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Jaina Ethics and Meditation: Self Purification Process through Karmic Cycle

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Abstract. The main concern in this paper is to explore the relationship between Jaina ethics and meditation techniques proposed in the Jaina scriptures and its foundations. Meditative practices have been practiced in Jaina tradition for centuries. We also find a difference between the interpretation of scriptures (especially *Digambara* and *Svetambara*) regarding meditation, and it also sometimes gets translated into the practice of meditation. In the case of Jaina tradition, it is challenging to separate ethics from the spiritual path of liberation and meditation as a practice. In this paper, based on *Tattvartha Sutra*, *Uttaradhyayana*, and *Acaranga Sutra*, I have tried to show that ethics in its restricted sense can be seen as only one aspect of meditation, but in its broader sense, the whole spiritual path suggested in the Jaina scriptures can be seen as meditation. The fourteen stages suggested in the Jaina scriptures can be considered the stages of ethical path or meditation. We can see *preksha dhyana* — a recent form of meditation that translates these stages into more acceptable to the laymen — a popular and simple form of the spiritual path in modern times. Nevertheless, in the end, the ultimate aim remains the same — self-purification through *the Karmic cycle*.

Keywords: Jaina, meditation, ethics, spiritual development, Digambara, Svetambara, sallekhana, *preksha dhyana*

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1. Introduction: Jaina Tradition, Philosophy, and its Identity

Indian scholars or foreign scholars have not paid sufficient attention to the study of Jainism. One may argue against the often maintained view that Jaina and Buddhist philosophy emerged against the Brahmanical doctrine of caste and other

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social evils. Jainism is an offshoot of Buddhism and Hinduism. Instead, there are good reasons to believe that Jainism is neither an offshoot of Buddhism nor Hinduism, as no historical data can establish this fact. Even before the advent of the Aryans in India, we have reasons to believe that a highly cultivated society existed along the Ganges around Magadh, where Jainism flourished, and they had no allegiance to the Vedic authorities.

According to Jaina tradition, there were twenty-four Tirthankaras, beginning with Lord Rishabha and ending with Mahavira Vardhamana, the last three to be personalities of the historic period. The others are of a prehistoric age, and we need not bother about their history till we know something more than mere tradition. The first Tirthankara Lord Rishabha, who is considered responsible for revealing Ahinsa Dharma for the first time to the world, seems to be a fascinating personality. He was the hero of the Iksavaku family. His father was Nabi Maharaja, the last of the Manus and mother Marudevi. Rishabha's period represents a complete change of world conditions. Before this, the country was called Boga Bhumi, where the people were satisfied with all their wants by the mere wish through the help of the traditional Kalpakavriksha. During the time of Lord Rishabha, these happy conditions wholly disappeared, and the people did not know what to do to have a good way of life. Then they all went to Lord Rishabha, praying for help. Furthermore, he had shown them a good way of life. He taught them how to obtain food by tilling the soil, agriculture, etc., and supplying the needy in the absence of Kalpakavrikshas. He also assigned duty to some to defend, thereby giving rise to the first social organization. Lord Rishabha divided the society according to its functions into three groups: agriculture, traders, and soldiers. Later his son Lord Bharata took charge, and Lord Rishabha went into the forests to perform tapas. After attaining Kevalajnana, he travelled widely to preach Ahimsa Dharma to the people to have spiritual relief. Lord Rishabha is known as *Adijina* and *Adi Bhagavan*.

In Jaina philosophy, great sanctity is attached to all life. The soul is taken as a conscious substance. The word 'Jaina' means a conqueror who has obtained perfect knowledge and absolute freedom from the bondage of the cycle of *karma*. It primarily refers to *Tirthankara*, who has built a passage through the ocean of births, meaning the teachers of this religion. Sometimes *Tirthankara* is also understood to mean the founder of the four *tirthas* or the orders of the monks, the nuns. There were 24 *Tirthankaras*, of which Rshabha or Adinath was the first, who had conquered their passion and sought liberation. Historically, only the existence of Mahavira is traceable, and that of Parsvanatha may be inferred. The essential teachings were canonized only in the 3rd century B.C. and were written several centuries later. Mainly Bihar was the centre of Mahavira's followers, and after the famine in the region, a large group of monks left Bihar and migrated to Karnataka. A group, however, stayed back in Magadh. The one who migrated stuck to the strict regulations became known as '*Digambara*,' the sky-robed, and the latter who stayed back and changed their ways due to famine became known as '*svetambara*,'

white-robed. The 'svetambara' are further divided into two sub-sects: *deravasi* worshipping the idol in the temple and *sthanakvasi* worshipping their teachers in a monastery. The *Digambaras* were divided into *terapanthi* and *bisapanthi*, depending on their difference in ritual observance. Jainism found patronage of early rulers like Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Kharvela of Kalinga. In order to avoid injury to living organisms, agriculture, animal husbandry, etc., are prohibited in Jainism. Occupations involving less mobility, such as those of merchants, are more suitable. Due to this reason, they controlled large business houses related to textiles, grains, machinery, and capital investment. Jainas owned textile, chemical, newspaper, precious metals, jewellery, and banking.

Digambaras and Svetambaras

There are two distinct and virtually irreconcilable monastic traditions (over 2300 years) within Jainism; *Digambaras* (Sky-clad) and the *Svetambaras* (White-or Cotton-clad), and this distinction applies to their lay followers as well. The split may have originated about 300 BCE, during the famous Acarya Bhadrabahu, the last patriarch of the united ascetic Jaina community. The *Svetambaras* believe that while Bhadrabahu was away in Nepal for a long time engaged in yogic activities, *Digambaras* believe that due to a disastrous famine, he migrated with a large group of disciples to the Karnataka State, where they stayed about 12 years. The *Digambaras* maintain that Bhadrabahu passed away before any return was possible. However, when his followers returned, they found that a recession of the sacred text was prepared in their absence which was unacceptable to the returned monks. So they declared this recent version of the canon invalid. Thus a new lineage started leading to the divide. The *Digambaras* wrote their canonical texts and *Puranas* giving a detailed account of Jina's lives, including Mahavira, which is considerably different from texts of the *Svetambaras*.

The controversy between the two sects surrounds three issues:

1. The nature of an omniscient being: For *Digambaras*, any being who has obtained omniscience engages in no worldly activities and performs no bodily functions (eating, for example) since these are considered antithetical to omniscience. According to *Svetambaras*, a person who has become omniscient continues to engage in bodily functions until he or she passes from this world forever.
2. The role of nudity in the holy life: *Digambaras*, as their name implies, stress the practice of nudity as an absolute prerequisite to the ascetic's path—the only mode of conduct through which one can become truly free of shame and sexuality and thus hope to attain eternal liberation. The *Svetambaras*, due to retaining their clothing, fall short of the fifth ascetic Vow of non-possession (*aparigraha*). *Svetambaras* disapprove of the attachment to clothing but do not accept that clothing is an obstacle to liberation (*moksa*). Ascetic nudity is optional, and this practice was prevalent at the time of Mahavira and became invalid soon after his death.

3. The position of women. Digambaras believe that a woman lacks the adamantine body necessary to attain liberation. Therefore she must be born again as a man before such attainment is possible. Svetambaras reject this view, maintaining that a woman can be born with such a body and thus is capable of the same spiritual accomplishments as a man. They further claim that the nineteenth Tirthankara, Malli, was a woman. Nonetheless, neither of the Jaina traditions allows its nuns to go “sky-clad” [1].

Jainas realize that strict moral discipline is necessary for the purity of life. They do not isolate metaphysics from the nature of the self; behaviour cannot be isolated from our metaphysical beliefs. Truth and value are inseparable; without knowing the truth, values cannot be realized, which is the ultimate aim of philosophy. Therefore, metaphysics and ethics are interrelated. Samantabhadra goes to the extent of saying without knowing the fundamental nature of things, which is permanency in transitorizes all moral distinctions between bondage and liberation, *papa* and *punya*, heaven and hell, pleasure and pain will be blurred [2. P. 12]. *Nayavada* represents the most consistent and logical form of realism in Indian metaphysics. *syadvada* constitutes a comprehensive scheme of complementary methods designed to help the mind grasp the nature of reality in its unity and diversity. All evil traits of character arising through the activities of speech, mind, or body have to be eradicated, and then only the final emancipation can be achieved.

Every object known to us has innumerable characteristics besides having positive and negative implications for what it is and what it is not. The set of what it is not will always be greater than what it is, which also changes with time. Whatever it is, it is due to its essential qualities (*gunas*). There could also be accidental qualities. Consciousness is the substantial quality of the soul, but pleasure, pain, desire are accidental (modes or *pariyayas*) to soul substance. Change and permanence both are real. Reality consists of three factors: permanence, origination, and decay. Souls have varying degrees and kinds of knowledge. There could be perfect souls who have attained omniscience, or there could be of lower or of lowest imperfect souls, which inhabit bodies in the earth, water, air, or vegetables. Two to Five senses are midway between lowest and highest, like worms, ants, and men. The soul is eternal, but it undergoes a change of state. Based on one's past actions, a *jiva* enters into a body; *jiva* is not infinite. It is not present everywhere but only in the body. Jaina rejects the existence of God as the creator of the world, but the notion of worship is quite well accepted in the system. One should worship the liberated or perfect souls; they are God-like and can be prayed or can offer guidance and provide inspiration. Past misdeeds can only be countered by generating strong opposite forces like a good thought, good speech, and good action within the soul. Therefore everyone must work for his salvation through the self-purification process.

Attainment of right conduct is a gradual process; the aspirant may not achieve the highest ideals at the first stage. He, therefore, can observe only partial self-control as a householder, whereas at the stage of monkhood, he becomes capable

of observing the rules of conduct more comprehensively. So we have two sets of rules of conduct, one for householders and the other for the monk. The role of our intellect, effort, moral teachings as helpers (teachers) is only meaningful if freedom of will is accepted. It makes no sense to tell a person what he should do or should not do if he has no choice. The theory of omniscience and *karma* presuppose a kind of determinism, but they do not come in the way of our efforts to make ourselves moral. Kundakunda says that all of us have twofold consciousness- knowledge consciousness (*jnanacetana*) and action consciousness (*karmacetana*) [2. P. 33]. Knowledge consciousness means the state of absolute freedom from the sense of being an agent of an action. The soul remains in its pure intrinsic, blissful, conscious state. It has no desire to initiate an action—a state of supra moral, beyond good or bad — the state of complete freedom. However, from the practical point of view, action consciousness dominates. He has a passion for choosing between good and evil. Here the role of human effort (*purusarthas*) comes in. The two consciousness exclude each other and cannot exist side by side. The path to the supra-ethical plane of life is only through the practical path of morality and not through immorality. The ultimate aim is the complete cessation of all activities and attainment of knowledge consciousness. But only his effort and exertion bring him nearer to his goal. The self, within the self, satisfied with self is the motto of all individualistic systems of philosophy — a kind of inwardness. In general, traditionally, Indian systems accept that extroversion, whether due to our incapability of self-control or for the cause of social service, never leads us nearer to the goal. Instead, it is a withdrawal from the outside world, which takes us nearer to self-realization.

Bondage of the soul is associated with matter, so it must disassociate itself from matter by *stopping* the influx of new matter into the soul and completely eliminating the matter with which the soul is mixed up. These two methods are called *samvara* and *nirjara*. To remove ignorance, one must have the right knowledge. Mere knowledge is useless; it must be practiced, which is called right conduct. By *samvara* and *nirjara* soul is liberated by eliminating matter which ties the soul into bondage. The liberation is the combined effect of the three gems right faith (respect towards truth), right knowledge, and right conduct.

To ascertain correct knowledge, one has to make personal efforts. A practical code of conduct has been provided in this system. Vows compulsory for them were *ahimsa* (abstinence from all injury to life), *Satyam*, an individual to abstain from falsehood, and *brahamcharya*, abstinence from self-indulgence. In total, there are five vows for any Jaina: *Satyam*, *Ahimsa*, *Astayam*, *Brahmacharya*, and *Aparigraha*.

According to *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* [3] the five great vows, non-violence, etc. are *mula gunas*. Compared to them, study, meditation, etc. are *utra gunas*.

Ahimsa is the first and the most important among five rules of conduct set for the householder as well as for the monk. There is only a quantitative difference in these two levels of *anuvrata* and *mahavrata*, not a qualitative one. The basic idea of coordination between the mind and body is held necessary for the practice of

ahimsa for both of them. The principle of *ahimsa* naturally implies purity of thought, word, and deed and results from universal love and sympathy towards all living beings, however low they may be in the scale of evolution. On deeper analysis, it becomes clear that the principle of *ahimsa* is rooted in the doctrine of continuity of consciousness as propounded in Jaina philosophy. If *jivas* are in various stages of evolution towards perfection (getting freed from *ajivas*), no *jiva* at, whatever higher stage it may be, has any right to interfere with spiritual prospects of any other *jiva* at any stage of evolution. The real implication of non-violence is not merely not killing or taking away of life but also any mental or verbal injury to one's vitalities out of negligence. That is why *bhavahimsa* or violence of thought has been discussed so much in Jainism. Thus the Jaina view of non-violence is not limited to killing or injuring living beings only; it is very wide and deep. It pervades all the values of Jainism, and it is the collection of all virtues, which is the highest virtue not only in practical aspects but also in mental and spiritual aspects. It is both an end and a means.

Parigraha is the result of *mohakarma*, which is the main obstacle to self-realization. *Moha* has two sides — attachment and aversion. The first manifests itself as *parigraha* and the latter as *himsa*; therefore, *aparigraha* is as essential as *ahimsa*; it is non-attachment as well as non-possession. *parigraha* includes land, house, coins, gold, maidservants, menservants, jewels, bed, and other luxury items. There are some other vows for householders: they are known as *silavrata*s, which include three *gunavrata*s and four *siksavrata*s like restricting the movements of a householder in order to avoid violence. “The householder is the observer of the small vows” (7.15) [2. P. 128]. It is difficult to observe this small Vow of non-violence as avoiding injury to mobile beings which has two or more senses, so householders should desist from “intended” act of violence. The third Vow of truthfulness is to be taken in a sense to avoid false statements, refrain from taking anything without the owner's consent, the fourth Vow is to desist from sexual activity with anyone other than one's spouse, and the fifth is to voluntarily limit the possession of cattle, corn, and land and so on.

According to Jaina, every judgment must be qualified by a word like maybe (*syad*). The truth lies in its manifoldness, and to make a categorical judgment is to claim that it is only of one kind, which is wrong and being dogmatic according to Jaina theory. Therefore, every judgment only expresses one aspect of reality and is relative to the conditions — different systems of philosophy present partial aspects of reality. Jaina system insists that we always use a qualifier to express our view. For example, if it is raining and if I make a judgment “It is raining”, then I should say, “Maybe it is raining” (*syad*); this meant that the space, time, quality, etc., under which it is raining. This way of making judgments avoids the possibility of misunderstanding that it is raining, all times and everywhere, etc. It emphasizes that the ordinary judgments passed by imperfect minds hold good from particular aspects and circumstances and from that point of view.

2. Important contributions of Jaina Tradition

Firstly, it provides space for differences of opinions and avoids any kind of absolutist stand or conflict. Jainism accepts a kind of relativism but not scepticism. The approach of Jainism towards the opponent is constructive and not destructive. It balances between opposites: practical and transcendental, fate and human efforts, substantial cause, and instrumental cause, absolute and relative, etc. Jainism argues that our knowledge in the material world is limited. One needs to realize that his view does not represent the whole truth about anything, and therefore we must learn to appreciate and respect the other's point of view. Secondly, Jainism does not confuse spirituality (*moksasastra*) with the science of righteousness (*dharmasastra*). The path of righteousness is the cornerstone of the ultimate goal of life-liberation. The essential nature of *dharma* is different from non-essential beliefs, which change with time and place. Social problems and the welfare of society, and the essential problems of ethics, which is emancipation, are interrelated. Thirdly, it lays emphasis on the unity of faith, knowledge, and conduct. Jainism is not merely a system of certain codes of morality but a religion to be lived in practice. Householders and the monks both have to practice the rules of conduct in their lives. It is neither mere speculative philosophy nor a religion of rituals but a comprehensive system of religion and morality as well as of thought and conduct.

Fourthly, it is the life of a monk, which occupies the central place, as the ultimate aim of life is liberation as it is in any system of Indian Philosophy. Thus complete renunciation of the mundane life and ascetic virtues are the virtues of a higher order for Jain *Acaryas*. But even for a householder, a denunciated life within the household setup is possible for his development.

Fifthly, Jainism is based on diversities as well as equality of life. All souls are equal, so man, animal, insects, and plant life all are given equal importance while observing *ahimsa*. Jainism does not accept any kind of distinction based on caste, creed, and colour.

Jainism, although originally was a religious movement, can be regarded as the first example of secularism as it tells us that each view, each point of view has some truth, and we must respect that truth, each religion has one perspective out of many, and we must respect each perspective. Today, in India, unfortunately, in the name of secularism, all the moral and spiritual values are washed away. Secularism does not mean the absence of religion and *dharma*. It was never meant that we should banish all moral and spiritual values from our country or that religious and spiritual values should be outlawed from our educational system. It means equal respect for all religions, not equal neglect of all religions.

3. The Inflow of Karma and the Karmic Cycle

Jainism accepts the dualism between self and non-self; *jiva*, soul and *ajiva*, matter. How the *jiva* joins *ajiva* is a mystery, but it is karmic matter, which is the medium between body and soul. The soul has an inherent quality of attracting these particles towards itself. But the mere flow of this karmic matter is not an obstacle;

it is with the four fundamental passions (*kashaya*) anger, pride, deceitfulness, and greed (*krodh, moha, kama, lobh*) hold the karmic matter in bondage with soul. This inflow of fresh karmic matter is to be checked (*samvara*). This requires constant control against trends of mind, deeds, and words as may lead to such inflow. One needs to shed off karmic matter, which is already accumulated by the soul by meditation. In the end, the soul that was engulfed in the mud of karmic matter after getting rid of it shines in its intrinsic purity of infinite knowledge, intuition, bliss, and potency (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 1.4) [4].

Every human action has two aspects-extrinsic (*dravya*) and intrinsic (*bhava*). The extrinsic merit of an action is assessed by others and depends on its outer social results. Its intrinsic merit depends on the intention or motive of him who acts. It is the purity of intention or motive, not the external results, that makes an action intrinsically good or bad. Kundakunda says:

A person behaving carelessly with his mind full of passion, incurs the sin of causing injury; conversely, one who is free of passion and firm in the observance of mindful (*samiti*) is not bound by sin even if injury results by his conduct [5].

Jaina thinkers all agree on the order of the path of liberation; the priority of Right Insight is generally accepted. Right Conduct and Right Knowledge are impossible in the absence of Right Insight. Kundakunda says: “Those who are devoid of Right Insight will never attain Right Knowledge, even if they practice severe penance for thousands of millions of years” [5].

The *Sutrakrtanga* says that “whether a man is a Brahmin, or a *bhiksu*, (monk) or a knower of many scriptures, he will suffer on account of his actions, if they are not good” (2.1.3) [6]. Just as a chariot on one wheel cannot move, and a blind or a lame man cannot reach his destination by himself, in the same way, knowledge or action alone cannot lead one to liberation. Thus, Jaina path seeks to combine both aspects and to develop a person’s inherent spiritual qualities in every respect so that he or she may attain the ultimate goal. (See: [7]).

The Jaina festivals are not aimed at entertainment; they are for the spiritual development of the self by practicing austerities. *Paryusana* means “a period of worship”, the lay followers observe a fast in the month of *Bhadrapada* (Aug-Sept.) and spend their time in worshiping and other religious discourse. They practice non-violence as far as possible, and they ask forgiveness and friendship with all living beings.

In Jaina spirituality, there is no God or other supernatural forces who leaves the living beings to the mercy of some unknown force. On the contrary, one is oneself the builder of one’s own destiny through his or her good or bad actions. One can attain the level of the supreme through one’s own efforts alone. It is said that the soul itself is God. Instead of looking up for the grace of any power, one must look within to realize the supreme state through self-exertion. Jainism condemns the fire sacrifice with a deeper spiritual significance to them; the rituals prominent in Hinduism are rejected in favour of self-purification and self-restraint and realization of the auto-motivated self.

Umasvati in *Tattvartha Sutra* has classified the truth into seven categories:

1. the existence of souls
2. the existence of non-sentient entities (matter, time-space, media of movement, and of rest)
3. the inflow of karmic particles to the soul
4. the binding of karmic particles to the soul
5. stopping of the karmic inflow
6. the falling away of the karmic particles
7. the liberation from worldly bondage

This is basically within the framework of *Tattvartha Sutra* [4], which recognizes two fundamentals of existence; the beginningless and interdependent co-existence of physical and mental reality, whatever a soul possesses is a result of its interaction with matter. The second underlying principle of truth is the law of causation which drives the universe. By these two fundamentals of existence, Umasvati explains the autonomy and interdependence of the universe.

The interaction between the first and second categories of truth that is between the soul and the material world is through the working of very subtle material particles of karma which Jainas believe fill the universe. These karmic workings are described in the third to sixth categories of truth. The soul has always had a “karmic body” that produces its physical bodies and vicissitudes of its many lives. The karmic body affects and vibrates the soul and the activities of body, speech, and mind. These actions, motivated by passion, draw more karma to the body. In this way, the karmic body is constantly being revamped as old karma falls off like ripened fruit and new karma is attracted. The evil activity attracts harmful karma; good activity attracts beneficial karma. The big question is how to break this cycle of karmic renewal that binds and blinds the soul in worldly suffering. The causes of karmic bondage are four passions — anger, pride, deceit, and greed, which lead to violence in thought, word, and deed. And the antidote for karmic bondage suggested by Umasvati is *Ahimsa* or non-violence — the way to unbind karma and live harmoniously. It is a Vow of vows, the foundation of all other virtues and four vows — to abstain from falsehood, stealing, carnality, and possessiveness. The ultimate criterion for non-violence is self-restraint.

“The threefold action is the cause of the inflow of karma” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 6.2) [4]. In the case of the omniscient soul, the process of partial elimination and partial suppression of karma is overtaken by the complete elimination of all types of destructive karma. Infinite un-channelled knowledge and power are realized. “Good actions cause the inflow of beneficial karma and evil actions cause the inflow of harmful karma” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 6.3 and 6.4) [4]. Good actions can lead to the weakening of karmic binding if they are not undermined by evil actions such as violence and indulgence. The good or evil nature of activity depends on the good or evil intention of the person. “The activities of a person driven by passions cause long-term inflow (bondage) while the activities of a person free of passion cause instantaneous inflow (bondage)” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 6.5) [4]. This causes the

soul's long-term worldly wanderings. "The different "doors" (causes) for the inflow of long term karma are five senses, four passions, five indulgences, and twenty five urges" (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 6.6) [4]. The instrument of long-term karmic inflow is both sentient and non-sentient entities. "The modes of the sentient instrument of inflow are: the three stages of intention, preparation and commission; the three actions of body, speech and mind; the three types of acts, those done by oneself, those in which one convinces others to undertake the act, and those undertaken by others but approved by oneself; and the four passions on anger, pride, deceit and greed". By the formula of permutation, the total number of modes of the sentient instrument of karmic bondage is $3 \times 3 \times 3 \times 4 = 108$ (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 6.9) [4].

"The five causes of bondage are: deluded world view, non-abstinence, laxity, passions and the actions of the body, speech and mind" (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 8.1) [4]. The five types of deluded views are given as: 1. absolutist, 2. perverse, 3. sceptical, 4. egalitarian, and 5. agnostic (who denies the possibility of a distinction between good and bad doctrines).

"Because of its passions, the soul attracts and assimilates the material particles of karmic bondage, the result is bondage" (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 8.2 and 8.3) [4]. "The four sub-types of lifespan karma lead to birth as infernal beings, subhumans, (animals, plants and micro-organisms) humans and gods" (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 8.11) [4]. Life span karma determines both longevity and the realm of birth.

In Jainism soul is eternally longing for liberation and what does the soul obtain by longing for liberation? The answer given in *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* is "By longing for liberation soul obtains intense devotion to the law, destroys passions, viz. Anger, pride, deceit and greed which reproduce themselves infinitely, and binds not new karma. With the destruction of passions, it is able to purify its wrong beliefs, thereby being in possession of the right faith. Purified in faith, some souls attain perfection in that very life, but in no case will they have their perfection deferred beyond third life thereafter" (*Uttaradhyayana Sutra* 1: Ch. 27: 336) [3].

The second important supplementary practice is that of the *sallekhana* — holy death through fasting and meditation. Jainism considers the last moments of a person's life to be of the utmost importance in determining the condition of his or her subsequent incarnation. The point of *sallekhana* is to meet death with all of one's faculties functioning properly, in a state of complete awareness and ability to maintain the vows one has taken. Gradually the abandonment of food — liquid food — water and then total fast is performed when death is imminent due to outside causes such as calamity, famine, infirm old age, or terminal illness. Only then and only by fasting is the death "pure" because the passions are being thinned out (aspirations are warned not to undertake it with ambitions for a better re-birth or other such rewards). Any other method of terminating one's life is considered impure because the passions are thereby increased. It is death for which the aspirant emotionally prepares him or herself over the years and which the family and community support.

4. Inhibiting and Wearing off Karma:

“Stopping the inflow of karma is inhibition” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 9.1) [4]. There are forty-two doors of karma inflow—three instantaneous and thirty-nine long term. Stopping all forty-two doors entirely or partially is inhibition. Complete inhibition is only possible at the spiritual stage immediately before liberation. Progress in spiritual development depends on Progress in inhibition. “Inflow is inhibited by guarding, careful movement, morality, reflection, conquering hardship and enlightened conduct”. Austerities wear off karma as well as inhibiting it. Guarding is enlightened control of the threefold activity of body, speech and mind. Morality is perfect forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, purity (freedom from greed), truthfulness, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation, detachment and continence (residing with the teacher). All ten moral virtues must be practiced meticulously by ascetics. There are 22 hardships which are prescribed for strict observance of the vows to adhere to the spiritual path and weakening of the karmic bondage. These are hunger, thirst, cold, heat, insect bites, nudity, ennui, women, travel, seat, and posture, for practicing austerities, sleeping place, indigestion for reproach, injury caused by others, seeking alms, lack of gain, physical ailment, a touch of thorny grass, dirt, honour and reward, learning, lack of intelligence and loss of faith (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 9.2—9.9) [4].

Only eleven hardships are possible in the victor — a saint of the thirteenth and fourteenth stages of spiritual development. “Renunciation means abandoning the external articles and the internal passions including the body.” The feeling of detachment from the body is an integral part of compulsory daily practice.

5. Meditation: Self Purification Process:

Jaina believe that soul has always been impure through its entanglement with the material world, just as a seam of gold has “always” been embedded in the rock where it is found. Absolute purification is possible if the proper refining method is applied. As can be seen in *Tattvartha Sutra* [4], no other Indian school has invested so much energy in describing the precise mechanism of karmic bondage and release from that bondage as part of the unequivocal physical laws of the universe. Karma is itself actual matter rather than the sort of quasi-physical or psychological elements envisioned by other schools. Every aspect of bondage is analysed, various types of material karmas are identified, and a path for laypersons which is inferior to the path for the monks with high regard is worked out very carefully. Even the discipline suggested in Jainism is far stricter than any other religion. The layperson’s “minor vows” (*anuvratas*) of refraining from evil actions are just a modified, relatively weak version of the real Jaina vows, the “great vows” (*mahavratas*) of the ascetics; they may curb evil behaviour, but they cannot bring a person to liberation. In practice, however, this point has not been stressed. Jaina teachers have been realistic enough to see that most new converts will be emotionally ready only for the layperson’s path. These two stages can be seen as two stages of meditation in Jainism. The first is *samayika*, a practice of great

antiquity, wherein the layperson's religious activities are integrated with yogic methods of the ascetic path — it is the fusion of the true self through increasing detachment from all external objects — a temporary renunciation of all possessions before sitting in meditation for up to one Indian hour (forty-eight minutes). The tranquillity of the mind is at first increased by forgiving and begging forgiveness of the entire world of beings. The mind then is guided to a deep level of meditation on the self by inwardly repeating one of the many recitations for renouncing the passions of mind-body and feeling equanimity towards all during the meditation, with an aspiration that this state will be maintained life after life until eternal liberation is achieved.

This ritual discipline for the laymen as well as for a monk is called meditation in Jaina conceptual scheme.

In Umaswami defines meditation as “The concentration of thought on a single object by a person with good bone-joints is meditation” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 9.27) [4]. The restless mind moves from one object to another. It is immersed in thought. When the restless mind concentrates on a single object, it meditates. This is a kind of restriction placed on the mind to still it. The stilling of the speech organs and the body is also a type of meditation. Perfect stillness of the body and all its organs is the highest state of meditation which is immediately followed by disembodied liberation. Concentrating on a single object entails withdrawing thought from all other objects and fixing it on a particular point. Concentration is a suspension of thought. It is a sort of negation, but not like a hare's horn, which is non-existent; it is negation in the sense that it negates the objects other than the one it is concentrating upon. But it is a solid and concrete affirmation of the object upon which it is fixed. So the negation is also a sort of affirmation. It takes positive note as a logical consequence of its negation. The state of meditation cannot last more than one intra-hour (less than forty-eight minutes), although it can be resumed. It is a positive state, knowledge that shines like a un-flickering flame.

There are four kinds of meditation: mournful, wrathful, analytic, and white (pure). And the last two kinds of meditations, analytic and white, lead to liberation, and the first two nourish the worldly life. Mournful meditation, which is at the lower spiritual stages, is also of four kinds: in an undesired situation, in a painful feeling of ailment, when a person loses possession of an object, and when a person has an intense lust for an object. Investigating the essence of the scriptural commandments, the nature of physical and mental suffering, the effects of karma, the universe, and its content is part of analytic meditation. At the spiritual stage, complete self-restraint is possible. Analytic meditation is possible in people who are at the seventh stage of spiritual development. The object of meditation here could be scriptural commandments, universal suffering, and its conditions, the nature of the fruition of various karmas, and the structure of the universe and its contents. On the eleventh and twelfth stages of spiritual development also, analytic meditation occurs.

The fourth kind of meditation, white meditation, has four varieties: 1. multiple contemplations, 2. unitary contemplation (one who is conversant with the early

scriptures) 3. Subtle infallible physical activity, and 4. The irreversible, motionless state of the soul (the one who is omniscient). Of these, the first two are possible in someone at the eleventh or twelfth stages of spiritual development, at which stages analytic medication is also possible. “Climbing ladder” starts at the eighth stage of spiritual development. The first two kinds of white meditation have one particular substance as their object and are accompanied by contemplation (and movement). The second variety of white meditation is devoid of any movement.

“Abstaining from *arta* and *raudra* meditation,
A monk who has full command of self,
Concentrating on *dharma* and *sukla* types,
One truly performs meditation, say the wise”

(*Uttaradhyayana Sutra*: Ch. XXX: 35) [3].

Contemplation is musing on one object, whereas movement is the oscillation between objects of meditation-substances and modes, symbols, and actions. The mediator penetrates deeper and deeper through these objects until he transcends all of them in self-realization in the fourth variety of white meditation, which is immediately followed by disembodied liberation ending with the “victor”, the highest stage of a soul’s spirituality while still in a body. At each stage, innumerably more karma wears off than at the previous stage.

Omniscience arises when deluding karma is eliminated, and as a result, knowledge-covering, intuition-covering, and obstructive karma are eliminated (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 10.1) [4]. The one who attains this state is described as perfectly pure, enlightened, all-knowing, all-intuiting, victorious, and alone. There is no new bondage because the causes of bondage have been eliminated, and all destructive karmas have worn off (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 10.2) [4].

Now only the four non-destructive *karmas*-sensation, lifespan, body, and status remain to be eliminated.

When these are eliminated, the soul is detached from its body, ending its worldly existence. The soul moves upwards and arrives at the border of cosmic space. This is achieved when the lifespan karma comes to an end as the appointed moment and is followed by liberation, which is free of all karmas. “The elimination of all types of karma is liberation” (*Tattvartha Sutra*: 10.3) [4]. Thus “on the elimination of the non-destructive karmas-the sensation, body status and lifespan karmas-the soul is freed of effect bondage. It has now burnt the karmic fuel accumulated in the past. It is like fire without fuel. It is absolutely tranquil because it is severed from its past worldly life and with no future worldly life because there is no cause to produce this. It is beyond all worldly pleasures and attains the bliss of liberation which is perfect, absolute, incomparable, eternal and unsurpassed by anything else”.

“Equipped with five *samities* and *gupties* three,
Conquered of senses and free from passions,
Free from ego and free from thorn,
The soul becomes free from karma acquisition”

(*Uttaradhyayana Sutra*: Ch. XXX: 3) [3].

Again,
“Just as a tank which is large,
But whose water inlet has been stopped,
Dries up gradually through consumption,
Or evaporates in the rays of the sun.

So it happens even to a monk,
Whose inlet of sinful deed is stopped,
Karma acquired over hundreds of births
Through penance is gradually erased”.

(*Uttaradhyayana Sutra*: Ch. XXX: 5—6) [3].

6. Fourteen Stages of Spiritual Development

***Mithyadristi*: The First Stage:** This is the soul’s original state of “deluded world-view”, unaware of its own bondage. From here, the efforts for spiritual development are made. The soul is in the grip of all passions—anger, pride, deceit, and greed. Those souls which are capable of enlightenment reside here for some limited time and then try to attain Right Insight. The false insights are of five kinds: one-sided view (*ekanta*), the acceptance of a view that runs counter to facts or reality (*viparita*); a veneration of false creeds (*vinaya*); doubt or instability of faith (*samsaya*) and ignorance of the real nature of things (*ajnana*).

***Sasvadana-samyag drsti*: The Second Stage:** The stage of “passing taste” or “ongoing enlightened world-view” the soul has lost the immediate experience of enlightenment but retains an “aftertaste”. This is an intermediate stage when the soul falls from the level of Right Views to that of False View but has not quite fallen. The soul has had a taste of the Right view, but there is hesitation accepting the false ones.

***Samyag-mithyatva*: The Third Stage:** The third stage is the transition on the soul’s way up from the first stage of deluded world-view to that of enlightened world-view. The soul has an innate, beginning less “autonomous capacity” that is always struggling to relieve the soul of its burden. This capacity is the willpower that drives the soul towards liberation. There is a tension or struggle between the pressure of the deluded worldview and the autonomous capacity to proceed along the path of spiritual progress.

Right and wrong both present themselves before the mind, each claiming to be superior while the mind is capable of choosing between them. The souls that fail to resist the pressure go back to the beginning of the first stage, and those which are powerful enough along with autonomous capacity generate a series of novel experiences of progressive purification through which the soul is led to first enlightenment that comes like a flash due to the absolute suppression of the view-deluding karma.

***Samyag-drsti*: The Fourth Stage:** The soul enjoys the first dawn of enlightenment known as *samyag-darsana*, enlightened worldview. The soul realizes its own nature. The vision here is due to suppression rather than

elimination; the soul attains insight it never had before. Like a person born blind who sees the world for the first time on the sudden acquisition of eyesight, so the soul now sees the truth. A soul eternally bound to the wheel of worldly existence feels spiritual joy and bliss on the sudden dawn of enlightenment. The soul now distinguishes between right and wrong; the soul has insight but lacks self-control. At this fourth stage, the soul is prone to fall at the lower stages. From this stage, the soul either goes up to the fifth or down to the first stage again. If the impure heap comes into effect and passions arise, the soul slides to the lower stages. The fourth stage is pivotal as it is the beginning of spirituality, the soul which has reached this stage, liberation is assured. Perfection of morality, however, is achieved in the later stages.

Desa-virata, sarva-virata-apramatta-virata: The Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Stages: The capacity for self-restraint begins to grow at the fifth stage, which is called the “enlightened world-view with partial self-restraint”. This is the stage at which a layperson takes one of the five small vows. At this stage, the soul knows what is right and also tries to practice it but cannot fully control its passions as self-control is partially effective.

The sixth stage is called “complete self-restraint, but with spiritual inertia” at which a person takes the great vows of an ascetic, there could still be occasional lapses in morality. The soul observes Right Conduct, but there is still a partial self-awareness.

The seventh stage is still higher, which is absolutely free from all sorts of laxity, and at which deep meditation becomes possible. At this stage, the soul has full control over its passions without any attachment to the body. The soul suppresses the passions, but a still higher ladder is to annihilate his passions to attain liberation.

Apurva-karuna, anivrtti-karuna, suksma-samparaya, upasanta-kasaya: The Eighth, Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Stages: During these stages, the soul is on one of the two ladders: the ladder of suppression, or the ladder of elimination, of the gross and subtle flickering passions (conduct-deluding karmas). The ladder is on will depends on whether it has partially suppressed and partially eliminated the seven deluding karmas in the earlier stages or totally eliminated them.

In the eighth stage, no karma is actually suppressed or eliminated, harmful karma is merely diminished in nature, duration, and intensity, and beneficial karma is augmented through new and positive motivation. The ascetic then climbs to the ninth stage with progressively purer and purer experiences, and gradually the conduct — deluding karmas are suppressed. The tenth stage of spiritual development is called the “complete self-restraint with flickering greed”. The eleventh stage is “complete self-restraint with suppressed passions” the soul suppresses flickering greed. It has now suppressed twenty-one karmas and seven deluding karmas; total of 28 deluding karmas are suppressed. Notice that it is the stage of suppression and not the elimination of the karmas; a fall is still inevitable.

If it falls down to the lower stages, it is born as a god in the highest celestial regions. The soul can also climb the “ladder of elimination of passions”.

Ksina-moha: The Twelfth Stage: The soul which has reached the eleventh sage moves directly to the twelfth stage called “complete self-restraint with eliminated passions”, radically eliminating the entire mass of deluding karma. The soul eliminates the five knowledge-covering, four intuitions — covering, and five obstructive karmas, leading to the thirteenth stage.

Sayogi-kevali: The Thirteenth Stage: This is the stage of “omniscience with physical activity”. It is a cosmic law that the soul must experience in full the fruits of all karmas. If the soul possesses such non-obstructive karmas, which will take longer to ripen and fall away than the lifespan karma, the soul reduces the duration of these karmas to that of the lifespan karma. Before entering the last and final stage called “omniscience with no activity”, the soul prepares to stop all activities, gross and subtle-of speech, mind, and body — the third stage of white meditation and has no fall whatsoever. By means of this meditation, the soul contracts and fills the cavities created in the embodied state. It is now reduced in dimension by one-third of the previous height. Then it enters the fourth stage of white meditation, which stops even the residual subtle activities and has no reversion.

A yogi-kevali: The Fourteenth Stage: The soul is now motionless; all the remaining karmas are eliminated, the last stage of spiritual development, before death. The soul then frees itself of the sensation, body, lifespan, and status karmas and attains disembodied eternal liberation.

Meditation produces beneficial effects; it even leads to liberation provided it is “pious” and “pure”. For, there are kinds of meditations not to be recommended. The pious meditation has four kinds or ranges since it serves for penetrating (*vijaya*) into the Jaina commandments and for the outcome of the actions. The characteristics of meditation are purity and renunciation in all external affairs and absence of emotions and confusions; it refers to forbearance, abandonment, humility, and perpetual transformation. In the beginning, the object of meditation may be in transit in leading from the meditation on one object to that of another. In the second consciousness continues to concentrate on one. In the first, little activity is left. In the latter, none at all. The uppermost grades are exclusively for *Kevelin*, with only vegetative activity like breathing. It is characteristic of the post-canonical view that it introduces physical conditions for the faculty of meditation. Those only who possess a most excellent physique are fit for lasting it out, and even they will do so for the time of one *muhurta* only. Indeed the two highest grades do not occur any longer since after Jambu’s Nirvana-nobody ever again became a *Kevalin*. This view is not shared by Umasvati since he assigns the different kinds of monks of different moral maturity (*Tattavartha Sutra*: 9.35) [4].

Further, the meditation must refer to the state of mind proper to the state of *Kevelin*, but the description offered by Umasvati says nothing about meditation. Yet an indication may be found describing the manifestations of the inner sense and both speech and body at the moment when they have been brought to a standstill.

Just after annihilating the karmas put an end to his earthly life like a burnt seed that is not able to produce a sprout, the soul is free from karmas, and finally, the soul leaves its casing—the *karman* body.

A special word for *sallekhana* is necessary at this point which is considered a special kind of Vow in Jainism in some special circumstances. It is also considered the highest stage of meditation in Jaina system.

Penance and Santhara (Sallekhana)

When a layperson or a Jaina monk embraces voluntary death at the end of his life by observing withdrawal of food and drink and spends his last moments in contemplation and meditation, putting aside all worldly attachment and affections, sorrow and fear, such type of death is known as *sallekhana*, *samadhi marana* or *pandita marana* it is a vow — a final vow. *Samthara* is considered as ‘*vrataraja*.’ It cannot be called suicide as there is no passion in it. The absence of any attachment and passions, confession of mistakes, and forgiveness are all the preconditions for *sallekhana* or voluntary death. *Sallekhana* is facing death voluntarily when one is nearing his end. Normal life is not possible due to old age, incurable disease, or severe famine. He observes all the austerities, gradually abandoning food, liquid food, and water, and at last lie down quietly meditating on the self until the soul leaves the body. The main idea behind this Vow is that the self-determines its future, which is liberation. (A detailed discussion is to be found in Samanatabhadra’s “*Ratna-karanda Sravakacara*” who lived in II century A.D.) (See: [8]).

The *Acaranga Sutra* explains three kinds of *sallekhana*. The first one is prescribed for a well-controlled monk with no movements of the body, speech, or mind. The second one requires not to move from one’s place and check all motions of the body. The third one requires to lie down and concentrate on the true nature of the soul, leaving the body. “Death by *sallekhana* is the victory of the soul over karma and infirmities of the mind and body. It is an act of fulfilment and a fitting culmination to a life of piety and religion”. [9. P. 254].

One who accepts the Vow of *sallekhana* should avoid five kinds of *aticaras* (transgressions) — a feeling that it would have been better if death comes little later, wishing for a speedy death, how would he bear the pain of death, remembering friends and relatives at the time of death and wishing for a result of penance. If the *aticaras* are not avoided, the *Samthara* cannot be granted as complete or successful.

7. Preksha Dhyana: A Modern Form of Meditation

Preksha Dhyana is a form of meditation for the integrated development of the personality without religious bias. [10] *Preksha* means *pra+iksha* = to see carefully. It is a system of meditation engaging one’s mind and body fully in the perception of subtle internal and innate phenomena of consciousness. It is not just the concentration of “thought” but a concentration of “perception”. Knowing and seeing are characteristics of consciousness, but due to contamination of the karmic matter, the fundamental nature is not manifested but by practice and effort, one can

develop it. *Preksha Dhyana* is meant for “concentration of perception and not of thought” [11], but it does not mean that thinking has no role in *preksha dhyayana*. Whatever is happening in the present is necessarily a reality. The present is the essential reality. One starts with the perception of one’s body; the body contains the soul. To reach the soul, we must pierce the wall of the body. Breathing is the essence of life; to breathe is to live. First, breathing and then the body becomes part of the perception; the internal emotions and other realities also become part of the perception.

Furthermore, ultimately, the envelope of karmic matter, contaminated consciousness could be perceived. The other important aspect is that thinking and perceiving cannot coincide. When one thinks, one does not perceive, and when one perceives, one does not think. ‘*Preksha*’ is perception without any like or dislike, attachment or aversion, neither pleasure nor pain. Our senses are simply an instrument of perception, and so is our purely perceptive consciousness. When the ‘perception’ and ‘knowledge’ are pure, it does not attract any new karmic matter, nor does he suffers the effect of the old accumulated karmas — is purely perceptive consciousness.

The purpose of *Preksha-dhyana* is to purify the mental states that constantly urge emotions and passions that hamper the flow of wisdom. Through various stages of manifestation — “*Tajasa Lesya*”, “*Padma Lesya*” and then “*Sukla Lesya*” purity is reached. The state of well-being or peacefulness is not the ultimate aim of *Preksha Dhyana*. We need to transcend these mental states to reach the ultimate, total purity of mind and goodness. (Notice it is not liberation or *Kevali jyanana*)

We can note that the *Preksha-dhyana* form of meditation developed by Yuvacharya Mahaprajna [11] and Acharya Mahaprajna is a recent form of a spiritual path based on the Jaina Scriptures such as *Tattavartha Sutra* [4], *Acharanga Sutra* [12], etc.

My concern in this paper was to explore the hidden or presupposed meditation techniques in the Jaina scriptures and to go deep into its foundation. These meditative practices have been practiced in Jaina tradition for centuries. We also find a difference between the interpretation of scriptures (especially *Digambara and Svetambara*) regarding meditation and sometimes gets translated into meditation practice. In the Jaina tradition of meditation, it is not easy to separate the spiritual path of liberation from meditation as a practice. As we have discussed before, meditation can be seen as only one aspect of the spiritual path, but in its broader sense, the whole spiritual path suggested in the scriptures can be seen as meditation and nothing else. The fourteen stages suggested in the Scriptures can be considered the stages of meditation, and as we can see, *preksha dhyana* translates these stages into more acceptable to the laypeople, for a common appeal to people — a popular and simple form of the spiritual path. Nevertheless, in the end, the purpose or ultimate aim remains the same — self-purification, through Karmic cycle.

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Джайнская этика и медитация: процесс самоочищения через кармический круг

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Аннотация. Основной задачей этой статьи является — изучение взаимосвязи между джайнской этикой и техниками медитации, предлагаемыми в джайнских священных текстах и основах учения джайнизма. Медитативные практики использовались в джайнской традиции на протяжении веков. При этом мы обнаруживаем весьма разные интерпретации медитации в священных текстах (особенно если сравнивать трактовки дигамбаров и шветамбаров), что также отражается и в самой практике медитации. В случае джайнской традиции сложно отделить этику от духовного пути освобождения и медитации как практики. В рамках данного исследования на основе Таттвартха-сутры, Уттарадхьяны и Ачаранга-сутры предпринята попытка показать, что этика (в узком смысле) может пониматься как всего лишь один из аспектов медитации, если понимать

под медитацией весь духовный путь, описанных в учениях джайнизма. Описанные в джайнских сутрах четырнадцать стадий можно считать стадиями этического пути, или медитации. В наше время приобретает популярность *прекша-дхьяна* — обновленная форма медитации, которая переводит эти стадии в более мирские практики, предлагая более доступную и простую форму духовного пути. Однако предельная, конечная цель остается неизменной — достижение самоочищения через кармический круг.

Ключевые слова: джайнизм, медитация, этика, духовное развитие, дигамбары, шветамбары, саллехана, прекша дхьяна

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