

Siddheshwar Rameshwar Bhatt

Jainism for a New World Order

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*Dedicated to His Holiness Pujoyashri Karshni
Swami*

(Dr.) Gurusharananandji Maharaj

*Who is an embodiment of wisdom, affection
and love*

Foreword

Human race is going through unprecedented manifold and multidimensional crises on almost every front of life. During last few centuries, scientific investigations and technological innovations have remained the dominant driving force behind every human endeavour. These two, together with purely economic model of development, seemed to make human life more comfortable, smoother, prosperous, healthier and happier. Man tried to emerge as the 'Master' of 'Nature', and the whole universe became sheer instrument for satisfying his boundless unending desires.

Gradually, the deeper implications and after effects of this model of growth started manifesting themselves in every sphere of human life. Environmental imbalance caused by unmindful excessive exploitation of natural resources resulted in dreadful natural calamities threatening the very survival of life on earth. Egocentric individualism, non-teleological gross materialism and consumption-oriented world view have led to collapse of major value structures in moral realm. Social institutions are disintegrating, and most of the political and economic organizations have lost their significance or have become defunct. In attempting to satiate unlimited desires from limited natural resources, each individual, community and nation have become competitor and enemy of every other and there is complete erosion of universal values of love, care, share, help compassion, mutual community binding, support, fellowship and harmony. Mad race for accumulating the weapons of mass destruction has brought human race at the verge of extinction. Physical and mental stress has engulfed the very spirit of humanity, weakening its enormous inner strength.

The question is what is the way out of this alarming situation? How do we deal with this scary scenario? Mere science and technology cannot resolve the problems largely caused by their own exclusive and excessive misuse. Perhaps, we need to go back to our ancient time-tested wisdom which always maintained beautiful balance between material and spiritual, physical and mental, individual and community, particular and universal, part and whole, relative and absolute, and empirical and transcendental. Our contemporary problems, conflicts and strives may find their solution in the profound thoughts of our ancient sages, seers and seekers of truth. We need to dive a little deeper in the vast ocean of Indian philosophical and cultural

tradition so that we may come up with practical and concrete solutions to the major issues bothering human civilizations at this juncture.

This is precisely what Prof. S. R. Bhatt has done in the present book *Jainism and New World Order*. He has addressed the most crucial contemporary issues from the perspective of Jain philosophical tradition and has tried to show how its holistic vision and an innovative understanding of its foundational principles can provide effective, efficacious and pragmatic solutions to our present-day ailments. He has creatively re-examined the basic tenets of Jainism and with his in-depth analysis has demonstrated how an honest genuine adherence to these can create a happy symbiosis of material prosperity and spiritual enhancement.

Professor S. R. Bhatt is one of the most learned distinguished scholars of Indian philosophical, cultural and religious tradition. His vast knowledge and deep understanding of all the philosophical systems of India is reflected in the large number of books and research papers authorized by him. His comprehensive vision and holistic approach for resolving problematic issues is exhibited in this book also, where along with presenting Jain perspective, he has enriched the analysis by providing Vedic–Upanishadic, Buddhistic, Advaita Vedantic and Gandhian perspectives.

Chapter 1 of the book presents an insightful exposition of the key concepts of Jain metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. A brief but precise account of Jain theory of Reality (*utpāda vyāya dhrovyā yuktam sat—guṇa paryāya vad dravyam*), *Anekāntvāda* (*anant dharmātkam vastu*), *Śyādvāda* (the theory of relativity of human perception and expression) and five cardinal virtues—*ahiṃsā, satya, asteya, aparigraha and brahmacarya*—prepares a perfect background for analysing multidimensional contemporary problems. Here, the author rightly emphasizes the practical orientation of Jain philosophy by referring to the first sutra of Tattvārtha-Sūtra (the most accepted foundational Jain text) *Samyagdarśanjñānacāritranimokṣamargah*, according to which liberation from all sufferings is possible only when right belief and right knowledge are translated into right conduct.

Chapter 2 deals with the most glaring problem of our times—environmental imbalance. The author believes that the root cause of all environmental pollution is human misuse of freedom and lack of the sense of responsibility. This pollution is primarily caused by the mental and intellectual human perversions, which get reflected on the external physical level.

The anthropocentric world view that man is the centre of the cosmos and hence is the master of everything (animate or inanimate) has made us painfully self-centred, insensitive and devoid of any feeling of responsibility, fellowship, concern, love, care and compassion. Undoubtedly, human being is the highest emergent in the cosmic process so far and as rational agent is capable of controlling and making changes in the external environment with the help of science and technology. But the human identity, the author says, cannot be defined in isolation of other beings and elements of the cosmos. The famous Jain dictum *paraspaograham jivanam* highlights this organismic, interdependent, interconnected, multilayered nature of human existence.

Unlike utilitarian, materialist and mechanical ecology propagated by West, Jainism advocates ‘deep ecology’, which is essentially spiritual, teleological, holistic and integral in character. Since environmental degradation even at physical level is

caused by deluded egocentric individualistic mindset, to cure this ill the remedial measures must also be sought in the transformation of this mindset. To accomplish this, the author suggests some important steps from Jain perspective. Nature must be approached with a sense of respect and gratitude, and besides its instrumental worth, its intrinsic value must be realized. *Ahiṃsā*, the highest cardinal virtue of Jain ethics, is based on its metaphysical principle of equality of all living beings. According to Jain texts, not only humans but all animals (non-human creatures), plants and even earth, water, fire and air are also living beings and have soul. Every soul is potentially capable of attaining the highest knowledge (*kevala jñāna*) and ultimate liberation (*mokṣa*) by gradual removal of ignorance (*avidyā*). Due to strong belief in the universal equality of all living beings, Jain ethics not only defines *ahiṃsā* as non-killing or non-harming other living beings but also prescribes for giving due opportunities to them for self-preservation and self-development. Love, compassion, kindness, the feeling of fellowship and friendliness naturally become primary virtues in such a value framework. *aparigraha*—minimizing of possessions, desires, wants and consumptions—is another important Jain doctrine which can immensely help in improving external as well as internal mental environment.

The principles of *ahiṃsā* and *aparigraha* joined with the doctrines of (*asteya*) non-stealing and *anekanta* can bring a radical paradigm shift in our economic planning and execution, and the author believes it will lead us to the era of relative, regenerative and compassionate economics. According to him, there is an urgent need to transform our existing value structure and Jain principles can play pivotal role in this restructuring. Education systems based on Jain values and code of conduct can create a genuine environmental consciousness and help in regaining environmental balance.

Ahiṃsā is considered to be the supreme virtue in Indian cultural and religious ethos. Jainism believes it to be the foundation of all other virtues and the highest duty of human beings (*Ahiṃsāparmodharmah*). The importance of *ahiṃsā* in building a new world order cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, the learned author has devoted Chap. 3 of the book exclusively for the analysis of its various aspects and practical implications of its application.

In its grammatical formulation, *ahiṃsā* appears to be a negative term, but it has deep positive connotation and the author has rightly highlighted it in the context of Jain code of conduct (*ācāra śāstra*). Refraining from killing, harming, torturing, enslaving, exploiting, oppressing, insulting or abusing any living being is only one aspect of *ahiṃsā*. Love, compassion, care, cooperation, coexistence, peace, friendship and harmony are also integral part of its constitution. And therefore, practice of *ahiṃsā* is not limited to certain don'ts (*niṣedha*). It also involves active engagement in certain positive actions. Not killing or not harming any existent is necessary but not sufficient condition for being *ahiṃsaka*. For that, one has to engage in selfless service to others and make efforts to improve living conditions and quality of life of every creature on earth. To this comprehensive conception of *ahiṃsā*, Jainism adds another important dimension. It maintains that *hiṃsā* in any form, even from mind, body or speech, is not acceptable. Thus, not only physical,

but also mental and verbal *hiṃsā* is prohibited. Strict adherence to these rules makes Jainism the most rigorous advocate of non-violence.

But this conception of non-violence supports neither withdrawal from positive action nor any kind of cowardice. In consistency with its practical approach, Jain scriptures mention four types of *hiṃsā*: (1) *ārambhi*—the minimum unavoidable *hiṃsā* involved in performing daily routine works; (2) *udyogi*—*hiṃsā* necessary for certain occupations and professions such as agriculture and mining; (3) *virodhajā*—*hiṃsā* used in self-defence against violent attacks by enemies or cruel creatures; and (4) *sankalpika*—intentional and deliberate *hiṃsā* which is unnecessary and is avoidable. The first three kinds of *hiṃsā* are permitted with the condition that it must be minimum, unavoidable and justified. But the fourth kind of *hiṃsā* is completely prohibited.

Ahiṃsā as an intrinsic value, and a sublime ideal is integrally related to all other fundamental principles of Jainism. The author explains its intimate relationship with *anekāntavāda*, the law of karma, truth, *aparigraha*, equality, happiness, peace, friendship, forgiveness, vegetarianism, physical and mental health and ecology. As a guiding principle of economy, it ensures non-violent, non-exploitative process of production, distribution and consumption and thus paves way for sustainable development.

Like *ahiṃsā*, *aparigraha* (the principle of non-possessiveness) is another fundamental dictum of Jainism. It is one of the five mandatory vows (*pañca mahāvratā*). Jain saints like Acharya Mahapragya place it even higher than *ahiṃsā* because possessiveness invariably causes violence. In his view, the ideal of a non-violent society can be actualized only by strictly following the principle of non-possessiveness.

Umaswati in *Tattvārtha-sūtra* (7.12) defines *parigraha* as *murcchā*, the tendency to cling to objects (animate or inanimate) in order to satisfy unlimited, insatiable desires. *Aparigraha* is practice of abstaining from all kinds of possessions, both internal and external. It implies minimizing of desires, wants, needs, accumulation of goods and put control on greed and attachment. According to Jain thinkers, unrestrained possessiveness necessarily leads to economic disparity, deprivation, exploitation, consumerism, wasteful expenditure, violence, hatred, jealousy and different kinds of heinous crimes. In Chap. 4 of the book, various benefits of *aparigraha* are explained. And it is argued that adherence to the principle of non-possession ensures ecological equilibrium, sustainable development, absence of class conflict, global peace and prosperity and, above all, intragenerational and intergenerational justice.

An important implication of principle of *ahiṃsā* (live and let live) is manifested in the form of strong advocacy for strict vegetarianism in Jain (*ācāra-sāstra*) code of conduct. Purity of food is highly emphasized in Jainism, and it is believed that any food produced/obtained by killing or harming any living being not only affects health of human body and mind adversely but is also non-conducive for spiritual progress. Jains are expected to follow strict dietary restrictions, have to avoid even vegetarian food, which is *tāmasic* in character, and are not supposed to consume alcohol and even honey. For health reasons and in order to avoid killing of insects and microorganisms, they have to abstain from eating after sunset and are

encouraged to keep fasting at regular intervals. The learned author in Chap. 5 of the book has given an interesting account of enormous benefits of vegetarianism and has very convincingly shown how it can be used to deal with modern-day problems related to physical, mental and spiritual health.

As stated earlier, value erosion and loss of faith in moral and spiritual order is one of the most troublesome problems of our times. Prevalence of violence, indiscipline, selfishness and crimes are all its resultants. In Chap. 6, the author suggests that the pathway to deal with the situation of value entropy is self-purification and spiritual realization, which can be accomplished only through character-oriented right kind of education. In his view, Jain concept of *samvara* (stoppage of karmic inflow which causes bondage) and *nirjarā* (destruction of accumulated karma) helps in eradication of vices and promoting a virtuous life. This chapter also discusses problem of religious fundamentalism and terrorism, and the author maintains that the Jain concept of *anekānta* (the theory of multiplicity of perspectives and relative truth) can play a significant role in building mutual respect and understanding among followers of different religions. Study of comparative religions must be encouraged, and instead of religious education, education about religions must be promoted.

Relationship between science, religion and spirituality is another intriguing issue of contemporary times. Dealing with it in Chap. 7, the author maintains that these three have distinct areas of operation and there is no antagonism among them. Science deals with empirical, physical/material reality, while religion and spirituality are concerned with higher dimensions of our consciousness. Science and the technology based on it have phenomenally improved the quality of life on earth. But its self-acclaimed value neutrality has also caused tremendous catastrophes endangering the very existence of life on earth. Science advancing under spiritualistic guidance can serve the purpose of both material prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and spiritual enhancement (*nīḥśreyasa*). But for that, religion also has to free itself from sectarianism, fundamentalism, dogmatism and fanaticism. It has to open itself for fresh new ideas and harmonious outlook. There is no unbridgeable cleavage between the two. To take the benefit of both, all we need to do is to spiritualize science and make religion and spirituality scientific. For achieving this goal, the author believes the Jain technique of *prekṣā dhyāna* (developed by Acharya Tulsi and Acharya Mahapragya) can be highly useful because according to them, it is based on synthesis of science and spirituality.

In continuity of the earlier discussion, Chap. 8 addresses the issue of religious harmony and tolerance at greater length. Plurality of religions is an undeniable reality. Possibility of one single universal religion is in fact a far-fetched idea. We have to learn to coexist with multiplicity of religions. Here again, Jain theory of *anekānta* and *syādvāda* can be immensely helpful in cultivating a mindset, which accepts equality of all religions perceiving every religion as one *naya*—an alternative approach to the truth. This results in mutual respect and appreciation and creates environment of harmony, love, peace and tolerance among followers of different religions. This precisely is the essence of Indian secularism.

We are living in an era marked with fiery debates on clash of civilizations and conflicts of cultures. Cultures are carriers of comprehensive world view embodying a specific value structure, which manifests itself in the form of tradition. These days, establishing cultural dominance and destroying or demeaning other cultures is becoming alarmingly prevalent. In its known history of 5000 years, India has successfully preserved cultural pluralism and has encouraged coexistence of different cultures. As in the case of multiplicity of religions, the Jain theory of *anekāntavāda* provides guidelines to deal with this situation also. The idea of coexistence of multiple, sometimes even contrary viewpoints (*naya*) definitely encourages acceptance and respect for plurality of cultures. Chapter 9 of the book presents an elaborate discussion on this phenomenon.

Economy constitutes one of the basic pillars, which shape and deeply influence human life on earth. In the present age of globalization, economic structures are becoming more and more individualistic, materialistic, competitive, consumerist and simply profit seeking. In Chap. 10, the author points to the need of a paradigm shift and presents the idea of spiritual globalization based on Jain principles of *ahiṃsā*, *asteya*, *aparigraha*, *śubha*, *lābha* and *icchā-parimāṇa* (limiting desires). This can pave the way for cooperative, compassionate, non-consumerist, sustainable model of economy which will be able to cure many ills of our present-day financial systems.

Political structure of any society to a large extent determines its sociocultural and economic structure. History has witnessed several forms of political organizations such as monarchy, oligarchy, aristocracy, autocracy, democracy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, socialism, communism and many more. Among all the above, democracy, almost unanimously, is considered to be the best form of governance. With its foundational principle—‘Government of the people, by the people and for the people’, it is supposed to promote people’s participation, rule of law, human dignity and spirit of fellowship. But in its actual functioning, the author believes presently it is suffering with incurable drawbacks, deficiencies and deformities. Hence, there is an urgent need to re-examine its postulates and propose an alternative model of governance, which retains merits of democracy but is free from its weakness. In Chap. 11, the author suggests that this new model can be developed in the light of foundational principles of Indian tradition in general and Jain ethics in particular. Based on the notion of organic harmony, this new form of political organization can be termed as ‘Dharmocracy’ or ‘Dharmatantra’ in which the rule of ‘Dharma’ is given the supreme status.

Chapter 12 is devoted to the analysis of Jain theory of *puruṣārtha*. There is a general acceptance of the scheme of fourfold *puruṣārtha* (the goals of all human endeavours) in Indian culture. These are *dharmā*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*. Remaining well within this scheme, Jainism adds a significant dimension to the notion of *puruṣārtha* by taking the theory of karma to its logical conclusion. It does not believe in the idea of a creator, sustainer, personal God. The universe according to its metaphysics is strictly governed by the law of karma. Man is his own making.

His past, present and future are completely determined by fruits of his own actions. In the absence of possibility of any kind of divine intervention, self-effort is the only way for redemption from sufferings and attaining desirable goals at individual or societal level. This strict adherence to the law of karma makes Jainism truly a religion of self-help, *puruṣārtha*. The author has presented an interesting exposition of its various aspects in this chapter.

Human existence on this earth appears to be beset with ignorance (*mithyātva*) and consequent bondage, miseries, delusions and imperfections. Man seems to suffer from innumerable limitations and finitude. But this Jainism believes is not his true nature. Human soul is abode of infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite power. It has potential to transcend all kinds of limitations—physical, mental, emotional or intellectual. It is even beyond the boundaries of space and time. It is intrinsically pure and perfect. The ultimate goal of human life is to realize this true nature of self.

According to Jainism, souls have three states of existence: (1) conditional and embodied soul called *bahirātmā* or the physical self which identifies itself with physical body and material objects; (2) awakened and indwelling soul called *antarātmā* or the interior self which discriminates itself from the body and sense organs and renouncers all identification with animate or inanimate objects; and (3) pure and supreme soul called *paramātmā*—the transcendental self which is perfect, omniscient, omnipotent and free from all karmic bondages. The summum bonum of human life is attainment of the state of *paramātmā*. It is a journey from the state of exterior self to the state of transcendental self, through the intermediary stage of interior self.

Jain theory of *gunasthāna* lays down the details of the fourteen stages through which human soul can gradually move upward—from imperfection to perfection, from bondage to freedom, from suffering to infinite bliss. In the final chapter of the book, the author has presented a lucid account of this process and has explained how through reflective awareness, self-consciousness, yoga and meditation, the empirical self can get transformed into transcendental self—the terminus of all human endeavours.

I feel privileged and honoured in writing the foreword of the book authored by a visionary scholar like Prof. S. R. Bhatt. Reading this book was a joyful journey. With his holistic approach, the author has analysed various dimensions of human life—personal, social, political, economical, environmental, religious, moral and spiritual as well. Though the main focus of the book is to present the Jain perspective, in-depth knowledge and understanding of the learned author of other systems of Indian philosophical tradition has enormously enriched the discussion. He has addressed the major problems of our contemporary times and has tried to respond by rational and creative reinterpretation of basic foundational principles of Jainism. With his remarkable conceptual clarity and refreshing new insights, this book will contribute significantly in improving knowledge and understanding of traditional wisdom and will inspire further research in this direction. Besides being

useful for serious scholars, this book, I believe, will arouse interest of common readers also towards exploring the deeper dimensions of human existence and will help in creating a new world order free from major ills of our present-day scenario.

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Preface

The objective of this book is both academic and practical. It analyses some glaring global issues with a holistic vision and pragmatic solution from Jain perspective. The maxim ‘Think globally and act locally’ is the guiding principle. So, there has to be two-pronged attempt—theoretical exposition and collaborative practical venture. This work is a blueprint for individual development, social transformation and cosmic well-being on the basis of basic tenets and practices of Jainism. I have presented an innovative understanding of the basic premises, doctrines and tenets of Jainism as per the present-day needs and aspirations. That is why I have given contemporary thinking by way of background. For this purpose, I have also drawn out necessary implications from the Jain literature. It is my belief that Jainism is as relevant today as it was in the past. Its salient message and needful practices have global significance, provided they are properly understood and genuinely practised for cosmic wellness. Dissemination of awareness about them and social services as their practical counterparts are the modalities to be adopted. It is no doubt a herculean task as the arena is very vast and not easily manageable, but the task is needed and important. The aim is to motivate people and to guide them for such activities as they are conducive to universal peace and amity, global prosperity and harmony. Though this is lofty ideal, it can be achieved gradually and persistently in a programmatic action. In all human enterprises, there has to be a happy symbiosis of material prosperity and spiritual enhancement. Then only, there can be universal peace and harmony.

There can be many alternative ways to realize this goal. All may be effective and efficacious, but the Jain approach is more suitable to the contemporary needs and aspirations. The Jain theories of *Anekānta*, and *syādvāda*, clear demarcation between *nīścaya* (trans-worldly) and *vyavahāra* (worldly) and principles of *Mahāvratā* and *Aṇuvratā* need to be propagated and practised at the global level in a systematic and methodical way. The exposal of some glaring issues outlined in this work provides the justification and need for undertaking such activities to go to the root causes rather than attending to outer symptoms. The Jain community has the required wherewithal, will and zeal, and therefore such an enterprise can be undertaken unifiedly without sectarian considerations under its mentorship. This

has been the message of Revered Tīrthankaras, and undertaking this task is real worship, adoration and tribute to them.

There are myriads of problems in the world which demand immediate solutions. There is a spread of violence all around giving rise to conflict situations—individual, familial, communal, international, etc., there is environmental degradation resulting in many types of illness, there are psychosomatic diseases, socio-economic inequalities and misuse of scientific and technological capabilities, and the list is unending. One of the major causes for this is lack of moral and spiritual development because of the absence of proper education. This also requires transvaluation of our value perception. For all these, Jain perspectives on different issues may be helpful.

In order to approach and solve global issues, there is a need of paradigm shift in our value perception and for this purpose the Jain view is highly relevant and efficacious. The objective of this book is to state the Jain view towards right modes of thinking (*samyak jñāna*) and harmonious ways of living (*samyak cāritra*) as efficacious means to solve problems humankind is facing today.

This book is an outcome of my studies in Jainism. In this book, some ideas and statements are repeated for the sake of connectivity and emphasis but this seems to be necessary. For the sake of smooth and non-bothersome reading, I have used textual references to the minimum but have given a list of suggested readings and bibliography.

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In writing this book, I have been inspired by His Holiness Late Acharya Shri Mahapragyaji. Following his Guru Acharya Shri Tulsiji, he pondered over most of the contemporary problems and suggested genuine solutions. I remember him with reverence and gratitude for encouraging me to study Jainism. I am only expanding his ideas. I am thankful to Jain Vishva Bharati Institute for providing me grant on the project 'Engaging Jainism with Modern Issues'. In preparing this book, I have been benefitted from the same. For this, I am grateful to the Vice Chancellor of the university and to Prof. (Dr.) Samani Chaitanya Pragya who gave valuable suggestions and guided me. I express my gratitude to Prof. Kusum Jain, an erudite Jain scholar, Director of Prakrit Academy, Jaipur, for writing Foreword to this book. I am indebted to all the scholars from whose books I have learnt quite a lot. I thank Ms. Vandana Sharma for helping me in going through the manuscript and putting diacritical marks on Sanskrit expressions. I also express my gratitude to Ms. Satvinder Kaur for encouraging me to write and undertaking this publication on behalf of Springer Nature. I dedicate this book to His Holiness Pujoyashri Swami Gurusharananadaji Maharaj, who like Ācārya Haribhadra cherishes equal respect for all religions. He is an embodiment of wisdom and prudence, love and compassion, fellowship and benevolence.

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Table of Diacritical Marks

Key to Transliteration (Using Diacritical Marks)

अ	इ	उ	ऋ
a	i	u	r̥

आ	ई	ऊ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	अं	अःa
ā	ī	ū	e	ai	o	au	am	aḥ

Classified Consonants

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ

च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ

ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ

त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n