *anuvratas*, nor even the *mahāvratas*, out of a sense that Mahāvīra is floating in the heavens somewhere watching them, approving or disapproving of certain acts and meting out karmic rewards and punishments. Karma is a natural law. I once heard a Buddhist explain the Buddhist understanding of karma in the following crude but accurate way: 'If you jump off a cliff, you'll hit the ground and go splat.' The same understanding applies to Jainism. Some actions will lead naturally to suffering and others will lead to happiness.

As one evolves spiritually, one realizes that the actions that lead to suffering in others are the ones that lead to suffering in oneself. Similarly, the actions that lead to happiness in others are the ones that will lead to one's own happiness. It is a reciprocal process. If one wants

to be happy, one will do those things that lead to the happiness of others. And if one wants to avoid suffering, one will avoid creating suffering in others.

Is this selfish? Perhaps at an early stage it could be so characterized. But the end result of thinking and living in this way is an eventual identification of one's own joys and sorrows with the joys and sorrows of others – a state of total altruism. Jain ethics, like Buddhist ethics, is best seen as a process of character transformation rather than as a set of rules. Rules are necessary early in the process. But the ultimate goal is for these rules to transform one's character until they become second nature. Moral behavior, one could say, is the spontaneous behavior of the spiritually enlightened being. For the rest of us, it requires practice. And moral rules are practical guidelines.

The Jain path, both in its early stage, as represented in the *anuvratas*, and at more advanced levels, as reflected in the *mahāvratas*, is a kind of road map for the soul to the realization of its own pure nature. Even the decision to tread the path at all is a matter of choice. According to Jainism, many beings never experience the desire for liberation. Such beings will never be liberated from the cycle of rebirth, not because they have been damned or because only Jains have been predestined for salvation, but because they do not want to be liberated, and so never take the steps necessary to achieve this goal. They are called *abhavya*. 'Why the Jainas should harbor such a theory of absolute, permanent bondage for certain beings is not at all clear; it has been dogmatically accepted on the basis of scripture, and may simply reflect the commonplace observation that some individuals show no interest whatsoever in their salvation.'[169]

As we have seen, the most important and most distinctive of the Jain *vratas*, the one that underlies the bulk of Jain ethical practice, is *ahiṃsā*, or nonviolence. This makes sense, in terms of karma; for thoughts, words, and deeds that are harmful or that intend harm toward other beings will inevitably come back to oneself. As Mahāvīra says in the *Ācārāṅga*: 'To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself. You are he whom you intend to kill. You are he whom you intend to dominate. We corrupt ourselves as soon as we intend to corrupt others. We kill ourselves as soon as we intend to kill others.'[170] And it is the karmic matter that is associated with violent thoughts, words, and deeds that is the heaviest of all, that most obscures the true nature of the *jīva*. But the other *vratas* are significant as well.

Truthfulness (*satya*) is an essential Jain virtue. The entire thrust of the Jain path is toward the realization of the true nature of existence – realizing the true nature of the soul and experiencing the pure knowledge that results. Speech or action that is intended to distort the truth is therefore at odds with the fundamental goal of the Jain way of life. It is also connected with other vices, because false speech is typically done for nefarious ends, either out of excessive acquisitiveness or a desire to do harm.

Speech, therefore, which willfully distorts and misrepresents the nature of reality goes completely against the grain of the Jain goal. For laypersons and for ascetics, this means being scrupulously honest in one's words and – in the case of businessmen – honest in one's business dealings.

Here, too, however, there is a distinction between the level of practice expected in the *anuvrata* in contrast with the *mahāvrata*. As in Western ethics, the question of the limits of truthfulness arises in Jainism. Might there not be some times when it is not only permissible, but the only acceptable moral course, to tell a lie? The scenario often used in Western ethics involves the Nazis asking the location of a Jewish family that one is hiding in one's home. (The equivalent Jain scenario involves a group of bandits hunting for a rich man that they want to kill and rob.) As in Western ethics, the Jain view in this scenario is that the more fundamental ethical value – *ahiṃsā* – trumps the value of truth. So one should definitely lie to the Nazis (or the bandits), telling them that you haven't seen the people they are looking for, or that they have gone in a different direction, and so on. If by telling the truth one would facilitate the destruction of life and the inflicting of pain, one would become complicit in that act of violence.

For the Jain monk or nun, however, the standard is considerably higher. While a layperson has an obligation to misrepresent the truth in a scenario such as the one I have just described, a monk or nun in such a situation must keep silent. If the villains should threaten the life of the monk or nun, he or she must still keep silent, being willing to give up his or her life for the principles of truth and nonviolence. The layperson has other obligations – such as protecting his or her family and property – making self-preservation an acceptable motive for action. But the ascetic is sworn to the path alone.

The third vow, the vow of non-stealing (*asteya*), is probably the one with the least variation between lay and monastic expectations. But

here, too, the layperson, due to his or her obligations as a householder, may be placed in a position in which stealing is the only acceptable recourse: to feed his or her starving children, for example.

In contrast to the layperson, the monk or nun, being responsible only for him or herself, must starve before taking food that is not freely given. To take food that has not been given, in accordance with the scriptural injunctions, would evidence an attachment to the physical body inappropriate for a Jain ascetic.

One can begin to see, through this investigation of the vows, why the life of the ascetic is seen, from a Jain perspective, as a life of freedom – despite the restrictions that it obviously involves. A layperson, because of responsibilities to the family or to society, can again and again be placed in morally compromising situations. A famine may make a layman have to steal food for his children. Violent, oppressive persons could make him have to lie to protect others. And even the first and most important vow, *ahiṃsā*, allows for minimal force to be used for self-defense and for the protection of others, if needed, and there were Jain kings in ancient India who had armies and engaged in warfare. But the ascetic, being free from all such considerations, is able to follow the vows to the full extent.

The fourth vow – chastity (*brahmacarya*) – means, for laypersons, marital fidelity and pre-marital celibacy. For ascetics, it means absolute celibacy. The rules governing even casual physical contact, particularly between members of different genders, are very strict for Jain monks and nuns. One of my former Sanskrit teachers, a male, told me of how he had once taught Sanskrit to a group of Jain nuns who could not even touch the same book that he, as a male, had handled. They had to use separate copies of the book.

The fifth vow, *aparigraha*, means, for laypersons, maintaining an attitude of non-attachment to worldly possessions. For monks and nuns, it means having no possessions whatsoever. Laypersons who abide by this vow will often set precise limits on how much of a particular item they will own – land, houses, money, clothing, furniture, and so on – and then live within that self-imposed limit.[171] The determination of these limits is one of the many areas of Jain observance in which laypersons will typically turn to an ascetic for advice.

The correct interpretation of *aparigraha* for ascetics is of course the main issue that differentiates Śvetāmbara and Digambara monks.

Both groups agree that an ascetic should only possess the bare minimum requirements for practicing the Jain ascetic path, such as the whisk for protecting small creatures from harm. But the Śvetāmbaras include clothing among these requisite items, whereas the Digambaras do not.

Sallekhanā: The Fast to the Death

The most controversial of Jain ascetic practices – though, it must be emphasized, a quite rare one – is the practice of self-starvation – known as *sallekhanā* or *santhārā* – occasionally undertaken by Jain monks and nuns, and the rare layperson, as the ultimate act of *ahiṃsā* and *aparigraha*.

This practice – as Jains emphasize quite strongly – is *not* a form of suicide. It is not undertaken out of passion or because of despair or anger. It can only be undertaken with the permission of one's spiritual preceptor, or *guru*. The guru's duty is to ensure that one's motives in undertaking this fast to the death are pure – that one is doing it out of a genuine sense of detachment from the body and out of compassion for all of the living beings that one will save by not continuing to eat, breathe, and consume resources. Such a holy death is seen as having great capacity to advance the soul on its path to liberation, and to be possible only for beings who have perfected their compassion and their wisdom to such a degree that they would rather die than cause pain or death for even the tiniest of creatures. There is, in fact, a famous story of a renowned Digambara scholar-monk of the sixth century, Samantabhadra, who sought permission from his guru to undertake the fast to the death because he had contracted leprosy and wanted to, quite literally, put himself out of his misery. His request was denied because his guru could perceive that the real motive behind Samantabhadra's desire was not, in fact, compassionate detachment, but rather the wish to avoid the physical discomfort of his disease. Only after he had spent a good deal of time in meditation and had come to accept his condition with equanimity was he granted permission to undertake *sallekhanā*.

Sallekhanā is an ancient practice. The first mention of it occurs in the earliest of the Jain scriptures, the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.7.8). A Brahmin convert to Jainism named Skandaka Kātyāyana undertakes

it with the permission of Mahāvīra. It is described as a highly ritualized process, with elements reminiscent of a Vedic sacrifice.[172]

This practice is of course controversial, especially among non-Jains, because it at least appears to be a religiously sanctioned form of suicide. It is most often undertaken by very elderly Jain ascetics who – due to various physical infirmities – are no longer able to perform their ascetic practices. This is quite different from Samantabhadra's despair, for the basis of the decision is the ability to practice, not physical or mental discomfort. In a recent case in Rajasthan, a court injunction was sought to prevent two elderly Jain women from undertaking this death by fasting. The case required members of the Jain community to articulate the distinction between *sallekhanā*, or *santhārā*, and suicide in order to show that this practice did not meet the legal definition of suicide.[173]

Jain Worship and Devotion

Though having an absolutely central place in the Jain path, an excessive focus on ethics and ascetic practices – especially rare and radical practices like *sallekhanā* – is one of the factors that has led to the stereotype of Jainism as an austere tradition, with nothing to offer its followers but a strict set of moral rules.

It therefore often comes as a surprise to students that some of the most ornate and magnificent temples in India are Jain temples. Devotion, or *bhakti*, plays as important a role in the life of the Jain layperson as it does for the Hindu (or for that matter, the Muslim or the Christian). Though ascetics are seen in Jainism as having gone beyond the need to engage in worship practices – and are, in fact, more often than not, the *objects* of devotion in the Jain community – Jain laypersons historically have lavished wealth on the creation of fabulous temples and engaged in profligate displays of public devotion. Examples of Jain devotional practices include the *abhiṣekha*, or anointing of a *mūrti* of a Jina, and, for Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbaras the adornment of such *mūrtis* with royal regalia.[174]

As we have already seen, such devotional practice is not universally endorsed by the Jain community, given the concern of some that temple building and *mūrtipūjā* can involve violations of *ahiṃsā*. But even among aniconic Jains, like the Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs, *bhakti* is important. But it is carried out mentally, rather than with objects.

The rationale for Jain *bhakti* is different from that found in more conventionally theistic traditions, such as Hinduism. Hindu devotion is about the devotee's relationship with the deity, who is seen as interacting with the devotee. Jain devotion is seen, at least by ascetics, more as a form of meditation on the ideal that the deity – typically one of the Jinas – embodies.

Despite this rationale at the formal level, however, scholars of Jainism who have interacted extensively with Jain laypersons in India have found that, for many Jains, this is not always an operative distinction.[175] There are Jains, in other words, who pray to the Tīrthaṅkaras and other Jain saints for what could broadly be called this-worldly favors, just as Hindus (and, as we have seen, many Jains) approach the Hindu deities for similar reasons: in the hope of receiving blessings like health, long life, and prosperity, both for themselves and their loved ones. While such interactive devotional activity – as opposed to the more passive conception of devotion as a form of meditation – may not be 'orthodox', in the sense that it is not what is taught by the ascetics or in Jain texts, it certainly occurs within the community.

Is it contradictory to pray to beings for this-worldly benefits who have renounced the world, and in the context of a tradition whose ultimate goal is world renunciation? If one, again, bears in mind that in the Indic traditions, including Jainism, there is a series of penultimate goods in addition to the ultimate, all of which are legitimate to pursue, then the appearance of a contradiction vanishes. One also observes, in all religions, that there are distinctions which sometimes appear very clear 'on paper', in an ideal conceptual system, but which can often be muddied in practice, as the system is translated into the lives of actual practitioners, with the whole host of typical human concerns.

Clearly, a sharp separation between what might be called the penultimate goods of health, long life, and prosperity and the ultimate good of liberation is not operative in the minds of most religious persons. These things are simply all goods, for which one petitions one's deity. This is no less true for Jains than for other religious practitioners.

Consider Cort's account of the relationship of lay Jain devotees to their *gurus* – living Jain monks who are objects of *bhakti*, or devotion, to many Jains:

> A layperson who has developed a special relationship of devotion with a particular mendicant is called a *bhakt* [devotee] … The *bhakt* counts on the guru for advice in a wide range of religious, family, and economic matters. In return, the *bhakt* is solicitous after the guru's welfare. Whereas laity always use elevated, polite language when addressing a mendicant, a *bhakt* inquires after the health and physical needs of the guru just as one would look after a small child or a spouse. Yet while treating the guru as a dependent on the social sphere, the layperson at the same time considers him or herself to be the spiritual dependent of the guru. One layman described this relationship as like that of father and son: 'Guru Mahārāj feels for me just like a father does for a son. If I haven't seen Guru Mahārāj recently, then I will see him in my dreams, and I know it is time to visit him.' Another layman commented upon the death of his guru by saying that he felt as much sorrow as when his own father had died … Most *bhakts* describe the blessings they receive from their guru in terms of grace or mercy … *Several laymen ascribed the beginning of their worldly financial success to the day they met their gurus*.[176]

Clearly, the guru – who is himself a *mendicant*, or a renunciant – is seen as bestowing not only spiritual, but also worldly, benefits on his disciples, and no contradiction is seen.

Many of the ways in which Jains both cultivate and demonstrate their *bhakti* are quite similar to devotional practices within Hinduism. The relationship between the Jain devotees and their gurus that Cort describes, for example, is not at all different from that obtained between Hindus and their gurus. The living relationship between the teacher and the disciple, or *guru* and *śiṣya*, is as central to Jainism as it is to Hinduism.[177]

Another devotional practice common to Jains and the wider Hindu community is the practice of pilgrimage – a journey to a holy place, usually marked by a temple, for the purpose of achieving religious merit. Indeed, pilgrimage is a nearly universal practice in the world's religions, being prominent in the Abrahamic traditions of the West no less so than in the traditions of South Asia.

Prominent places of Jain pilgrimage include the very beautiful and ornate temple complexes atop Mounts Abu and Śatruñjaya, both of which are in the western Indian state of Gujarat and the massive monument of Bāhubali, one of the first enlightened beings of our *kalpa* or cosmic era, at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa, in the state of Karnataka.

Besides elaborate acts of devotion, such as the building of temples, the *abhiṣekha* of the Jina *mūrti* on special holy days, and pilgrimage, the life of the Jain layperson, like that of the average Hindu, contains daily reminders of the spiritual path, and daily acts of devotion designed to strengthen one's resolve to practice the path with both diligence and sincerity. Jain families, like Hindu families, typically maintain a shrine at home, where daily devotions are observed. In the case of Hindu families, the shrine will contain an image of the family's special deity (*kuladevatā*), as well as any particular favorite deities special to individual members of the family (*iṣṭadevatā*). It will also typically contain a photograph of the family's guru, and possibly photographs of departed loved ones.

Jain family shrines are no different, except the central deity will always be a Jina – most often Mahāvīra, but not necessarily. Pārśvanātha, Ṛṣabha, and Indrabhūti Gautama (Mahāvīra's first disciple) are also popular objects of Jain devotion, as are some of the powerful ascetics from more recent history, such as the founding figures of the various ascetic lineages. Daily devotional activities before the shrine might include *āratī* and a prayer, special to all Jains, which is typically recited in the morning. This is the Fivefold Salutation, or *Pañca Namaskāra Mantra*:

Ṇamo arihantāṇam
Ṇamo siddhāṇam
Ṇamo āyariyāṇam
Ṇamo uvajjhāyāṇam
Ṇamo loe savvasāhuṇam

To which the Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbaras add:

Eso pañca ṇamokkāro savvapāvappaṇāsaṇo
Maṃgalāṇaṃ ca savvesiṃ paḍhamaṃ havai maṃgalam

This prayer, in the ancient Prakrit language of the Jain scriptures, is translated as:

I bow before the worthy ones [the Jinas, or Tīrthaṅkaras].
I bow before the perfected ones [all those who have attained *mokṣa*].
I bow before the leaders of the Jain order.
I bow before the teachers of the Jain order.
I bow before all Jain monks in the world.

The additional line recited by the Mūrtipujaka Śvetāmbaras means:

> This fivefold salutation, which destroys all bad karmas, is the best, the most auspicious of all auspicious things.[178]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen that the Jain path has a number of overlaps and similarities with other Indic traditions, as well as a number of its own distinctive features. Although there is a striking uniformity in the basic Jain worldview – in terms of karma theory, ideas about *ahiṃsā*, and so on – there is also, we have seen in earlier chapters, internal diversity, particularly in terms of ascetic practice and the use or non-use of *mūrtis* in worship. And although I have not discussed it here, there is even more variation at local levels, among the many Jain communities in India, as well as in the growing Jain diaspora.

It is often said that the foundations of the Jain path are its teachings of *ahiṃsā*, *aparigraha*, and *anekāntavāda* – nonviolence, non-attachment (or non-possession), and non-absolutism. In this chapter, we have discussed *ahiṃsā* and *aparigraha*. In our next chapter, we shall turn to *anekāntavāda*, which is one of the most distinctive and, I would suggest, one of the most important of Jain doctrines; for, were it to be widely adopted, this doctrine has the capacity to revolutionize the ways in which the world's religious communities perceive and relate to one another – a revolution our world desperately needs.

Chapter V

The Jain Doctrines of Relativity: An Intellectual History

Introduction

One of the most striking Jain contributions to South Asian religious thought, and one of considerable relevance to today's world of inter-religious conflict, has been a complex of three doctrines that I call the Jain 'doctrines of relativity'.

The first of these doctrines, *anekāntavāda*, claims reality is complex, or *anekānta* (literally 'non-one-sided'). This is a claim about the intrinsic nature of existence: that entities cannot be reduced to a single characteristic or concept, reality being irreducibly complex.

The second doctrine, *nayavāda*, the 'doctrine of perspectives', is an epistemic corollary of the first – a claim about the nature of knowledge in the complex universe that *anekāntavāda* posits. Given the complex nature of reality, anything may be known from a variety of *nayas*, or perspectives, that correspond to its many aspects.

This implies, finally, the third doctrine, *syādvāda*, or the doctrine of conditional predication (literally, the 'maybe doctrine'), according to which the truth of any claim that one makes about a particular topic is dependent upon the perspective, or *naya*, from which that claim is made. A claim can be true, in one sense or from one perspective (the technical meaning of the Sanskrit verb '*syāt*' in a Jain philosophical context), false from another perspective, both true and false from another, have an inexpressible truth-value from yet another, etc.

Given the complex nature of reality, the fact that it can be approached from many partially – though not equally or fully – correct perspectives, and that the truth of our claims depends on the perspective we take, an attitude of openness and toleration toward various views is recommended.

The gist of these doctrines is expressed in the famous story of the Blind Men and the Elephant, first attributed to the Buddha.[179] Several blind men are brought before a king and asked to describe an elephant.

An elephant is brought to them and they proceed to feel it with their hands. One, who grasps the elephant's trunk, claims that an elephant is like a snake. Another, grasping a leg, claims it is like a tree. Yet another grasps the tail and says it is like a rope; and another, feeling the elephant's side, claims it is like a wall. The blind men then proceed to argue amongst themselves about the true nature of the elephant. The moral of the story is that all the blind men are partially correct – for an elephant does, indeed, possess all the qualities that the blind men attribute to it. Each is also partially incorrect, inasmuch as he denies the claims of the others.

Only someone who can see the whole elephant – like a Jina – is in a position to say, unequivocally, what its true nature is. The rest of us, with respect to the true nature of reality, are like the blind men. We can only say with certainty what we can apprehend from our limited perspectives – and be open to the insights of others.

That these Jain doctrines of relativity do *not* constitute a form of what is called, in contemporary western thought, *relativism* – the view either that there is no truth or that 'truth' is solely a matter of convention – is evidenced, again, from this story. There really is an elephant *there* and it really does have particular characteristics, and not others. A sighted person – again, for the Jains, this would represent an omniscient Jina – is capable of apprehending its true nature. There is an ultimate truth in terms of which the claims of the blind men can be evaluated and placed in their proper perspective – one is describing the trunk, one a leg, one the tail, and so on. And from a Jain perspective, this ultimate truth is the truth taught by the Jain tradition.

This is very different from conventional Western relativism, which arises from a deep skepticism about the ability of human beings to know anything with any certainty. I sometimes observe my students taking such a position out of a kind of despair over being able to navigate the diverse variety of truth claims to which they are exposed.

The doctrines of relativity are closely related to the claim to omniscience made by Mahāvīra (or on his behalf) in the Jain scriptures. In these texts, Mahāvīra is represented as answering profound metaphysical questions (considered 'unanswerable', or *avyākata* in the Buddhist tradition) with both a 'yes' and a 'no', depending upon the perspective of the questioner. The soul is both eternal (in its intrinsic nature) and non-eternal (from the perspective of the karmic changes that it is constantly undergoing); the cosmos is

both eternal (in the sense that it has no beginning or end as such) and non-eternal (inasmuch as it passes through arising and descending cycles), and so on.

Another rationale for these doctrines is to be found in the complex nature of the soul that is posited by Jainism – a nature extrapolated to apply to all entities. The soul has an unchanging, intrinsic nature; but it also experiences karmically conditioned states that come into being, exist for a while, and then pass away. According to the famous formula of *Tattvārthasūtra* 5:29, *utpādavyāyadhrauvyayuktaṃ sat* – 'Emergence, perishing and endurance characterize [all] entities.' In other words, there is a sense in which all things come to be, perish and endure.[180]

In later, post-canonical Jain philosophical texts, this understanding of reality came to be applied to the topic – endlessly debated between the Buddhists and the Brahmins – of the nature of reality as either permanent or impermanent. Contrasting themselves with the Buddhists, who upheld a doctrine of radical impermanence, and the Brahmins, who – particularly in the Advaita Vedānta tradition – upheld a doctrine of permanence, the Jains claimed that entities were both permanent and impermanent, in different senses and from different perspectives.

Jain philosophers were thus able to present their view as the true 'Middle Path' between the ever-warring philosophical camps of the Buddhists and the Brahmins, and to claim the metaphysical high ground, in terms of being able to integrate the perspectives of the other two into their own. Historically, the Jain doctrines of relativity were a tool for affirming the superiority of the Jain perspective over others.

But the potential utility of the doctrines of relativity in resolving disputes between seemingly incompatible philosophies has led to the popular contemporary view that these doctrines are an extension of the Jain commitment to *ahiṃsā* to the realm of intellectual discourse. Though historically dubious, this characterization of these doctrines renders them attractive as a way to address the issue of how to remain committed to a particular tradition while also being open to the views of others. They provide an argument for *religious pluralism*, the view that there is truth in many traditions, and not only one.

The chief conceptual difficulty with religious pluralism is reconciling the idea of truth being present in many traditions with the fact that the world's religions say different things, and often at least

appear to contradict one another. If they are simply describing different aspects of the same reality, though, like the blind men trying to give an account of the elephant, then the idea that they are all true – not in the same sense, but in various senses and to varying degrees – can be defended.

Relativity in the Śvetāmbara *Āgamas*: Mahāvīra's Inclusive Middle Path

How did the Jains develop their philosophy of relativity? As mentioned earlier, Jainism originated – at least in its current, post-Mahāvīra form – during about the same time period and in the same geographic location as Buddhism – roughly the fifth century before the common era, in the region of India now encompassed by the states of Bihar and Jharkhand and the eastern half of the state of Uttar Pradesh, in the eastern portion of the Ganges valley. References abound in the Ardha-Māgadhī scriptures, or *Āgamas*, to the same geographic locations, persons, and – most relevantly for our purposes – intellectual currents as are mentioned in the Buddhist Pāli canonical literature.[181]

A common problem faced by both the Buddha and Mahāvīra, according to the texts of their respective communities, was a set of *avyākata*, or unanswerable, questions – metaphysical and cosmological questions that were sources of controversy among the various schools of thought at the time.

The Buddha, as portrayed in early Buddhist literature, often refused to answer these questions, viewing them as not conducive to liberation. But when he did choose to answer them he used a method called the *vibhajya*, or analytical, method. This involves clarifying the assumptions on the basis of which questions are posed. According to B.K. Matilal, the Jain doctrines of relativity developed from a similar strategy on the part of Mahāvīra.[182]

The Buddhist *Majjhimanikāya* (*Cūlamālunkya Sutta*) lists the *avyākata* questions as follows:

1. Is the *loka* (world, man) eternal?
2. Is the *loka* not eternal?
3. Is it (the *loka*) finite (with an end)?
4. Is it not finite?

5. Is that which is the body the soul? (Is the soul identical with the body?)
6. Is the soul different from the body?
7. Does the *Tathāgata* [the Buddha, a liberated being] exist after death?
8. Does he not exist after death?
9. Does he both exist and not exist after death?
10. Does he neither exist nor not exist after death?[183]

As depicted in Buddhist texts, the Buddha viewed passionate attachment to views on questions such as these as no less of a hindrance to spiritual progress than other kinds of passionate attachment, such as greed or lust. Indeed, attachment to such views is, in a way, more dangerous than other kinds of attachment – for those who are attached to a particular view may be under the illusion that this will lead them to liberation. This kind of attachment is therefore very difficult to uproot.

The Buddha's approach to the *avyākata* questions can be seen as an attempt to avoid philosophical extremes, to walk a 'Middle Path' between the various views current during his time by refusing to embrace any of them.

The first four questions, about the world's having or not having a beginning or an end, he simply refused to answer. The fifth and sixth questions, regarding the identity or non-identity of the soul and the body, he addressed with his *anātman* doctrine, which denies an independently existing soul, but is also not a materialism or physicalism. The remaining questions he answered in the negative.

Matilal suggests that the Jain doctrines of relativity developed from an analogous strategy on the part of Mahāvīra for dealing with the same set of questions. Unlike the Buddha, however, Mahāvīra replied to these questions in the affirmative, by answering them with a qualified 'Yes' rather than a 'No' – an approach taken by Jains to demonstrate Mahāvīra's omniscience, because of the profound knowledge of all aspects of reality that it suggests. Matilal characterizes this approach as an '"inclusive' middle" in contrast with the Buddhists' '"exclusive" middle' path. The Buddha avoids exclusive attachment to views by rejecting all of them. Mahāvīra avoids such attachment by incorporating all views equally into his own, more encompassing view. His positive use of *vibhajya* – the analysis of questions into their component parts – is illustrated in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*:

> [T]he Venerable Mahāvīra told the Bhikkhu Jamāli thus: … [T]he world is, Jamāli, eternal. It did not cease to exist at any time. It was, it is and it will be. It is constant, permanent, eternal, imperishable, indestructible, always existent.
>
> The world is, Jamāli, non-eternal. For it becomes progressive (in time-cycle) after being regressive. And it becomes regressive after becoming progressive.
>
> The soul is, Jamāli, eternal. For it did not cease to exist at any time. The soul is, Jamāli, non-eternal. For it becomes animal after being a hellish creature, becomes a man after becoming an animal and it becomes a god after being a man.[184]

According to Jain tradition, because of his omniscience, an enlightened being, or *kevalin*, like Mahāvīra, is able to see the complexity of reality from all perspectives, and thus answer metaphysical questions from all of the various relatively valid points of view. From the perspective of permanence the universe, Mahāvīra says, is eternal. From the perspective of change, on the other hand, the universe is affirmed to be 'non-eterna'.[185]

Similarly, from the perspective of its intrinsic qualities, the soul is eternal: 'It did not cease to exist any time.' But from the perspective of its ever-changing, karmically determined experiences of *saṃsāra*, its rebirths in numerous different forms, it is non-eternal. The point of view of the omniscient one encompasses all perspectives. Mahāvīra can thus address these and other *avyākata* questions in all of their various dimensions.

Its initial foundation in Mahāvīra's omniscience underscores the importance for Jain philosophy of the existence of a unique, absolute perspective (another translation of *kevala* being 'unique') from which the relative validity of all other perspectives can be perceived and proclaimed. This absolute perspective is the transcendental foundation, the necessary condition for the possibility, of a philosophy of relativity like that of the Jains.

Its affirmation of an absolute perspective is why this philosophy, in spite of its affirmation of relativity, is not a pure or thoroughgoing *relativism*; for it maintains the existence of an absolute perspective which grounds the relativity of all other perspectives, a perspective *to which* all other perspectives are relative. It is ultimately a faith-based

position, rooted in the belief in the omniscient *kevalin*, rather than in reason alone. Later Jain philosophers, though affirming something like the modern idea of redeeming claims on the basis of reason alone, did not deduce the need for an absolute perspective from the logic of their philosophy of relativity.[186] Belief in the omniscience of the Jina came first.

Metaphysical Foundations: Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra*

The Jain *Āgamas* do not constitute a simple and systematic presentation of the worldview taught by Mahāvīra and his immediate followers, the *gaṇadharas*. On the contrary, these texts include a wide variety of materials, ranging from biographical accounts of Mahāvīra and other Tīrthaṅkaras, cosmological treatises, minutely detailed accounts of the kinds of beings that exist in the world (including a variety of microscopic organisms), extensive treatments of ethics, monastic discipline, physiology, astrology, collections of prayers, narratives about gods and demons, detailed accounts of the various kinds of *karma*, and discourses on metaphysical and epistemological issues.

The systematization of Jain doctrine was left to Umāsvāti, 'of whose career the tradition has preserved virtually no information, either historical or hagiographical'.[187] Probably living in the second century of the Common Era, when a variety of Indian philosophical schools had begun to coalesce and enter into extensive debate with one another, Umāsvāti composed the first known Jain doctrinal treatise in Sanskrit, his *Tattvārthasūtra*. This was the period in which Buddhists, too, began to write Sanskrit *sūtra*s. By writing in Sanskrit, Jains and Buddhists could engage Brahmanical schools of thought in debate rather than remaining isolated in their respective Ardha-Māgadhī and Pāli worlds, writing in languages that only they understood.

The *Tattvārthasūtra* takes ideas found in the Ardha-Māgadhi canon (and in the Digambara *Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*), summarizes them concisely, and translates many of them into the terms of the broader Indian philosophical discussion of the time. Its contribution to the development of the Jain philosophy of relativity is in giving explicit and systematic expression to the fundamental metaphysical assumptions implicit in the doctrines of the early Jain community, and in the discourses attributed to Mahāvīra in the canon. As an early

systematic formulation of the Jain metaphysical position, this text was to become a touchstone for all future Jain philosophical discourse, its definitions and characterizations of issues taking on a 'quasi-scriptural status'.[188]

Most relevant to the Jain philosophy of relativity are this text's systematizations of the concepts of *satsāmānya*, *nikṣepa*, and *naya*. *Satsāmānya* means 'existence-' or 'being-universal'. It refers to the general characteristics of everything that exists. These are, according to Umāsvāti, "Emergence, perishing, and duration."[189]

The importance of this formula for the Jain tradition has to do with the character of the soul, or *jīva*, and the process of its liberation, which contrasts with the Brahmanical tradition, which affirms the ultimate permanence of Brahman as the underlying ground of reality, and Buddhism, which affirms radical impermanence and the *lack* of a permanent underlying ground as the defining characteristic of existence.

Jainism affirms the co-existence of permanence and impermanence, identity and difference, in the nature of the *jīva*; for the *jīva* is held to be, in one sense, permanent – eternally possessing infinite bliss, energy, perception and knowledge – but in a different sense, impermanent – inasmuch as its karmic accretions are in a state of constant flux. In contrast to Brahmanical and Buddhist tendencies toward *māyāvāda* – a teaching which relegates either change or permanence, respectively, to the realm of illusion – the Jains affirm a metaphysical realism that affirms both change and continuity as fundamental.

The pluralistic character of reality that Jainism affirms – its claim that a variety of entities (*dravya*s) constitute the world and that these entities have a variety of aspects – gives rise to the variety of perspectives from which all issues can be addressed. Though it is not yet called this in the *Tattvārthasūtra*, this conception of reality as having many facets, or aspects, is essentially *anekāntavāda*. The perspectivism that this view entails is systematized by Umāsvāti in the interrelated concepts of *nikṣepa* and *naya*.

A *nikṣepa*, or 'gateway of investigation', is a topic in terms of which an entity can be analyzed. Umāsvāti lists the *nikṣepas* as *nāma* (name), *sthāpanā* (symbol), *dravya* (potentiality), *bhāvatā* (actuality), *nirdeśa* (definition), *svāmitva* (possession), *sādhana* (cause), *adhikaraṇa* (location), *sthiti* (duration), *vidhānatā* (variety), *sat* (existence), *saṃkhyā* (numerical determination), *kṣetra* (field occupied), *sparśana* (field touched), *kāla*

(continuity), *antara* (time-lapse), *bhāva* (states), and *alpabahutva* (relative size).[190]

Each *nikṣepa* addresses a different question about the entity. What is it called? How can it be represented? What are its potential and actual states? How is it defined in terms of its relations to other entities? What qualities does it possess? What is the cause of its existence? Where is it? How long will it exist? Are there different types of this thing? And which of these types is it? Does it actually exist? How many things of this kind are there? How much space does it fill? With what other things is it in contact? Does it exist continuously? How long will it stay in the particular state it is in? What state is it in? How big is it compared to other entities of its kind?

Nayas are philosophical perspectives from which a particular topic can be viewed and which determine the conclusions that can be reached about it. Umāsvāti lists seven – *naigamanaya* (common view), *saṃgrahanaya* (generic view), *vyavahāranaya* (pragmatic view), *ṛjusūtranaya* (linear view), *śabdanaya* (verbal view), *samabhirūḍhanaya* (etymological view), and *evaṃbhūtanaya* (acuality view).[191] The common view is how an entity is generally perceived – what one might call a 'common sense' or unrefined perspective. A generic view seeks to classify the entity. A pragmatic view assesses the entity in terms of its possible uses. A linear view looks at the entity as it is in the present moment. A verbal view seeks to name the entity. An etymological view uses this name and its relations with other words to discern its nature. And an actuality view is concerned with the concrete particulars of the entity.

Umāsvāti's commentators see the *nayas* as partial views collectively making up a valid cognition (*pramāṇa*).[192] But the concept of *naya* underwent extensive elaboration in the later Jain philosophical texts, such that several variants of this concept now exist.

Mundane and Ultimate Perspectives: Kundakunda's 'Two Truths'

The first such variant was developed by the celebrated Digambara teacher and mystic, Kundakunda.[193] In such works as his *Pravacanasāra* ('The Essence of the Doctrine') and *Samayasāra* ('The Essence of the Soul'), Kundakunda distinguishes between what he calls the *vyavahāranaya* or 'mundane perspective' (not to be confused with

Umāsvāti's 'practical' *naya* of the same name) and the *niścayanaya* or 'ultimate perspective', also called "supreme" (*paramārtha*) and "pure" (*śuddha*).

In order to understand Kundakunda's distinction between these two perspectives, recall the complex nature of the *jīva*. It has a substantial, unchanging aspect (*dravya*), characterized by intrinsic qualities (*guṇas*), like infinite bliss, energy, and consciousness, and a constantly changing, karmically determined aspect, which includes its embodiment in various forms and its experience of emotive and cognitive states (*paryāyas*), release from which is the ultimate goal of the Jain path.

Kundakunda takes the distinction between these two aspects of the *jīva* as his point of departure. His *vyavahāranaya*, or mundane perspective, which could also be called the perspective of relativity, is the less reliable of the two perspectives. It is the karmically determined perspective through which one sees reality as characterized, in Umāsvāti's terms, by emergence, perishing, and duration. It is the perspective, in other words, of 'normal', non-omniscient persons, still trapped in *saṃsāra*, who have not yet experienced the eternal bliss and omniscience which is the true nature of the soul.

Such deluded persons consequently misunderstand the nature of reality, mistaking extraneous karmically determined activity for soul activity. As Kundakunda explains:

> The soul does not cause the nature of substance or attribute in material *karma*s. Not causing these two in that [karmic matter], how [can the soul be] the doer of that [*karma*]?
>
> But seeing the modification of karmic bondage by the [auxiliary] cause of [the mundane] soul's thought-activity, it is said from the mundane point of view that *karma*s have been caused by the soul.[194]

On the other hand, the ultimate perspective, according to Kundakunda – the true or certain (*niścaya*) perspective – is the *niścayanaya*, which perceives the soul in its intrinsic, unchanging nature: as blissful, energetic, perceptive, and omniscient. This, according to Kundakunda, is the perspective that the aspirant on the Jain path must strive to cultivate. The *vyavahāranaya*, on the other hand, is deluded and must finally be superseded, the understandings of reality it yields being relative and uncertain. But the *niścayanaya*

reveals things as they truly are. The understanding of reality this ultimate perspective yields, in contrast with that derived from the mundane perspective, is true and authentic:

> The mundane perspective does not yield the real meaning. But the pure perspective has been said to give the real meaning. The soul dependent on the real perspective is a right-believer.[195]

Kundakunda's approach resembles Buddhist and Vedāntic models of salvation, which locate the roots of spiritual bondage in ignorance, or *avidyā*, a false *consciousness* of the true nature of reality, rather than in a state of affairs external to consciousness that *causes* such ignorance.

The Jain tradition, however, with its doctrine of material *karmas* obscuring the true, omni-conscious nature of the soul, does ascribe bondage to an external state. But Kundakunda seems, sometimes, to be saying it is not the bondage of the soul by karmic matter, but rather the *perception* of it as being so bound, that is the real problem. As W.J. Johnson elaborates, for Kundakunda:

> …[L]iberation is seen to be attained not by the destruction of that *karman* which (very tenuously) has been said to bring about *moha* [delusion], but by the destruction of *moha* itself through meditation on the essential purity and complete separateness of the soul. In other words, it is lack of knowledge of the true nature of the self which really *constitutes moha*; consequently, it is the knowledge (gnosis) and realisation of the self's true nature which banishes *moha* (*aśuddhopayoga*) and, by revealing and realising the inherent purity of the soul, accomplishes liberation. The role of material *karman* in this mechanism of bondage and liberation has thus for all significant purposes been forgotten. And it can be forgotten because the logic of the system no longer requires it.[196]

With regard to liberation, then, Kundakunda seems to take a position – like that of Buddhism and Vedānta – which holds that it is *transcendence* of the realm of action – of *karma* – through gnosis which leads to liberation, rather than ascetic practice. The Jain tradition, however, at least in its early form, seems to have leaned quite radically in the other direction.[197] From this perspective then, Kundakunda's views could be seen as constituting a major departure from early Jain teaching.

This is not the only respect in which Kundakunda's teachings could be seen, from a more mainstream Jain position, to be heterodox; for his two perspectives are not, like the seven *naya*s of mainstream Jainism, simply alternative, partly valid ways of viewing the soul. The *niścayanaya*, rather, is a *true* perspective, and the *vyavahāranaya*, as an impediment to liberation, is ultimately a *false* one. Kundakunda could therefore be read as having committed the cardinal sin of the Jain philosophy of relativity, at least as it was eventually developed by the later tradition – *durnaya*, or *ekāntavāda* (absolutism):

> Thus know that the mundane perspective *is contradicted by* the ultimate perspective. Saints absorbed in the ultimate perspective attain *nirvāṇa*.[198]

Kundakunda's interpretation of *nayavāda* does seem, at first glance, to be at odds with the later Jain tradition, which affirms the partial validity of *all naya*s. Resembling the 'two truths' theories of both Nāgārjuna and Śaṅkara, this approach seems to affirm the truth of one view at the expense of another, and to embrace a Buddhistic or Vedāntic illusionism – or *māyāvāda* – in its account of the character of reality as perceived by ordinary, non-omniscient persons – for such ordinary perception is ultimately delusory, and indeed a hindrance to liberation.[199]

As we have already seen, by conceiving of such deluded perception, or *moha*, as *definitive* of spiritual bondage rather than as an *effect* of such bondage, Kundakunda could be seen to embrace a similarly Buddhistic or Vedāntic gnosticism with respect to soteriology, in contrast with what could be called the 'karmic realism' of mainstream Jain thought. This gnostic emphasis becomes a distinguishing mark of Digambara Jainism.

Moreover, Kundakunda identifies the entire system of relative *naya*s affirmed by the mainstream Jain tradition with the deluded mundane perspective, or *vyavahāranaya*, which is responsible for spiritual bondage and which the *niścayanaya* transcends:

> That which is said to be above the different perspectives [*naya*s], [and which] alone deserves the name of this right belief and knowledge is the essence of the soul.[200]

Was Kundakunda, from a mainstream Jain perspective, a heretic? Interestingly, despite the fact that, on a strict interpretation of early Jain doctrine, his ideas about the nature of liberation and the relationship

of the mundane and ultimate perspectives could be seen to depart from standard interpretations in several ways, Kundakunda nevertheless remained a figure of central importance for the tradition, particularly for the Digambaras, though commentaries were written on his works by Śvetāmbara authors as well. Though the 'one-sidedness' of his emphasis on the ultimate perspective at the expense of the mundane was criticized by some, like the seventeenth-century Śvetāmbara intellectual Yaśovijaya,[201] his distinction between the soul as it exists in its intrinsic nature and as it is experienced by karmically bound beings was nevertheless held to be valid.[202]

My view is that a close reading of the Jain tradition vindicates Kundakunda. At first glance, the approach Kundakunda takes with his two *nayas* appears to contradict the dominant understanding. Unlike the standard system of seven *nayas* enumerated by Umāsvāti, conceived as each partially valid and roughly equivalent relative perspectives collectively constituting a valid cognition – an understanding foundational to later Jain formulations of a perspectivism or philosophy of relativity – Kundakunda's two *nayas* are conceived in absolutist terms: one inadequate and relative, the other certain and absolute.

As we have already seen, though, the Jain philosophy of relativity does logically presuppose an absolute perspective from which its affirmation of relativity can be made. Kundakunda's two *nayas* are not actually comparable to the partially valid perspectives of the kind typically affirmed by *nayavāda*, in Umāsvāti's standard list of seven *nayas*.

I find that Kundakunda's *nayas* refer to the absolute and relative perspectives of Jainism taken as respective totalities. What is taken by some authors to be Kundakunda's quasi-heretical, absolutist interpretation of the *nayas* is really, I would like to suggest, a usage of the term *naya* to refer to something slightly different from the many possible relative perspectives to which it usually refers. The differences between Kundakunda's version of *nayavāda* and that of the mainstream tradition thus become a purely verbal issue. This, I would suggest, is why this figure could remain so central to the later tradition, despite his seemingly idiosyncratic philosophical position – because his views were not incompatible with Jainism at all. The compatibility of Kundakunda's 'two truths' approach to *nayavāda* and that of the mainstream tradition could be illustrated schematically in the following way:

Kundakunda's position		**Mainstream *nayavāda***
niścayanaya	corresponds to:	*kevalajñāna*/the absolute perspective of a Jina
vyavahāranaya	corresponds to:	The traditional seven *nayas*, taken collectively.

Samantabhadra, another Digambara author, claims that the difference between omniscience, or *kevalajñāna*, and the knowledge attainable through the *nayas*, through the method of *syādvāda* – which Kundakunda identifies with the *vyavahāranaya* – is that the former is an immediate form of knowledge, while the latter, relative form of knowledge is linguistically and conceptually mediated.[203]

Although, on Samantabhadra's reading, its linguistically mediated nature does not render the more conventional perspective represented by *syādvāda false*, as Kundakunda would have it (indeed, Samantabhadra claims that the *only* difference between *syādvāda* and *kevalajñāna* is the mediated character of the former and that this difference is *avastu*, or immaterial), it does preserve the basic distinction that Kundakunda makes, and that the tradition always maintains, between absolute (omniscient) and relative (non-omniscient) perspectives.

Historically, though, despite the fact that, for the reasons indicated, Kundakunda's basic distinction between mundane and ultimate perspectives was not rejected out of hand by the tradition as a whole – such rejection itself being contrary to the entire spirit of the Jain philosophy of relativity as it eventually developed – his two-*naya* approach remained fairly peripheral to the subsequent development of *nayavāda*. Its chief importance seems to have been as a mystical doctrine for the Digambara tradition, a way of orienting the mind away from the relative. His characterization of the *vyavahāranaya* as essentially false never seems to have taken root; for *syādvāda*, conceived as the surest path to truth this side of omniscience, was still to be developed to a high level of sophistication by later authors such as Siddhasena Divākara, Samantabhadra, and Haribhadrasūri.

It seems that the real source of potential conflict between Kundakunda's view and Jain orthodoxy – for which Jain intellectuals relentlessly attacked Buddhist and Vedāntic adherents of similar views

– is its potential downplaying of 'mundane' orthopraxy in favor of an experience of gnosis. If what matters is knowledge, rather than action, why is right conduct important?

Regarding this question, with few exceptions, most of Kundakunda's followers and commentators seem to have read him as affirming not that outward religious practice (*dravya*) is unnecessary, but that, without a corresponding inner transformation or the appropriate inward disposition (*bhāva*), such practice is ultimately fruitless. This is a perfectly orthodox interpretation, especially if one recalls Umāsvāti's affirmation that the path to liberation includes right 'faith', 'insight', or 'intuition' (*darśana*), right knowledge (*jñāna*), *and* right conduct (*caritra*).[204] Practice is also conceived in Jainism as necessary to transforming consciousness, which is its aim.

It was his emphasis upon the importance of the interior life that would eventually become Kundakunda's chief claim to fame. He is remembered in the Jain tradition chiefly as a great mystic, whose philosophical positions were based not so much upon intellectual reflection as upon his direct experience of the nature of the *jīva*. As he writes of himself in the *Samayasāra*:

> I describe that absolute oneness of the soul on the strength of my [own self-realisation]. What I describe should be accepted [after verification by your own experience]. If I err, [it] should not be considered a deception.[205]

In terms of the subsequent history of Jain philosophy, then, Kundakunda could be seen as little more than an historical oddity, representing a gnostic Digambara 'wing' of the Jain tradition, but not its main line of development, and therefore as not warranting the relatively lengthy treatment I have given his position. But this would be a mistake. For Kundakunda has remained absolutely central to Digambara self-understanding right up to the present day. Digambaras continue to identify themselves with his lineage and to see his mystical teaching as a profound source of truth.

Kundakunda's view constitutes probably the strongest insistence found in Jain philosophy on the importance of the affirmation of an absolute as foundational to the relativity of all other perspectives – thus helping, I would suggest, to refute the possible notion that the Jain position represents a form of relativism in the contemporary sense that has already been mentioned – a view that the Jains call *anābhigrahika*.[206]

Relativity as the Integration of Contraries: Siddhasena and Samantabhadra

The second major post-Umāsvāti elaboration upon the concept of the *naya*s – one which, unlike Kundakunda's approach, was to have a great impact upon succeeding formulations of Jain philosophy – was proposed by the fifth-century monk, Siddhasena Divākara.

Probably a member of the now-extinct Yāpanīya sect, Siddhasena, like Umāsvāti, is claimed as an authority by both the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras.[207] Unlike Umāsvāti, an extensive hagiographical literature exists on his life and deeds. He is particularly famous for having miraculously made a statue of a Tīrthaṅkara appear from inside a stone Śiva-*liṅgam* and for being expelled from the Jain monastic community for a period of 12 years of penance for suggesting that the Jain scriptures be translated into Sanskrit – a story which clearly refers to the increasing desire among both Jains and Buddhists at this time, mentioned previously, to reach a wider audience by writing their texts in this language rather than in the more traditional Ardha-Māgadhi and Pāli Prakrits.

With regard to the Jain philosophy of relativity, Siddhasena's major contribution is in the form of his *Sanmatitarka*, 'The Logic of the True Doctrine', in which he divides the traditional seven *nayas* into two categories: those which affirm the substantiality of existence (*dravyāstikanaya*s) and those which affirm the impermanent, changing aspects of existence (*paryāyāstikanaya*s). In this text, Siddhasena sets the tone for the rest of the Jain philosophical tradition by affirming that substantiality and modality, permanence and impermanence, identity and difference, are all necessary elements in an adequate account of reality. As one may recall, this understanding has its origins in Jain beliefs about the nature of soul as having a permanent, intrinsic character while simultaneously undergoing a series of constantly changing, karmically determined states.

Beginning with Siddhasena, however, this understanding of reality as complex, as characterized by a variety of seemingly contrary aspects, was to become the chief criterion in terms of which all philosophical claims would be assessed – the essence, as it were, of the Jain philosophy of relativity.

Two further innovations in the interpretation of *nayavāda* introduced by Siddhasena in this text are, first of all, to affirm, while

yet retaining the traditional list of seven *nayas*, that the number of *nayas*, or perspectives on reality, is potentially limitless. In this regard, his distinction between the *dravyāstikanaya* and the *paryāyāstikanaya* becomes definitive, in a sense, of extreme polarities, between which a vast range of views can exist on a spectrum and be ranked in terms of their adherence to one or another of these extremes, with the Jain position being established firmly in the middle.

Secondly, he goes on to identify the *nayas* with the positions of various actually existing schools of thought, thus setting the stage for what would become the standard Jain criticism of alternative views as advocating one or another extreme position to the exclusion of the rest. He also defines the criterion by which the validity of the use of a *naya* is to be assessed as the extent to which that usage is in conformity with traditional Jain doctrine.

All these ideas, as set forth in the following verses from the *Sanmatitarka*, were to become standard for the subsequent Jain philosophical tradition:

> A well-presented view of the form of *naya* only lends support to the Āgamic doctrines while the same, if ill presented, destroys both (i.e. itself as well as its rival).
>
> There are as many views of the form of *naya*s as there are ways of speaking, while there are as many rival (non-Jaina) tenets as there are views of the form of *nayas*.
>
> Kāpila's philosophy [Sāṃkhya] is a statement of the *dravyāstika* viewpoint while Buddha's that of the *paryāyāstika*.
>
> As for Kaṇṇāda [the founder of the Vaiśeṣika school of philosophy, which upholds the existence of both substances (*dravya*s) and qualities (*guṇas*), but as independently existing entities in a relation of 'inherence' (*samavāya*)], his doctrine, even if supported by both viewpoints is false inasmuch as each here gives primacy to itself and is independent of the other.[208]

Siddhasena's affirmation of the necessary complementarity of contraries in the description of an entity in his *Sanmatitarka* sets the basic agenda for the Jain philosophy of relativity.

Siddhasena's project is taken up and further elaborated by his contemporary (or near contemporary), Samantabhadrasvāmī, a

fifth-century Digambara scholar-monk, in his *Āptamīmāṃsā*, 'An Examination of the Authoritative Teacher'. As K.K. Dixit writes:

> Samantabhadra had a clear consciousness of what constitutes the central contention of *Anekāntavāda* [or *syādvāda*], viz. that a thing must be characterised by two mutually contradictory features at one and the same time. He also realised that the doctrine was applicable rather universally; that is to say, he felt that taking any thing and any feature at random it could be shown that this thing is characterised by this feature as also by the concerned contradictory feature.[209]

This is, essentially, what Samantabhadra does in the *Āptamīmāṃsā*. He applies a conception of reality as necessarily involving contrary attributes to the resolution, through synthesis, of a variety of philosophical topics – being and non-being, unity and plurality, permanence and impermanence, identity and difference, materialism and idealism – thereby setting the stage for centuries of philosophical analysis of the prima facie incompatible claims of diverse schools of thought by his successors in the Jain tradition.

Haribhadra and the Plurality of *Yogas*

By the eighth century of the Common Era, Siddhasena and Samantabhadra, as well as other Jain intellectuals, such as Mallavādin and Jinabhadra, had paved the way for the application of the Jain philosophy of relativity to the claims of various rival schools of thought as expressing partial truths, partially valid perspectives on the character of reality articulated fully only in the *Jainadarśana*.[210] Siddhasena's conception, in particular, of the *nayas* as divisible into those perspectives affirming substance (*dravyāstikanaya*s) and those affirming process (*paryāyāstikanaya*s) enabled Jains to interpret the basic concepts of reality expressed by such Brahmanical systems as Sāṃkhya and Vedānta and those of the Buddhists as respective examples of these two kinds of partially valid perspective on reality.[211] Samantabhadra, though not naming other systems in his *Āptamīmāṃsā*, claims to demonstrate the superiority of *syādvāda* over a variety of one-sided (*ekānta*) views identifiable with specific Indian philosophical traditions.[212]

The eighth-century Śvetāmbara monk and scholar Haribhadrasūri continued the trend of evaluating the tenets of rival schools of thought

as expressing only partial truth in such works as his *Anekāntajayapaṭāka* ('Victory-Flag of Relativity').

Haribhadrasūri's work as a whole, however, is noteworthy for another approach to philosophical and religious plurality, also entailed by the Jain philosophy of relativity. This approach emphasizes not the inferior *partiality* of the validity of diverse approaches to truth, but validity itself. It seeks to interpret the views of other schools of thought as fairly and as charitably as possible. A particularly noteworthy text in this regard is Haribhadra's *Yogadṛṣṛtisamuccaya*, or 'Collection of Views on Yoga'. Like his famous doxography, the *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* ('Collection of the Six Systems of Philosophy'), this text displays a remarkably in-depth knowledge of the teachings of non-Jain systems of though: 'Through his extensive writings, Haribhadra demonstrates his commitment to understand and respect the views of others, while maintaining his commitment to the core Jain beliefs.'[213]

In the *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*, Haribhadra argues that the experience of *mokṣa*, or liberation, is essentially one, but is described differently by the great masters of various traditions who have attained it in order to meet the needs of their particular disciples and the times in which they lived. The proper attitude, therefore, to hold toward all the great founders of the various paths to liberation, or *yogas* – such as Kāpila and the Buddha, whom he refers to as 'omniscient ones' – is veneration and respect. Disputation with rival schools is thus to be avoided as non-conducive to the supreme and common goal of *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*.

Haribhadra's approach is striking both because it was fairly exceptional during his time – the classical period being marked by extensive philosophical polemic on the part of all schools – and because of the degree to which it anticipates modern attitudes of religious pluralism and tolerance:

> The highest essence of going beyond *saṃsāra* is called *nirvāṇa*. The wisdom gained from discipline is singular in essence, though heard of in different ways.
>
> 'Eternal Śiva, Highest Brahman, Accomplished Soul, Suchness': With these words one refers to it, though the meaning is one in all the various forms.[214]

This is strikingly similar to sentiments articulated among modern Hindu figures such as Sri Ramakrishna and Mahatma Gandhi: that truth is one, though it can be known by many names; that there are many paths to a common destination. Here, Haribhadra identifies the ultimate goal of the various Indic spiritual paths of his time – Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist – as one:

> The mark of that highest essence (teaching) is, with no contradiction, free from disturbance, disease, and action [karma], by which one is freed from birth, and so on.[215]

Such an identification is possible, according to this verse, because, despite the various differences among these traditions, they describe their ultimate goal in ways that share certain basic characteristics: as freedom from suffering, from karma, from rebirth, and so on.

> The variety of teaching is suited according to who is being taught. These great souls are the best healers of the sickness known as 'worldly existence'.[216]

Why, then, do the teachings of the founders of the various paths vary? One possibility, akin to the Buddhist concept of the Buddha's 'skillful means' (*upaya kauśalya*), is that they vary their teachings according to the needs of those whom they teach. All are working toward the practical end of healing the sufferings of their adherents. This seems to be the import of the following verses as well:

> Perhaps the teaching is one but there are various people who hear it. On account of the inconceivable merit it bestows, it shines forth in various ways.
>
> This auspicious [teaching] provides benefit for everyone. Indeed, the essence of freedom is born joyously of it at all times.
>
> The root of the variety of teaching taught by the seers, though stemming from essentials, can be attributed to various perspectives on conduct or from time, and so forth.[217]

Although the various teachings of the different systems of thought and practice are derived from and aim at realizing the same essential experience, they vary based on the cultural beliefs and customs of the time and place in which they occur, in order to be most appropriate to their audience:

> Not having known the intention, it is not possible to assess their status; there would be no purpose in formulating objections regarding [the thought of] the great one who has gone beyond.
>
> Just as the blind are not inclined to dispute with one who possesses sight, so also the settling of such distinctions is not to be made from a lower point of view.[218]

And if the founders of the traditions were all enlightened beings, those of us who are not enlightened, but rely on our limited experience and reason, are not in a position to dispute about the differences in their teachings, regarding which is right and which is wrong. This is even more clearly spelled out in the verses that follow, which justify the pluralistic position that Haribhadra is taking:

> Hence it is not proper to object to words of reconciliation. Refuting or reviling noble people, it seems, would be worse than cutting one's own tongue.
>
> Saintly persons never speak like evil-minded people. They speak definitively and meaningfully, but always acting with good intention.
>
> There can be no certainty with regard to objects beyond the senses without *yogīc* knowledge, therefore, there is nothing [to be gained] here through a contest of blind alternatives.
>
> These essential matters are not objects that can be inferred with the mind and, moreover, there is no distinct certainty otherwise. Thus it has been said by one gifted with wisdom.
>
> With effort, even a position inferred through the proper establishment of premises may certainly be approached in another way, being assailed by opponents.
>
> If the meaning of those things beyond the senses could be known through a statement of reason, then by now it would have been ascertained by scholars.
>
> But since this is not the case, then those great graspers at unprofitable argument due to pride and ignorance should be renounced by those desirous of liberation.[219]

Though atypical in the classical period, this approach to a plurality of views is frequently cited by modern scholars who wish to argue

that Jain philosophy is a form of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*'. One will also note the extent to which Haribhadra seems to invoke Kundakunda's distinction between ultimate knowledge, gained only through direct yogīc experience, and the unprofitable, relative knowledge of those who dispute about views.

Later Formulations and Modern Interpretations

By no means all Jain intellectuals held Haribhadra's charitable estimation of non-Jain paths; though the fact that the Jain philosophy of relativity is logically able to support such a liberal approach is, I think, significant if one wishes to appropriate this philosophy in the service of religious pluralism.

But Haribhadra was also not alone in the Jain intellectual tradition in his concern to represent the teachings of other traditions in as fair and objective a manner as possible for a committed Jain. A number of Jain monks produced doxographies, or lists of the views of different schools of thought, some even more detailed than Haribhadra's. The distinctive trait of these doxographies is their tendency to depict the Jain tradition as one tradition among many, and to depict the views and practices of other schools of thought, to the best of our current knowledge, with little or no polemical distortion, sometimes displaying first-hand knowledge of the literatures of the schools of thought concerned.[220]

The production of doxographies, and activities such as the use of non-Jain sources to illustrate and support their views (such as Yaśovijaya's citations of the *Bhagavad Gītā* in his *Adhyātmasāra*),[221] need not be seen as flowing from the Jain philosophy of relativity. But they are certainly consistent with it.

Though not rejecting or calling into question the openness of such thinkers as Haribhadrasūri to other traditions, many Jain thinkers after his time, like the renowned twelfth-century scholar Hemacandra and his commentator, Malliṣeṇasūri, continued to write polemical texts and to depict the claims of other traditions as lacking in coherence and completeness in comparison with the more comprehensive vision offered by Jainism.

This more polemical stance, in fact, seems to be predominant in premodern Jain writings on other traditions – and in this way the Jains are no different from any of the other *darśanas* of premodern South

Asia. It has only been in modernity that the Jain doctrines of relativity have been claimed to express a philosophy of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*'.

But is this a proper formulation? Given the polemical tendencies of its premodern advocates, does it make sense to see the Jain philosophy of relativity as an extension of *ahiṃsā* to the realm of philosophical conversation? Or, even if this has not been the case historically (with rare but noteworthy exceptions, such as Haribhadra), might this way of doing philosophy have the *potential* to act as an expression of *ahiṃsā*? This is a topic to which we will have occasion to return in the next chapter, in which we engage in a philosophical analysis of the doctrines of relativity.

Chapter VI

The Jain Doctrines of Relativity: A Philosophical Analysis

Anekāntavāda: The Ontology of Relativity

Let us turn now from intellectual history to an analysis of the Jain doctrines of relativity themselves: *anekāntavāda*, *nayavāda*, and *syādvāda*.

Anekāntavāda may be translated as the 'non-one-sided' or 'many-sided doctrine', or the 'doctrine of many-sidedness'. I find Satkari Mookerjee's translation, 'philosophy of non-absolutism', useful up to a point, but ultimately deceptive, inasmuch as it might be taken to imply that there is *no* absolute viewpoint within Jain philosophy. But according to Jainism such a viewpoint does exist – the viewpoint that encompasses all others, the viewpoint of fully enlightened and liberated omniscient beings (*kevalins*), like Mahāvīra, souls that have been liberated from their inessential defiling karmic matter.[222]

Anekāntavāda is an ontological doctrine. Its fundamental claim, as it eventually came to be understood by the tradition, is that all existent entities have infinite attributes. As Haribhadra summarizes it in the section on Jainism in his *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*:

> Existence is characterized by emergence, perishing, and duration. On account of this, it is said that an entity has infinite (*ananta*) attributes and is the object of an instrument of knowledge ([*pra*]*māna*).[223]

This claim stems from the ontological realism that characterizes the Jain position. That is, according to Jain thought, reality is essentially as we perceive it.[224] The apparent contradictions that our perceptions of reality involve – continuity and change, emergence and perishing, permanence and flux, identity and difference – reflect the interdependent, relationally constituted nature of things. Reality is a synthesis of opposites. This multi-faceted (a good translation of '*anekānta*') character of reality is reflected in the definition of

existence that we have seen presented in the *Tattvārthasūtra*: 'Emergence, perishing, and duration constitute existence'.[225]

It is therefore consistent with the nature of reality to affirm contrary attributes of any given entity. The number of possible predications which can validly be made of an entity is heightened to infinity by the fact that, unlike other Indian (and Western) notions of a substance as having no real relations to any other entity, Jainism affirms a definition of an entity which includes within itself the entity's relations, both of being and of non-being, with every other entity constituting the cosmos. A pot, therefore, is related to all other pots by having all of the qualities that go into making a pot a pot. But it is also related to pens by its not possessing pen qualities.[226] It can therefore be asserted that, from a certain perspective (that of being a pot), the pot exists; whereas, from another perspective (that of being a pen – i.e. having pen-qualities) the pot does not exist – that is, it contains within its definition non-being with respect to pen-qualities. It does not exist *qua* pen. The Jain definition of an entity thus includes, in the form of its internal relations with them, both positive and negative, every other entity in the cosmos.[227]

Despite its different metaphysical starting point from Buddhism and Vedānta – its metaphysical realism in contrast with these two traditions' idealist bent – one can discern points of contact between the fundamental ontology of Jainism and that of Buddhism – in terms of affirming a relational, interdependent worldview – and Vedānta – in terms of the perception of a deep unity that can be seen to underlie all entities.[228] Although this may, at first glance, seem to be a surprising conclusion, given the profound dualism of the Jain worldview – with its sharp distinction between *jīva* and *ajīva* – the fundamentally relational nature of existence is a logical implication of the Jain doctrines of relativity when they are applied consistently to any given topic. This can be seen due to the inability to define any given entity in isolation, but only in terms of its relations of negative and positive prehension of the qualities of other entities, that these doctrines affirm. Though I am not aware of any Jain scholars who have sought to so apply it, this view of Jain philosophy as affirming a deeper relational unity beneath the dualism it affirms on a cosmological level can help account for the otherwise inexplicable ability of karmic matter to affect the soul.

Nayavāda: The Epistemology of Relativity

Epistemologically, *anekāntavāda*, with its affirmation that every entity possesses infinite attributes, entails *nayavāda*, which is best translated as 'perspectivism' or the 'doctrine of perspectives'. The gist of this doctrine has already been presented: because all entities possess infinite attributes – some of which seem incompatible – one may make infinitely many, and sometimes seemingly incompatible, claims about the character of an entity – such as, 'It is the nature of an entity to endure over time', or 'It is the nature of an entity to perish'. The truth of one's affirmations about an entity depend upon the perspective from which one's affirmations are made. Truth is a function of perspective (*naya*).

This doctrine of *nayas* enables the Jains to avoid the charge of self-contradiction in their attribution of seemingly incompatible characteristics to an entity. No violation of the law of contradiction is entailed; for it is not the case that the Jains make incompatible predications of an entity in the same sense, but in different senses, from different *nayas*. In other words, the Jains do not claim, for example, that an entity both exists and does not exist in the same sense. But in different senses, from different perspectives, the entity *can* be said both to exist and not to exist (*qua* pot, for example, but not *qua* pen).

This doctrine is illustrated with the example of the golden crown.[229] Recall the definition of existence as characterized by origination, cessation and endurance. A golden crown comes into the possession of a king. His son, the prince, wants to keep the crown, but the queen wants it melted down and made into a necklace. The king agrees to the wishes of his wife and the crown is melted down. The queen is delighted to have a new necklace. The prince is disappointed that the coveted crown has been destroyed. The king, however, is indifferent, for the amount of gold in question has remained the same.

These three people are viewing the same entity – the gold – from the perspectives of emergence, perishing, and duration – hence their varied reactions to the phenomena that they observe.

The former state (*paryāya*) of the substance (*dravya*) has passed away – the crown. A new state has taken its place – the necklace. But the substance – the gold – constituted by its essential qualities (*guṇas*) persists.[230] In one sense, a new entity has come into being. In another,

an entity has been destroyed. And in yet another, no change has occurred. This illustrates the complex character of reality.

As indicated earlier, the perspectives of emergence, perishing, and duration are not the only *nayas* affirmed in Jain philosophy. According to later interpretations, the number of *nayas* is potentially infinite: 'Reality is many-faced (*anantadharmakātmakaṃ vastu*) and intelligence is selective. There are, therefore, as many ways of knowing (*nayas*) as there are faces to reality.'[231]

As we have seen, though, a standardized list of seven *nayas* is articulated in a number of Jain philosophical texts, such as the *Tattvārthasūtra*. Though explanations of the items on this list vary in their particulars from text to text, Kendall Folkert provides the following 'compromise account' of the *nayas*, which gives one a good general sense of the Jain epistemological project as it is expressed in this list:

naigamanaya:	the viewpoint from which the general and particular properties of the object are inadequately distinguished; a commonsense, concrete way of looking at an object
saṃgrahanaya:	the viewpoint that takes primary account of the generic properties of the object.
vyavahāranaya:	the viewpoint that regards an object only in light of one's practical experience of it [not the same as Kundakunda's *vyavahāranaya*]
ṛjusūtranaya:	the viewpoint that takes account only of the present mode of an object, or sees it only as the present agglomerate of particulars
śabdanaya:	the viewpoint concerned with the relationship of word to object in general, i.e. the question of synonyms and their significance
samabhirūḍhanaya:	the viewpoint concerned with the etymological relationship of word to object
evaṃbhūtanaya:	the viewpoint that holds that language must conform to the function of an object at the moment in which a word is used of an object.[232]

Anyone with some familiarity with Indian philosophy will recognize a number of well-known Indian philosophical positions associated with particular schools of thought in this list. The *ṛjusūtra* (literally, 'straight thread') *naya*, for example, resembles early Buddhist metaphysical positions; and the *evaṃbhūta* ('existing thus') *naya* resembles Mīmāṃsā views of the relationship of language and object in a Vedic ritual context. One can see, then, the potential uses of *nayavāda* in Jain attempts to conceptualize the fact of a diversity of philosophical perspectives in the society around them, and as a polemical tool. This doctrine is, in fact, employed for both uses in Jain philosophical texts.

This brings us, then, to the Jain theory of error. The worst philosophical error one can commit, and which is the root of all error, is *ekāntatā* – one-sidedness, or absolutism.

A common illustration in Jain texts of the limitations of *ekāntatā* is the dispute between *nityatvavāda* and *anityatvavāda*. *Nityatvavāda*, according to which there are permanently enduring substances – the view of both the Naiyāyikas and Vaiśeṣikas and of Advaita Vedānta[233] – is correct if affirmed from the perspective of the enduring nature of a thing, but incorrect inasmuch as it rules out the reality of change. Similarly, the contrary view, *anityatvavāda*, the affirmation of impermanence as the essential nature of things – the view of Buddhism – is correct if affirmed about the constantly changing modal nature of things, but incorrect inasmuch as it rules out the permanently enduring aspect of a substance. The truth, of course, is *nityānityatvavāda*. Reality is, in different senses, both eternal and non-eternal, according to the Jain perspective.

The Jains evaluate alternative schools of thought as representing partially correct, but incomplete, *ekānta nayas*. Like Whitehead, the Jains affirm that, 'The chief danger to philosophy is narrowness in the selection of evidence.'[234] This is the realist thesis that any metaphysical system based on only one dimension of experience errs inasmuch as it rules out the validity of other perspectives.

According to the Jain version of realism, *ekāntatā* leads to *māyāvāda* – the thesis that the bulk of human experience is the result of illusion (*māyā*) – a view rejected by the Jains as destructive to spiritual practice.[235]

Syādvāda: The Dialectic of Relativity

The concerns of the Jain tradition are not confined to the realm of philosophy in the sense of inquiry into the nature of reality, but extend to the realm of 'meta-philosophy' as well – to reflection upon and discussion of what constitutes the proper nature of philosophical discourse.[236] This brings us to *syādvāda*, translatable literally as the 'maybe doctrine', but more accurately as the 'doctrine of conditional or qualified assertion' – the doctrine of the proper formulation and analysis of philosophical claims in light of the philosophy of relativity.

In the discussion of *nayavāda*, it was stated that, according to the dominant Jain theory of error, one commits falsehood only by stating propositions dogmatically or one-sidedly. Consequently, according to later Jain thought (at least from the time of the Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā*, very likely the first text to introduce *syādvāda* in the form which was to become normative for the mainstream tradition), one states a true proposition only when one speaks in a non-exclusive manner. The mark of this non-exclusive, non-absolutist form of speech is the qualification of one's philosophical claims with the Sanskrit modifier '*syāt*', hence the name '*syādvāda*', or '*syāt*-doctrine', for the Jain doctrine of the proper formulation and expression of philosophical claims.[237]

What does the word '*syāt*' mean? In ordinary Sanskrit usage, '*syāt*' is the third-person singular optative form of the verbal root *as*, meaning 'exist'. '*Syāt*' thus normally means 'it could be', 'it should be', 'maybe', or 'it is possible that…'. But in the context of its usage as a technical term in Jain philosophy, it is stipulated that *syāt* is *not* the third-person singular optative form of 'exist', but an indeclinable particle (*nipāta*). In its normal usage, *syāt* conveys a sense of indefiniteness. But this sense is not adequate to what the Jains intend when they use this term to qualify philosophical claims.

Quite the opposite meaning is, in fact, intended by the Jains in their technical use of this word; for the point of *syādvāda* is ultimately not to be vague, but to *dis*ambiguate language, to coordinate the exclusive, one-sided claims made by various competing schools of thought with partially valid perspectives, or *nayas*, understood as such in terms of the broader or higher perspective held to be provided by the *Jainadarśana* – a point of view which is itself based upon the

absolute or omniscient perspective of the Jina. As Samantabhadra explains:

> In the sentences of the position of relativity there is a movement towards specificity. [This occurs] due to the connection of the meaning of the particle (*nipāta*) '*syāt*' with Your [Mahāvīra's] absolute perspective.
>
> Due to its renunciation of absolutism, *syādvāda* [could be taken to mean] 'somehow' or 'sometimes' [in other words, to convey a sense of indefiniteness]. But in the method of sevenfold predication [to be explained shortly] it means 'in some specific sense'.[238]

In Jain technical usage, then, *syāt* conveys the meaning 'in some specific sense, or from some specific perspective, it is certainly the case that…'. According to Ācārya Mahāprajñā, for a statement to be valid according to *syādvāda*, it must include not only the modifier '*syāt*' – which, in ordinary usage conveys a sense of indefiniteness – but the modifier '*eva*' as well. In a sense the opposite of '*syāt*' in ordinary Sanskrit usage, *eva* is typically used to give emphasis, to indicate that something is *certainly* the case, or that what is being said is of special importance. It tends to have the same function as the old English word 'verily', and is frequently translated as such in early English renditions of Sanskrit texts. The pairing of *syāt* with *eva* is intended to convey the synthesis of the relative and the absolute that it is the purpose of *syādvāda* to effect – the idea that the truth of a claim is relative to the perspective from which it is made, but that, given this specification, definite truth-claims are possible. In the words of Ācārya Mahāprajñā:

> In the absence of relativism [i.e. relativity] indicated by the phrase 'in some respect' (*syāt*) the use of the expression 'certainly' (*eva*) would confer an absolutistic import on the propositions. But by the use of the word '*syāt*' (in some respect) indicative of relativism [i.e. relativity], the expression 'certainly' (*eva*) loses the absolutistic import and confers definiteness on the intended attributes predicated in the propositions.[239]

According to Siddhasena, there are seven possible applications of '*syāt*'. These applications exhaust all the truth-values of a given proposition. These seven applications of *syāt* do not correspond to the traditional seven *nayas*, but their purpose is the same: to situate various views as parts of the greater whole constituted by the synthesizing perspective of Jain philosophy. According to Samantabhadra, the seven

possible truth-claims that can be made with respect to any given proposition *p* are:

1. In a sense/from one point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) true.
2. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) not true.
3. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) both true and not true.
4. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) inexpressible.
5. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) both true and inexpressible.
6. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) both not true and inexpressible.
7. In another sense/from another point of view (*syāt*) *p* is certainly (*eva*) true, not true and inexpressible.[240]

In order to illustrate the function of *syādvāda* in the analysis of a proposition, let us return to our friend, the pot, and analyze the unqualified proposition "The pot exists":

1. In a sense (that of possessing the defining characteristics of a pot), the pot certainly does exist.
2. In another sense (that of possessing some characteristics incompatible with those of a pot, such as the characteristics unique to a pen), the pot certainly does not exist (i.e. it does not possess those non-pot characteristics).
3. In another sense (the two aforementioned senses taken in successive conjunction with one another), the pot certainly both does and does not exist. (It exists with respect to some characteristics and not others.)
4. In another sense (the first two senses taken in simultaneous conjunction with one another), the character of the pot certainly is inexpressible. (This is the sense in which the concrete character of the pot cannot be captured in words but, in Wittgenstein's terminology, can only be 'shown' – the point at which the limits of language are surpassed.)
5. In another sense (the first sense combined with the fourth), the pot certainly both exists and is inexpressible.

6. In another sense (the second sense combined with the fourth), the pot certainly does not exist and is inexpressible.
7. In another sense (the third sense combined with the fourth), the pot certainly both does and does not exist and is inexpressible.

This sevenfold application of *syāt* is taken to be universally applicable and to be exhaustive of the possible truth-values that a given proposition can convey. *Syādvāda* is, in fact, applied by Jain logicians to a wide variety of topics. It represents Jain dialectical logic at its most sophisticated, and is yet elegantly simple. As Matilal summarizes it, 'Add a *syāt* particle to the proposition and you have captured the truth.'[241]

The seven applications of *syāt* are not, according to the tradition, arbitrary – unlike, it could be argued, the standard list of seven *nayas* presented earlier – but really do reflect the possible number of truth-claims which can logically be made with respect to a given proposition; for further combinations of the first four applications (e.g. 'In a certain sense, *x* is true, true, not true, and inexpressible') are redundant, while applications five, six, and seven do amount to distinctive truth-claims, and not mere repetitions of the first four distinct possibilities.[242] The logic of this claim is difficult to dispute.

The only limitation on the universality of the application of *syādvāda* is that placed by the insistence of the tradition that the seven possible truth-values of a given proposition – the senses in which a given proposition can be said to be true – as well as the perspectives (*nayas*) from which these truth-values can be affirmed, must be consistent with the Jain worldview. As Siddhasena has asserted, 'A well presented view of the form of *naya* only lends support to the Āgamic doctrines while the same, if ill presented, destroys both (i.e. itself as well as its rival).'[243] This suggests a dual sense in which error can be committed. The chief error, of course – the cardinal sin – is the absolute affirmation of the truth of a single perspective to the exclusion of its contrary. But another misuse of a *naya*, or *nayābhāsa*, would be to affirm the truth of a proposition in a sense that is incompatible with the logic of the larger perspective of the Jain tradition.

The test, in other words, of whether *syādvāda* has been applied correctly is the extent to which the conclusions derived therefrom are compatible with the normative claims of the Jain tradition, taken to provide a kind of fixed point among the relativity of views which

ensures that one does not stray from the truth in the course of accommodating a plurality of perspectives – a fixed point itself founded upon the absolute perspective of the enlightened Jina. The introduction of a normative standard into this philosophy of relativity is what prevents it from being a form of relativism. It is not the case that *any* proposition can be true in *any* sense, but only in senses specifiable from within a correct understanding of reality.

The sevenfold application of *syāt*, taken together with its metaphysical basis in *anekāntavāda* and *nayavāda*, completes the complex of concepts which I have labeled the 'Jain doctrines of relativity' and which articulate the Jain philosophy of relativity. This philosophy has applications relevant to the modern study of religion – and to the question of truth and religious plurality in particular – which, in my opinion, gives it an importance that has yet to be matched by a corresponding Western scholarly interest. It now remains to address possible logical objections to this position as I have outlined it.

Objections and Responses: The Charges of Incoherence and Relativism

Before one can begin to argue in favor of either an application or an appropriation of the Jain philosophy of relativity there are a couple of objections that must first be met.

There is, first, the criticism leveled by the traditional opponents of the Jain view – the other schools of Indian philosophy – that the Jain philosophy of relativity is incoherent, and that the ascription of contrary attributes to a single entity is self-contradictory.[244]

This criticism, however, is easily met with the recognition that it is based on a misunderstanding of the system of *nayas*. As mentioned earlier, the Jain position is not that contrary attributions can be made of an entity *in the same sense*, but only in different senses and from different perspectives – perspectives which the Jains spend a great deal of time and energy delineating.[245]

One may add that the schools that level this charge most insistently – the Advaitins and Buddhists – articulate classic examples of what the Jains would call *ekāntavāda* – for the Advaitins affirm that only one entity can be coherently said to exist in the cosmos, the changeless and formless *nirguṇa* Brahman, and the Buddhists that the nature of reality

is *śūnya*, or void. Since both schools only accept one facet of existence – continuity and change, respectively – as a proper basis for reflection, they would, of course, object to any position which accepts other principles as indicative of the character of reality – and this is the case; for these schools marshal similar charges against the realist Naiyāyikas, Vaiśeṣikas, and Mīmāṃsakas on the same basis – the impossibility of attributing, in *any* sense, contrary properties to one entity.

Another criticism that has been leveled more recently against the Jain philosophy of relativity is that it operates in what could be called a 'moral vacuum' – that it cannot give an adequate grounding to moral claims – essentially, that it is a form of relativism.[246]

With *syādvāda*, for instance, how can one claim, as the Jains do, that violence is evil? Does not *syādvāda*, if taken seriously, entail that violence is evil from one point of view, not evil – or good – from another point of view, both good and evil from another point of view, of inexpressible moral character from another, etc.? This, essentially, is the charge that this philosophy constitutes a form of relativism in the modern sense – a charge frequently accompanied by the peculiar view that Jain thought is a form of skepticism.[247]

But this criticism is, like the first, based on a fundamental misconception of the Jain position. Recall the second rule of philosophical interpretation using *syādvāda* – that the *nayas*, the senses one invokes to articulate a truth-value for a given proposition, must be in harmony with the Jain conception of reality based on the absolute perspective of the *kevalin*, or Jina, Mahāvīra.

Samantabhadra, in fact, addresses the question of violence in his *Āptamīmāṃsā* – the *locus classicus* for the application of the Jain philosophy of relativity to a whole range of philosophical and moral issues:

> Violence [literally, causing pain] to another is always evil, while causing [another] happiness is [always] good. Both unintentional and deliberate destruction [are evil].
>
> Causing pain to oneself is always good, while [causing oneself] happiness is evil. Wise monks renounce attachment to both [pleasure and pain].[248]

Samantabhadra's approach to the question, 'Is violence, in some sense, good?' reflects both the Jain philosophy of relativity as

articulated in *syādvāda* and the profound Jain commitment to asceticism. Violence, in one sense (*syāt*) – the sense in which it is directed at others – is certainly (*eva*) evil. Violence, in another sense (*syāt*) – the sense in which it is directed at oneself in a Jain ascetic context, such as when one fasts for the purpose of 'burning off' bad *karma* – is certainly (*eva*) good.

Similarly, causing happiness to others is good, a source of merit, while (selfishly) pursuing one's own happiness – or better, one's own *pleasure* – is evil, an impediment on the path to liberation. In these first two senses combined, violence is both evil and good. And finally, in another sense, the moral character of violence is inexpressible; for the Jina has transcended the pursuit of both pleasure and pain, and so, like the wise monk, is indifferent to both.[249]

But has Samantabhadra really avoided the implications of relativism in his formulation of relativity? One might ask, once the truth-values of a given proposition, such as 'Violence is evil',have been specified, whether further specification is possible. Having established that violence directed at others is always evil, is it possible to apply *syādvāda* again to this claim? The result of such a second-level application would then be that violence directed at others is, in a sense, evil, but that, in another sense, it is good. This is where the test of correspondence with the normative claims of Jainism must again play its role.

The conclusion that violence directed at others is also, in some sense, good, could conceivably be upheld by the assertion that such violence is justifiable if it is engaged in for the purpose of self-defense – or better, for the defense of another who is defenseless (such as a Jain monk). But is such a conclusion compatible with Jainism?

Indeed, such claims have historically been made by the Jain community on behalf of both self-defense and the existence of Jain kings, who necessarily engage in violence as part of the pursuit of their royal duties.[250] But it could be argued that such claims are simply false, given the normative Jain commitment to *ahiṃsā* (which seems to be Jaini's position). Clearly, *syādvāda* lends itself to some form of situational ethics – and rightly so. But what if one is confronted with the specific claim, 'Violence directed at others for the sake of one's own pleasure is good'? Short of the possibility that such violence, engaged in to sufficient degrees, would eventually so sicken one that one would renounce it and adopt a life of nonviolence – as the

Buddhist tradition claims happened in the case of King Aśoka – one would be hard-pressed to find a perspective acceptable from within the Jain worldview supportive of such a claim.[251]

Again, the limiting factor upon the universalization of the Jain philosophy of relativity is the fact that the perspectives from which particular truth-claims can be affirmed must finally be coherent with the total Jain worldview.

The objection, of course, could be leveled at this point that the introduction of this principle of limitation – the absolute perspective of the enlightened Jina – is arbitrary, and is finally incoherent with the philosophy of relativity as a whole. This objection, however, is met with the claim that the necessity of an absolute perspective is itself an entailment of the philosophy of relativity, consistently applied. Ācārya Mahāprajñā explains this in the following passage:

> It has been said that the sevenfold predication can be applicable with respect to each and every attribute of a substance. If so, is the non-absolutism … itself available to the system of sevenfold predication? If the reply is in the affirmative, the predication of negation (that is, the second among the seven propositions) would be a kind of absolutism. And in this way non-absolutism would not be a universally applicable doctrine. … The propounder of non-absolutism … admits both non-absolutism and absolutism in their proper perspective. This is why the system of sevenfold predication is applicable to non-absolutism … itself in the following manner:
>
> 1. There is absolutism in some respect.
> 2. There is non-absolutism in some respect.
> 3. There are both absolutism and non-absolutism in some respect.
> 4. There is indescribability in some respect.
> 5. There is absolutism and indescribability in some respect.
> 6. There is non-absolutism and indescribability in some respect.
> 7. There is absolutism, non-absolutism, and indescribability in some respect.[252]

The affirmation of an absolute perspective in the Jain philosophy of relativity is thus not an ad hoc introduction, but an *entailment* of this philosophy applied consistently *to itself*.

In response to this claim, one might still object that, with respect to the question of violence, it is not the claim of non-absolutism that

needs to be exempted from being relativized, but a secondary claim about the acceptability of violence. It must be pointed out here, though, that the *Jainadarśana* as a whole is conceived as an internally coherent system, and the various claims that constitute it as implying one another. *Ahiṃsā* thus remains a constant within this system of relativity.

Ahiṃsā or Assimilation? The Question of Intellectual 'Violence'

As alluded to earlier, *syādvāda* has frequently been characterized and promoted by its contemporary interpreters as 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*'. By this is meant a practice of nonviolence extended to the realm of philosophical discourse, a kind of charity toward other philosophical positions and their possible insights into the character of reality. Such an approach is rooted not in mere notions of 'tolerance' – often connected in modernity with the trivialization of religion – but in the very nature of the cosmos itself. Specifically, it is rooted in the fact that reality is multi-faceted (*anekānta*) and thus amenable to multiple, non-exclusive perspectives, and that nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*) is an essential component of the Jain path to liberation, rooted in the metaphysics of the soul (*jīva*). Violent, delusory passions (*rāgadveṣamoha*), such as those involved in one-sided attachment to particular views, attract soul-obscuring karmic matter to the *jīva* and hinder its progress toward *kevalajñāna* and liberation.[253] This is why Haribhadra affirms that 'those great graspers at unprofitable argument due to pride and ignorance should be renounced by those desirous of liberation. In reality, those desirous of liberation should have no attachment to grasping anywhere.'[254]

In other words, one who engages in philosophical debate and makes assertions without qualification, affirming the exclusive truth of only one point of view, not only fails to express the truth by failing to take into account the many possible perspectives from which a proposition may be validly asserted, but also runs the risk of arousing unwanted passions (such as competitiveness, defensiveness, or anger) in the course of one's discussion and thus further enmeshing oneself in the process of *saṃsāra* (birth, death, and rebirth). This, essentially, is the logic of the argument of those who claim that the Jain philosophy of relativity articulates an ethic of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*'.

It is also the case, however, that this doctrine has historically served as a powerful polemical weapon in the hands of Jain logicians against the adherents of rival schools of thought – portrayed as examples of *ekāntavāda*. Indeed, it may be argued that the characterization of Jain doctrines of relativity as constituting a form of intellectual *ahiṃsā* is a false one. This charge is two-pronged; that is, it can be made from two perspectives – one historical and the other philosophical.

In much of both the scholarly and the popular literature of the last couple of centuries on the religions of South Asia, a great deal has been made of the supposedly "tolerant" character of these religions, particularly in contrast with the alleged doctrinal rigidity (or stability, depending upon the author's evaluative stance) of the monotheistic traditions of the West: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In this literature, the indigenous traditions of South Asia – primarily Vedāntic Hinduism – are typically depicted as capable of accommodating within themselves an enormous variety of doctrines and practices, an internal diversity which would, it is generally presumed, never be countenanced by the orthodoxy-obsessed religions of the West. Modern Vedāntic descriptions of Hinduism, for example, as 'not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance',[255] and its Indological equivalent, the image of Hinduism as 'a vast sponge, which absorbs all that enters it without ceasing to be itself',[256] are well-known expressions of the view that accommodation of diversity is definitive of Hindu religiosity.[257]

Probably less well known than these depictions of Hindu accommodation of diversity, but arising from similar historical circumstances and concerns, is the twentieth-century depiction of Jainism, too, as a religion characterized throughout its history by peaceful toleration, in the realm of philosophy, of multiple points of view.[258] It has been claimed that the Jain system of philosophical analysis embodies 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*' – an extension of the central ethical principle of the Jain path into the realm of religious and philosophical discourse. In particular, the Jain doctrines of relativity have been claimed by a number of scholars to articulate an ethic of tolerance toward non-Jain religious and philosophical perspectives, whose assimilation within a Jain intellectual framework they also serve to facilitate.[259] But is this an adequate reading of these doctrines?

One might, of course, have suspicions about whether the concept of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*' actually reflects the orientations of the authors

of the premodern Jain texts in which these doctrines of relativity are formulated, particularly given their tendency toward sharp polemic – Haribhadrasūri being a notable exception.

Might the 'discovery' of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*', of an ethic of religious toleration articulated in the philosophical doctrines of a premodern South Asian school of thought, be a product of such typically modern concerns as nation-building and harmony among the diverse religious communities inhabiting the modern Indian nation-state? This clearly seems to be the case with modern formulations of Hinduism as 'not a religion, but religion itself in its most universal and deepest significance', of the Vedāntic Brahman as the ocean into which the streams of all the world's various religions pour, or the peak of the mountain up which all paths lead. This is primarily an historical question.

Furthermore, because they allow for the incorporation of non-Jain perspectives in a Jain philosophical framework, might the doctrines of relativity represent not an ethic of toleration, but an assertion of the superiority of the Jain *darśana* over all other schools of thought as the place where the various one-sided (*ekānta*) insights of other belief systems find their true, conditionalized expression?

If this is the case, then these doctrines are simply the Jain version of the strategy of inclusivism, found in Buddhist and Vedāntic philosophical texts as well, in which one's own system is depicted as the final truth toward which all other paths point – or, as is the case with Jain inclusivism, the sum total of truths taught in other systems of thought.[260]

Finally, for the Jains, might not such inclusivism have been a defense mechanism, a philosophical survival strategy on the part of a community that, throughout most of its history, been, with only occasional exceptions, a tiny (though influential) minority?

Kendall Folkert claims that the reading of 'tolerance' or 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*' into the Jain doctrines of relativity is a purely modern phenomenon, there being no clear premodern textual evidence that *ahiṃsā* was an explicit or even a primary motivation of the Jain intellectuals who formulated these doctrines, or that the two concepts – nonviolence and conceptual relativity – were ever even seen by premodern Jain intellectuals to be connected at all, at least not explicitly.[261]

The argument, of course, hinges on what one takes 'tolerance', precisely, to mean, and how well this notion corresponds with the

claims of the Jain philosophy of relativity. As Folkert points out, the dominant Jain theory of error – that it is the result of *ekāntatā*, or exclusivity with respect to philosophical perspectives – is congenial to being interpreted as a form of 'tolerance' in what could be called a modern sense – an affirmation of the importance of openness to a plurality of perspectives, a rejection of arbitrary, irrational dogmatism. But this is not the only theory of error articulated in the Jain tradition – for there is also the insistence that perspectives, or *nayas*, must be employed in a manner consistent with Jain doctrine. The dominant theory fits well with the notion that this philosophy is a form of intellectual *ahiṃsā*; the other theory, however, does not:

> The fact that the *naya*s can be interpreted differently plays a role in the notion of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*'. Two interpretations of the problem of error in the *nayavāda* have been mentioned: first, that *naya*s err in being incomplete [*ekānta*]; second, that they are susceptible to active misuse [*durnaya*]. Under the first interpretation, when a *naya* is illustrated by a school of thought, it is possible to draw the conclusion that each school of thought contributes or partakes in a valid, though limited, view of matters, and that if these limited viewpoints can be synthesized one will have the means of understanding matters in their multi-faceted real status. Thus schools of thought are simply extensions of the fact that any one judgement is limited, and no odium need be attached to the various schools of thought except that they are one-sided while the Jain position is not. … Under the second interpretation, where *naya*s are capable of being fallacious as well as limited, matters would be very different. What causes the existence of various schools of thought is not only the fact that judgements tend to be partial, but also that there can be error in those judgements. Thus it is not merely wrong-headed insistence on a particular viewpoint that lies behind the existence of various schools, it is also error itself.[262]

As we have seen, the Jain doctrines of relativity postulate a universe of multi-faceted entities that can be characterized in infinitely many ways from a correspondingly infinite variety of perspectives. The relational character of reality and knowledge posited by *anekāntavāda* and *nayavāda* entails that the truth of any given claim about the nature of an entity is relative to the perspective from which the claim is made – that is, that claims about reality are true not absolutely, but only conditionally: 'in a certain sense' (*syāt*), or from a certain point of view.

These doctrines allow Jain philosophers to take what Matilal calls an 'inclusive middle path' regarding ontological questions, questions about the ultimate character of reality and the entities constituting it.[263] Buddhist logicians, for example, typically claim that reality is ultimately characterized by impermanence, consisting of a series of causally connected momentary events. Adherents of Advaita Vedānta, however, claim that there is ultimately only one unchanging entity – Brahman – of which all of reality consists. Jain authors incorporate both perspectives into their view that reality is characterized by both change and continuity. According to the Jain, therefore, the Buddhist and the Vedāntin are both right from their respective points of view and wrong only inasmuch as they assert their positions absolutely, thus negating one another. Change and continuity presuppose one another, and the only properly comprehensive world view, according to Jain thought, is one which allows for both principles to operate as genuine elements of reality, reducing neither to the realm of *māyā*, or illusion, which the two extreme positions of Buddhism and Advaita each do to the other's privileged principle: impermanence and eternity.

The philosophy of the unchanging substance is embodied in its strongest form by Advaita Vedānta. The affirmation that the momentary state is most ultimate is expressed by the various schools of Buddhism. A mixture of both views, which gives priority to permanence, can be found in the Sāṃkhya school, with its doctrine of the *puruṣa*, or unchanging spirit, as the eminent reality in contrast with *prakṛti* – changing matter – from which *puruṣa* seeks to liberate itself. A mixture of both views which gives priority to particularity and change can be found in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, according to Jainism, which places itself firmly in the middle between the two extremes of eternalism and momentarism and their more moderate forms.[264] Jainism affirms the existence, equally, of both persisting substances and changing modes. It therefore depicts itself as the most comprehensive, the most inclusive, meta-philosophical view; and premodern Jain texts frequently include or consist of lists of all the possible perspectives from which a given question can be viewed and answered correctly.

The fact that the doctrines of relativity thus enabled premodern Jain intellectuals to incorporate elements of non-Jain systems of thought into their own philosophical framework, and that Jains have

been among the foremost composers of doxographies – compendia of the views of various schools of thought containing remarkably little in the way of polemic or distortion[265] – combined with the modern historical trends which might lead a scholar to *want* to see toleration in the doctrines of a school of Indian philosophy – the same trends which have led many to conceive of Hinduism as the most tolerant of religions – make it quite understandable that a twentieth-century scholar of the caliber of Matilal might come to the following conclusion about the Jain doctrines of relativity:

> Non-violence, i.e., abstention from killing or taking the life of others, was the dominant trend in the whole of [the] śramaṇa movement in India, particularly in Buddhism and Jainism. I think the Jainas carried the principle of non-violence to the intellectual level, and thus propounded their *anekānta* doctrine. Thus, the hallmark of the *anekānta* doctrine was toleration. The principle embodied in the respect for the life of others was transformed by the Jaina philosophers, at the intellectual level, into respect for the view[s] of others. This was, I think, a unique attempt to harmonize the persistent discord in the field of philosophy.[266]

Unfortunately, Matilal does not make a case for this conclusion on the basis of specific evidence from premodern Jain texts. It is apparently supposed to be obvious that a doctrine that involves the incorporation of the views of others into one's own expresses an ethic of nonviolent toleration of those others in fact. Is it possible that this is obvious only to a modern thinker, to whom issues of communal tolerance and inter-religious harmony are among the most pressing issues of the day? Is it possible that, because one's own existential situation is so characterized by the perceived need for a perspective conducive to peacemaking, the quest for such a perspective being conceived as, perhaps, a matter of national, or even global, survival, one reads that need back into history and presumes that the authors of the texts one is studying were motivated by those same concerns as well?[267] The point, again, is not that one cannot use the Jain philosophy of relativity in the service of inter-religious harmony, but that it is not as clear that this is what the ancient Jain thinkers who developed it had in mind.

One scholar who does try to make a properly historical case for the doctrines of relativity being an extension of the principle of *ahiṃsā* into the realm of philosophical discourse is Nathmal Tatia. It has been

suggested by Tatia that *syādvāda* evolved from early Jain monastic rules regarding proper – that is, nonviolent – speech. Tatia points out that in some of the earliest extant Jain texts, such as the *Ācārāṅga* and *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, explicit admonitions against violence not only in body, but in speech and mind as well, occur.[268] Similarly, the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, an early Jain manual of monastic discipline, contains the following rules for Jain monks with regard to speech:

> A wise monk does not speak inexpressible truth, truth mixed with falsehood, doubtful truth, or complete falsehood.
>
> A wise monk speaks after careful thought of things uncertain, even of truths, in a manner which may be free from sin, mild and beyond doubt.
>
> Likewise, he does not use harsh words, nor even truth that may cause deep injury, for even these generate bondage to negative karmas.
>
> A wise soul, conscious of evil intentions, does not speak words as prohibited above, or any other that may cause harm.[269]

It does not seem like a very big leap from rules about nonviolent speech such as those found in an early text like the *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* to the claim of later texts like Samantabhadra's *Āptamımāṃsā* that the proper way to express a claim is to accompany it with the word '*syāt*' and the elaboration of the senses in which various, prima facie contradictory claims can all be said to be true by means of the doctrine of the *nayas* and the metaphysics of *anekāntavāda*.

As Folkert points out, however, in his critique of Tatia's argument, this is an inference which the modern scholar must draw; for the connection between nonviolent speech and *syādvāda* does not seem to be made, at least explicitly, in any of the premodern Jain texts currently available to modern scholarship.

Is there no merit, though, in the position of those scholars who have perceived tolerance in the Jain doctrines of relativity? Whatever their historical origins, could these doctrines not be used to argue for inter-religious tolerance today?

In partial defense of the scholars of Jainism who have held that the doctrines of relativity are expressions of intellectual *ahiṃsā*, I would want to argue that there are two issues here that can easily become conflated. One is the *historical* question of whether the premodern formulations of the Jain doctrines of relativity did, in fact, constitute

an extension of the principle of *ahiṃsā* into the realm of religious and philosophical discourse. The second is the *philosophical* question of whether or not, regardless of the actual motivations behind their historical formulation, these doctrines *can legitimately be so interpreted* as to be capable of deployment in the name of religious toleration.

In other words, whether or not they were originally conceived as expressions of 'intellectual *ahiṃsā*', can the Jain doctrines of relativity, by their internal logic, be deployed to provide the philosophical foundation for an ethic of religious toleration? Simply to pose the problem in the form of the question 'Do the Jain doctrines of relativity express an ethic of religious toleration or not?' is to lose sight of this very important distinction.

These two issues, however, though distinguishable, are interrelated. With regard to the first issue – the historical question – I tend to agree with Folkert's position that there is insufficient evidence for making the strong positive claim that many Jain scholars have made in this regard. Regarding the second issue, however, of whether the Jain doctrines of relativity might plausibly be used as elements in the making of an argument for religious toleration, I am strongly inclined to support the position that they can be so used. The historical and the philosophical issues are interrelated, however, inasmuch as textual evidence indicates that, historically, even if the doctrines of relativity were not necessarily designed with *ahiṃsā* in mind, there are Jain writers who did put them to what could be called 'tolerant' or 'nonviolent' uses, and Jain writers who did not. This suggests that the answer to the question 'Do the Jain doctrines of relativity articulate an ethic or religious toleration or do they not?" cannot be an easy 'Yes' or 'No'. I would like to argue – after the manner in which the Jain texts themselves confront philosophical questions – that the best answer to this question is 'In some sense yes; in another, no'.

Regarding the attitude that is proper for Jains to hold toward non-Jain religious beliefs and practices, there is no consensus among premodern Jain writers. All Jains are, of course, enjoined to live lives of nonviolence in body, speech and mind, entailing the avoidance of careers that involve the taking of human or animal life and the performance of acts of charity toward the larger community, Jain and non-Jain. However, behaving nonviolently, or even kindly, toward others need not – though it can – entail acceptance of or even respect for their beliefs and practices. The range of Jain responses to, for

example, the deities worshipped by Hindus has included everything from acceptance – the Jains, for example, offer *pūjā* to Saraswatī and Lakṣmī – to ambivalence – Krishna, for example, is regarded as residing in Hell for his violent deeds in the Mahābhārata war, but will be reborn as a Jina in the next cosmic cycle, and is claimed to be related to Neminātha, the 22nd Tīrthaṅkara – to loathing and contempt – particularly for Śiva, who is ridiculed in some Jain texts.[270]

In the realm of philosophy, the Jain doctrines of relativity have had applications with regard to issues of religious toleration at least as varied as the Jain responses to the Hindu deities in popular literature. For some, such as Haribhadrasūri, the doctrines of relativity prove that there are fundamental truths in the teachings of the masters of all traditions, including the non-Jain Kāpila (the traditional founder of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy) and the Buddha. As we have already seen, in his *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*, Haribhadra asserts that *nirvāṇa* is essentially one, but is described differently by the great masters who have attained it in order to meet the needs of their particular disciples and of the times in which they lived. The proper attitude, therefore, to hold toward all the great founders of the various paths is veneration and respect. Disputation over matters of logic is to be avoided as non-conducive to the supreme goal, the common aspiration of all.[271] He writes elsewhere, 'I do not have any partiality for Mahāvīra, nor do I revile people such as Kāpila [the founder of the Sāṃkhya system of philosophy]. One should instead have confidence in any person whose statements are in accord with reason (*yukti*).'[272]

One may, however, contrast Haribhadra's attitude toward non-Jain *darśana*s with that of another celebrated Jain thinker of the Śvetāmbara tradition, Hemacandra, author of the *Anyayogavyavacchedika* – a possible translation of the title of which is 'The Ripper-Apart of Other Systems of Thought'. In this text, further elaborated by the commentary of his disciple, Malliṣeṇasūri, the *Syādvādamañjarī* ('The Flower-Spray of the Doctrine of Conditional Predication'), Hemacandra, while affirming that Jainism contains the true insights of all other systems – and thereby, implicitly, that other systems do contain true insights – seeks primarily to refute the doctrines of those systems, demonstrating their absurdity either on the basis of self-contradiction or conflict with the data of experience, as well as the standard Jain charge of 'one-sidedness' (*ekāntatā*); for Hemacandra also

upholds the dominant interpretation of *nayavāda*, and expresses it in this text.[273] The following verse, sometimes cited as evidence for the nonviolent character of Jain philosophy, sounds, in this context, more like a form of Jain philosophical triumphalism:

> As, because of being alternatives and counter-alternatives one to another, the other prime doctrines are jealous; not so is Thy [the Jina's] religion, in desiring the Methods [*naya*s] in totality, without distinction [or] given to partiality.[274]

For Hemacandra, the doctrines of relativity demonstrate the superiority of Jainism over other schools of thought, its ability to assimilate their insights to itself.

Do the Jain doctrines of relativity, then, articulate an ethic of *ahiṃsā*, of nonviolent toleration for the views of others, seen as each expressing a genuine insight into truth? Or do they constitute a rhetorical strategy of assimilation, by which the central teachings of other schools of thought are 'swallowed up' into Jainism, which comes out on top as the superior, all-inclusive perspective? The evidence indicates that the answers to these questions depend on who is deploying the doctrines in a given situation. But one thing is clear: for the authors in question, these doctrines are logical entailments of the metaphysical system accepted by the Jain tradition as a whole – the one systematized in Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra* – and not primarily responses to religious diversity.

An issue remains, though. Even given the current interpretations of *nayavāda*, are the Jain doctrines of relativity really 'nonviolent'? Do they not interpret the doctrines of other communities in ways foreign to the self-understanding of those communities, subsuming their ideas in an intellectual framework to which they would probably not acquiesce? By relativizing them, does this philosophy not distort doctrines beyond recognition? Does it provide a framework for genuine understanding of the other, or for the absorption and appropriation of a constructed 'other' with little resemblance to the genuine article? Are the Jain doctrines of relativity a kind of theological imperialism?

These are serious questions, and must be answered by those of us who would appropriate this system of logic as a framework for the analysis of religious doctrines and for the conceptualization of religion in general. To some extent, I would claim that the issue must be

conceded – that *anekantavāda*, *nayavāda*, and *syādvāda* do not interpret the doctrinal claims of other schools of thought without some distortion, without imposing foreign categories of understanding upon them.

I would also maintain, however, that this is an inevitability for anyone, from any perspective, who attempts to understand other points of view using their own categories of understanding. How can one avoid using the categories of one's own worldview when seeking to understand the views of others? The same general principle applies to secular theories of religion and culture no less than to the perspectives of philosophers and religiously committed intellectuals.

In *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*, Wilhelm Halbfass provides what I find to be a useful discussion of the concept of *inclusivism* as a way of understanding the position which a tradition of thought that is bound, on the one hand, by commitment to certain absolute, normative claims, and, on the other, by injunctions of tolerance and nonviolence, must logically assume. He writes that, 'any kind of tolerance which is allied with, and committed to, religious absolutism, and which keeps itself free from relativism, scepticism or indifferentism, is by definition inclusivistic'.[275]

Halbfass furthermore recognizes that, among the possible varieties of inclusivism, some are, in a sense, more inclusive than others, and that the Jain system of relativity is something of a model in this respect:

> In addition to the 'vertical', hierarchical model of inclusivism, there is also a 'horizontal' model, which is typified by the Jaina doxographies. The Jainas present their own system not as the transcending culmination of lower stages of truth, but as the complete and comprehensive context, the full panorama which comprises other doctrines as partial truths or limited perspectives. Although these two models are not always kept apart in doxographic practice, they represent clearly different types of inclusion. The subordination of other views to the Vedāntic idea of *brahman* or the Madhyamaka viewpoint of 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*) postulates an ascent which is at the same time a discarding and transcendence of doctrinal distinctions; the inclusion and neutralization of other views is not a subordinating identification of specific foreign concepts with specific aspects of one's own system, but an attempt to supersede and transcend specific concepts and conceptual and doctrinal dichotomies in general. The

> Jaina perspectivism, on the other hand, represents a horizontally coordinating inclusivism which recognizes other views as parts and aspects of its own totality. Of course, the Jainas, too, claim a superior vantage point, and a higher level of reflection.[276]

The logical structure of what Halbfass calls *inclusivism* is required by a philosophy, like Jainism, which would avoid the undesirable extremes of both absolutism and relativism.

Mahatma Gandhi and the Jain Philosophy of Relativity

Interestingly, no less of a champion of *ahiṃsā* than Mahatma Gandhi was an advocate of the Jain philosophy of relativity. If one asks, 'What was Gandhi's approach to religious diversity?', one finds that the answer is: *syādvāda*!

As we shall see, Gandhi's *syādvāda* was not necessarily the *syādvāda* of the Jain philosophers we have been studying. We shall even see that Gandhi was aware of this. As with a host of other ideas that he encountered from a variety of traditions and sources – Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, modern thought – Gandhi appropriated and adapted the concepts of Jainism from the perspective of his own emergent worldview and needs. In this way, he is a model for all of us who seek to draw wisdom from other traditions. His *syādvāda*, therefore, may not be 'authentically' Jain. But it is nevertheless instructive.

Gandhi's general attitude toward religious diversity is well summarized in the following, fairly representative passage:

> Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal?[277]

Elsewhere, he elaborates further upon this same theme:

> I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world. I believe that they are all God-given and I believe that they were necessary for the people to whom these religions were revealed. And I believe that if only we could all of us read the scriptures of the different faiths from the standpoint of the followers of these faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom all one and were all helpful to one another.[278]

The Non-Systematic Pluralism of the Karma-Yogī

The vast body of Gandhi's written work contains numerous passages of a similar sort, which elaborate upon or presuppose a pluralist orientation toward the world's religions. This is the view that the religions are paths leading to a common goal, and that, properly understood, they express mutually supportive, complementary views of ultimate reality, rather than mutually incompatible and, by implication, antagonistic alternatives.

According to the *Bhagavad Gītā* – which Gandhi once described as 'an infallible guide of conduct', and which was to become his 'dictionary of daily reference'[279] – there are multiple paths to spiritual liberation for different kinds of people. These paths, or disciplines – *yogas* – have, for centuries, provided a framework in terms of which Hindus have understood and defined their varied beliefs and practices. They form a framework that allows for a considerable religious diversity within Hinduism itself.

In terms of the *Gītā*'s model of many paths to salvation, Gandhi would probably be characterized best as a *karma-yogī*, a practitioner of the discipline of action. An activist through and through, Gandhi's primary concern was not to develop a consistent systematic philosophy – a concern more typical of a *jñāna-yogī*, a seeker after wisdom. His concern was with translating ideas into action with a positive transformative impact on the suffering of human beings. *Satya* and *ahiṃsā*, truth and nonviolence – the first two Jain *vratas* – were, for Gandhi, inseparable. He claimed that, 'a perfect vision of Truth can only follow a complete realization of Ahimsa'[280] – a typically Jain approach. For him, the most important test of the truth of an idea was not its logical coherence with other ideas in a philosophical system, but the ability of that idea to facilitate transformative nonviolent action. As he once wrote:

> …Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, try the following expedient: Recall the face of the poorest and most helpless man you have ever seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he be able to gain anything by it? Will it restore to him control over his own life and destiny? … Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.[281]

Gandhi: The Anekāntavādi

What is the *jñāna-yogī*, then, who is concerned with the consistency and clarity of ideas and methods, to make of Gandhi's views on religious plurality? If one is interested in discerning a systematic world-view underlying Gandhi's various pronouncements on this subject, how should one proceed?

One can begin by attending to Gandhi's social and historical context. Gandhi's pronouncements about the ultimate unity and complementarity of the world's religions echo similar claims made by other prominent Hindus of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In response to the intellectual and cultural challenges of the West, a 'Neo-Hindu' or 'Neo-Vedāntic' movement emerged in the nineteenth century that conceived of a 'universal religion' of which all religions are forms or aspects.

The classic expression of this universalist Neo-Hinduism is found in the life and teachings of the nineteenth-century Bengali saint Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who claimed:

> God has made different religions to suit different aspirants, times, and countries. All doctrines are only so many paths; but a path is by no means God Himself. Indeed, one can reach God if one follows any of the paths with whole hearted devotion. One may eat a cake with icing either straight or sidewise. It will taste sweet either way. As one and the same material, water, is called by different names by different peoples, one calling it water, another eau, a third aqua, and another pani, so the one Everlasting-Intelligent-Bliss [*sat-chit-ananda*] is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Jehovah, and by others as Brahman. As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so diverse are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.[282]

This Hindu universalism is typically articulated, in the writings of such thinkers as Swāmī Vivekānanda and S. Radhakrishnan, in terms of the philosophy of *Advaita*, or non-dualism. According to this philosophy, the ultimate reality is *nirguṇa* Brahman – a pure, impersonal existence beyond all conceptual thought, name, and form. The deities of Hinduism (and, in Neo-Hinduism, the ultimate realities of all the world's religions) are forms or manifestations of this reality, which is ultimately identical with everything.

According to this view, the perception of a world of forms distinct from Brahman is conceived as a result of cosmic illusion, or *māyā*. This school of thought is based on the teachings of Śaṅkarācārya, an eighth-century Hindu philosopher who interpreted the *Upaniṣads* as revealing the ultimate unity of the world and Brahman.

Swāmī Prabhavānanda, a twentieth-century exponent of this monistic philosophy, explains the concept of Brahman in the following way:

> Brahman is the reality – the one existence, absolutely independent of human thought or idea. Because of the ignorance of our human minds, the universe seems to be composed of diverse forms. It is Brahman alone … This universe is an effect of Brahman. It can never be anything else but Brahman. Apart from Brahman, it does not exist. There is nothing beside Him. He who says that this universe has an independent existence is still suffering from delusion. He is like a man talking in his sleep. 'The universe is Brahman' – so says the great seer of the Atharva Veda. The universe, therefore, is nothing but Brahman. It is superimposed upon Him. It has no separate existence, apart from its ground.[283]

Gandhi, too, embraced the philosophy of *advaita* – but with a deeply ethical twist:

> I do not believe … that an individual may gain spiritually while those who surround him suffer. I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him and if one man falls the whole world falls to that extent.[284]

But while Gandhi did embrace *advaita* in many of his writings, he also spoke and wrote frequently of a personal God – distinct from humanity and the rest of the universe – and of the importance of discerning and behaving in accordance with this God's will, and of the actions of God as an agent in human history – theistic concepts more in line with traditional Vaiṣṇava *dvaita*, or dualistic Vedānta, or Abrahamic monotheism, than with the ultimately impersonal and formless Brahman of *advaita* Vedānta.

In early 1926 or late 1925, this apparent inconsistency in his thought was pointed out by a reader of Gandhi's English-language newspaper, *Young India*, in a letter to the editor. Gandhi's response to this letter, in

the 21 January 1926 issue, is helpful for discerning the philosophy underlying Gandhi's seemingly disconnected pronouncements on religion:

> I am an *advaitist* and yet I can support *Dvaitism* (dualism). The world is changing every moment, and is therefore unreal, it has no permanent existence. But though it is constantly changing, it has something about it which persists and it is therefore to that extent real. I have therefore no objection to calling it real and unreal, and thus being called an *Anekantavadi* or a *Syadvadi*. But my *Syadvada* is not the *syadvada* of the learned, it is peculiarly my own. I cannot engage in a debate with them. It has been my experience that I am always true from my point of view, and am often wrong from the point of view of my honest critics. I know that we are both right from our respective points of view. And this knowledge saves me from attributing motives to my opponents or critics. The seven blind men who gave seven different descriptions of the elephant were all right from their respective points of view, and wrong from the point of view of one another, and right and wrong from the point of view of the man who knew the elephant. I very much like this doctrine of the manyness of reality.[285]

How did Gandhi become aware of *anekāntavāda*? And how did the first two Jain *vratas*, *ahiṃsā* and *satya*, become foundational to his worldview? As we have seen, one of the highest concentrations of Jains in India is in the region of Gujarat, the western coastal region in which Gandhi was born and raised. Jain ideals and practices have long exerted an influence upon the Gujarati Hindu Vaiṣṇava community, of which Gandhi was a member, and Jain monks were frequent visitors to the Gandhi household when he was still a boy. Indeed, before he undertook his first journey abroad – to London to study law – his family permitted him to do so only after he took a vow 'not to touch wine, woman and meat' – a vow administered by one Becarajī Svāmī, a Jain monk.[286]

Later in his life, one of Gandhi's closest friends and spiritual advisers was a Jain layman, Rājacandra Mahetā – known affectionately to Gandhi as 'Raychandbhai' – of whom he writes:

> I have tried to meet the heads of various faiths, and I must say that no one else has ever made on me the impression that Raychandbhai did. His words went straight home to me. His intellect compelled as great

> a regard from me as his moral earnestness, and deep down in me was the conviction that he would never willingly lead me astray and would always confide to me his innermost thoughts. In my moments of spiritual crisis, therefore, he was my refuge.[287]

Given the strong presence of Jainism in Gandhi's social and historical context, it should come as no surprise that the Jain tradition exerted a profound influence upon his thought.

It was Jain philosophy that allowed Gandhi to conceive of ultimate reality pluralistically, in both personal theistic and impersonal *advaitic* terms. Most importantly, from Gandhi's perspective, it was Jain philosophy that allowed him to exercise not only tolerance but empathy for the positions of those with whom he disagreed. Again:

> It is this doctrine that has taught me to judge a Musalman [Muslim] from his own standpoint and a Christian from his. Formerly I used to resent the ignorance of my opponents. Today I can love them because I am gifted with the eye to see myself as others see me *and vice versa*. I want to take the whole world in the embrace of my love. My *anekantavad* is the result of the twin doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa*.[288]

Anekāntavāda as a Philosophy of Religious Pluralism

Adopting his own version of the Jain philosophy of relativity, Gandhi justified drawing inspiration from a wide and diverse range of sources, incorporating their insights into his own view. The *Bhagavad Gītā*, the Bible, the Qur'an, Thoreau, Tolstoy, Theosophy: all became resources which he could tap for ideas and embrace as elements in his own, constantly growing and changing worldview. His pluralism could almost be seen as an intellectual expression of his desire 'to take the whole world in the embrace of his love'. He could embrace the truth in the beliefs of others because his nonviolent attitude enabled him to *see* the truth in them, and his *anekānta* philosophy enabled him to make their truth his own – without contradicting or sacrificing any of the truths he already held.

Any attempt to interpret religions and philosophies pluralistically – as elements in a larger, more encompassing worldview, just like the parts of the elephant felt by the blind men – inevitably involves some distortion, some epistemic 'violence', especially if they do not see

themselves as expressing 'parts' of the truth, but the *whole* truth. But if one acknowledges – like Haribhadrasūri, Ramakrishna, or Gandhi – that there is wisdom to be found in all traditions, but one also wishes to avoid an indiscriminate relativism, it is hard to conceive of an alternative to some kind of religiously pluralistic worldview.

The Jain doctrines of relativity recommend themselves, I believe, to those who are committed to religious pluralism due, not only to their own internal consistency, but also to the fact that they allow for a minimal distortion of the claims of the world's religions. As we have seen, some distortion is inevitable when one draws the ideas of others into one's worldview. But because of the metaphysical realism that underlies them, the Jain doctrines do not relegate any experience to the realm of illusion. The experiences at the core of all the world's religions can thus be affirmed as authentic perceptions of reality.

Conclusion

The Jain doctrines of relativity are an important cornerstone of the claim that this is a tradition with universal relevance; for one does not necessarily have to be a Jain to adopt the Jain pluralistic method. Gandhi, for example, was able to incorporate his very strong Vaiṣṇava theism into his *anekāntavāda*. In our next chapter, we shall conclude our discussion of Jainism with some reflections on the relevance of this tradition to all of humanity.

Chapter VII

The Jain Vision and the Future of Humanity

Jainism in the World

The Jains form a distinctive and important sub-community in the larger setting of Indic religious life. Their views on nonviolence have been particularly influential on the larger Hindu community in the midst of which they have always existed. From the practice of vegetarianism to the political deployment of *ahiṃsā* by Mahatma Gandhi, the influence of the Jains on the religious life of India has been profound. And this influence has been despite the relatively small number of people making up the Jain community.

To what can this influence be attributed? It is almost certainly due in part to the tendency of the Jains to gravitate toward business professions. The wealth of the Jains as a whole is considerable, and with wealth comes influence.

But it is also certainly due to the great reverence with which the Jain monks and nuns are regarded by the various communities in the Indian subcontinent. The difficulty and the rigor of Jain ascetic practice cannot but command respect and attract prestige in a part of the world where asceticism and spirituality are closely linked in a wide variety of traditions. For Hindus as well as for Jains, self-discipline and nonviolence are important spiritual ideals, which Jain ascetics embody to a degree that is difficult for many to even fathom, much less emulate, even in India – or for that matter, even among Jain laypersons.

Finally, the Jains have been a very articulate community, producing volumes of religious and philosophical writing over the centuries. In debate with both Buddhists and Brahmins, Jain philosophers have held their own, using their doctrines of relativity to present a perspective inclusive of both Buddhist and Hindu views. For all these reasons and more, the Jain community continues to thrive and to maintain its highly distinctive identity in the midst of the vastness of Hinduism.

What does the Jain tradition have to teach the world today? Even if, due to its very ascetic ideal, the appeal of Jainism has always been limited, one can still readily see how dimensions of the Jain vision can be relevant to contemporary issues. The Jain emphasis on *ahiṃsā*, and on respect not only for the lives of other human beings, but for the lives of all beings, right down to the level of microscopic organisms, has great resonance with the pressing issues of war and environmental degradation. And we have just seen that the Jain doctrines of relativity have the potential to allow one to argue for religious pluralism, a view that respects the truths of all religions – an important idea in an era torn by religious conflict. Although its emphasis has been on personal rather than social transformation, perhaps we can all learn something from this ancient and distinctive spiritual tradition.

Jainism: The West's Radical Other

But it would be difficult to conceive of a system of thought and practice more radically at odds with the dominant materialistic paradigm of Western modernity than Jainism. I find that when I teach the South Asian religious traditions at Elizabethtown College (a small American undergraduate institution located in rural Pennsylvania), the tradition that my students consistently find most 'other' to their values and way of life is not Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, or even Islam – despite contemporary world politics – but Jainism.

Why is this so? Whereas most of my students tend to assume that the material world exists for human consumption, for the gratification of human physical needs and desires, Jainism teaches that, for human beings, the material world is primarily that which is to be renounced. Whereas most of my students celebrate their physical existence as something to be enjoyed, the religious among them regarding life as 'sacred', Jainism teaches that the most holy death is one of self-starvation pursued in the name of liberation from physical existence. Whereas most inhabitants of the region in which Elizabethtown College is located are voracious meat-eaters – the smells of agriculture being all-pervasive in the area – Jainism teaches not only vegetarianism, but even the avoidance of injury, as much as possible, to insects and microorganisms.

To be sure, the 'otherness' of Jainism can easily be exaggerated if one is attentive only to the ascetic ideal of the tradition, which only

an infinitesimal percentage of Jains, those who join the community of *sādhus* and *sādhvis*, or monks and nuns, elect to pursue. If one were to focus only upon monastic behavior, then Theravāda Buddhism, Hinduism, or even a Western tradition such as Roman Catholicism, could be made to look radically other to the dominant form of life in contemporary Europe and North America. I always therefore make it a point to draw my students' attention to the fact that the average Jain is a layperson whose actual lifestyle may not be *that* radically different from their own.

On the other hand, the fact that the motivating ideal of a religious tradition is very difficult to achieve, so much so that few, even within the community, strive to embody it in a given lifetime, does not mean that this ideal is wholly irrelevant to the lives of those who do not strive in this way.

This is especially true for Jainism, which is marked by a relentless internal logical consistency. Jainism is an organic system of ideals and practices interrelated in such a way that the ascetic ideal, although embodied by relatively few, nonetheless informs the practice and self-understanding of even the Jain businessman, thoroughly enmeshed in the affairs of the material world.

This is only one of the paradoxes of Jainism, at least from the point of view of Western culture, in which moral injunctions are typically seen as applying with equal force to all human beings. Jainism shares with other Asian traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, a high degree of context sensitivity with respect to claims about what is or is not morally appropriate. Although it expresses a strong universal moral ideal in the form of its teaching of *ahiṃsā*, or nonviolence, according to which *ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ* ('Nonviolence is the ultimate duty'), Jainism maintains that the degree to which *ahiṃsā* is to be practiced depends upon one's station in life (specifically upon whether one is an ascetic or a layperson) and on the particular situation one is facing at a given time.

Anything, therefore, that is said about the Jain ascetic ideal must be understood as being qualified by this fact. It is *not* expected that all Jains, at any given time, will be full-time ascetics: monks or nuns. It is well understood that were all Jains to adopt the ascetic life there could not be any ascetics, because a necessary material condition for the existence of the ascetic community is the existence of a lay community that supplies the ascetics with food, shelter, and clothing

– not to mention 'supplying' ascetics themselves, all of whom began life as laypersons.

'Interference': Sources of Misunderstanding of Jainism

In maintaining, as I wish to do, that Jainism is a tradition with universal relevance, it is necessary to address some issues which sometimes produce negative reactions to the Jain tradition among non-Jains. These negative perceptions are, on the whole, the result of misunderstandings of the Jain tradition, which interfere with the ability of the perceiver to appreciate the gifts that Jainism has to offer.

Motives vs. Consequences

The first misunderstanding, which I have just been discussing and which Dundas has – I think rightly – attributed to the influence of Christian missionary writing about Jainism, is that Jainism is a coldly austere religion of pure asceticism, with no 'heart', preoccupied only with not harming microorganisms. As I have already mentioned, only a minority of Jains practice *ahiṃsā* to its fullest extent. And the notion that the ethic of Jainism is only negative – to avoid doing harm – is simply incorrect; for compassion is enjoined in the Jain tradition as both an effect of and a prerequisite for a correct perception of reality.

Related to the perception of Jainism as excessively preoccupied with nonviolence is an ancient controversy between Jains and Buddhists regarding the relative importance of motive and consequence in determining the morality of an act. For the Jains, though motive is clearly important, the destructive consequences of our actions must be taken with great seriousness in evaluating their morality. For a Jain ascetic, even accidentally killing an insect has karmic consequences that require a ritual of atonement.

The Jain focus on consequences – that the effects of our actions matter karmically, regardless of our intentions – creates a very high standard of behavior, particularly when one takes into account the need to avoid the destruction of even very small life forms.

From a Buddhist point of view, it is the motive that ultimately determines the morality or immorality of an act. This does not mean that consequences are unimportant to Buddhists, just as the Jain emphasis on consequences does not render motive wholly irrelevant.

But the different emphases of these two traditions in this regard have had practical consequences, with Buddhists emphasizing a 'Middle Path' of moderation with regard to ascetic practice, with the Jains maintaining that, at least for the aspirant for liberation, there can be no compromise with the ideal of *ahiṃsā*.

It would be too easy, however, to exaggerate this difference between Buddhism and Jainism – as both Buddhist and Jain polemical writers did in ancient times – suggesting that Jains irrationally regard the accidental killing of an ant as being an act with equal weight to the deliberate and pre-meditated murder of a human being, or that Buddhists are 'slackers' who have no regard for the consequences of their actions, as long as they do not mean any harm.

I am emphasizing this point because I have found that, whereas students in the West often come away with a very positive reaction toward Buddhism, they are put off by what they perceive to be Jainism's rigor in regard to the protection of life. In practice, however, these two traditions are not as different as their respective emphases on motive and consequence might suggest. Theravāda Buddhism in particular is quite rigorous as an ascetic practice. The life of the Theravādan *bhikkhu*, set on a scale along with that of a Jain ascetic and a contemporary college student in the West, will be at almost the same point as that of the Jain ascetic. And Jain ascetics conceive of their constant watchfulness toward small creatures as a kind of mindfulness meditation, and not only as a way of 'burning off' bad karma. Jainism and Buddhism are not as different as their respective stereotypes would have us think.

Jainism and God

For many students in the West, especially those from a religious background, a major source of potential misunderstanding of Jainism pertains to the question of the existence of God.

A point of divergence between Jains and most Hindus regards the existence of a divinity or Supreme Being. Jainism, like Buddhism, is not theistic, claiming the universe has always existed and that the effects of karma are sufficient to explain the regularities observable within the cosmos. Most Hindus, however – not unlike Jews, Christians, and Muslims – maintain that there is a Supreme Being who is creator, preserver, and periodic destroyer, and re-creator of the universe, an idea reflected in the famous Hindu image of the *trimūrti*,

or 'three forms' of God: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. God is the *coordinator* of karma, the guarantor that each action will be followed by its inevitable result.

However, according to Jainism and Buddhism (and some forms of Hinduism), it is unnecessary to posit a divine being in order to explain the regular workings of the universe. This was a source of considerable controversy between Jains and Hindus in ancient India. Jains have argued that, even were there a creator of the universe, the act of creating would imply desire – the desire to create – on the part of that creator. As a being subject to desire, this creator would still be trapped in *saṃsāra*, and at a lower spiritual level than a Jina. Also, if karma is sufficient to account for what happens in the world, is there a need for a deity? Such a being would either be superfluous or arbitrary.[289]

It is not the case, though, that most Jains (or Buddhists for that matter) are atheists in the full, contemporary sense of this term, which usually implies not only the denial of the existence of a creator and coordinator of the universe, but also the denial of a soul and an afterlife, and possibly of any ultimate meaning to human existence – the position held by the Cārvākas or Lokāyatas in ancient India. Jains believe strongly in the existence of what could be called a sacred reality of ultimate importance, and so in what could be called a 'God' in a functional sense.

This sacred reality is the *jīva*, or soul, in its pure, enlightened state. Some modern Jains even express this idea by referring to the soul as 'God within', and referring to enlightened beings that have fully realized the soul in its purity as 'God'. The Jinas, like Mahāvīra, are therefore, in this functional sense, divine, and are worshiped as such.

As discussed earlier, Jains do not traditionally conceive of the *jīva*s as ultimately connected with a 'supersoul' or 'oversoul', like the Vedāntic *paramātman*, or 'supreme self' – which is what Hindu thinkers are typically referring to when they speak of God as dwelling within all beings. Souls all have a common nature, according to Jainism. But they are not linked to a shared supreme self – though Jains do use the word *paramātman* to refer to a soul in its liberated state.

This metaphysical distinction is commonly elided, however, in the modern period, with the rise of heterodoxy among many lay Jains – particularly those residing outside of India. The fact that both Jains and Hindus can speak of a 'God within', even though their respective

textual traditions mean something different by this, facilitates a blending of the two concepts.[290]

Jainism and Science

On the other hand, for those students with a more scientific bent of mind, Jainism has yet another stumbling block. According to the Ardha-Māgadhī scriptures, the universe, as it was perceived by Mahāvīra after his attainment of omniscience, is quite different from the world known to modern science.

Traditional Jain cosmology conceives of the earth, first of all, as a flat disc. At the center of this disc is Mount Meru – a sacred mountain at the center of the Hindu and Buddhist traditional universes as well. Not too far from Meru is the land mass of which the Indian subcontinent is a part – called Jambūdvīpa. Radiating out from the center of the world disc is a concentric series of rings of islands, interspersed with oceans. Adjacent to Jambūdvīpa is Dhāṭakīkhaṇḍa which, along with half of the next continent, Puṣkaradvīpa, is the abode of humanity.[291]

The world disc as a whole is situated in the center of the cosmos. The cosmos as a whole is shaped, interestingly, somewhat like the figure of a human being, and is called the *loka puruṣa*. This fact has very interesting resonances with the *Ṛg Vedic* conception of the universe as the body of a deity – the *puruṣa*, or cosmic man – who offered himself as a sacrifice to the gods so the universe could be created.[292] Above and below the world disc are various planes of existence, the position of each being a function of the karmas of the beings that inhabit them. The 'lower' realms are hells – unpleasant realms of rebirth, where beings are reborn who have committed great evil – the worst hell being the one at the very bottom. The 'higher' realms, similarly, are heavens, where beings are born who have lived very good and pure lives, the highest being the *Brahmāloka*, near the top of the universe.

The very top of the universe is reserved for the beings that have attained *mokṣa* – the *Siddhaloka*, or 'Realm of the Perfected Ones'. Beings born in any of the other levels of the cosmos will be reborn on the same level or another, depending on their karma, after they die. But those beings that have attained liberation go, at death, to the *Siddhaloka*, where they remain forever in a state of perfect bliss and omniscience.

The *loka puruṣa* as a whole is quite vast. Attempts to calculate its size in terms of Western measurements yield a space many light years in extent.

Needless to say, this is not, at least at first glance, the universe known to modern science – particularly the flat world disc – a fact which has caused some Jains, even a very prominent monk, to question their faith, while some others have insisted that the 'flat earth theory' is literally true.

The issues that Jain cosmology raises are analogous to those raised by the idea of creationism in some forms of Christianity. If one interprets one's religion as mandating the belief that the world was created approximately 6000 years ago, in seven days of 24 hours' duration, one must radically reinterpret or reject a good deal of scientific evidence, and much of modern science.

One could ask whether the traditional Jain cosmology should really be that much of a stumbling block in appreciating Jainism. Hinduism and Buddhism, after all, have quite similar traditional cosmologies, which are generally interpreted, within these two traditions, as spiritual cosmologies – as metaphors, rather than as literal representations of the world. And it is quite clear that the primary function of the Jain cosmology is to give an illustration of Jain karma theory – to articulate in cosmological terms the deeply moral conception of existence that Jainism teaches; for there is no 'morally neutral' space in the Jain universe. Each location in the Jain universe is a function of the karma of the beings that occupy it.

When one takes into account, however, the ancient Jain claim of omniscience for Mahāvīra and the other Jinas, and the painstaking detail with which the Jain universe is described in the Ardha-Māgadhī scriptures, one can see why this representation of reality could be taken by many to be literally true.

Given the vast size of the *loka puruṣa*, though, another possible reading suggests itself that is neither simplistically literal nor wholly metaphorical. For a believing Jain, for whom the claim of Mahāvīra's omniscience is a necessary tenet of faith, might it not be possible to interpret the 'islands' of the world disc as planets, or as planetary systems, and the 'oceans' as interstellar space? The distances involved, when translated into the terms of Western measurement systems, would allow for this. Indeed, when interpreted in this way, the world disc bears more than a little resemblance to the Milky Way galaxy.

Might a contemporary Jain not allow that Mahāvīra spoke of 'islands' and 'oceans' in order to communicate to a premodern audience that would not have a frame of reference for talking about distant planets and solar systems?

And of course, when the question of Jainism and science arises, devout Jains can always point to the fact that Mahāvīra was profoundly aware of the existence of tiny life forms in air and water many centuries before the invention of the microscope – which is a very interesting fact indeed.

Jainism and Ecology

Much has been written in recent years about Jainism and environmentalism. A topic of some controversy in the study of Jainism regards the question of Jain ecological wisdom. Specifically, intellectuals within the Jain community have taken to expressing the view that Jainism, with its emphasis on nonviolence toward all living beings, could form the basis for a strong ecological ethos, thus adding its voice to global calls for the protection of the environment.

Other scholars of Jainism, on the other hand, have called this view into question, arguing on the basis of Jain textual traditions that Jainism has more typically expressed a world-denying ethos of extreme asceticism which, far from positively valuing the world – and by implication, the physical environment – sees it as an obstacle to be overcome.[293] A re-envisioning of Jainism as a 'green' tradition therefore involves inevitable distortion. Dundas, for example, argues that

> …to detach Jain teachings from their overall historical, practical, and mythical context in the cause of rendering them into a quasi-scientific ahistorical philosophy palatable to the modern world is completely at variance with the trajectory of informed scholarship on Asian religious traditions, including Jainism, carried out in the last fifteen years or so. … Very often, what emerges from this is little more than a trivialization of Jainism into strings of platitudes.[294]

John Cort similarly observes that 'The Jain soteriology, with its devaluation of the material world in the pursuit of pure spirituality, is in many ways not conducive to the development of an environmental ethic.' 'But', he adds,

> the Jains also have a rich history of daily practices and attitudes that foster a much more positive engagement with the material world. Such habitual activities in relationship to the environment oftentimes underlie and inform an environmental ethic, more so than abstract moral rules and injunctions.[295]

In contrasting soteriology at a formal, textual level with actual social practice, Cort points to one of the deep paradoxes of Jainism. Although it radically devalues the material world as that which is to be renounced, its soteriological system issues in the practice of profound respect for life, including, pre-eminently, non-human life.

Its non-anthropocentric view of the *jīva* as not a *human* quality, but as dwelling in all beings (even plants, stones, air, and fire), produces, in practice, a deep reverence for all living things, which are viewed as repositories of potential divinity, rather than as raw material to be exploited for human ends. Although, as some scholars have pointed out, the *jīva* – like the *puruṣa* of Sāṃkhya philosophy – implies a dualism as radical as the Cartesian dualism that has facilitated the Western devaluation and exploitation of the natural world as mere material for consumption, Jain practice would seem to belie this.[296] Although its philosophy may be world negating, its practice issues in a negation of this negation: a profound mindfulness of one's environmental impact in everyday life.

Conclusion

This book has been written in the conviction that Jainism is a tradition with much to offer the world. It articulates ideals of truth and nonviolence that, in the hands of Gandhi, were transformed into powerful tools for bringing about social justice. It has developed an approach to religious diversity that can address the objections that have been raised against pluralistic philosophies of religion, thereby giving religious thinkers a powerful conceptual tool with which to argue for a world of tolerance and mutual appreciation among religions. Apart from these gifts, it has developed a distinctive culture within the larger framework of Hindu society that is valuable and precious in its own right.

Though few will ever seek to undertake it, even the radical renunciation of the Jain ascetic can be seen, in a world of rampant

consumerism, as a reminder that there are more profound values around which one can organize one's life than the pursuit of the temporary satisfactions provided by material goods. In a world in which the material is pursued to excess, perhaps the 'excess asceticism' of the Jain ascetic can be seen as a needed counterweight to the relentless pursuit of sensual gratification at the cost of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and, in short, the planet we inhabit. The ultimate paradox of Jain asceticism is that, in renouncing the material world, Jain ascetics just might be pointing the way to saving it.

For my own part, the greatest gift the Jains have given me – and this is probably clear from the emphasis I have given it in this book – is their philosophy of relativity. In the process of my own spiritual journey, a persistent theme has been crossing boundaries and accepting the other. My upbringing was in the Catholic faith, but I grew up in a very small town in rural Missouri in which Catholics were a minority. Several times, I faced discrimination from the Protestant majority, being told that because I was Catholic I was damned for all eternity – that Catholics are not true Christians because they worship idols, the Pope, the Virgin Mary, and so on. Such an exclusionary attitude, I felt, was not at all in keeping with the teachings of Christ, and the loving God that Christ proclaimed. Nor, I felt, was the exclusion I found in my own tradition – for it was clear to me that Catholics could be every bit as exclusive as Protestants. When I began exploring the religions of the world around the age of 13 – due to the death of my father and the spiritual crisis that this brought about – I was instantly attracted to the teachings of Gandhi, and of Indian traditions, like Hinduism and Buddhism. In the idea that all paths lead to the same goal, and that there are many names for the one ultimate reality, I felt that I had come upon the central truth of my existence: that exclusionary boundaries are false creations which keep people apart and prevent them from sharing their insights with one another.

At the same time, profound as this conviction was, I also found, especially as I progressed in my education through college and graduate school, that it was very difficult to express this conviction in a way that found intellectual respectability. I even found the pluralism of Gandhi and Ramakrishna to be an object of scorn and ridicule among serious scholars of religion, who saw it as simplistic, and as being insufficiently attentive to the real differences among practices and worldviews. I therefore resolved to find a way to express this

insight that could address the valid objections of its critics, and advance the ideal of a world where, although distinct religious identities and boundaries would still exist, their interdependence and mutually beneficial characteristics would be affirmed in the place of the exclusion and violence that characterizes their relations today.

In my search, I found the logic of the Jain doctrines of relativity to be an essential tool for affirming pluralism without lapsing into a self-refuting relativism, and for taking differences seriously without allowing these differences to undermine the greater project of finding truth in all traditions. In Jainism, I have found a logical structure to support and enhance the pluralistic affirmations of my own tradition – the modern Vedānta of Sri Ramakrishna, which I eventually adopted as the tradition closest to my own worldview and way of perceiving and approaching reality. While my use of Jain philosophy may not be something that all Jains would accept, my gratitude to the Jains for the gift of the logic of relativity that they have given the world is boundless. It is a gift that I feel can benefit not only spiritual seekers like myself, but the entire world, as we seek for a way beyond religious conflict, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of our basic religious insights – as we strive to co-exist in peace without 'watering down' our various worldviews in a shallow secularism. This is something that humanity needs if we are to survive, not only physically, but spiritually as well.

And that is why I have written this book.

Recommended Reading

A Brief Survey of the Literature on Jainism

This literature survey is by no means comprehensive. It is intended for the reader who would like to know where to turn next for more detailed books on specific topics related to Jainism. Complete references are listed in the bibliography.

General Interest

For those interested in a more comprehensive and detailed overview of the Jain tradition as a whole, I highly recommend the second edition of *The Jains*, by Paul Dundas. Apart from the areas of doctrine and practice explored in my book, Dundas provides extensive coverage of the history of the Jain community.

For a more in-depth treatment of Jain doctrine, P.S. Jaini's classic, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, is unsurpassed. I also recommend his *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies*.

Also, the collection of the scholarly writings of the late Kendall Folkert, compiled by John Cort and entitled *Scripture and Community: Collected Essays on the Jains*, is an excellent set of articles on a wide range of Jain-related topics, including Western biases against Jainism and traditional Jain approaches to non-Jain philosophical perspectives, as well as some very good ethnographic material.

Finally, for a general reference work, there is Kristi Wiley's *Historical Dictionary of Jainism*. (Wiley is also the world's leading expert on Jain karma theory.)

Jain Scriptures and Primary Sources

Translations of the Arda-Māghadhī scriptures are quite old and hard to acquire, unless one has access to a good research library. They can be difficult reading for beginners.

Nathmal Tatia's translation of the *Tattvārthasūtra* is an excellent, approachable overview of basic Jain doctrine. I also strongly

recommend Christopher Key Chapple's translation of Haribhadrasūri's *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* entitled *Reconciling Yogas*.

Two excellent collections of Jain literature are by Phyllis Granoff: *The Clever Adulteress and Other Stories* and *The Forest of Thieves and the Magic Garden*.

Contemporary Jain Accounts of Jainism

If you are interested in what Jains are saying about their own tradition, from a monastic perspective, there is Saman Śrūtaprajña's *The Path of Purification*, and, from an educated layperson's perspective, Dr. Vastupal Parikh's *Jainism and the New Spirituality*, which covers a wide range of issues of contemporary relevance. For a Jain view on the issue of Jainism and science, there is also K.V. Mardia's *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism*. Finally, Surendra Bothara's *Ahimsā: The Science of Peace* is a very powerful attempt to recast Jain ideas in a contemporary context.

Ethnographic Studies

Some excellent ethnographic studies of Jainism, focused on worship and devotion, have been undertaken in the last few years: Lawrence Babb's *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture*, John Cort's *Jains in the World*, Whitney Kelting's *Singing to the Jinas: Jain Laywomen, Mandal Singing, and the Negotiations of Jain Devotion*, Anne Vallely's *Guardians of the Transcendent: An Ethnography of a Jain Ascetic Community*, and James Laidlaw's *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy, and Society among the Jains*.

Sectarian Articulations of Jainism

An excellent study of the internal diversity of the Jain community is Ravindra K. Jain's *The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India*, as is Peter Flügel's *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues* and Paul Dundas' *History, Scipture and Controversy in a Medieval Jain Sect*.

Jain Art

Two particularly important texts in this area are Pratapaditya Pal's *Jain Art from India: The Peaceful Liberators* and J. Van Alphen's *2,500 Years of Jain Art and Religion*, both of which are adorned with stunning illustrations.

Jainism and Women

P.S. Jaini's *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* is an in-depth account of the Śvetāmbara-Digambara debates on the liberation of women. N. Shanta's *The Unknown Pilgrims: The Voice of the Sādhvīs – The History, Spirituality and Life of the Jaina Women Ascetics* is an excellent, detailed, and sympathetic account of Jain women's monasticism. The Kelting and Vallely books, mentioned above, are also good for learning the perspectives of Jain women.

Jainism and Ecology

Two very good books on this topic are Christopher Key Chapple's edited volume entitled *Jainism and Ecology* and Chapple's broader survey of ecological themes in the religions of Asia entitled *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions*. Nicholas F. Gier's critique of Jain dualism and its potential problems can be found in his *Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese, and Western Perspectives*.

Jains and Non-Jains

John Cort's edited volume, *Open Boundaries: Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History*, is a coherent collection of very good scholarly articles on this topic.

Jain Philosophy

These books are somewhat difficult to locate, but are definitely worthwhile for those who are interested in the Jain philosophy of relativity. The best overall summary is B.K. Matilal's *The Central Philosophy of Jainism: Anekāntavāda*. Also quite good is Satkari Mookerjee's *The Jaina Philosophy of Non-Absolutism*. The best available survey of Jain intellectual history is probably K.K. Dixit's *Jaina Ontology*. Finally, Y.J. Padmarajiah's *A Comparative Study of the Jaina Theories of Reality and Knowledge* is good at situating Jain philosophy in context relative to the other systems of Indian philosophy.

Though it is a bit dated, F.W. Thomas' translation of Mallisẹṇasūri's *Syādvādamañjarī* is a good English translation of a major Jain primary source on the doctrines of relativity.

For those who are interested in the pluralistic uses to which I have suggested the Jain philosophy of relativity can be put, I would recommend my first book *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu*

Nationalism, especially Chapter Four, 'A Relational Ontology: Hindu Religious Pluralism and the Convergence of Jain and Process Metaphysics.' Harder to obtain (and even harder still to read) is my doctoral dissertation, *Plurality and Relativity: Whitehead, Jainism, and the Reconstruction of Religious Pluralism*.

Jain Chronology

Most premodern dates are approximations. The dates of most philosophers and texts before 1000 CE are subject to extensive sectarian and scholarly debate.

8500–1000 BCE? (speculative)	Period of Ṛṣabha (Ādinātha), first Tīrthaṅkara of our era, and the 2nd through the 22nd Tīrthaṅkaras.
2600–1900 BCE:	Indus-Saraswatī/Harappan civilization, advanced urban phase.
1900–1700 BCE:	Indo-European migrations into subcontinent (disputed by some Hindu scholars).
850–750 BCE:	Life of Pārśvanātha, 23rd Tīrthaṅkara.
499–427 BCE:	Life of Mahāvīra, 24th Tīrthaṅkara, founder of current Jain community.
463–383 BCE:	Life of the Buddha.
327 BCE:	Alexander of Macedon invades northwestern India.
320–293 BCE:	Reign of Candragupta Maurya.
268–233 BCE:	Reign of Aśoka.
200 BCE:	Migration of Bhadrabāhu with Samprati Candragupta to Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa?
200 BCE:	Approximate period of composition of oldest extant Jain texts, the *Ācārāṅga* and *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*; council of Pāṭaliputra to preserve the Jain scriptures.
200 BCE–400 CE:	Jains in Mathurā; Yāpanīya sect in existence.
100 BCE:	Jains in Kaliṅga (Orissa).
c. 100–200 CE:	Life of Umāsvāti, composer of the *Tattvārthasūtra*.
c. 100–200 CE:	Digambara-Śvetāmbara schism.
156 CE:	Composition of the Digambara 'Six-Part Scripture' (*Ṣaṭkhaṇḍāgama*) of Dharasena.
c. 200–300 CE:	Life of Kundakunda, renowned Digambara mystical teacher.
c. 300–400 CE:	Councils of Mathurā and Valabhī.

c. 400–500 CE:	Lives of Jain philosophers Samantabhara and Siddhasena Divākara.
c. 700–800 CE:	Life of Jain philosophers Akalaṅka, prominent critic of Buddhism, and Haribhadrasūri, known for his pluralistic approach to the Jain doctrines of relativity; period of widespread emergence of *tantric* forms of spiritual practice.
782 CE:	City of Valabhī destroyed by Turkish invaders; precursor of later invasions.
981 CE:	Carving of the great monument of Bāhubali at Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa.
1089–1172 CE:	Life of Hemacandra, prominent Jain philosopher and literary figure.
1000–1200 CE:	Period of major Jain temple construction, including the temple to Ṛṣabha at Mount Ābū (1032), to Neminātha at Mount Girnār (1128), and to Ṛṣabha at Mount Śatruñjaya (1154).
1200–1300 CE:	Development of the *bhaṭṭāraka* institution among Digambaras.
1228 CE:	Establishment of the Śvetāmbara Tapā Gaccha by Ācārya Jagaccandrasūri, today the largest Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbara ascetic lineage.
1313 CE:	Invaders desecrate Jain temples on Mount Śatruñjaya, in Gujarat.
c. 1400–1500 CE:	Life of Loṅka Śāh, Jain reformer who rejected the practice of *mūrtipūjā*; later inspired both the Sthānakavāsī and Terāpanthī movements among the Śvetāmbaras.
1448–1515 CE:	Life of Tāraṇ Svāmī, founder of the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth in central India. A Digambara, Tāraṇ Svāmī was heavily influenced by the writings of Kundakunda; rejected *mūrtipūjā* and the authority of bhaṭṭārakas.
c. 1600–1700 CE:	Establishment of both the Sthānakavāsī and Digambara Terāpanthī movements.
1624–1688 CE:	Life of Yaśovijaya, often regarded as the last great premodern Jain philosopher.
1760 CE:	Establishment of Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī movement.
c. 1700–1800 CE:	Gradual establishment of British hegemony over India.
1867–1901 CE:	Life of Rājacandra Mahetā, spiritual teacher to Mahatma Gandhi; his followers established the Kavi Panth.

1869–1948 CE:	Life of Mohandas K. (Mahatma) Gandhi.
1889–1980 CE:	Life of Kānjī Svāmī, founder of the Kānjī Svāmī Panth.
c. 1900 CE–present:	Growing numbers of Jains leave India and settle around the world; emergence of heterodoxy and neo-orthodoxy as modes of Jain thought and practice; some Jains in North America share temple facilities with Hindus (such as HARI in central Pennsylvania).

Glossary

abhiṣekha 'anointing', ceremony in which sacred substances such as milk, yogurt, and sandalwood water are ritually poured over a *mūrti*, or image of a deity; modeled on ancient Indian coronation rituals.

Ācārāṅga one of the oldest Jain scriptures, possibly dating to 200 BCE.

ācārya 'teacher', leader of a Jain or Hindu ascetic lineage; a Christian equivalent might be 'bishop'.

Ādinātha 'first lord', an epithet of Ṛṣabha, the first *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch.

āgama scripture; literally 'coming' down from the past, being passed on from one generation to the next; what has been passed down from the enlightened beings of the past; term used by many Indic traditions for their collections of scripture, including the Jains.

ahiṃsā 'nonviolence', absence of even the desire to do harm to any living being; nonviolence in thought, word, and deed; necessary pre-requisite for any spiritual advancement, according to Jainism; the central Jain ethical virtue; also one of the *vratas*; for monks, complete nonviolence to the extent that is humanly possible; for laypersons, avoiding deliberate harm to macroscopic living things and, typically, practicing vegetarianism.

ajīva matter; substance which lacks awareness (*jñāna*), perception (*darśana*), bliss (*sukha*), or energy (*vīrya*).

Ājīvikas *śramaṇa* sect that was a major rival of early Jainism and Buddhism; attributed with a doctrine of fatalism which was likely an affirmation that, while one could avoid the accumulation of new karma, one could do nothing to accelerate the fruition or 'burning off' of already present karma; this sect had died out by the year 1000 CE; its ascetics were possibly assimilated into the Digambara Jain community.

anekāntavāda doctrine of the multi-faceted, complex nature of reality; metaphysical basis for the Jain philosophy of relativity.

anuvrata 'lesser vow': somewhat less strict versions, appropriate for laypersons, of the five 'great vows' (*mahāvratas*) undertaken by Jain ascetics: nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), chastity (*brahmacarya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*).

anuvrata movement social reform movement promoted by the twentieth-century Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī ascetic leader, Ācārya Tulsī, based on the *anuvratas*; the aim was to promote virtue in the broader Indian – and not only Jain – society.

aparigraha non-possession, non-attachment; cultivation of a detached attitude toward material objects and physical relationships; one of the *vratas*; for Jain ascetics, involves non-ownership of anything; for Jain laypersons, involves not being possessive or overly preoccupied with material things.

āratī ceremony performed by both Jains and Hindus in which the flames of small candles (*dīyās*) are offered before a *mūrti*, or physical image of a deity, usually accompanied by singing or chanting and the ringing of a bell.

Ardha-Māgadhī a Prakrit language of ancient northern India, related to Sanskrit; the literary language of the Jains, and specifically of the Śvetāmbara *āgamas* (scriptures); a later form of the language spoken in Greater Magadha, possibly even by Mahāvīra and the Buddha.

āsana posture used in the practice of yoga.

ascetic one who practices physical austerities, usually in the form of renunciation, in order to advance spiritually; a relatively mild form of asceticism would be the Christian practice of giving up certain luxuries during the period of Lent; a relatively difficult form of asceticism would be the practice of constant nudity by a Digambara Jain monk.

asteya non-stealing, one of the *vratas.*

ātman self; sometimes used as a synonym for the individual soul (*jīva*) in Jainism; in Hindu thought, there are individual souls (*jīvātman*), but there is also a supreme soul (*paramātman* – 'God') that dwells in all souls and is identical to Brahman.

avatāra in Hinduism, an incarnation of the divine, usually of the deity Vishnu; in heterodox Jainism, the *tīrthaṅkaras* are sometimes conceived as *avatāras*, and one Hindu list of the *avatāras* of Vishnu includes Ṛṣabha.

Bāhubali first human being of our current cosmic epoch to attain

kevalajñāna; son of Ṛṣabha, the first *tīrthaṅkara*; depicted in a massive monument at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa, a popular Digambara pilgrimage site in Karṇātaka, in southern India.

Bhagavad Gītā Sacred Hindu text, but also highly regarded by many Jains; Jain ascetics occasionally cite it and Yaśovijaya wrote a text that does so extensively (the *Adhyātmasāra*, or 'Essence of the Inner Soul').

Bhagavatī Sūtra properly called the *Bhagavatī Vyākhyāprajñāpti*, or 'Revered Exposition of Explanations', this voluminous Jain text presents highly detailed teachings of Mahāvīra on the nature of the cosmos and the creatures that inhabit it; a part of the Śvetāmbara *āgama*, or scriptural tradition.

bhaṭṭāraka 'venerable one': Digambara monk specially designated to administer a monastery; *bhaṭṭārakas* wear simple clothing (usually orange robes) in order to facilitate their duties, which can involve extensive interactions with laypersons; disagreement over whether *bhaṭṭārakas* are authentic monks led to the split among northern Digambaras in the seventeenth century between the Terāpanthīs (who reject the institution) and the Bīsapanthīs (who accept it); southern Digambaras do employ *bhaṭṭārakas*.

Bīsapanthīs Northern Digambaras who accept the *bhaṭṭāraka* institution.

brahmacarya chastity, one of the *vratas*; for ascetics, complete celibacy; for laypersons, marital fidelity.

Brahman ultimate reality, according to Vedānta (Hindu) philosophy, characterized by infinite being (*sat*), consciousness (*chit*), and bliss (*ānanda*); unlike the souls of Jainism, who are as many in number as living beings, Brahman is one universal reality.

Brahmin member of the priestly caste of Hinduism; Brahminhood is generally seen as a matter of birth, though Hindu reform movements since the time of the *Upaniṣads* have argued that it should be a matter of individual character.

caste translation (and conflation) of the Sanskrit terms *varṇa* and *jāti*; refers to a hereditary occupational group, ranked hierarchically according to ritual purity by Brahmanical traditions; accepted simply as a way of organizing society, but without implications for spiritual purity, by *śramaṇa* traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism; contemporary Jains in India organize themselves according to caste, and some Jain castes even intermarry with certain Hindu (typically Gujarati Vaiṣṇava) castes.

darśana literally 'view' or 'vision,', but often understood in Jain contexts as 'faith'; 'right faith' or *samyagdarśana*, along with right knowledge (*jñāna*) and right conduct (*caritra*), is one of the three essential components of the path to liberation according to Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra*; *darśana* as 'world-view' refers to any traditional Indian system of philosophy; as 'vision', it refers to the act of seeing (and being seen by) a sacred image or person as a form of blessing; also perception, one of the characteristics of the soul.

Digambara 'sky-clad'; Jain sect whose male ascetics practice nudity as a form of non-attachment (*aparigraha*).

dīkṣā 'initiation': the ceremony by which one becomes a Jain monk or nun; more broadly in Indic traditions, the ceremony by which one joins a spiritual lineage, either as an ascetic or as a lay practitioner.

divyadhvani according to Digambara tradition, a sacred sound emitted by Mahāvīra's body after his attainment of enlightenment and 'translated' by his first disciples into the basic teachings of Jainism; Digambaras believe that an enlightened being does not eat, speak, or move about as a normal person does.

fasting one of the most common Jain ascetic practices; engaged in by laypersons as well as monks and nuns.

gaccha 'tree', 'branch', or 'going forth': a Jain ascetic lineage; the largest Mūrtipūjaka Śvetāmbara *gaccha* today is the *Tapā Gaccha*, established in 1228 CE by Ācārya Jagaccandrasūri.

gaṇadharas the first 11 disciples of Mahāvīra and the leaders of the early Jain community.

Gandhi, Mohandas K. (1869–1948); leader of the nonviolent movement for Indian independence; influenced in his youth by the Jain lay teacher Rājacandra Mahetā; popularly called 'Mahatma', or 'great soul'.

God term used by modern Jains not for a creator deity, but for the soul in its enlightened state (*paramātman*).

Gujarat state in the western part of India where Jains are prominent; home state of Mahatma Gandhi.

guru spiritual teacher; in Indic traditions, the relationship between guru and disciple is extremely important to the disciple's spiritual advancement; in Jainism, prominent ascetics typically act as gurus to laypersons.

Haribhadra also called Haribhadrasūri, prominent Jain philosopher of the eighth century CE; rationalist; originally a Brahmin who converted to Jainism because of the logic of Jain

arguments; known for his pluralistic attitude toward non-Jain spiritual paths, though strongly critical of *tantra*; Śvetāmbara.

Hemacandra (1089–1172); prominent Jain philosopher and literary figure; author of the *Anyayogavyavacchedika* ('Ripper Apart of Other Views'); Śvetāmbara.

heterodoxy modern Jain self-understanding, prominent among Jains living outside of India, which blurs the traditional distinctions between Jainism and Hinduism.

hiṃsā violence, doing or wishing harm to another; the opposite of *ahiṃsā*; source of the most destructive karmas that can bind the soul.

Indra important Vedic deity who also plays a prominent role in the life stories of Mahāvīra and the Buddha, thus indicating the common Indo-European cultural wellspring from which both the Vedic and *śramaṇa* traditions developed.

Indrabhūti Gautama not to be confused with Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha; Mahāvīra's chief disciple and leader of the early Jain community; later a major object of Śvetāmbara devotional activity.

Isibhāsiyāiṃ 'Sayings of the Seers', very ancient text whose antiquity is suggested by the fact that it quotes from Jain, Buddhist, Brahmanical, and Ājīvika sages indiscriminately and without any apparent hierarchical ranking or attempt to identify with one sect or another; perhaps these distinctive community identities had not coalesced when this text was composed; or it reflects the non-sectarian universalism sometimes found in Indic texts.

Jai Jinendra 'Victory to the Lord of the Jinas!': common Jain greeting, increasingly popular among Jains outside of India.

Jain practitioner of the path to liberation taught by the *Jinas* – specifically, of the 24th *tīrthaṅkara*, Mahāvīra.

Jina victor, spiritual conqueror; one who has attained *kevalajñāna*; the word *Jain* is derived from *Jina*.

jīva soul; life-force; substance characterized by unlimited awareness (*jñāna*), perception (*darśana*), bliss (*sukha*), and energy (*vīrya*), all of which are obscured by karmic matter prior to liberation (*mokṣa*); there are as many souls as there are living beings.

jñāna gnosis, knowledge, awareness; one of the essential characteristics of the soul that are obscured by karmic matter prior to liberation (*mokṣa*).

kalpa cosmic epoch, billions of years in duration, during which 24 *tīrthaṅkaras* appear in our region of the universe.

Kalpasūtra Jain text from either the second or first centuries BCE which narrates the lives of the 24 *tīrthaṅkaras*.

Kānjī Svāmī Panth northern Digambara sect established by Kānjī Svāmī (1889–1980), a Sthānakavāsī monk who converted to mystical Digambara Jainism; heavily inspired by Kundakunda, by whom Kānjī Svāmī claimed to have been taught in a past life.

karma principle of cause and effect governing all action; a form of matter (*ajīva*) which adheres to the soul (*jīva*), obscuring the soul's true nature and producing the effects to which actions give rise, including rebirth; there are many types of karma, the specific effects of which vary.

Karnataka state in southern India where Digambara Jains are prominent.

Kavi Panth loosely organized following of the teachings of Rājacandra Mahetā (1867–1901).

kāyotsarga distinctively Jain standing meditation position known for its difficulty.

keśa locana the ritual pulling out of one's hair; undertaken by Jain ascetics when they take ordination (*dīkṣā*) and every six months thereafter; in so doing they are following the example of Mahāvīra, who is said to have pulled out his hair when he left home to become a renouncer.

kevalajñāna absolute knowledge, omniscience; the realization by the soul of its true nature through the purging of karmic matter; necessary condition for *mokṣa*; defining characteristic of a *Jina*.

kevalin one who has attained *kevalajñāna*; a *Jina*; an omniscient being.

Kṣatriya member of the warrior caste of Hinduism, the caste into which both the Buddha and Mahāvīra were born; dominant caste in the ideology of the Greater Magadha region of ancient times, as opposed to the Brahmins of the Vedic culture.

Kundakunda (third century CE?) influential Digambara *ācārya* who taught a mystical 'two truths' doctrine, reminiscent of the teachings of the Buddhist Nāgārjuna (second century CE) and the Advaita Vedāntin Śaṅkara (eighth century CE); highly popular among modern Digambara Jains; Kundakunda's date is highly uncertain and it is possible that this name

	refers to several authors sharing an ascetic teaching lineage and writing over the course of several centuries.
loka	the cosmos, conceived in Jainism as roughly in the shape of a vast human form, the *lokapuruṣa*; this concept has resonance with the image of the cosmos as the result of a deity's self-sacrifice in the *Puruṣa Sukta* of the Hindu *Ṛg Veda*.
Magadha	city-state of ancient northeastern India, located in what is today the state of Bihar, center of the Maurya Dynasty; Bronkhorst has labeled the entire northeastern region dominated by this city-state *Greater Magadha*; the *śramaṇa* culture from which Jainism and Buddhism emerged was the dominant ideology of this region in ancient times, in contrast with the Vedic ideology of the Brahmins, predominant in northwestern India.
Maharashtra	state in south-central India where Digambara Jains are prominent.
Mahāvīra	(499–427 BCE); 'great hero', the 24th (and final) *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch; founder of the contemporary Jain community.
Mahāvīra Jayantī	holiday celebrating the birth of Mahāvīra, held during the Hindu month of Caitra (typically overlapping late March and early April).
Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa Divas	holiday commemorating Mahāvīra's final *nirvāṇa* – his giving up of life in his physical body; corresponds with the Hindu holiday of Dīvālī; Jains, like Hindus, observe this holiday by worshiping Lakṣmī, the goddess of prosperity.
mahāvrata	'great vow', the five vows taken by Jain ascetics: nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), chastity (*brahmacarya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*).
Mahetā, Rājacandra	(1867–1901); lay Jain teacher of the modern period; inspired the Kavi Panth; teacher of Mohandas K. Gandhi and sometimes called 'Gandhi's guru'.
Makkhali Gosāla	contemporary of Mahāvīra and the Buddha; founder of the Ājīvikas, a *śramaṇa* sect that was a major rival of early Jainism and Buddhism; he is attributed with a doctrine of fatalism which was likely an affirmation that, while one could avoid the accumulation of new karma, one could do nothing to accelerate the fruition or 'burning off' of already present karma.
Mallinātha	19th *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch; believed by Śvetāmbaras to have been a woman, a claim rejected by

Digambaras due to their belief that women are incapable of practicing ascetic nudity, and so incapable of attaining *mokṣa* until being reborn as a man.

Malliṣeṇa (12th–13th centuries CE); also called Malliṣeṇasūri; disciple of Hemacandra; author of the *Syādvādamañjarī*, a commentary on Hemacandra's *Anyayogavyavacchedika* and a major text for the development of *syādvāda*; Śvetāmbara.

Mathurā important urban center in northwestern India; a thriving Jain community existed here from roughly the third century BCE to the fifth century CE; some of the oldest archeological evidence pertaining to early Jainism is from this city; important Hindu and Buddhist center as well.

māyāvāda 'illusionism', doctrine associated principally with Buddhism and Advaita Vedānta, according to which conventional perception does not reveal the true nature of reality; largely rejected by Jain philosophers, who tend to be metaphysical realists, though the 'two truths' doctrine of Kundakunda is very close to this view.

Meru also called Mount Meru; the sacred mountain at the center of the universe; the *axis mundi* in Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist cosmographic traditions.

mokṣa liberation from *saṃsāra*, the cycle birth, death, and rebirth; occurs after *kevalajñāna*, the realization by the soul of its true nature through the purging of karmic matter.

muhpattī mouth-shield; face-mask used to prevent a Jain ascetic from accidentally inhaling or swallowing small creatures, such as insects; an aid to the practice of *ahiṃsā* (nonviolence); worn by many Jain ascetics, and even laypersons, on particular occasions, but worn at all times only by the ascetics of the Sthānakavāsī and Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī sects.

muni literally 'one who observes a vow of silence', but more generally, a term for a Jain monk.

mūrti "form', physical image of a deity in Indic spiritual traditions; Jain *mūrtis* typically represent *Jinas*; used in worship.

mūrtipūjā worship using physical images of the object of worship; most Jain *mūrtipūjā* is directed toward the *tīrthaṅkaras.*

Mūrtipūjaka one who engages in worship using images (*mūrtipūjā*); there are both *mūrtipūjaka* and non-*mūrtipūjaka* sects among both Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jains; the term has come to be used to refer to the majority of Śvetāmbaras to distinguish them from the non-*mūrtipūjaka* Śvetāmbara minority sects (the Sthānakavāsīs and Terāpanthīs).

Nātaputta family name of Mahāvīra in the earliest Jain and Buddhist scriptures (the probably Sanskrit derivation is *Jñātṛiputra*).

naya perspective, point of view from which a topic can be analyzed; traditionally seven in number.

nayavāda 'doctrine of perspectives', Jain teaching that there are many possible valid ways of viewing any given topic; in ancient versions, as found in Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra*, the perspectives were formalized as being seven in number (not corresponding to the later seven perspectives of *syādvāda*); in later versions, the *nayas*, or perspectives, are said to be vast in number, corresponding to the number of aspects of a given entity.

Neminātha 22nd *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch; said to have been a relative of the popular Hindu *avatāra* Sri Krishna and to have influenced Krishna's teachings as found in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

neo-orthodoxy modern Jain self-understanding that emphasizes the rational and scientific dimensions of Jainism; prominent among Western-educated laypersons.

Niganṭha 'without bonds' (Sanskrit *nirgrantha*), ancient name for the Jains (or at least for Jain ascetics); Mahāvīra is known as *Niganṭha Nātaputta* in the earliest Jain and Buddhist scriptures.

nigoda microscopic life form with only one sense (touch); most rudimentary form of life in which a soul can become incarnate; they are countless in number and form the 'pool' from which higher forms of life develop.

nirvāṇa 'extinguishing', 'absorption', another term for *kevalajñāna* or *mokṣa*.

niścayanaya 'ultimate perspectiv', one of Kundakunda's 'two truths', the perspective of the enlightened being who perceives the true nature of reality.

niyati fate, destiny; teaching (dubiously) attributed to Makkhali Gosāla, of the Ājīvika sect, according to which the time of one's *mokṣa* is predetermined and no action on one's part can accelerate it.

Om root sound at the basis of all *mantras* and, according to Hindu thought, at the basis of all existence; deployed in Jain and Buddhist *mantras* as well.

paramātman 'supreme self', in Hindu thought, the divine 'oversoul' that dwells within all individual souls; in Jainism, the nature of the soul as it truly is, in its liberated state, as opposed to its karmically bound, incarnate state.

Pārśvanātha (c. 850–750 BCE); 23rd *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch; Mahāvīra's parents were said to be adherents of the ascetics in the lineage of Pārśvanātha; Pārśvanātha is said to have taught four of the five *vratas*, or vows, taught by Mahāvīra (excluding only *brahmacarya*) and his ascetics wore clothing; he is often depicted as being protected by a seven-headed cobra.

Paryuṣana the Rainy Season Festival, which honors the cultivation of ascetic practice; the *Kalpasūtra*, which narrates the lives of the *tīrthāṅkaras*, is publicly recited during this festival.

Prakrit language of ancient northern India, related to (and hypothetically derived by Sanskrit grammarians) from Sanskrit; most Prakrits were vernaculars of particular regions which eventually evolved into the modern languages of northern India; two Prakrits – Ardha-Māgadhī and Pāli – became the technical and literary languages of the Jains and Buddhists, respectively, just as Sanskrit was the technical and literary language of the Brahmins.

prekṣā-dhyāna form of meditation introduced in 1975 by the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī Ācārya Mahāprajñā.

pūjā worship, usually involving a *mūrti*, or physical image, of the object of worship.

Rajasthan state in the western part of India where Jains are prominent.

rebirth also called reincarnation; according to all Indic traditions (except for the ancient materialist Carvāka or Lokāyata sect), after the death of the body, the soul is reborn in a new body determined by one's karma at the time of death.

Ṛṣabha literally 'bul', but meaning 'pre-eminent one' (as in 'a bull among men'); proper name of the first *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic epoch; Ṛṣabha is also attributed with being the founder of civilization, inventing law, the arts, and agriculture, in addition to being a *Jina*.

sādhu Jain monk; also a generic term for a holy man in Indic traditions.

sādhvī Jain nun.

sallekhanā the controversial practice of fasting to death as the ultimate act of *ahiṃsā* (nonviolence) and *aparigraha* (detachment); distinguished from suicide, which is undertaken due to passion; usually undertaken by Jain ascetics who can no longer follow their ascetics practices due to old age or

	disease; considered a very holy death; also called *santhārā*.
saman	male member of an 'intermediate' order of Jain ascetics who live a life stricter than that of a Jain person, but not as strict as that of a Jain monk or nun; this order was established in 1980 by Ācārya Tulsī to minister to the Jain community living outside of India (given the strictures against travel that more traditional Jain ascetics must observe).
samaṇī	female *saman*.
Samantabhadra	important Jain philosopher of roughly the fifth century CE; author of the *Āptamīmāṃsā* ('Analysis of the Nature of the Authoritative Teacher'), an important text in the development of *syādvāda*; said to have died through the practice of *sallekhanā*; Digambara.
saṃsāra	the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth from which Jains seek liberation, or *mokṣa*.
saṅgha	community of ascetics; term used by both Jains and Buddhists to designate their monks and nuns collectively.
sannyāsa	renunciation; the formal Hindu institution of renunciation, reminiscent of Jain and Buddhist monastic traditions.
Sanskrit	language of the Hindu scriptures; hypothetical root-language of the Prakrits of ancient India; originally the technical 'in-group' language of the Brahmins, but by the early Common Era, the language of learning and high culture across the Indic traditions – Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain.
santhārā	the controversial practice of fasting to death as the ultimate act of *ahiṃsā* (nonviolence) and *aparigraha* (detachment); distinguished from suicide, which is undertaken due to passion; usually undertaken by Jain ascetics who can no longer follow their ascetic practices due to old age or disease; considered a very holy death; also called *sallekhanā*.
saptabhaṅgi-naya	'sevenfold perspective', another term for *syādvāda*, which emphasizes the seven truth values of any given claim, according to this doctrine.
Saraswatī	Hindu goddess of wisdom also worshiped by Jains; according to some accounts her worship is of Jain origin, an example of a shared Hindu and Jain religious practice.
Ṣaṭkhaṇḍ-āgama	Six-Part Scripture', composed by Dharasena (c. 156 CE); Digambara sacred text which compiles the Digambara tradition's memory of the original Jain scriptural corpus.

Siddhasena Divākara important Jain philosopher of roughly the fifth century CE; possibly a member of the now-extinct Yāpanīya sect; caused controversy by suggesting that the Jain scriptures be translated into Sanskrit.

śramaṇa 'striver', one who achieves spiritual progress through individual (usually ascetic) effort, in contrast with a Brahmin, who is believed to be holy by birth; the *śramaṇas* and their lay supporters were strong critics of Brahmanical spiritual claims; Jainism and Buddhism are the only *śramaṇa* movements that survive to the present.

śrāvaka 'listener', a Jain layperson.

śrāvakācāras texts, largely composed by Jain ascetics, which establish the norms of proper behavior for Jain laypersons.

Sthānakavāsīs Śvetāmbara sect established in the seventeenth century, which rejected the practice of *mūrtipūjā*.

sukha happiness, bliss; one of the essential characteristics of the soul that are obscured by karmic matter prior to liberation (*mokṣa*).

Sūtrakṛtāṅga one of the oldest Jain scriptures, possibly dating to 200 BCE.

Śvetāmbara 'white-clad', Jain sect whose ascetics wear simple white robes as a form of non-attachment (*aparigraha*), in contrast with the nudity of Digambara male ascetics.

syādvāda 'maybe doctrine' or doctrine of conditional predication; the Jain doctrine that all statements (prior to the attainment of enlightenment) are only relatively true, their truth being dependent upon the aspect of a topic that is under consideration; the possible truth values of any claim are seven in number, according to this doctrine, which is therefore also known as the *saptabhaṅginaya* (sevenfold perspective); these seven truth values are distinct from the seven perspectives traditionally articulated in *nayavāda*.

tantra style of spirituality found in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism that emphasizes using the senses to transcend the senses; less prominent in Jain traditions than in Hinduism and Buddhism, probably due to the Jain emphasis on asceticism and what were seen to be the perils of *tantra*, as articulated by Haribhadrasūri; the term has today fallen into disrepute among many Hindus.

Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth northern Digambara sect established by the monk Tāraṇ Svāmī (1448–1515) who rejected *mūrtipūja* and

	institution of the *bhaṭṭāraka*; heavily influenced by the teachings of Kundakunda.
Tattvārthasūtra	'Text on the True Nature of Reality', also called the *Tattvārthadhigamasūtra*; written by Umāsvāti (c. 100–200 CE); the one text that is taken as authoritative by all Jain sects; articulates the worldview shared by the various Jain communities.
Terāpanthīs (Digambara)	northern Digambara sect established in the seventeenth century, which rejects the institution of the *bhaṭṭāraka*.
Terāpanthīs (Śvetāmbara)	Śvetāmbara sect established in 1760 which rejects the practice of *mūrtipūjā*; particularly active in the modern period, such as through starting the institution of *samans* and *samaṇīs*, the *anuvrata* movement, and the practice of *prekṣā* meditation.
tīrthaṅkara	'ford-maker', Jina who creates a path to liberation for beings trapped in the realm of *saṃsāra*; 24 *tīrthaṅkaras* appear in each cosmic cycle; Mahāvīra is the 24th *tīrthaṅkara* of our current cosmic cycle.
Triśalā	mother of Mahāvīra, believed by Śvetāmbaras to have attained *mokṣa*.
Umāsvāti	(c. 100–200 CE); author of the *Tattvārthasūtra*; probably predated the formal separation between the Digambaras and Śvetāmbaras.
Upaniṣads	latest Vedic texts to be composed (between roughly 800 and 200 BCE, by most scholarly estimates); Bronkhorst argues for a somewhat later date, for these texts show the influence of the *śramaṇa* culture of Greater Magadha.
Vardhamāna	Mahāvīra's proper name.
Vedānta	'end of the *Vedas*', dominant form of Hindu philosophy; based on the *Upaniṣads* and later commentaries by Hindu teachers, or *ācāryas*; the Advaita, or non-dualist, form of Vedānta was championed by the eighth-century *ācārya*, Śaṅkara, a sharp critic of Jain metaphysical realism; later forms of Vedānta are more in line with Jainism philosophy in rejecting *māyāvāda*.
Vedas	most ancient of sacred Hindu texts; dated by most modern scholarship from roughly 1500 to 1000 BCE, but by many modern Hindu scholars to a much earlier period, around 6000 BCE; regarded by traditional Hindu thought as authorless and timeless.

vīrya energy, volition, will power; one of the essential characteristics of the soul that are obscured by karmic matter prior to liberation (*mokṣa*).

vrata vow; Jains undertake many ascetic vows, such as to avoid certain foods for a given period of time; Jain monks take five 'great vows' or *mahāvratas*, which are profound moral commitments to nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), chastity (*brahmacarya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*); Jain laypersons sometimes take less strict versions of these same five vows, called the 'lesser vows' (*anuvrata*).

vyavahāra-naya 'conventional perspective', one of Kundakunda's two truths, the point of beings prior to enlightenment, the domain in which the Jain doctrines of relativity operate, in contrast with the enlightened perspective of a *Jina*.

Yāpanīya 'intermediate' sect, existing in the Mathurā region of northwestern India between the third century BCE and the fifth century CE, who practiced nudity while in the privacy of their monasteries, but who donned a simple loincloth when interacting with laypersons, a practice which possibly led to the Śvetāmbara practice of wearing simple white clothing at all times.

Yaśovijaya (1624–1688); prolific author and Jain philosopher of the seventeenth century; often regarded as the last great premodern Jain intellectual.

Notes

Acknowledgements

1 There being, of course, no singular, monolithic Jain community.

Introduction

2 An historian of religion can of course be a religious practitioner, as well as a theologian or philosopher. I am speaking of the historian, practitioner, theologian, and philosopher as *roles*, *identities*, or *functions* rather than as individual people.

3 This will be particularly noticeable in the third, fourth, and fifth chapters, though less so in the first and second chapters.

4 This masterful and comprehensive survey, first published in 1992, is now in its second edition (Dundas 2002a).

5 The title of a recent work by Anne Vallely on a community of Jain ascetics, *Guardians of the Transcendent*, captures quite poetically the way Jain ascetics perceive themselves and are perceived by lay Jains in this regard (Vallely 2002a).

6 Though there are certainly what could be called 'confessional' scholars of Jainism in the field – scholars of Jainism who are also practicing members of a Jain community.

7 Among the earlier texts in the field of Jain studies that present more of a system of ideas – Jainism – than a thickly descriptive account of Jain communities, two classic works stand out: Walther Schubring's *The Doctrine of the Jainas* and Padmanabh S. Jaini's *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Schubring 2000, first published in 1934, and Jaini 1979, respectively).

8 The distinction between the Śvetāmbara and Digambara Jains is constituted by just this kind of judgment: that differences of praxis are of vital importance even when there is broad agreement in areas of belief pertaining to cosmology and metaphysics – the kind of thing a philosopher is interested in.

9 See Dundas 2002a, pp. 264–265, according to whom, 'it is still not uncommon in Gujarat to hear [Raychandbhai Mahetā] described as Gāndhī's guru'.

10 One could well ask why I have included Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama in this list. Surely these men did not have to look beyond their own Buddhist traditions to find nonviolent models for social and political change? The point is well taken, inasmuch as Buddhism certainly has the resources within itself already to inspire such change. But I would say that for all the people I have listed, Gandhi – and therefore, indirectly, Jainism, which had such a profound impact upon Gandhi – was a catalyst and a model for looking into their own traditions, finding these resources, and using them creatively to transform the social and political landscape.
11 *The Frontiers of Peace: Jainism in India* (BBC TV, 1986). The Jain industrialist cited is Shrenik Lalbhai, a prominent Jain philanthropist based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.
12 Dundas 2002a, p. 9.
13 In fact, it is not even all-pervasive in the West – such as in the Roman Catholic Church, where, as I remind my students, ethical sexual behavior for a priest, monk, or nun means something quite different from what it means for a married person. Absolute celibacy is not expected of married people, and marital fidelity is meaningless for priests, monks, and nuns, who are unmarried. The Catholic Church is probably the closest institution in the West to the twofold model of lay and ascetic morality that is present in South Asian religious traditions – – pre-eminently Jainism and Buddhism.
14 Dundas 2002a, p. 9.

Chapter I

15 As will be discussed later, to describe Jainism as a tradition of deep ecological wisdom is an interpretation that is highly contestable. But this characterization is not completely without foundation and, at least for some contemporary Jains, such an understanding of Jainism is an important component of a distinctively Jain identity. See Chapple 2002 and 1993, Tobias, and Parikh.
16 The Sanskrit verbal root *kṛ*, meaning 'do', 'make', 'act', or 'perform'.
17 The belief in rebirth in Indic traditions is not always a logical deduction from karma, as I explain it in this paragraph, but is often affirmed on the basis of accounts of past life memory, yogic experience, claims made by authoritative persons or texts, and so on. But if one looks at these traditions as a philosopher of religion might – as forming an internally coherent system of ideas – then the concept of rebirth or reincarnation can be seen to bear the logical relation to the idea of karma that I describe.

18 And even in Hinduism, although the idea of a personal divinity is extremely important – indeed central – to many Hindu systems of practice, the theological concept of God is not identical with that affirmed in most Abrahamic traditions. God does not create the world *ex nihilo*, for example, but from pre-existing material, or *prakṛtī*. In at least one Hindu system – the Vaiṣṇava Dvaita Vedānta tradition – God, although *supremely* powerful, is not, strictly speaking, omnipotent. (See Sarma.) And in Advaita Vedānta, God, or Īśvara, as a separate, personal reality, distinct from the devotee, is ultimately an illusion, along with the entirety of phenomenal existence and the individuality of the devotee him- or herself.

19 See Bronkhorst.

20 John Cort, personal communication.

21 Although unfortunately associated in the West with Nazism, the svāstika, or swastika, is an ancient sacred symbol in the Indic traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. It has slightly different meanings in each of these traditions (including the Jain usage as a symbol of the fourfold community male and female ascetics and laypersons), but is uniformly regarded as positive and auspicious.

22 Meaning, of course, the first human being *of our cosmic epoch* to attain mokṣa, other such beings having existed in other epochs. Some Jain sources dispute the claim that Bāhubali was the first enlightened being, attributing this distinction to another figure: Bāhubali's nephew, Anantavīrya. See Wiley 2004, p. 48.

23 The 'Laws of Manu' or *Manusmṛti*, for example, asserts that Brahmins should dwell only in *Āryavarta*. *Manusmṛti* 2.22.

24 For those curious to know why a Westerner with a name like 'Jeffery D. Long' is a member of a Hindu temple, I recommend the introduction to my first book *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism*, which includes a brief account of my spiritual journey. Growing up Roman Catholic in Missouri, I was eventually drawn to Hinduism – specifically, to the Ramakrishna Vedānta tradition – which is where I have found my spiritual home. My interest in Jainism is closely connected to my own spiritual path; for, as I explain in *A Vision for Hinduism*, the Jain doctrines of relativity, described in detail in Chapter Four of this book, are, I believe, essential to explaining in a philosophically coherent way the modern Vedāntic teaching of the harmony and the ultimate unity of all religions.

25 My wife is Indian and teaches Japanese. For some reason this always seems to puzzle people. I don't see that it's any more odd than an American, a Canadian, or a person from the UK teaching Japanese.

26 See Chapter Four.

27 As we shall see later, this is what scholar Lawrence Babb calls a transactional form of worship, in which something is given to the deity and the deity gives something to the worshiper in return. See Babb.
28 The 14 auspicious objects are: (1) a white elephant, (2) a white bull, (3) a lion, (4) the goddess Lakṣmī, (5) garlands of flowers, (6) the full moon, (7) the rising sun, (8) a flag, (9) a vase filled with water, (10) a lake with lotus flowers, (11) an ocean of milk, (12) a heavenly palace, (13) a pile of jewels, and (14) a sacred flame.
29 Wiley 2004, p. 38.
30 The first Parliament of World Religions was held in Chicago in 1893 and is especially famous in the modern Vedānta tradition for the address that was given there by Swāmī Vivekānanda.
31 From the viewer's perspective, the brass mountain was to the left of the altar. When describing directions in relation to an altar or *mūrti*, it is proper in Hindu culture to speak from the 'point of view' of the sacred object.
32 A number of Hindu *pūjā* practices have been similarly 'sanitized' in the West. During the Bengali festival of Durgā Pūjā, in which my wife and I participate annually, the climactic act of offering flowers, or *puṣpāñjalī*, which, in India, normally involves the entire crowd tossing flowers at the *mūrti* of Mā Durgā, is done by passing around a basket through the crowd and having everyone put their flowers in it. The basket is then given to the priest, who offers the flowers to the deity in a more, shall we say, orderly fashion. I have seen this trend in a number of temples in the USA. I find it somewhat sad. Something of the festive, Dionysiac quality of Hindu ritual is lost in this fashion. At least the carpeting is kept tidy!
33 Not unlike the anointing of the kings of Israel, as described in the Hebrew Bible.
34 Wiley 2004, p. 22.
35 Ibid.
36 *samyag-darśana-jñāna-caritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ*: 'Right faith, knowledge, and conduct make up the path to liberation.' This is the first verse of Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra*, the most important doctrinal text shared by all the Jain communities.
37 Wiley 2004, p. 182 and Dundas 2002a, p. 262.
38 See Warren.
39 Adherents.com (www.adherents.com/Religions_By_Adherents.html).
40 www.hindujaintemple.org/about_us.htm.
41 Dundas 2002a, p. 272.
42 Ibid. It is interesting to note in this regard that a portion of the Hindu-Jain Temple of Pittsburgh also functions as a *gurdwāra*, or Sikh place of worship.

43 Ibid.
44 One therefore observes, in North America, 'pan-Hindu' facilities like HARI Temple and the various Hindu-Jain temples, but also distinctively South Indian temples, North Indian temples, Bengali temples, Vaiṣṇava temples, Śaiva temples, temples devoted to a particular Hindu spiritual teacher, such as Satya Sai Baba, and so on.
45 Chhatarpur Mandir in New Delhi is a good example. This temple, which houses Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Śākta deities, was also the location of the installation ceremony for the head *ācārya* of the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī order, Ācārya Mahāprajñā, in 1994.
46 Adherents.com (www.adherents.com/adh_branches.html).
47 These debates are extensively summarized and examined in Jaini 1991.
48 Wiley 2004, pp. 238–239.
49 Dundas 2002a, p. 47.
50 Jain 1999, p. 95.
51 Though there is also a Digambara Terāpanthī sect which, while engaging in *murtipūjā*, does not use water, milk, or other 'living' (*sacitta*) substances. Their reasoning is the same as that of the Loṅka-inspired Śvetāmbara sects.
52 Dundas 2002a, p. 249.
53 Wiley 2004, p. 216.
54 See, for example, Samantabhadra's *Āptamīmāṃsā* and Hemacandra's *Anyayogavyava-cchedika*.
55 Dundas 2002a, pp. 261–262.
56 Wiley 2004, pp. 58–59.
57 Ibid, pp. 116–117, 210–211, 176.
58 'On Conversion Bill, Jain Split Wide Open', *Ahmedabad Newsline*, cities.expressindia.com (http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=203040).
59 For more detail, see Beckerlegge, pp. 61–66.
60 Babb 1996, p. 175.
61 Dr. Sulekh Jain, personal communication, 9 May 2007.
62 Dundas 2002a, pp. 6–7. Japanese Buddhists similarly worship at Shinto shrines, and Theravāda Buddhists in Southeast Asia worship the nature spirits and deities that predate Buddhism in that region, while Chinese Buddhism has become thoroughly enmeshed with Daoism and Confucianism. One could also argue that the mutual worship by Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva Hindus of one another's deities represents a similar case of a 'dual' or 'synthetic' identity with regard to religion, though this is arguably obscured by the use of the term 'Hindu' to designate these two traditions. The case of Buddhism in its various cultural contexts, however, is instructive because of the similarities between the Jain and

Buddhist paths, and the fact that Buddhists, like Jains, will engage freely in the worship of 'other' deities for this-worldly purposes, but will see their respective founding figures as essential to the higher goal of spiritual transcendence and escape from the cycle of rebirth. In both traditions, deities are seen as penultimate, in the sense that they, like the worshiper, are caught up in the cycle of rebirth. But they can and do help the worshiper with things like securing health, long life, and prosperity – things with which the Buddha and Mahāvīra are not concerned. Indeed, in both traditions, the beings that are more 'operative' in terms of frequency of worship are often the gods, and not the enlightened masters, *nirvāṇa* being a rather distant goal, but health and prosperity being a more immediate concern.

Chapter II

63 Some scholars have suggested that Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra were actually closer in time than the tradition claims. See Dhaky.
64 These four rules are called, collectively, the *cāturyāma dharma*, or 'law of the fourfold restraint'. Wiley 2004, p. 66.
65 Dundas 2002a, p. 19.
66 The Buddha's given name was Siddhārtha Gautama.
67 An appropriate name for a family that produced an omniscient being!
68 Jaini 1979, p. 49.
69 Dundas 2002a, p. 23.
70 Ibid.
71 Wiley 2004, p. 166.
72 Interestingly, the revised dates for Mahāvīra agree with the conclusions of a renowned medieval Jain scholar-monk, Hemacandra. (Ibid, p. xxix.)
73 Pāli was originally spoken in the western part of India, whereas Ardha-Māgadhī is very likely an artificial language based on Māgadhī, the ancient spoken language of the eastern part of India that Mahāvīra and the Buddha probably spoke.
74 For the 'Hindu Protestant Reformation' theory of the origin and character of *śramaṇic* religions, see, for example, Basham, p. 17; Gombrich, p. 73 ff.; and Rabault, p. 87, n. 65.
75 Dundas 2002a, p. 70.
76 An interestingly similar phenomenon has been observed among the Amish community of Pennsylvania. The Amish speak a dialect of German – 'Pennsylvania Dutch' – that is essentially the German that their ancestors spoke when they came to America in the early eighteenth century. This language is used primarily in church services, and so has the character of a sacred language. It has been passed down largely unchanged since the early eighteenth century. When contemporary

German tourists come to Pennsylvania and hear this language spoken, they find it incomprehensible, since the language in Germany has continued to change over time, as languages of daily usage tend to do. The same thing may have happened to Ardha-Māgadhī and Pāli, the Prākrits employed in the Jain and Buddhist scriptures, respectively.

77 Bronkhorst.

78 See Inden.

79 Dundas 2002a, p. 17.

80 Jaini 1979, pp. 7–8. Mahāvīra is subsequently born to the Kṣatriya couple Triśalā and her husband Siddhārtha (not the same Siddhārtha who would become the Buddha).

81 Dundas 2002a, p. 17.

82 *Divyāvadāna*, in Strong, pp. 18–23.

83 The report of Mahāvīra's death to the Buddha by the Buddha's disciples is mentioned in three places in the Buddhist canon: *Majjhima Nikaya, Samagama Sutta, 3.14; Digha Nikaya, Pasadika Sutta 3.6; and Digha* Nikaya*, Paryaya Sutta* 3.10.

84 Dundas 2002a, p. 217.

85 Ibid, p. 238.

86 Mahāvīra was, at this stage of his life – after having attained *kevalajñāna*, but prior to giving up his physical body – a *kevalin*, an omniscient, enlightened being. But only after giving up his body was he a *siddha* – a fully liberated being. He still possessed *ayu karma* (the karma which determines one's physical lifespan), but this is a non-obstructive karma that does not obscure one's knowledge. After his physical death, he possessed no karma at all.

87 Jaini 1979, p. 25.

88 Ibid, p. 22.

89 Dundas 2002a, p. 29.

90 Ibid.

91 Bronkhorst 2007, pp. 38–51.

92 Ibid, *passim*.

93 See, for example, the story of Satyakāma Jābāla in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.4.

94 *Ṛg Veda* 10.90.13–14.

95 *Ṛg Veda* 10.90.12.

96 Srinivas.

97 For in-depth discussions of the emergence of Indological thought on caste, the theory of Āryan migration into ancient India, and how both these and other, related conceptual models are interconnected with the history of British colonialism and Western dominance over India, see Inden, Trautmann, and Sugirtharajah.

98 For a contemporary Hindu articulation of this conception of caste, see Pandit.
99 *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 4.4.
100 *Vasettha Sutta*.
101 *Manusmṛti* 12.4.
102 See Long 2004.
103 *Casteism* is prejudice against others on the basis of their caste, just as racism is racial bigotry and sexism is bigotry on the basis of gender.
104 The most prominent figure associated with the former approach is Swāmī Dayānanda Saraswatī, founder of the reformist Āryā Samāj. The most prominent figure associated with the latter approach is B.R. Ambedkar, who famously adopted Buddhism as a protest against the casteism of many Hindus.
105 Bronkhorst, p. 5.
106 Parikh, pp. 163–164.
107 Ibid, pp. 162–172.
108 Dundas 2002a, p. 39.
109 See Kenoyer, Possehl, and McIntosh.
110 See, for example, Feuerstein, Kak, and Frawley.
111 Bronkhorst, pp. 219–247.

Chapter III
112 Dundas 2002a, pp. 37–38.
113 Wiley 2004, p. 87.
114 This peculiarity of modern Indian secularism was discussed in the first chapter.
115 Wiley 2004, p. 51.
116 Ibid, p. xxxi.
117 Ibid.
118 Sonya Quintanilla and P.S. Jaini argue that the representations at Mathurā depict the otherwise barely known Ardhaphalaka lineage. See Quintanilla 2007 and Jaini 2000.
119 Dundas 2002a, p. 47.
120 Ibid.
121 'The Digambars have been in northern and central India for centuries, as evidenced by the very many ancient and medieval pilgrimage shrines, the icon inscriptions, and the history of the *bhaṭṭāraka* lineages. In Rajasthan, the northern and eastern parts of the state are mostly Digambara, and mostly Khandelwal [a caste designation]; the western and southern parts are mostly Śvetāmbara, and mostly Osval [also a caste designation]. Even in Gujarat, which we think of as a Śvetāmbara-only stronghold, there has always been a Digambara presence, again as

evidenced by shrines, texts, *bhaṭṭāraka* seats and the like. What we can say is that there has not been any Śvetāmbara presence in the Kannada and Tamil speaking areas until the migration of Marwari and Gujarati traders over the past century-plus.' (John Cort, personal communication, email, 18 April 2008.)

122 Ibid, p. 63.

123 Wiley 2004, pp. xxx–xxxi.

124 Ibid, pp. xxv–xxvi.

125 *Samyagdarśanajñānacaritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ* – 'Right faith, knowledge, and conduct are the way to liberation.' (*Tattvārthasūtra* 1:1.)

126 Umāsvāti is thought to have been a Brahmin by birth, which might also have been a factor in his choice to compose the *Tattvārthasūtra*, as well as other texts attributed to him, in Sanskrit, the language of traditional Brahmanical learning. Interestingly, a number of prominent historical Jain intellectuals came from Brahmanical backgrounds, including the 11 *gaṇadharas*, Umāsvāti, and Haribhadrasūri.

127 This wide divergence of possible dates may be due to their having been more than one author using this name – perhaps a lineage of teachers all known as "Kundakunda," much like the Śaṅkarācāryas of Hinduism.

128 An example of a current controversial thinker from within the Christian tradition who takes such an approach is John Hick, who, in his various writings on the philosophy of religion, posits that religious language functions only at the phenomenal level, affirming that the true nature of ultimate reality ("the Real") is noumenal, and so beyond speech. On this basis, Hick affirms the fundamental validity of all religions as paths to the divine, undermining the importance of attachment to any particular religious path in the name of a pluralism which sees the experience of the Real as being beyond any one conception of it.

129 See Granoff 1993, Granoff 2006, and Doniger.

130 Haribhadrasūri, *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* 67–69, 71, translated by Chapple in Chapple 2003, pp. 118–119.

131 Dundas 2002a, p. 145.

132 Ibid.

133 Wiley 2004, pp. 58–59.

134 Ibid, p. 130.

135 Though there are abundant precedents to modern modes of thought in Indic traditions, not least in Jainism itself. See Gier.

136 There had already been Orthodox Christians in India – primarily in the southern region of Kerala – for many centuries prior to the arrival of European missionaries. Europeans, however, brought distinctively

Western, Catholic and Protestant, forms of Christianity to the subcontinent.

137 Although the Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth actually predates the modern period – its founder, Tāraṇ Svāmī, having lived in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (1448–1515) – it shares most of the characteristics of the modern movements I have described. It also thereby shows that ostensibly 'modern' trends such as an experiential and non-sectarian emphasis have warrants within premodern Indic thought (such as the teaching of Kundakunda) and need not be explained solely as a consequence of Western influence.

138 Wiley 2004, p. 167.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid, pp. 210–211.

141 Ibid, p. 211.

142 Ibid, p. 176.

143 Ibid, pp. 116–117.

144 Ibid, p. 67.

145 Ibid, p. 208.

146 Ibid, p. 85.

147 For recent English-language 'insider' texts on Jainism, see Vastupal Parikh's *Jainism and the New Spirituality* and Bharat S. Shah's *An Introduction to Jainism*. A prominent lay Jain organization in North America is JAINA (the Federation of Jain Associations in North America).

Chapter IV

148 See Hadot.

149 John Cort, personal communication.

150 See Bronkhorst, pp. 61–68. Vastupal Parikh also points out that Kāpila is referred to as *muni* (one who keeps silence, the traditional term for a Jain monk), and not as *ṛṣi*, or seer, which is the traditional Vedic designation for a sage. (Personal communication.)

151 The equivalents of *jīva* and *ajīva*, respectively, in the Sāṃkya and Yoga systems are called *puruṣa* and *prakṛtī*.

152 *Bhagavad Gītā* 7:7.

153 The leading living Western scholar of this literature is Kristi Wiley. (See, for example, Wiley 2000.)

154 Wiley 2004, pp. 184–185.

155 Vallely 2002a, p. 46.

156 Dundas 2002a, pp. 261–262.

157 The possibility of this latter process, of eradicating karmic seeds from the soul that are embedded there, as opposed to the prevention of additional

karmic influx, is what the Ājīvika teacher, Makkhali Gosāla, apparently denied, according to Bronkhorst. See Bronkhorst, pp. 38–51.
158 See Wiley 2006.
159 Dundas 2002a, p. 9.
160 Ibid, p. 197.
161 See Wiley 2006.
162 Wiley 2004, p. 156.
163 Cort 2001, pp. 27–28.
164 Jaini 1979, p. 16.
165 Śrūtaprajñā, pp. 151–152.
166 See Vallely 2002b and Vallely 2004.
167 Dundas 2002a, p. 191.
168 Ibid.
169 Jaini 1979, p. 140.
170 *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.5.5.
171 Wiley 2004, p. 38.
172 Dundas 2002a, p. 180.
173 See http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5400232.stm.
174 See Cort 2001, p. 6. The *abhiśekha* itself is a royal ritual, being the means by which kings in South Asia were traditionally made king – the equivalent of crowning in the West. In the ancient Near East a similar practice of anointing was observed. Indeed, the Judaic and Christian term *messiah* means 'king' – literally, 'anointed one'. The treating of the Jina *mūrti* in a royal fashion also has interesting resonances with the issue discussed in the previous chapter of the possible royal – i.e. Kṣatriya – origins of the *śramaṇa* traditions. Digambaras do not adorn their *mūrtis*, such adornment being considered a form of clothing. This Śvetāmbara practice has been a major source of contention between the Śvetāmbaras and the Digambaras for roughly a 1000 years.
175 See, for example, Cort 2001, Kelting, Vallely 2002a, and Babb.
176 Cort 2001, pp. 114–115, emphasis mine.
177 On a personal note, I felt when reading Cort's account of the Jain *bhakts*' relationships with their gurus as if my relationship with my own guru in the Vedānta Society was being described.
178 Dundas 2002a, pp. 81–83.

Chapter V

179 The earliest account of this story is from the Theravāda Buddhist Pāli canon (*Udāna* 6.4:66–69).
180 As we shall see, the *Tattvārthasūtra* is a tremendously important Jain text, held to be authoritative by both Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras, both of whom wrote commentaries upon it.

181 See Bhaskar.
182 Matilal 1981, pp. 19–29.
183 Ibid, p.12.
184 *Bhagavatı Sūtra* 9:386. Translation by Matilal. Quoted from Matilal 1981, p. 19.
185 The 'progressive' and 'regressive' time-cycles of which Mahāvīra speaks – the *utsarpiṇī* and *avasarpiṇī*, respectively – are periods of increasing good and bad qualities, each of which characterizes half of a *kalpa*, or cosmic epoch. See Jaini 1979, pp. 30–32.
186 See Fujinaga.
187 Dundas 2002a, pp. 86–87.
188 Ibid, pp. 87–88.
189 *Tattvārthasūtra* 5:29.
190 Translation by Tatia. Quoted from Umāsvāti (Tatia trans.) 1994, pp. 7–12.
191 Ibid, p. 23.
192 Ibid, p. 8.
193 Whether the various writings attributed to Kundakunda are the work of a single author by this name or of a school of thought claiming him as its founder is an as yet unresolved historical question. For a discussion of the issues that this question raises, see Johnson 1995, pp. 91–97.
194 *Samayasāra* 111–112. All translations in this section are based on that of J.L. Jaini (Kundakunda 1930). Sanskrit scholars may find it odd that the terms *jīva* and *ātman* are both consistently translated in this dissertation as 'soul', and are used, functionally, as synonyms, and that *pudgala* is translated here as 'matter'. In the better-known tradition of Vedānta, the *jīva* and the *ātman* are *not* identical – with the *jīva* typically referring to the empirical soul or ego – the 'self' – and the *ātman* referring to the 'Self', which is ultimately identical, at least in Advaita Vedānta, with Brahman, or Ultimate Reality. Similarly, *pudgala*, in the Buddhist tradition, refers to the concept of the 'person', introduced – illicitly according to the mainstream tradition – by the Pudgalavādins, or 'Personalists', to account for the sense of "self" to which the combination of the five *skāndhas*, or aggregates (matter, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness), gives rise according to early Buddhist thought. (To the rest of the Buddhist tradition, this concept looked too much like the self, or *ātman*, denied by the Buddha in his *anātman* doctrine, and the Pudgalavādins came to be regarded as heretics.) In the Jain tradition, however, *jīva* and *ātman* – even *paramātman* – are typically synonymous. Both refer to the inherently omniscient, blissful, and energetic entity whose nature is obscured by karma and the experience of the true nature of which is constitutive of liberation – the entity which I am calling the 'soul'. In Vedānta, by contrast, *paramātman*

is the 'supreme soul' – God as dwelling within all beings. Pudgala refers, in Jainism, to matter – specifically, to atomically constituted matter, in contrast with non-atomic forms of *ajīva*, like space (*ākāśa*) and the principles of motion and inertia (*dharma* and *adharma*).

195 *Samayasāra* 13.

196 Johnson, p. 141.

197 Ibid, pp. 4–45.

198 *Samayasāra* 290. Emphasis mine.

199 Regarding the resemblances of Kundakunda's *vyavahāranaya/niścayanaya* duality to 'two truths' models such as those affirmed in Mādhyamika Buddhism (such as when Nāgārjuna affirms the identity of *nirvāṇa* and *saṃsāra* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 25:20)) and in Advaita Vedānta (such as when Śaṅkarācārya affirms the ultimate identity of *nirguṇa* and *saguṇa* Brahman), the direction of historical influence (if this is, indeed, a case of such influence) may well have been in the other direction. That is, it may not be that Kundakunda represents a 'Buddhistic' or 'Vedāntic' trend in Jainism, but that his understanding of Jainism subsequently influenced Buddhists and Vedāntins to adopt their own "two truths" models of reality. This is more likely the case with Vedānta than with Buddhism – Kundakunda preceding Śaṅkara, if traditional dating is at all reliable, by at least five centuries, and both inhabiting a south Indian (Tamil) milieu. The case with Buddhism would be harder to make, Kundakunda and Nāgārjuna being, according to traditional dating, near contemporaries, and the case for Nāgārjuna's having a south Indian origin being far from conclusive. If this is a case of direct historical influence, it may be that the Buddhist 'two truths' theory actually came first. Or perhaps it is not an issue of influence at all, but of highly creative thinkers coming up, independently, with very similar analyses of reality. See Dundas 2002a, pp. 108–109.

200 *Samayasāra* 151.

201 Dundas 2002a, pp. 110–111.

202 In regard to the question of heterodoxy, one modern Jain movement which takes its chief inspiration from Kundakunda – the Kānjī Svāmī Panth – has been critiqued by other Digambaras for an over-emphasis on the *niścayanaya*. These Digambara critics point out that Kundakunda never advocated the non-performance of any of the conventional Jain practices. See Jain 1999, pp. 101–117.

203 Samantabhadra, *Āptamīmāṃsā* 105.

204 *Tattvārthasūtra*: 1:1.

205 *Samayasāra* 5.

206 Dundas characterizes *anābhigrahika* as 'indiscriminate attachment to all views as being true' and 'a kind of misconceived relativism'. See Dundas 2004, p. 132.

207 Jaini 1979, p. 83.
208 *Sanmatitarka* 3:46–49. Translation by Dixit (Dixit, pp. 110–111).
209 Ibid, p. 136.
210 Ibid, pp. 114–132.
211 *Sanmatitarka* 3:47–49.
212 Dixit, pp. 136–138.
213 Chapple 2003, p. 148.
214 *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* 129–130; translation by Chapple (Chapple 2003, p. 131).
215 Ibid, verse 131; p. 132.
216 Ibid, verse 134; p. 132.
217 Ibid, verses 136–138; p. 133.
218 Ibid, verses 139–140; pp. 133–134.
219 Ibid, verses 141–147; pp. 134–135.
220 Folkert, pp. 341–409.
221 See Kansara.

Chapter VI

222 'Non-absolutism' is, however, a fine translation of *anekāntavāda* if it is taken to apply only to the epistemic situation of non-omniscient beings: Kundakunda's *vyavahāranaya*.
223 *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* 57.
224 The noteworthy exception to this being, of course, the Digambara mystical tradition inspired by Kundakunda, as discussed previously.
225 *Tattvārthasūtra* 5:29.
226 Mookerjee, pp. 23–48.
227 One account of the meaning of *kevalajñāna* is thus to have complete *self*-knowledge. If one knows oneself, one's *jīva*, *fully*, this will include knowing all of its relations to the rest of the entities in the cosmos: 'He who knows one, knows all. He who knows all, knows one' (*Ācārāṅga* 1:3:4). See Tatia 1951, p. 70 and Jaini 1979, pp. 91, 267.
228 All three worldviews could be characterized as 'holographic', in the sense that they affirm that each part of reality contains the whole.
229 This example is used by Samantabhadra in his *Āptamīmāṃsā* (*Āptamīmāṃsā* 59) and by Maṇibhadra in his commentary on Haribhadra's *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya*. It is also used by the Mīmāṃsakas to illustrate a similar position of ontological realism.
230 'A substance is that which possesses qualities and modes' (*Tattvārthasūtra* 5:37). The understanding of a substance as consisting of the *locus* of qualities and modes, which conceives of all three of these categories of entity as existing in a relationship of mutual dependence, is presented by the Jains in opposition to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika doctrine of *samavāya*, or the inherence of qualities and actions in substances conceived as independently

existing entities. This is the chief distinction between the Jain position and other forms of ontological realism in traditional Indian philosophy – its attempt to coordinate and synthesize entities and their characteristics, rather than emphasizing their essential unity (as in most Brahmanical schools of thought) or their radical distinctiveness (as in Buddhism).

231 Rao, p. 196.

232 Folkert, pp. 221–222.

233 Though Advaita affirms that there is only *one* such substance – *nirguṇa Brahman* – and that the existence of everything else is an illusion due to *māyā*.

234 Whitehead, p. 337.

235 Tatia 1951, p. 178.

236 See Gopalan.

237 Matilal 1981, pp. 52–53.

238 *Āptamīmāṃsā* 103–104.

239 Mahāprajñā, pp. 18–19.

240 Siddhasena's earlier formulation of the sevenfold method, or *saptabhaṅginaya*, of *syādvāda* places the fourth 'limb' (*bhaṅga*) – inexpressibility – third and gives it a somewhat different meaning – that the entity is inexpressible from the perspective of foreign properties. Samantabhadra, however, places inexpressibility fourth and defines it as the simultaneous application of positive and negative predications (as opposed to their successive predication, which he identifies with the third limb). He identifies the second limb, non-existence, with the non-existence of foreign properties in the entity in question (in the manner of Siddhasena's conception of inexpressibility). Samantabhadra's formulation of *syādvāda* is the version that eventually became authoritative for the Jain tradition. See Dixit, pp. 25–26.

241 Matilal 1981, p. 3.

242 Mookerjee, pp. 117–120.

243 *Sanmatitarka* 3:46.

244 Matilal 1981, pp. 309–311.

245 See, for example, Folkert's account of the 363 possible philosophical positions in Folkert, pp. 215–337.

246 See Sinari, pp. 59–64.

247 Ibid; Padmarajiah, pp. 363–378.

248 *Āptamīmāṃsā* 92–93.

249 Ibid 95.

250 Jaini 1979, p. 313.

251 Double application of *syādvāda*, therefore, is not unlike double application of the rules of *sandhi*, or sound combination, in Sanskrit: such double application is not permitted by the system of Sanskrit grammar.

252 Mahāprajñā, pp. 30–31.
253 Jaini 1979, pp. 226–273.
254 *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* 147b–148a; translation by Chapple (Chapple 2003, p. 135).
255 Radhakrishnan, p. 18.
256 Spear, p. 57.
257 I have also given an extended argument for this claim in my first book, *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism*.
258 Dundas 2002a, p. 227.
259 Folkert, pp. 224–227.
260 Halbfass, pp. 403–418.
261 Folkert, pp. 224–227.
262 Ibid, p. 224.
263 Matilal 1981, p. 18.
264 Padmarajiah, pp. 9–182.
265 Folkert, pp. 217–218.
266 Matilal 1990, pp. 313–314.
267 Among scholars of Jainism, such concerns are most evident in Chapple's work.
268 Tatia 1951, pp. 17–26.
269 *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* 7:2–3, 11, and 13. (Translation based on Lalwani 1973, pp. 134–135, 138.) These rules should call to mind Śrūtprajñā Swāmī's contemporary assertion that 'harsh words (even if they are truths) are … forms of *hiṃsā*'. (Śrūtprajñā, p. 152.)
270 Dundas 2002a, pp. 233–240; Jaini 1993.
271 Haribhadrasūri, *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* 129–138, translated by Chapple in Chapple 2003, pp. 131–133.
272 *Lokatattvaniṃaya* 38. (Quoted in Dundas 2002a, p. 228.)
273 *Anyayogavyavacchedika* 30.
274 Ibid (Malliṣeṇasūri (Thomas trans.), p. 164).
275 Halbfass, p. 416. Emphasis mine.
276 Ibid, p. 414.
277 Gandhi 1982, p. 75.
278 Ibid, p. 78.
279 Gandhi 1957, p. 265.
280 Ibid, p. 504.
281 Gandhi 1982, p. 25.
282 Smith, p. 86.
283 Prabhavānanda, p. 70.
284 Gandhi 1982, p. 23.
285 Gandhi 1981, p. 30.
286 Gandhi 1957, p. 39.

287 Ibid, p. 89.
288 Ibid.

Chapter VII

289 Jaini 1979, pp. 89n.
290 I was astonished to hear a Jain tour guide at Śravaṇa Belgoḷa describe the Tīrthaṅkaras essentially as Hindu *avatāras*, saying that 'God came down to earth 24 times to teach the path to liberation.' Orthodox Jainism of course teaches that the Tīrthaṅkaras were human beings who *attained* liberation, and *then* taught the path, and not forms of a singular divine being taking rebirth solely to save suffering beings.
291 Dundas 2002a, p. 91.
292 It also has interesting resonances with Christian theology, in the notion of a deity who sacrifices himself so other beings can have life. Did this ancient Vedic concept influence early Christian thought through some indirect cultural transmission from India?
293 For articles expressing both sides of this discussion, see Chapple, 2002.
294 Dundas 2002b, pp. 98–99.
295 Ibid, p. 84.
296 See particularly Gier.

Bibliography

Babb, Lawrence A. *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1996)

Basham, A.L. *A Corpus of Indian Studies: Essays in Honour of Professor Gaurinath Sastri* (Cakcutta: Sanskrit Pustak Bhandar, 1980)

Beckerlegge, Gwylim. *The Ramakrishna Mission: The Making of a Modern Hindu Movement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Bhaskar, Bhagchandra Jain. *Jainism in Buddhist Literature* (Nagpur: Alok Prakashan, 1972)

Bothara, Surendra. *Ahimsā: The Science of Peace* (Jaipur: Prakrit Bharati Academy, 2004)

Bronkhorst, Johannes. *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007)

Bryant, Edwin. *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture: The Indo-Āryan Migration Debate* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Chapple, Christopher Key. *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993)

—— *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Chapple, Christopher Key. *Reconciling Yogas: Haribhadra's Collection of Views on Yoga* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003)

Cort, John, ed. *Open Boundaries: Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998)

—— '"Intellectual *Ahiṃsā*" Revisited: Jain Tolerance and Intolerance of Other', *Philosophy East and West* (Vol. 50, No. 3, July 2000)

—— *Jains in the World: Religious Values and Ideology in India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

—— 'Green Jainism? Notes and Queries toward a Possible Jain Environmental Ethic', in Chapple, Christopher Key, ed. *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002)

Dhaky, M.A. *Arhat Parsva and Dharanendra Nexus* (B.L. Series) (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1997)

Dixit, Krishna Kumar. *Jaina Ontology* (Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, 1971)

Doniger, Wendy, ed. *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993)

Dundas, Paul. *The Jains* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002a [1992])

—— 'The Limits of a Jain Environmental Ethic', in Chapple, Christopher Key, ed. *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2002b)

—— "Beyond Anekāntavāda: A Jain Approach to Religious Tolerance," in Sethia, Tara, ed. *Ahiṃsā, Anekānta and Jainism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004)

—— *History, Scripture and Controversy in a Medieval Jain Sect* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)

Feuerstein, Georg, Subhash Kak, and David Frawley. *In Search of the Cradle of Civilization* (Wheaton, Illinois: Quest Books, 2001)

Flügel, Peter, ed. *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)

Folkert, Kendall W. *Scripture and Community: Collected Essays on the Jains* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1993)

Fujinaga, Sin. 'Why Must There Be an Omniscient in Jainism?' in Flügel, Peter, ed. *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)

Gandhi, Mohandas K. *Gandhi: An Autobiography (The Story of My Experiments with Truth)* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957)

—— *Young India: 1919–1931* (Vol. VIII, 1926) (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1981)

—— *The Words of Gandhi* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1982)

Ghosh, Aurobindo. *The Secret of the Veda* (Centenary Edition) (Lotus Press, 1995)

Gier, Nicholas F. *Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese, and Western Perspectives* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2000)

Gombrich, Richard F. *Theravada Buddhism: A Social History from ancient Benares to modern Colombo* (London; New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988)

Gopalan, S. *Jainism as Meta-Philosophy* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1991)

Granoff, Phyllis. *The Clever Adulteress and Other Stories: A Treasury of Jain Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1993)

—— *The Forest of Thieves and the Magic Garden: An Anthology of Medieval Jain Literature* (London: Penguin Classics, 2006)

Hadot, Pierre. *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995)

Halbfass, Wilhelm. *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1988)

Haribhadrasūri. *Ṣaḍdarśanasamuccaya* (Vārāṇasī: Caukhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1949)

Humphrey, Caroline and James Laidlaw. *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

Inden, Ronald. *Imagining India* (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990)

Jain, Ravindra K. *The Universe as Audience: Metaphor and Community among the Jains of North India* (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1999)

Jaini, Padmanabh S. *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979)

—— *Gender and Salvation: Jaina Debates on the Spiritual Liberation of Women* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1992)

—— 'Jaina Purāṇas: A Purāṇic Counter Tradition', in Doniger, Wendy, ed. *Purāṇa Perennis: Reciprocity and Transformation in Hindu and Jaina Texts* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993)

—— *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000)

Johnson, W.J. *Harmless Souls: Karmic Bondage and Religious Change in Early Jainism with Special Reference to Umāsvāti and Kundakunda* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, 1995)

Kansara, N.M. 'The Bhagavadgītā Citations in Yaśovijaya's *Adhyātmasāra*, a Manual on Jaina Mysticism', in *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute* 57 (1976)

Kelting, Whitney M. *Singing to the Jinas: Jain Laywomen, Mandal Singing, and the Negotiations of Jain Devotion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Kenoyer, Jonathan Mark. *Ancient Cities of the Indus Valley Civilization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Kundakunda (J.L. Jaini, trans.). *Samayasāra (The Soul-Essence)* (Lucknow: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1930)

Laidlaw, James. *Riches and Renunciation: Religion, Economy, and Society among the Jains* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Lalwani, Kastur Chand (trans.), *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973)

Long, Jeffery D. *Plurality and Relativity: Whitehead, Jainism, and the Reconstruction of Religious Pluralism* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Chicago, 2000)

—— 'Claiming the Buddha for Hinduism: Swami Vivekananda and the Re-Discovery of Buddhism in India', in Sengupta, Sukalyan and Makarand

Paranjape, eds. *The Cyclonic Swami: Vivekananda in the West* (Calcutta: Samvad India Foundation, 2004)

—— *A Vision for Hinduism: Beyond Hindu Nationalism* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2007)

Mahāprajñā, Ācārya. 'An Introduction: The Axioms of Non-Absolutism', in Kumar, Rai Ashwini, T.M. Dak, and Anil Dutta Mishra, eds. *Facets of Jain Philosophy, Religion and Culture: Anekāntavāda and Syādvāda* (Ladnun, Rājasthān: Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, 1996)

Mallişeņasūri (F.W. Thomas, trans.). *Syādvādamañjarī: The Flower-Spray of the Quoammodo Doctrine* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968)

Mallişeņasūri. *Syādvādamañjarī* (Poona: Śrimad Rājacandrāśrama, 1970)

Mardia, K.V. *The Scientific Foundations of Jainism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1996)

Matilal, Bimal Krishna. *The Central Philosophy of Jainism: Anekāntavāda*. (Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, 1981)

—— *Logic, Language, and Reality: Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Issues* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990)

McIntosh, Jane. *A Peaceful Realm: The Rise and Fall of the Indus Civilization* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2001)

Mookerjee, Satkari. *The Jaina Philosophy of Non-Absolutism: A Critical Study of Anekāntavāda* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978)

Padmarajiah, Y.J. *A Comparative Study of the Jaina Theories of Reality and Knowledge* (Bombay: Jain Sahitya Vikas Mandal, 1963)

Pal, Pratapaditya. *Jain Art from India: The Peaceful Liberators* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1994)

Pandit, Bansi. *The Hindu Mind* (Glen Ellyn, IL: B & V Enterprises, 1998)

Parikh, Vastupal. *Jainism and the New Spirituality* (Toronto: Peace Publications, 2002)

Possehl, Gregory L. *The Indus Civilization: A Contemporary Perspective* (AltaMira Press, 2003)

Prabhavānanda, Swāmī (Christopher Isherwood, trans.). *Shankara's Crest-Jewel of Discrimination: Viveka-Chudamani* (Hollywood, California: Vedānta Press, 1947)

Quintanilla, Sonya Rhie. *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007)

Rabault, Pascale. *La fascination de l'Inde en Allemagne* (Rennes, France: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2004)

Radhakrishnan, Sarvepalli. *The Hindu View of Life* (London: George Unwin & Allen Ltd, 1927)

Rao, G. Hanumanta. 'The Jaina Instrumental Theory of Knowledge', in Bhattacharyya, K., ed. *Recent Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1963)

Samantabhadrasvāmī. *Āptamīmāṃsā*, in Yaśovijaya, *Aṣṭasahāsrikatatpāryavivaraṇam* (Mumbai: Śri Jinaśāsana Arādhana Trasta, 2045 [1988])

Sarma, Deepak. *An Introduction to Madhva Vedanta* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2003)

Schubring, Walther. *The Doctrine of the Jainas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000)

Sethia, Tara, ed. *Ahiṃsā, Anekānta and Jainism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2004)

Shah, Bharat S. *An Introduction to Jainism* (New York: The Setubandh Publications, 2002)

Shah, Nagin, trans. *Jaina Philosophy and Religion* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Bhogilal Lehar Chand Institute of Indology, and Mahattarā Sādhvī Śrī Mrigāvatīji, 2000) [English translation of Muni Shri Nyayavijayaji, *Jaina Darśana*]

Shanta, N. *The Unknown Pilgrims – The Voice of the Sādhvīs: The History, Spirituality, and Life of the Jaina Women Ascetics* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1997)

Sinari, Ramakant. 'A Pragmatist Critique of Jain Relativism', in *Philosophy East and West*, Volume 19 (1969)

Smith, Huston. *The Religions of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965)

Spear, T.G. Percival. *India, Pakistan and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958)

Srinivas, Mysore Narasimhachar. *The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization and Other Essays* (Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Śrūtaprajñā, Saman. *The Path of Purification* (Rajkot, Gujarat: Peace of Mind Training Center, 2005)

Strong, John. *The Experience of Buddhism: Sources and Interpretations* (Second edition) (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002)

Sugirtharajah, Sharada. *Imagining Hinduism: A Postcolonial Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)

Tatia, Nathmal. *Studies in Jaina Philosophy* (Banaras: Jain Cultural Research Society, 1951)

Tobias, Michael. *Life Force: The World of Jainism* (Fremont, CA: Jain Publishing Company, 1991)

Trautmann, Thomas R. *Aryans and British India* (New Delhi: Yoda Press, 2004)

Umāsvāti (Nathmal Tatia, trans.). *That Which Is: Tattvārtha Sūtra* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1994)

Vallely, Anne. *Guardians of the Transcendent: An Ethnography of a Jain Ascetic Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2002a)

—— 'Moral Landscapes: Ethical Discourses among Orthodox and Diaspora Jains', in Lambek, Micheal, ed. *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002b)

—— 'The Jain Plate: The Semiotics of the Diaspora Diet', in Jacobsen, Knut A. and P. Pratap Kumar, eds. *South Asians in the Diaspora: Histories and Religious Traditions* (Boston: Brill, 2004)

Van Alphen, J. *Steps to Liberation: 2,500 Years of Jain Art and Religion* (Antwerpen: Etnografisch Museum, 2000)

Warren, Herbert. *Jainism in Western Garb as a Solution to Life's Great Problems* (New Delhi, Crest Publishing House, 1993) (first published in 1928)

Whitehead, Alfred North. *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology (Corrected Edition)* (New York: The Free Press, 1978)

Wiley, Kristi. 'Colors of the Soul: By-Products of Activity or Passions?', *Philosophy East and West* (Vol. 50, No. 3, July 2000)

—— *Historical Dictionary of Jainism* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2004)

—— '*Ahiṃsā* and Compassion in Jainism', in Flügel, Peter, ed. *Studies in Jaina History and Culture: Disputes and Dialogues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006)

Index

abhiṣekha 3, 10, 111, 114, 193
Ācārāṅga 33, 62, 107, 110, 160, 189, 193
(See also *āgamas*, Ardha-Māgadhī.)
ācārya 66, 80, 193, 194, 198, 205, 219
Ādinātha 54, 189, 193
(See also Ṛṣabha.)
Advaita Vedānta 92, 93, 119, 145, 158, 167, 198, 200, 205, 209, 218, 219, 221;
of Mahātma Gandhi 168–169
(See also Brahman, *māyāvāda*, Vedānta.)
āgamas 120–123, 193, 194, 195, 203
(See also Ardha-Māgadhī, Prakrit.)
ahiṃsā xiii, xvi, 16, 20, 30, 76, 79, 97–100, 101, 102–103, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 115, 119, 138, 139, 152, 154–165, 166, 169, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 186, 193, 194, 197, 199, 200, 202, 203, 206
(See also *anuvrata*, *mahāvrata*, nonviolence.)
ajīva 90, 92, 142, 193, 198, 216, 219
Ājīvika 43–44, 59, 193, 197, 199, 202
(See also Makkhali Gosāla.)
Akalaṅka 67, 190
anātman 83, 121
(See also *ātman*, soul.)
anekāntavāda xiv, xvi, 5, 75, 76, 115, 117, 134, 141–142, 143, 150, 157, 160, 169, 170–171, 187, 194, 220
(See also *nayavāda*, *syādvāda*.)
anuvrata 101, 106, 107, 108, 194, 206
(See also laypersons, *mahāvrata*.)
anuvrata movement 22, 79, 205
aparigraha xvi, 101, 109, 110, 115, 194, 196, 202, 203, 206
(See also *anuvrata*, detachment, *mahāvrata*, non-attachment.)
Āptamīmāṃsā 67, 134, 146, 151–152, 160, 203, 220
(See also Samantabhadra.)
āratī 6–7, 9, 11, 114, 194
Ardha-Māgadhī 18, 34–36, 120, 123, 132, 179, 180, 194, 213
āsana 39, 194
(See also *yoga*.)
asceticism, ascetic practice xii, xviii, 18, 21, 30, 33, 39–42, 44, 52, 54, 63, 64, 65, 66, 79, 92, 95, 97, 98, 99, 100, 115, 127, 173, 174, 175, 194;
problem of excessive focus upon in presentations of Jainism xx–xxii, 3, 111, 176–177;
and karma 91–100;
and Tantra 69–70;

self-starvation (*sallekhanā*) as example of 110–111;
as legitimate form of violence 151–152;
and doctrines of relativity 151–152;
and environmentalism 181–182;
as critique of consumerism 182–183
(See also *keśa locana*, *sallekhanā*, *santhārā*.)
ascetics 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 25, 30, 31, 32, 44, 57, 58, 61, 67, 68, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 83, 87, 90, 95, 173, 175, 176, 194;
as spiritual warriors 36–39;
relations with laypersons 58–59, 71, 73, 95, 96, 98–99, 101–110, 112–113, 175–176;
female 13, 17–18, 42, 79, 80, 90, 98, 203, 209;
as objects of devotion 111–114;
Jain and Buddhist compared 176–177
Aśoka 59–60, 68, 153, 189
asteya 30, 101, 108, 194, 199, 206
(See also *anuvrata*, *mahāvrata*.)
ātman xxi, 78, 92, 194
(See also *jīva*, *jīvātman*, *paramātman*, soul.)
avatāra 51, 76, 194, 201, 223
(See also heterodoxy.)

Bāhubali 3, 10, 59, 113, 190, 194–195, 209
(See also Śravaṇa Belgoḷa.)
Bhadrabāhu 58–59, 61–62, 63, 189
(See also Candragupta.)
Bhagavad Gītā xxi, 12, 37, 42, 88, 90, 95, 138, 166, 170, 195, 201, 216
Bhagavatī Sūtra, *Bhagavatī Vyākhyāprajñāpti* 33, 57, 121–122, 195
bhaṭṭāraka 22, 72–73, 78, 190, 195, 204–205, 214–215
(See also Digambaras, Terāpanthīs (Digambara), Bīsapanthīs.)
Bīsapanthīs 22, 23, 72–73, 195
(See also Digambaras.)
brahmacarya 101, 109, 195, 199
(See also *anuvrata*, celibacy, chastity, *mahāvrata*, marital fidelity.)
Brahman x, 93, 124, 135, 150, 156, 158, 164, 167–168, 194, 195, 218, 219, 221;
distinct from Jain concept of *jīva* 90–92
(See also Advaita Vedānta, *Upaniṣads*, Vedānta.)
Brahmin, Brahmins x, 4, 34, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 54, 57, 68, 89, 110, 119, 173, 195, 196, 198, 199, 202;
and Sanskrit 35–36;
rivalry with Kṣatriyas 36–38;
philosophical debates with Buddhists 119–120
(See also Sanskrit, Vedas, Vedic traditions.)
Bronkhorst, Johannes 37, 45, 49, 51, 52–53, 55–56, 205
(See also Greater Magadha, Ājīvikas.)
Buddha 2, 29, 30, 31, 33–37, 39, 41–42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 52, 55, 58, 75, 90, 133, 135, 136, 162, 189, 194, 197, 198, 199;
critique of birth-caste attributed to 49, 52;
Hindu attitudes toward 51;

story of the Blind Men and the Elephant attributed to 117–118;
and 'unanswerable' (*avyākata*) questions 120–121
Buddhism, Buddhists xi, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, xxii, xxiii, xxiv, 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13, 16, 30, 31, 33–36, 37–38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 59, 61, 65, 66–71, 83, 85, 86, 88, 90, 92, 93, 96, 100, 101, 103, 106, 107, 118; 120–121, 123, 124, 127, 128, 130, 132, 136, 142, 145, 150, 151, 152–153, 156, 158, 159, 165, 173, 174, 178, 179, 180, 183, 190, 193, 195, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 208, 209, 210, 211–212, 213, 214, 217, 218, 219, 221;
and other śramaṇa groups, origins of 45–56;
and modernity 74–75;
Theravāda 98, 175, 176–177;
philosophical debates with Brahmins 119–120
(See also *anātman*, Aśoka.)

Candragupta 189;
and Digambara origins 59–60
caritra 196
(See also conduct.)
caste x, 16, 28, 36, 38, 50, 51, 52, 54, 68, 75, 78, 83, 88, 195, 198, 213, 214;
reference to in *Ṛg Veda* 46–48;
critique of in Vedic literature 49
(See also *varṇa*, *jāti*.)
casteism 51, 214
celibacy 18, 79, 102, 108, 194, 208
(See also *brahmacarya*.)
chastity 101, 102, 108, 194
(See also *brahmacarya*.)
conduct 10, 32, 65, 131, 136, 196, 210, 215;
Bhagavad Gītā as 'infallible guide of' 166
cosmology, cosmos 11, 32–33, 65, 69, 70, 80, 83–84, 85, 90, 91, 123, 142, 150, 154, 177–178, 179;
both eternal and non-eternal 118–121;
Jain and scientific accounts 180–181

darśana 85–90, 131, 139, 154, 156, 162, 193, 196, 197, 210;
samyak, or right 99;
Jaina 134, 146
deities x, xxi, 5, 6–7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 25, 26, 37, 38, 41, 60, 76, 93, 112, 114, 122, 123, 161–162, 167, 178, 179, 193, 195, 197, 199, 200, 210, 211, 212, 223;
Vedic 46, 47, 50, 53, 69, 179
(See also heterodoxy.)
detachment xvi, 17, 18, 31, 37, 57, 95, 96, 110, 202, 203
Digambaras 16–19, 20, 22, 23, 26, 32, 42–43, 44, 57, 59, 60–61, 63, 64–65, 76, 80, 87, 104, 109–110, 123, 132, 133–134, 189, 190, 193, 194–195, 196, 198, 199–200, 203, 204–205, 207, 211, 214–215, 217, 219, 220;
schism with Śvetāmbaras 62–63;
mysticism 65–66;
philosophers 66–67;
sub-sects 71–73;
modern movements 75–76, 77–79
(See also Bīsapanthīs, Terāpanthīs (Digambara), Kundakunda.)

divyadhvani 43, 196
dīkṣā 196, 198

ecology xxiv, 181–182
(See also environment.)
environment xx, 3, 67, 94–95, 100, 181;
cultural 45;
environmental crisis 81, 174
(See also ecology.)

fasting 152, 196;
to the death (*sallekhanā*, *santhārā*) 110–111, 202–203

gaccha 16, 63, 73, 190, 196
(See also Tapā Gaccha.)
gaṇadharas 43, 57–58, 123, 196, 215
(See also Indrabhūti Gautama.)
Gandhi, Mohandas K. (Mahātma) ix, xvi–xvii, 7, 8, 13, 22, 76, 78, 83, 135, 173, 182, 183–184, 190, 191, 196, 199, 208, 222;
and Jain philosophy of relativity 165–171
God xix, 2, 14, 76, 93, 106, 165, 167, 168, 177–179, 196–197, 209;
jīva as 91
(See also heterodoxy.)
gods
(See deities.)
goddesses 6, 7, 15, 20, 199, 202, 210
Greater Magadha 2, 37, 39, 45, 49, 51–52, 55, 57, 59, 60, 64, 89–90, 194, 198, 205
(See also Bronkhorst, Johannes; Magadha.)
Gujarat 8, 17, 19, 60, 77, 113, 169, 190, 196, 207, 208, 214–215;
Gujarati-language x, 34;
Gujarati-people 8, 169, 195, 215
guru 57–58, 110, 112–113, 114, 196, 217;
Gandhi's 78, 199, 207
(See also Mahetā, Rājacandra.)

Haribhadra xiv, 76, 130–131, 185–186, 190, 196, 204, 215, 222;
and Jain philosophy of relativity 134–138, 139, 141–142, 154, 156, 161, 170–171;
critique of *tantra* 69–70
(See also *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya*.)
Hemacandra 21, 67, 71, 138, 162–163, 190, 197, 200, 211, 212
heterodoxy 14–15, 23, 76–77, 91, 178–179, 191, 197
(See also modernity, neo-orthodoxy, orthodoxy.)
hiṃsā 100, 103, 197;
asceticism as legitimate form of 151–152;
harsh words as form of 222
(See also violence.)
Hinduism, Hindus x, xi, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, xxi–xxii, xxii–xxiv, 57–58, 60, 67, 68, 69,71, 73, 77, 80, 83, 84–85, 85–86, 89, 98–99, 155, 156, 159, 161–162, 165, 166, 167, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 189, 191, 194, 195, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 203, 204, 205, 209;
compared with Jainism 1–3, 16, 20, 75–76, 90–92, 96, 111, 112, 113, 114, 136;
Jain event at Hindu temple 4–15;
question of whether Jains are Hindus 23–28;

and origins of Jainism 35–37, 40, 42, 45, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53, 55–56;
Vaiṣṇava 78, 168–169

Indra 11, 46, 197;
and transfer of Mahāvīra's embryo 38
(See also deities.)
Indrabhūti Gautama 57, 114, 197
(See also *gaṇadharas*.)
Isibhāsiyāiṃ 44, 197

Jagaccandrasūri, Ācārya 190, 196
jāti 48, 195
(See also caste, *varṇa*.)
Jina 9, 17, 21, 36, 38, 76, 78, 111, 114, 118, 123, 130, 146–147, 150, 151, 152, 153, 162–163, 178, 180, 186, 197, 198, 200, 201, 205, 206, 217
(See also *kevalin*.)
jīva 66, 83, 90–93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 107, 124, 126, 131, 142, 154, 182, 194, 197, 216, 218–219;
as God 91, 178;
distint from Hindu concept of Brahman 90–92
(See also *ātman*, *jīvātman*, *paramātman*, soul.)
jīvātman 83
(See also *ātman*, *jīva*, *paramātman*, soul.)
jñāna 90, 131, 166, 167, 193, 196, 210, 215
Jñātṛputra 30, 201
(See also Mahāvīra, Nātaputta.)

kalpa 29, 113, 198, 218
Kalpasūtra 33, 198, 202
(See also Paryuṣana.)
Kānjī Svāmī 22, 79, 191, 198
Kānjī Svāmī Panth 22, 23, 72, 76, 79, 191, 198, 219
(See also Kānjī Svāmī.)
karma xiii, 1, 2, 9, 18, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 50, 59, 84, 85, 89–100, 103, 106, 107, 115, 118–119, 122, 123, 124, 136, 141, 142, 152, 154, 160, 176, 177–178, 179, 180, 185, 193, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 208, 213, 216–217, 218;
and *ahiṃsā* 98–100;
Kundakunda on 126–129;
karma-yogī, Gandhi as 166
(See also *pāpa*, *puṇya*.)
Karnataka 3, 19, 60, 112, 113, 194–195, 198
Kavi Panth 22, 23, 72, 76, 78, 190, 198
(See also Mahetā, Rājacandra.)
kāyotsarga 97, 198
(See also meditation.)
keśa locana xxi, 198
kevalajñāna 42–43, 57, 94, 130, 154, 195, 197, 198, 200, 201, 213, 220
(See also *kevalin*, omniscience.)
kevalin 43, 122–123, 141, 151, 198, 213
(See also Jina, *kevalajñāna*.)
Kṣatriyas 46, 47, 48, 49, 198, 213, 217;
rivalry with Brahmins 36–38
Kundakunda 65–66, 69, 189, 190, 198, 200, 201, 204–205, 206, 215, 216, 218–219, 220;
and modern Jain movements 75–79;
'two truths' theory of 125–131, 138, 144

Lakṣmī 6, 15, 162, 199, 210
(See also goddesses, Saraswatī.)

laypersons xxii, 3, 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 58–59, 61, 72–73, 77, 78, 79, 81, 83, 95, 96, 98, 99, 110, 111, 173, 193–194, 195, 196, 200, 201, 204, 206, 209, 114;
moral rules for 101–109;
relations with ascetics 111–113, 175–176
(See also *śrāvakas*.)
liberation (See *mokṣa*.)
loka 89, 120, 199;
loka puruṣa 179–181;
Brahmāloka 179;
Siddhaloka 179
(See also cosmology, cosmos.)
Loṅka Śāh 20, 21, 73, 190
(See also *mūrtipūjā*, Sthānakavāsīs, Terāpanthīs (Śvetāmbara).)

Magadha 60, 61, 68, 199
(See also Greater Magadha.)
Mahāprajñā, Ācārya 21, 96, 147, 153, 202, 211, 221, 222
(See Terāpanthīs,Śvetāmbara.)
Maharashtra 8, 19, 61, 199
Mahāvīra x, 2, 17, 19, 20, 21, 28, 29–30, 59, 60, 62, 63, 68, 73, 75, 80, 100, 102, 105, 106, 107, 110–111, 114, 118, 141, 147, 151, 162, 179, 180, 181, 189, 199, 201, 202, 205, 212, 213, 218;
revered at HARI temple 6–14;
and origins of Jainism 29–56;
sources of knowledge about 30–33;
parallels with life of Buddha 33–42;
differences in Śvetāmbara and Digambara beliefs about 42–43;
and Makkhali Gosāla 43–44;
disciples of 57–58;
and Jain philosophy of relativity 120–123;
as God 178
(See also Jina, Jñātṛputra,*kevalin*, Nātaputta, *tīrthaṅkara*, Vardhamāna.)
Mahāvīra Jayantī celebrated at HARI temple 6–14
Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa Divas 26, 42
mahāvrata 102, 106, 107, 108, 194
(See also *anuvrata*, asceticism, ascetic practice, ascetics.)
Mahetā, Raychandbhai (See Mahetā, Rājacandra.)
Mahetā, Rājacandra xvii, 22, 78 79, 169–170, 190, 196, 198, 199, 207
(See also Kavi Panth.)
Makkhali Gosāla 43–44, 199, 201, 217
(See also Ājīvikas.)
Mallinātha 18, 19, 199–200
Malliṣeṇa 138, 162, 187, 200, 222
marital fidelity 101, 109, 195
Mathurā 52, 61, 64, 189, 200
māyāvāda 92, 124, 200
(See also Advaita Vedānta.)
meditation xviii
(See also *kayotsarga*, *prekṣā-dhyāna*, *sāmāyika*, *yoga*.)
Meru 11, 200
modernity 14, 74–81, 159
mokṣa xvi, 2, 3, 17, 18, 19, 29, 77, 89, 92, 94, 96, 99, 114, 135, 179, 197, 198, 200, 201, 203, 204, 205, 206, 209;
path to 11, 29, 68–69, 93, 98, 110, 131, 152, 154, 196, 197,205, 210, 223
(See also *nirvāṇa*.)
muhpattī xx, 16, 21, 100, 200

mūrti 5–6, 10, 21, 61, 111, 114, 115, 194, 200, 210, 217
mūrtipūjā 20, 21, 22, 191, 200, 204, 205
Mūrtipūjakas 20, 23, 72, 79, 111, 114, 115, 190, 200
(See also Śvetāmbaras.)

Nātaputta 30, 201
(See also Jñātṛputra, Mahāvīra.)
nayas 117, 124, 142–145, 147, 149, 151, 157, 160, 201;
Umāsvāti's list of seven 125;
Kundakunda's two 125–131, 138, 144;
Siddhasena's categorization of 132–134;
saptabhaṅgi (sevenfold) 203
(See also *niścayanaya*, *vyavahāranaya*.)
nayavāda 117, 141, 142–145, 146, 150, 162–164, 201;
story of the Blind Men and the Elephant as illustration of 117–118
Neminātha 42, 162, 190, 201
(See also *Bhagavad Gītā*, *tīrthaṅkaras*.)
neo-orthodoxy 14–15, 77–78
(See also heterodoxy, orthodoxy.)
Nigaṇṭhas 30, 39, 40, 201
nigoda 100, 201
nirvāṇa x, 2, 19, 26, 34, 41, 42, 90, 92, 93, 98, 135, 162, 199, 201, 212
(See also Mahāvīra Nirvāṇa Divas, *kevalajñāna*, *mokṣa*.)
niścayanaya 125–128, 130, 201
(See also Kundakunda, *nayas*.)
niyati 43, 201
(See also Ājīvikas, Makkhali Gosāla.)

nonviolence xvi, xvii, xx, xxiv, 1, 3, 4, 16, 30, 33, 36, 50, 79, 97, 101–107, 115, 166, 173, 175, 176, 181, 182, 187, 193, 194, 199, 200, 202, 203, 206
(See also *ahiṃsā*.)
non-attachment xvi, 17, 22, 72, 101, 102, 109, 115, 194, 196, 204
nudity, ascetic 17–19, 61–63, 65, 72–73, 194, 196, 199–200, 204, 206
(See also Digambaras, Yāpanīyas.)

omniscience 43, 57, 76, 91, 93, 118, 121, 122–123, 126–127, 128, 130, 135, 141, 146–147, 179, 180, 198, 212, 213, 218, 220
(See also *kevalajñāna*.)
Orissa 60, 189
orthodoxy 14–15, 104;
Brahmanical, Vedic 36, 52, 88
(See also heterodoxy, neo-orthodoxy.)

pāpa 84
(See also *karma*.)
paramātman 76, 91, 178, 194, 196, 201, 218
(See also *ātman*, *jīva*, *jīvātman*, soul.)
Pārśvanātha 30, 32, 39, 41, 62, 63, 90, 102, 114, 189, 202, 212
Paryuṣana 202
(See also *Kalpasūtra*.)
Prakrit x, 30, 34–36, 65, 114, 132, 194, 202, 203
(See also *āgamas*, Ardha-Māgadhī,Sanskrit.)
prekṣā-dhyāna 22, 79, 96, 97, 202, 205

puṇya 59, 84, 98–99
(See also *karma*.)
pūjā (See *mūrtipūjā*.)

Rajasthan 17, 19, 60, 111, 202, 214
rebirth 1, 2, 3, 17, 18, 25, 29, 30, 31, 33, 40, 46, 50, 83, 84, 85, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 96, 98, 99–100, 122, 136, 154, 179, 198, 200, 202, 203, 208, 212
(See also reincarnation, *saṃsāra*.)
reincarnation 1, 202, 208
(See also rebirth, *saṃsāra*.)
renunciation xviii, 3, 36, 38, 39–41, 46, 85, 98, 99, 112, 147, 182–183, 186, 194, 203
(See also *sannyāsa*, *śramaṇa*.)
Ṛṣabha 54, 114, 189, 190, 193, 195, 202

sādhu 16, 174–175, 202
sādhvī 16, 174–175, 187, 202
sallekhanā xx, 98, 110–111, 202–203
(See also fasting, *santhāra*.)
saman 13, 22, 79, 203, 205
samaṇī 13, 79, 203, 205
Samantabhadra 21, 67, 130–131, 203, 211, 219, 220, 221, 229;
death by *sallekhanā* 110, 111;
and Jain philosophy of relativity 133–134, 146–152, 160
(See also *Āptamīmāṃsā*.)
sāmāyika 95, 97
saṃsāra 29, 43, 46, 85, 92, 94, 98, 99–100, 122, 126, 135, 154, 178, 200, 203, 205, 219
(See also rebirth, reincarnation.)
saṅgha 37, 203
sannyāsa 39–41, 202
Sanskrit ix–x, 1, 6, 30, 34–36, 46, 65, 87–88, 90, 109, 117, 123, 132, 146, 147, 194, 195, 201, 202, 203, 204, 208, 215, 218, 221;
sanskritization 47
santhārā xx, 98, 110–111, 203–203
(See also fasting, *sallekhanā*.)
saptabhaṅgi-naya 203
(See also *syādvāda*.)
Saraswatī 15, 162, 203, 214
(See also goddesses, Lakṣmī.)
Ṣaṭkhaṇḍ-āgama 63, 123, 190, 203
Siddhasena Divākara 67, 130, 132–134, 147, 149, 190, 203, 221
(See also *nayavāda*, *syādvāda*.)
soul xiii, xxi, xxii, 17, 32, 53–54, 66, 76, 78, 79, 83–84, 85, 91–100, 107, 108, 110, 121, 124, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 132, 135, 136, 141, 142, 154, 178–179, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 200, 201, 202, 204, 206, 216, 218–219;
oversoul, none in Jainism 91, 178–179, 201, 218–219;
both eternal and non-eternal 118–119, 122
(See also *ātman*, *jīva*, *jīvātman*, *paramātman*.)
śramaṇa 32, 33–34, 39, 43, 85, 88, 89–90, 159, 193, 195, 197, 199, 204, 205, 217;
as spiritual warrior 36–38;
origins of movement 45–56
(See also asceticism, ascetic practice, ascetics, Greater Magadha, renunciation, *sannyāsa*.)
śrāvakas 204
(See also laypersons.)

śrāvakācāras 204
Śravaṇa Beḷgoḷa 3, 10, 60, 62, 113, 190, 194–195, 223
(See also Bāhubali, Bhadrabāhu, Candragupta, Digambaras, Karnataka.)
Śrūtaprajñā, Saman viii, 42, 102–103, 217, 222;
lecture by at HARI Temple 11–13
Sthānakavāsīs 16, 20–21, 22, 23, 72, 73, 78, 79, 80, 111, 190, 198, 200, 204
(See also Loṅka Śāh.)
sukha 90, 193, 197, 204
Sūtrakṛtāṅga 33, 160, 189, 204
Śvetāmbaras 22, 23, 32, 34, 38, 39, 42, 43, 46, 57, 60, 61, 64, 65, 67, 69, 70, 71, 73, 79, 80, 96, 109–110, 111, 114–115, 120, 129, 132, 134–135, 162, 194, 195, 196, 197, 199, 200, 202, 204, 205, 206, 207, 211, 214, 217;
schism with Digambaras 60, 62–63, 187, 189, 190
(See also Mūrtipūjakas, Terāpanthīs (Śvetāmbara), Sthānakavāsīs.)
syādvāda 117, 130, 134, 141, 145–150, 151–152, 154, 157, 163–164, 200, 201, 203, 204, 221;
theory of origins in monastic rules regarding proper speech 159–161;
of Gandhi 165

tantra 69–70, 196–197, 204
Tapā Gaccha 73, 190, 196
(See also Jagaccandrasūri, Ācārya.)
Tāraṇ Svāmī 22, 77–78, 190, 204–205
(See also Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth.)
Tāraṇ Svāmī Panth 22, 23, 72, 76, 77–78, 190, 204–205, 216
(See also Digambaras, Tāraṇ Svāmī.)
Tattvārthasūtra 65–66, 119, 123–125, 141–142, 144, 163, 185, 189, 196, 201, 205, 210, 215, 217, 218, 219, 220
(See also Umāsvāti.)
Terāpanthīs (Digambara) 22, 23, 72, 73, 78, 190, 195, 205
Terāpanthīs (Śvetāmbara) 13, 16, 20–22, 23, 73, 79, 96, 111, 190, 194, 200, 202, 205, 211
(See also Mahāprajñā, Ācārya and Tulsi, Ācārya.)
tīrthaṅkaras 6, 7, 18, 20, 29, 30, 32, 33, 38, 39, 41, 42, 53, 54, 61, 63, 69, 76, 77, 112, 114, 123, 132, 162, 189, 193, 195, 197–198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 205, 223
Triśalā 11, 19 (See Mahāvīra, Mahāvīra Jayantī.)
Tulsi, Ācārya 79

Umāsvāti 65, 66–67, 123–125, 125–126, 129, 131, 132, 163, 189, 196, 201, 205, 210, 215, 218
Upaniṣads 36–37, 39, 45–46, 49, 75, 85, 88, 89, 90, 168, 195, 205, 213, 214

Vardhamāna 30, 205
(See also Mahāvīra.)
varṇa 46, 48, 88, 195
(See also caste, *jāti*.)

Vedānta xvi, xxii, 5, 66, 75, 85, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 127, 128, 130, 134, 142, 155, 156, 164, 167, 168, 178, 184, 195, 205, 209, 210, 217, 218, 219
(See also Advaita Vedānta Brahman, *māyāvāda*, *Upaniṣads*.)
Veda(s) 9, 34, 35, 46, 49–52, 54, 75, 86, 88–89, 168, 199, 205, 213
(See also Brahmins, Sanskrit.)
Vedic culture, texts, traditions x, 7, 9, 26–27, 31, 34, 36–37, 39, 42, 45–53, 54–56, 86, 88–90, 111, 145, 179, 197, 198, 205, 216, 223
(See also Brahmins, *Upaniṣads*, Vedānta,Veda(s).)
violence xviii, 21, 61, 68, 97, 98, 99, 108, 184, 197;
and Jain philosophy of relativity 151–152; 153–165, 170–171
vīrya 193, 197, 205
vrata 206
(See also *anuvrata*, *mahāvrata*.)
vyavahāranaya 125–131, 144, 206, 219, 220
(See also Kundakunda, *nayas*.)

Yāpanīyas 19, 61, 67, 72, 132, 189, 204, 206
Yaśovijaya 67, 68, 73, 129, 138, 190, 195, 206
yoga 11–12, 53, 88, 89–90, 166, 194, 216;
anuyogas 64;
aśuddhopayoga 127;
Haribhadra and the plurality of 134–138
(See also *prekṣā-dhyāna*.)
Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya 185–186;
critique of *tantra* in 69–70;
pluralism of 134–138, 162