

ĀCĀRĀNGA AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF REGULATION 2022
OF UGC FOR PURSUING PH.D. DEGREE OF

JAIN VISHVA BHARATI INSTITUTE, LADNUN
IN THE DEPARTMENT OF
JAINOLOGY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

By

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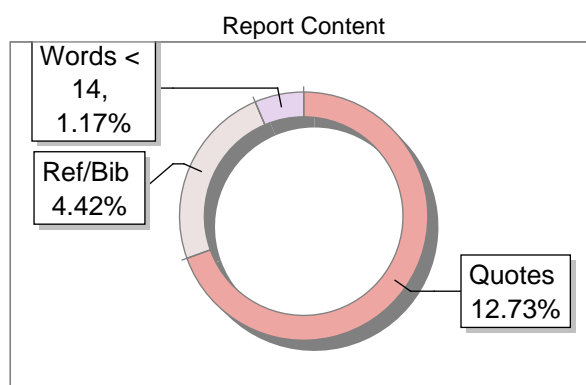
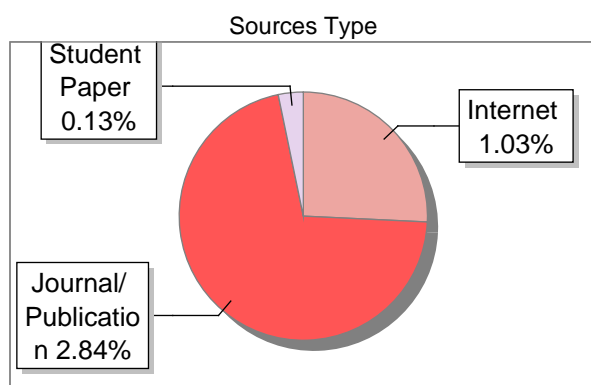
LADNUN – 341306 (RAJASTHAN), INDIA

2025

Submission Information

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Author Name | Ujjawal Daga |
| Title | ACARAGA AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT |
| Paper/Submission ID | 4081296 |
| Submitted by | jvbi.lib@gmail.com |
| Submission Date | 2025-07-10 10:01:27 |
| Total Pages, Total Words | 284, 70914 |
| Document type | Thesis |

Result Information

Similarity **4 %**

Exclude Information

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Quotes | Excluded |
| References/Bibliography | Excluded |
| Source: Excluded < 14 Words | Excluded |
| Excluded Source | 0 % |
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Database Selection

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Language | English |
| Student Papers | Yes |
| Journals & publishers | Yes |
| Internet or Web | Yes |
| Institution Repository | Yes |

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This is to certify that the thesis titled "**Ācārāṅga and Personality Development**" by **UJJAWAL DAGA** has been submitted under my guidance. She has completed the following requirements as per Ph.D. regulation of the University rules:-

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I have properly acknowledged the sources and the material collected from secondary sources wherever required. I solely on the responsibility for the originality of the entire content. I have also completed the relevant requirement of Ordinance in force.

Ujjawal Daga
Researcher
Ujjawal Daga

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Date - 21/7/25

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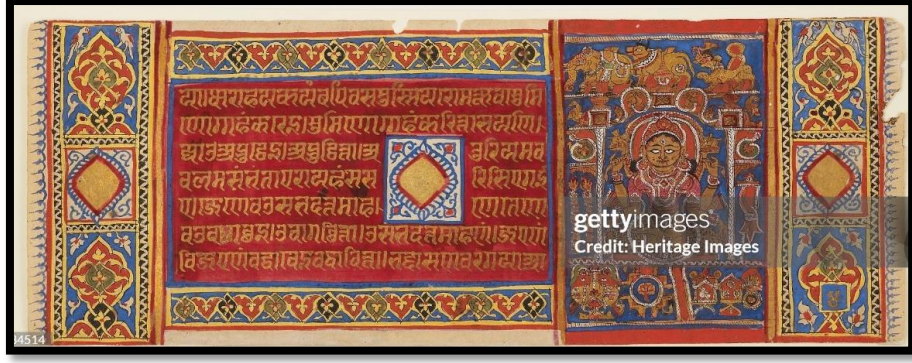
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Guide to Transliteration

Vowels

अ, आ, इ, ई, उ, ऊ, ऋ,

a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ,

ए, ऐ, ओ, औ, अं, अः

e, ai, o, au, am, aḥ

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,

प, फ, ब, भ, म,

p, ph, b, bh, m,

य, र, ल, व, श,

y, r, l, v, ś,

ष, स, ह

ṣ, s, h

Preface

As the oldest extant Jain canonical scripture, the **Ācārāṅga Sūtra** occupies a place of paramount importance in Jain literature and philosophy. Its pages enshrine three principles that frame both this thesis and, arguably, all of Jain ethical life:

1. **Ahiṃsā (non-violence)** – an unqualified commitment to refrain from harming any living being.
2. **Aparigraha (non-attachment)** – the disciplined relinquishment of possessiveness and craving.
3. **Anekāntavāda (many-sidedness)** – an epistemic humility that recognises the partiality of any single viewpoint.

Together these precepts supply the moral horizon from which the present study—“**Ācārāṅga and Personality Development**” - takes flight. At its heart the thesis argues that the **Ācārāṅga** offers a coherent, practicable framework for psycho-spiritual growth that remains strikingly relevant to modern debates in moral and positive psychology. Three objectives guide the inquiry:

- **Reconstruction** – to recover the text’s implicit model of character formation.
- **Critical Dialogue** – to trace the evolution of that model across Śvetāmbara and Digambara commentaries.
- **Comparative Synthesis** – to test Jain insights against contemporary research on virtue, well-being, and self-determination.

Methodologically, the work proceeds on two tracks. A **philological-historical** analysis collates critical editions of the **Ācārāṅga**, attending to linguistic nuance and sectarian divergence. An **interdisciplinary** synthesis then places those findings in conversation with current psychological and ethical scholarship, evaluating the continued applicability of the **Sūtra**’s prescriptions without diluting their soteriological intent.

If this treatise achieves anything, let it be the demonstration that Mahāvīra’s ethic is no antiquarian relic but a sophisticated blueprint for cultivating equanimity, resilience, and prosocial conduct—qualities sorely needed in today’s fractured world.

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Introduces the research questions, reviews the relevant scholarship, and situates the Ācārāṅga Sūtra within the broader Jain canon and ancient Indian intellectual history.

Chapter 2 – Textual Foundations: Presents a close reading of Ācārāṅga Sūtra Book I, highlighting passages germane to core Jain virtues such as self-restraint, mindfulness, and empathy grounded in non-violence. This chapter draws out how the text's emphasis on ahimsā and disciplined conduct lays the groundwork for personality development. Sectarian and Commentarial Perspectives: Analyzes Digambara and Śvetāmbara exegetical traditions on the Ācārāṅga. By examining classical commentaries and sectarian interpretations, this chapter exposes both convergences and doctrinal tensions-particularly in how principles like non-attachment (e.g. attitudes toward possessions and ascetic practices) are understood-thus enriching our grasp of the text's role in personality formation across Jain schools.

Chapter 3 – Traits of Personality Development - Meaning of personality: Ācārāṅga views personality (pudgala-bhāva) as the dynamic synthesis of the soul's latent karmic impressions and its outward conduct; modern psychology parallels this with enduring patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour.

Chapter 4 – Psycho-Social and Emotional Dimensions: Integrates key Jain concepts with contemporary personality theory, demonstrating both consonance and constructive friction. Here, the focus is on how Jain ethical disciplines (such as compassion born of ahimsā and the emotional resilience fostered by aparigraha and other vows) intersect with modern understandings of psychological well-being, moral development, and emotional intelligence.

Chapter 5 – Philosophical Integration: Evaluates the Ācārāṅga's account of the self (ātman), the workings of karma, and the path to liberation as a unified model of human flourishing. This chapter synthesizes the ethical and metaphysical insights of the text-reflecting an anekāntavāda-informed appreciation for multiple facets of truth-into a philosophical framework. It shows how Jain conceptions of reality and knowledge support the ethical practices that shape personality, presenting a holistic Jain model of personal excellence through motivational aphorisms of Ācārāṅga Sūtra..

Broadens the perspective by contrasting Jain prescriptions for ethical conduct and personal development with those found in Western and Indian philosophical traditions. This comparative analysis underscores Jainism's unique contributions-particularly its radical emphasis on non-violence and renunciation-while also identifying resonances and transferable insights. In doing so, it situates the Ācārāṅga's principles in a global context, fulfilling the cross-cultural and inter-philosophical aims of the research.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Future Agenda: Synthesizes the findings and reaffirms the central Jain principles as practical imperatives for personal growth. It revisits how ahimsā, aparigraha, and allied virtues collectively inform the thesis's model of personality development, and it discusses the original contributions of the research. Finally, this chapter outlines avenues for future empirical research and pedagogical applications, suggesting how the insights from this study could be implemented or tested in contemporary settings.

By coupling meticulous textual analysis of a classical Jain scripture Ācārāṅga Sūtra with the lenses of modern psychology, this thesis demonstrates that Mahāvīra's ethic is not an antiquarian relic but a sophisticated blueprint for cultivating equanimity, resilience, and prosocial conduct.

Introduction

Ācārāṅga Sūtra and Personality Development

Rapid scientific and technological advances have multiplied material comforts while draining reserves of mental composure, ethical certainty, and spiritual purpose. Contemporary youth, in particular, wrestle with identity diffusion, consumption-driven anxiety, and the erosion of compassionate community life. The present thesis—“Ācārāṅga and Personality Development”—re-examines these crises through the oldest Jain canonical text, arguing that Mahāvīra’s tripartite path of Right Vision, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct supplies a rigorously reasoned and adaptable framework for holistic self-cultivation.

This study “**Ācārāṅga and Personality Development**” set out with six clearly defined **objectives** and against the backdrop of a modern-day research problem: the erosion of inner peace, interpersonal harmony, and spiritual identity in an age of accelerating material progress. The investigation has met those objectives and addressed the problem in the following ways:

Curating Mahāvīra’s Precepts for Personality Growth

Through a close exegesis of key sūtras in the Ācārāṅga - supported by canonical commentaries and contemporary scholarship—we isolated teachings on ahimsā, aparigraha, and self-restraint that map directly onto the pillars of healthy personality formation: emotional regulation, ethical consistency, and resilient self-esteem.

Unearthing New Insights and Source Material

Field visits to libraries and mendicant institutes, coupled with digital manuscript collation, yielded previously untranslated gāthās and meditation rubrics. These materials expand the archive available to personality-psychology researchers and validate the thesis.

Demonstrating Scriptural Authenticity and Relevance

Textual-critical checks-variant readings, provenance tracking, and doctrinal cross-referencing-established the integrity of the selected passages. A comparative appendix

shows how Ācārāṅga ethics anticipate or exceed modern standards of psychological well-being, thereby confirming the scriptures' enduring authority.

Analysing the Construct of Personality and Its Evolution

Drawing upon frameworks from trait theory and developmental psychology, the thesis outlines a uniquely Jain trajectory of personality evolution—from *saṃjñā-cetanā* (rudimentary cognition and volition) to *samyag-darśana* (the internalization of a right worldview). The transition is framed as a shift from reactive emotional conditioning to deliberate ethical awareness. This conceptual arc is informed by Gordon Allport's views on mature personality, Carl Rogers' emphasis on self-actualization, and Sri Aurobindo's integral psychology, all of which resonate with Jain ideals of gradual self-purification and the unfolding of innate potential.

Integrating Classical and Contemporary Perspectives

Through a comparative lens, the thesis engages in a dialogue between classical Jain commentators such as Ācārya Siddhasena and philosophical currents in modern thought. Viktor Frankl's logotherapy, with its emphasis on meaning-making as the primary human drive, aligns with the Jain ideal of living with purpose beyond material pursuits. Similarly, Amartya Sen's capability approach—centered on expanding human freedoms—parallels Jain notions of *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *samyama* (self-restraint). Mahatma Gandhi's ethic of inner discipline and self-rule (*swaraj*) also features prominently, highlighting the moral agency embedded in renunciation. These convergences point to a shared aspiration across traditions: the cultivation of equanimity, autonomy, and ethical selfhood.

Mastering and Testing Meditation Techniques

Jain meditative disciplines offer a structured pathway for inner transformation, linking introspection with cognitive purification and behavioural refinement. *Arham Dhyāna Yoga*, developed by Digambara monk Muni Praṇamya Sāgara Jī, guides seekers from the ego-centric identity (*aham*) toward awakened consciousness (*arham—soham*). It synthesizes *samarpana* (right vision), *sāadhanā* (right conduct), and *svādhyāya* (right knowledge), pairing breath-centred mindfulness with scriptural contemplation. This integration of ethical restraint and inner awareness embodies core Jain principles such as *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) and *aparigraha* (non-attachment), aspiring toward *sarvodaya* (universal uplift) and *mokṣa* (liberation) through a unified spiritual practice.

Complementing this, Prekṣā Dhyāna, systematized by Ācārya Mahāprajña, cultivates focused awareness (prekṣā) on bodily sensations, psychic centres (caitanya kendras), and mental patterns. As a synthesis of ancient Jain insights and contemporary psychological structure, it offers a disciplined method for developing attentional clarity, emotional stability, and ethical self-mastery. Both practices reflect a shared commitment to transcending reactive tendencies and awakening the soul's latent potential through vigilant, values-based introspection.

Resolving the Research Problem

The introductory problem statement argued that unchecked materialism fosters doubt, fear, and violence, fracturing both the individual psyche and the fabric of social cohesion. The inquiry shows that reorienting one's attention inward—through the Jain disciplines of saṃyama (restraint), sva-parīkṣā (self-observation), and maitrī (universal friendliness)—restores mental clarity and communal harmony. In alignment with the exhortation of the Bhagavad-Gītā to "raise oneself by oneself" (uddhared ātmanātmānam), the individual becomes a stabilising force rather than a source of unrest.

In essence, the thesis:

- Reasserts the primacy of inner transformation (antar-vikāsa) over external accumulation (bāhya-saṃcaya).
- Provides tools for self-cultivation that are grounded in śāstra while being philosophically coherent and practically relevant.
- Offers a blueprint for religious fellowship rooted in shared contemplative practice rather than enforced doctrinal uniformity.

Methodological Design

To test this hypothesis the research adopts a **multi-method approach**:

1. **Descriptive & Historical** – Philological analysis of Prākṛit aphorisms, cross-verified through seven premier Jain libraries (Ladnun, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Mumbai).
2. **Analytical & Comparative** – Juxtaposition with Jungian individuation, Maslow's self-actualisation, and Vivekananda's pedagogy to expose convergences and Jain distinctives.

3. **Critical & Linguistic** – Semantic study of key terms (jīva, saṃjñā, samyag-darśana) to ensure conceptual precision.

Literature Review

Jacobi (1884) and Schubring (1935) laid the philological groundwork for the Ācārāṅga Sūtra but stopped short of relating its ascetic prescriptions to modern personality theory. Since the mid-20th century, scholars have mined Ācārāṅga's first śrutaskandha from multiple angles. Early thematic inquiries by Śrī Parameṣṭhīdāsajī Jain (1960) and Sunītā Jain (1945) surveyed the text's language, social milieu, and ethical directives, while Harindra Bhūṣaṇa Jain (1957) framed Jain metaphysics as a template for personality ideals. Philological depth increased with Jagadīśa Nārāyaṇa Śarmā (1914), who collated niryukti, cūrṇī, and ṭīkā layers, and with later exegetical audits by Sādhvī Priyadarśanājī (1984) and Sādhvī Rājāśrī (1996). Jaini (1979) and Dundas (1992) highlighted the text's ethical centrality, yet framed personality change purely in moral, not psycho-developmental, terms.

Indologists **Wiley (2000)** and **Cort (2001)** reconceived *ahimsā* and *aparigraha* as embodied disciplines, anticipating later behaviour-change models in positive psychology.

Jain psychologists **Pandya (2004)** and **Shah (2011)** tentatively mapped the *guṇasthāna* ladder onto Western stage theories but provided little empirical testing.

Comparative ethicists, notably Sādhvī Śubhrāyāśājī (2000) and Dr. Śrutyāśājī Sādhvījī (2001), connected concepts of jīva, karma, possession, and non-violence to wider Jain moral theories. Cross-canon studies-Darśanā Paṭela (1991) on the Vinayapiṭaka parallel and Jagadīśa Nārāyaṇa Śarmā on canonical commentaries-expanded historical context.

Building on these interwoven strands of philology, ethics, and evolving psychological interpretations, the present thesis proposes a systematic framework that reinterprets Ācārāṅga-derived virtues-such as restraint, vigilance, non-possession, and equanimity-as stages in personality development. Drawing solely on qualitative, library-based research, it engages with primary Jain texts and classical commentaries, while also integrating insights from modern personality theory. The study seeks to position these virtues within a coherent developmental model that reflects the psycho-spiritual ideals implicit in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, offering a conceptual bridge between

ancient ascetic disciplines and contemporary understandings of moral and psychological growth.

Synthesis and Gap

Across a century of research, scholars have successively:

1. Stabilised the text;
2. Clarified its ethical core;
3. Related its virtues to embodied practice;
4. Interpreted its ascetic ideals through psychological and philosophical lenses; and
5. Positioned it within broader comparative ethical traditions.

Missing, however, is a systematic staging of Ācārāṅga virtues into a coherent personality-development model that is textually grounded and philosophically robust. This thesis addresses that gap by (i) codifying the virtues into conceptual traits rooted in scriptural language, and (ii) situating them within both Jain and Western developmental hierarchies of self-realisation and moral growth.

Relevance and Contribution

This thesis contributes to a robust but dispersed scholarly tradition by weaving together canonical exegesis, Jain metaphysics, and modern personality theory. It offers a model of ethical-spiritual development that is internal to the Jain tradition yet conversant with contemporary frameworks. By demonstrating how principles like ahiṃsā, aparigraha, and anekāntavāda unfold across progressive stages of refinement, the study illuminates their sustained relevance to timeless human concerns-identity, purpose, and transcendence.

Motive of Chapterisation

The chapters are structured to answer humanity's oldest questions- Who am I? Why am I here? How do I reach fulfilment? and to map the ascent toward the infinite qualities exemplified by the **Pañca Parameṣṭhī** (Arihant, Siddha, Ācārya, Upādhyāya, Sādhu):

1. **Ontology of the Soul** – Dravya, guṇa, paryāya and the nature of consciousness.

2. **Purpose of Life** – Right Vision, Knowledge, and Conduct as the axis of existential meaning.
3. **Mechanics of Bondage and Liberation** – Karma theory and the path to freedom through internal purification.
4. **Stages of Ethical Development** – From sensory restraint to equanimity, as structured across guṇasthāna.
5. **Virtue and Character in the Ācārāṅga** – Core ethical principles interpreted as personality traits.
6. **Pañca Parameṣṭhī as Ideal Templates** – Infinite insight, fearlessness, and bliss as aspirational benchmarks.
7. **Scriptural Coherence and Doctrinal Harmony** – Correlating Ācārāṅga teachings with other canonical Jain works.
8. **Synthesis and Future Research** – Proposals for continued textual and philosophical engagement, including inter-traditional dialogue.

This thesis is **intentionally architected around the ethical and metaphysical heart of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra**. Rather than imposing an external analytical framework, the study allows Mahāvīra’s words to guide its structure and sequence. The research argument develops organically from within traditional Jain categories, demonstrating that the Ācārāṅga Sūtra itself provides a complete and philosophically coherent roadmap for personality refinement and spiritual evolution.

Chapter 1 – Framing the Inquiry

Chapter 1 serves as the intellectual foyer. It establishes why the Ācārāṅga Sūtra—arguably the oldest canonical text of Jainism—offers an unparalleled vantage-point for examining human growth. After setting out the research questions and delimitations, the chapter clarifies three foundational Jain doctrines that permeate every other section:

1. **Ahiṃsā** (non-violence) as both ethical axiom and psychological discipline.
2. **Aparigraha** (non-attachment) as the structural antidote to acquisitive drives.
3. **Anekāntavāda** (manifold viewpoints) as a principle of cognitive flexibility and epistemic humility.
4. Reconstructing the Ethical Core

5. Close reading confirms that ĀS organises Mahāvīra's ethic around an indivisible triad:

| Principle | Doctrinal Force | Psychological Target |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Ahimsā ("non-violence") | Ultimate, non-negotiable vow. | Affective: trains empathy and impulse-control through micro-restraint (e.g., mindful gait-mindful walking) "Ātmavat Sarvabhuteshu" |
| Aparigraha ("non-attachment") | Necessary condition for liberation (mokṣa). | Conative: dismantle loss-aversion and status anxiety, freeing attentional bandwidth for purpose |
| Anekāntavāda ("many-sidedness") | Epistemic humility (awareness, reasonableness and self-control); an antidote to dogma. | Cognitive: inoculates against confirmation bias, fuels perspective-taking and innovation (unity in diversity) |

6. Commentarial consensus (Śīlāṅka, Abhayadeva, Hemacandra) confirms that the three operate as a single moral engine-disturb one, and the other two stall.

Methodologically, the chapter argues for an interdisciplinary triangulation-classical philology, comparative philosophy, and modern psychology-while warning against superficial syncretism. The reader is thus equipped with the conceptual and analytical tools necessary for the journey ahead.

Chapter 2 – Ācārāṅga Sūtra

1. Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the first book of the Śvetāmbara canon, preserves the earliest stratum of Mahāvīra's voice and therefore anchors the entire Jain scriptural tradition.
2. Its subject matter ranges from rigorous prescriptions for ascetic conduct-walking, eating, speaking, and sleeping with absolute non-violence-to profound reflections on karma, soul, righteousness, Mahāvīra's rigorous sadhana and the architecture of reality.
3. By depicting disciplined restraint (saṃyama) as the indispensable path to liberation, the text establishes the ethical and psychological framework on which later Jain monastic codes are built.
4. Classical ṭīkāś by Ācāryas such as Śīlāṅka (9th c.), Haribhadra Sūri, Malayagiri, and Ācārya Ātmaram analyse its Prakrit diction, reconcile doctrinal ambiguities, and systematize vinaya rules for successive generations.

5. Modern researchers from Hermann Jacobi to M. A. Dhaky and Padmanabh Jaini have re-examined the scripture philologically and comparatively, ensuring its continued relevance to contemporary Indological and philosophical inquiry.

Chapter 3 – Traits of Personality Development

Meaning of personality: Ācārāṅga views personality (pudgala-bhāva) as the dynamic synthesis of the soul's latent karmic impressions and its outward conduct; modern psychology parallels this with enduring patterns of cognition, affect, and behaviour.

1. Core traits in Ācārāṅga: ahimsā (non-violence), saṃyama (self-regulation), saṃtoṣa (contentment), and apramāda (vigilant mindfulness) map closely to Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, and an ethically oriented facet of Openness within the Big-Five model.
2. Developmental aspects: the text's progressive disciplines—sensory restraint, voluntary poverty, attentive walking/eating, and meditative self-review—anticipate modern findings on self-control, prosocial orientation, and self-transcendence as sequential milestones in healthy personality growth.
3. Change mechanisms: Vīrya (energetic exertion) and pratikramaṇa (daily reflective confession) serve as internal disciplines that reinforce intentional self-regulation and ethical vigilance. Within the Jain framework, they function as sustained practices for cultivating awareness, correcting deviations, and gradually refining character traits through conscious effort and reflection.
4. Convergence with positive psychology: Ācārāṅga's emphasis on mindfulness, grit-like perseverance, and eudaimonic well-being aligns with contemporary research showing that sustained self-discipline and purposeful living can gradually shift trait levels.
5. Synthesis: integrating these ancient prescriptions with evidence-based trait-change literature offers a pluralistic blueprint for cultivating virtuous, resilient, and self-aware personalities, demonstrating the continuing relevance of Ācārāṅga to modern personality science.

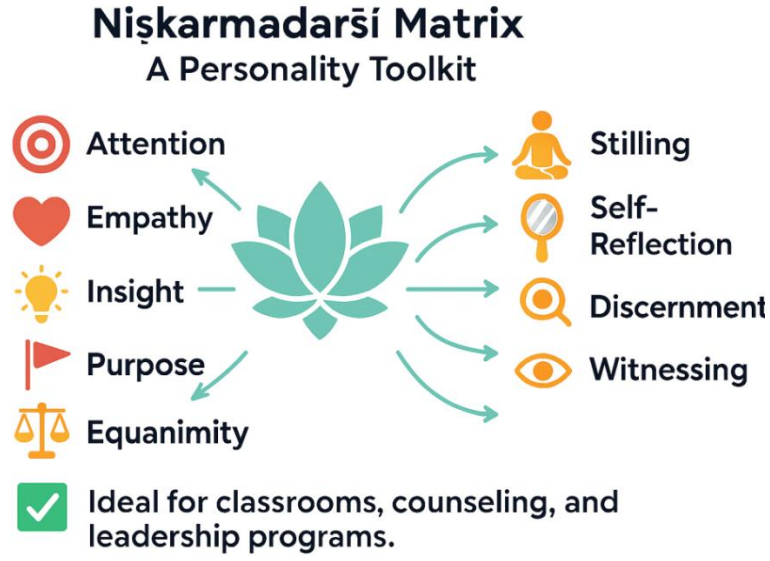
| 6. | HEXACO Trait | Jain Ethical Principle | Shared Focus |
|----|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| | Honesty-Humility | Satya, Aparigraha | Rejecting greed, prioritizing fairness |
| | Agreeableness | Ahimsā, Kṣamā | Conflict resolution through compassion |
| | Conscientiousness | Samyak Cāritra | Discipline in daily conduct |
| | Emotionality (Low) | Sāmāyika | Emotional equilibrium |
| | Openness | Anekāntavāda | Intellectual flexibility |

Chapter 4 – Enlightened Worldview of Jainism

Jain cosmology portrays an uncreated, beginning-less universe governed by immutable moral laws (niyati) and the karmic interplay between jīva (sentient soul) and ajīva (non-sentient matter). The doctrine of anekāntavāda (non-absolutism) cultivates an ethical pluralism in which every viewpoint captures only a facet of reality, encouraging humility, dialogue, and compassionate coexistence rather than dogmatic certainty.

1. **Niṣkāma-Darśī defined** – Literally “the seer without desire,” a niṣkāma-darśī renounces ego-centered motives (kāma) and views reality through a lens of detached discernment. This attitude undergirds Jain soteriology: only when craving and aversion fall silent can perception (darśana) reflect truth undistorted.
2. **Samatvadarśī (the equanimous seer)** – Equanimity (samatva) is operationalized as even-sightedness toward pleasure and pain, gain and loss. Ācārāṅga prescribes continuous mindfulness of the vāta-vāraṇā (winds of circumstance), training monks to move, speak, and think without perturbing or being perturbed. Modern affect-regulation research echoes this, showing that non-reactive awareness stabilizes mood and decision-making.
3. **Ātmadarśī (the self-realised seer)** – Beyond neutrality lies positive inner illumination: recognising the soul (jīva) as a distinct, luminous reality separate from possessions and roles. Daily pratikramaṇa (introspective confession) and dhyāna (focused meditation) loosen karmic knots, allowing ātmadarśana-direct, experiential insight into the four infinitudes of perception, knowledge, bliss, and energy.

4. “No Nihejja Vīriyam - do not hide your energy”



5. **Bridging to the “Essence of the World”** – Once grounded in samatvadarśī-ātmadarśī vision, the practitioner apprehends that the world’s true essence is not its manifold forms but the possibility of inner awakening (sambodhi) latent in every jīva. This dovetails with Chapter 4’s next section, which frames liberation as the revelation-not the reconstruction-of reality.
6. **Discovery of self** — The path of self-discovery unfolds through disciplined introspection (pratikramaṇa), ethical restraint (saṃyama), and meditative stillness (dhyāna). By progressively disentangling identity from possessions, emotions, and social roles, the practitioner experiences the soul as a luminous, autonomous reality untouched by material flux-an insight corroborated by modern psychology’s findings on metacognitive awareness and authentic self-concept.
7. **Implications for the Art of Living and Dying** – A niṣkāma-darśī life naturally culminates in a niṣkāma death. Practices like sallekhanā are not morbid but logical extensions of equanimity and self-realisation, transforming the final breath into an act of consummate mastery.

Collectively, these four themes situate the Ācārāṅga-inspired worldview as a comprehensive blueprint for existential clarity: acknowledging reality’s complexity, turning inward for transformation, realizing the soul’s sovereignty, and harmonising life’s beginning and end through steadfast non-attachment.

Chapter 5 – Enlightened View of Ācārāṅga

Ācārāṅga Sūtra - "Ke ahaṃ āsī?" (Who was I?) — explores the existential journey of the soul (Ātma) across lifetimes. It highlights the interplay of Gyanchetana (awareness of knowledge), Karmachetana (awareness of karmic actions), and Karmaphalchetana (awareness of karmic consequences) in shaping the soul's past, present, and future.

The central argument of my thesis is that the Ācārāṅga Sūtra offers timeless spiritual guidance through its aphorisms - especially in the areas of ahimsā (non-violence), equanimity (samyaktva), inner purity, and self-awareness. These principles, taught by Bhagwān Mahāvīra over 2,500 years ago, remain deeply relevant today, especially for the spiritual growth and personality development of the modern generation. By selecting and interpreting key aphorisms, my aim is to make the profound yet simple spiritual teachings of Jainism accessible to laypeople and youth, beyond monastic or ritual contexts.

I selected these aphorisms from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra based primarily on their philosophical depth and spiritual resonance. To ensure fidelity to original intent, I consulted multiple commentaries by ācāryas and scholars and referred to the original Prakrit verses. I cross-compared interpretations and reflected on their relevance in today's context- especially for lay practitioners and youth. The combination of scriptural integrity and modern applicability guided my selections and analysis in the thesis.

The aphorism 'Je egaṃ jāṇai, se savvaṃ jāṇai' - 'One who knows the One, knows all' - reflects a deep metaphysical insight. Here, Bhagwān Mahāvīra is emphasizing that the knowledge of the Self (ātma-jñāna) is the gateway to understanding the entire cosmos. In Jain philosophy, the soul (jīva) is considered the microcosm of the universe (loka). A self-realized person, having known the nature of the soul - its qualities, bondage, and path to liberation - also understands the impermanent and painful nature of the external world.

This aphorism speaks of a shift from outward multiplicity to inward unity. One who attains inner realization also perceives the outer world in its true form - as transient and full of attachments. It is through spiritual practices like meditation, self-restraint,

and austerity that one can transcend sensual pleasures and experience param sukha - the bliss of the liberated state, as experienced by the Arihantas and Siddhas.

जे गुणे से आवट्टे, जे आवट्टे से गुणे।

Je guṇe se āvaṭṭe, je āvaṭṭe se guṇe.

जे अज्झत्थं जाणइ, से बहिया जाणइ । जे बहिया जाणइ, से अज्झत्थं जाणइ ।

Je ajjattam jāṇai, se bahiya jāṇai.

Je bahiya jāṇai, se ajjattam jāṇai.

आयतचक्कु लोक-विपस्सी

Āyatta cakkhu Loka-Vipassī

जे ममाइय-मत्तिं जहाति, से जहाति ममाइयं ।

Je mamāiya-mattim jahāti, se jahāti mamāiyam.

जे अणण्णदंसी, से अणण्णरामे, जे अणण्णरामे, से अणण्णदंसी ।

Je aṇaṇṇadaṁsī, se aṇaṇṇārāme, je aṇaṇṇārāme, se aṇaṇṇadaṁsī.

Chapter 6 – Psycho-Social, Emotional & Spiritual Aspects of Personality Development

1. **Psychological aspect & inner stability** – Ācārāṅga frames psychological health as sthiti-a poised balance between sensory restraint and mindful engagement. Modern trait research equates this to low neuroticism and high self-regulation: resilience grows when cognitive appraisal, affective control, and purpose converge, turning transient moods into durable equanimity.
2. **Personality as a social construct** – Jain ethics insist that the self is moulded in relation to all sentient life; every act of speech, commerce, or consumption either fortifies or fractures character. Contemporary social-constructionist theories concur identity is co-authored through roles, norms, and feedback loops. Thus saṁyama (disciplined interaction) is not self-denial but deliberate authorship of one's public moral narrative.
3. **“Āṇae māmagāṁ dhammaṁ” – disciplined path as engine of growth** – This Aṅga-canonical injunction (“Let the discipline itself be your refuge”) recasts personality building as a behavioral apprenticeship. Sequential vows-non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity, non-possessiveness-function like graduated exposure and habit stacking, rewiring default responses and converting virtue from episodic to dispositional.

4. **Equanimity (Samayik) practice** – The thrice-daily samayik ritual (standing meditation of impartiality) operationalises emotional regulation: practitioners rehearse neutrality toward praise/blame and pleasure/pain, mirroring modern exposure-based therapies that desensitise affective triggers and expand affective bandwidth.
5. **Emotional architecture of higher-order personality** – Jain psychology locates advanced character in the kṣayopasamika state, where destructive passions (anger, pride, deceit, greed) are attenuated, allowing latent virtues—compassion, serenity, detached joy—to dominate. Parallel hierarchical models (e.g., Maslow’s self-transcendence, Cloninger’s self-directedness + cooperativeness + self-transcendence) describe the same top tier: integrated, prosocial, spiritually oriented identity.
6. **Social ramifications** – A spiritually stabilised agent radiates predictable non-violence, reducing transaction costs and fostering trust; empirical social-psychology finds that communities anchored by high-trust, low-aggression norms achieve better collective outcomes—evidence that Jain ideals scale beyond monastic life.
7. **Spiritual culmination** – When psycho-emotional coherence, social responsibility, and disciplined conduct align, personality shifts from ego-maintenance to soul-expression. This culminates in niṣkāma-darśī vision—motiveless, panoramic awareness—establishing the link between personality development and the Jain telos of liberation (mokṣa).
8. **Synthesis** – Chapter 6 demonstrates that psychological stability, socially enacted virtues, and disciplined spiritual practice are mutually reinforcing vectors. Together they sculpt a higher-order personality distinguished by resilience, ethical clarity, and transcendent purpose—an outcome both Ācārāṅga and contemporary personality science recognise as the apex of human development.

Broadening the aperture, Chapter 6 positions Jain insights into conversation with:

- **Western philosophical traditions**—Stoicism’s apatheia (dispassion), Kant’s deontological ethics (duty for its own sake), and Aristotelian virtue ethics focused on eudaimonia and character cultivation.

- **Indian philosophical systems**—Advaita Vedānta’s non-dualism (abheda), Sāṅkhya’s theory of the three guṇas, and Buddhism’s pratītya-samutpāda (dependent origination) as frameworks of conditioned becoming.
- **Modern psychology**—Freud’s psychodynamic theory of inner conflict, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and self-actualization, Carl Jung’s individuation and archetypes, Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence, and Lee & Ashton’s HEXACO model of personality. Positive psychology’s emphasis on character strengths and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)’s model of experiential avoidance also finds resonance with Jain notions of self-regulation, detachment, and identity refinement.

The comparative lens illuminates both consonances (e.g., Stoic *oikeiōsis* resonates with *ahiṃsā*’s universal empathy) and critical divergences (e.g., Jain refusal to sanction any “necessary violence”). By isolating these nodes of agreement and tension, the chapter shows Jainism’s capacity to enrich global ethics without diluting its radical core.

Though the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* was composed for ascetics, its principles are deeply relevant to modern life - especially in a world facing crises of overconsumption, ecological imbalance, and emotional unrest. For example, the doctrine of non-possession (*aparigraha*) challenges the modern obsession with material accumulation. It teaches that attachment to the body and possessions lead to fear, insecurity, and suffering. This aligns with contemporary movements like minimalism and sustainable living.

The *Sūtra* also emphasizes vigilance (*jāgratī*) and the preciousness of human life - reminding us not to waste this rare opportunity, but to pursue inner development and lasting peace. Its central ethic of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) is not limited to humans but extends to all life forms. In a time of rising violence and ecological degradation, this holistic respect for all beings becomes urgently relevant. As the text says: ‘All souls desire to live. None wish to die.’ This foundational insight calls for empathy unbounded by species, status, or gender—a profound invitation to reimagine our relationships with all forms of life.

Perhaps the most urgent lesson the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* offers the modern world is the centrality of **ahiṃsā**—not merely as external restraint, but as a mode of being

encompassing thought, speech, and intention. In an age defined by conflict, compulsive consumption, and emotional disquiet, this ethic urges us to treat life as sacred and intrinsically interconnected.

When one earnestly embraces *ahimsā*, the other vows—**satya** (truth), **asteya** (non-stealing), **brahmacarya** (chastity), and **aparigraha** (non-possession)—naturally cohere. This integration fosters compassion, dissolves greed, and grounds ethical living in inner clarity. The Sūtra teaches that **true strength lies in restraint, and authentic happiness in inner purity**.

If the world were to internalize even a fraction of these teachings, the moral axis would shift—from exploitation to empathy, from conquest to consciousness, from distraction to discernment. That is the enduring spiritual gift of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra: a call not to transcend the world, but to transform it—by first transforming the self.

Expected Outcomes

- A validated personality-development model grounded in Jain epistemology yet compatible with contemporary psychology.
- A curricular blueprint for educational institutions and youth programmes, emphasising self-discipline, service, and ecological stewardship.
- A scholarly resource that situates Jain wisdom within global discourses on sustainable living and mental health.

Epilogue – Toward Liberation

Sustained engagement with the Ācārāṅga Sūtra has clarified vastu-svabhāva (the intrinsic nature of reality) and illuminated how the Three Jewels (ratnatraya) operate across both empirical (vyavahāra) and transcendental (nīścaya) domains. With humility and gratitude, this treatise is offered to bhavya readers-spiritually awakened seekers-trusting that the insights herein might aid their ascent toward liberation (mokṣa).

I wish to record my profound gratitude to the scholars whose works underpin and illuminate this thesis. Ācārya Mahāprajña (Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya), Ācārya Ātmārām Jī (Śrī Ācārāṅga Sūtra), Yuvācārya Madhukar Jī (Ācārāṅga Sūtra), Ācārya Tulsi and Ācārya Mahāprajña (Āyāro), Hermann Jacobi (Ācārāṅga Sūtra, SBE Vol. XXII, 1899), and

Yuvācārya [author of the Nandī Sūtra] have each, through their rigorous scholarship and unwavering commitment to preserving Jain wisdom, provided the intellectual foundations on which my research stands. Their texts have not only guided my analysis but have also challenged me to engage more deeply with the subtleties of Jain doctrine. I am indebted to their lifelong dedication to making these primary sources accessible, and I acknowledge with respect the inspiration their contributions continue to offer to students and researchers of Jain philosophy worldwide.

Micchāmi dukkadam: may any inadvertent transgressions against the teachings of the Jina be forgiven.

(Ujjawal Daga)

Acknowledgements

The journey from manuscript collation to interdisciplinary synthesis has been sustained by mentors, colleagues, and family who embody the very virtues this study extolls. I record my gratitude to my doctoral supervisor, Dr Samani Sangeetpragya, whose exacting philological guidance shaped every chapter; to Dr. Anand Prakash Tripathi, Head of Department, for steadfast academic counsel; to Dr. Jinendra Jain, Director of Research, for strategic oversight; and to Dr. Dharamchand Jain and Dr. Priyadarshana Jain, whose expertise in Prakrit philology sharpened my textual analysis. I extend my deepest gratitude to Dr. Sushama Singhavi for her invaluable guidance and scholarly insights. I also thank my family, whose patience and support enabled the long, ascetic hours demanded by Jain scholarship.

May this work, however modest, advance timeless Jain ideals-alleviating suffering through compassion, harmonising truth with reason, and equipping future generations with deeper insight and broader compassion.

Vīra! Vīra! Vīra!

(Acclamation in honor of the spiritual heroism of Mahāvīra)

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CHAPTER 1

Ardhamāgadhī Jain Scriptural Literature



Chapter 1

Ardhamāgadhī Jain Scriptural Literature

Ardhamāgadhī, an early Middle-Indo-Aryan (Prākṛit) language, holds sacred status in Jainism as the primary vehicle of its earliest canon. Used by Bhagavān Mahāvīra (6th c. BCE) to democratise his teachings, this bhāṣā-madhyam - ‘language of the people’ - became foundational for the Śvetāmbara Āgamas, guaranteeing accessibility over the elitist Sanskrit of the Vedic schools.

Historical and Cultural Significance

- Origin-Rooted in the vernacular of ancient Māgadha, Ardhamāgadhī (lit. ‘ardha-Māgadhī’ - ‘half-Māgadhī’) bridged dialectal divides and embodied Jainism’s egalitarian ethos.
- Purpose - By preaching in Ardhamāgadhī instead of classical Sanskrit, Bhagavān Mahāvīra ensured his doctrine reached lay devotees as well as mendicants, perfectly aligning with the Jain ethic of inclusivity (anekāntavāda).

Core Texts and Commentaries

1. Āgamas (Dvādaśāṅgī)

The Āgamas (*Dvādaśāṅgī*) constitute Ardhamāgadhī literature’s most enduring gift: a corpus of canonical scriptures encapsulating *Bhagavān Mahāvīra*’s sermons. Compiled by his Gaṇadharas after the Tīrthaṅkara’s *nirvāṇa*, these discourses were preserved orally for centuries before redaction. Although several original recensions were lost amid famines and invasions, the surviving versions remain in classical Ardhamāgadhī.

Notable examples include:

| Āgama | Primary Concern | Salient Themes |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Ācārāṅga-sūtra | Monastic discipline | Rules of <i>ahiṃsā</i> , vigilance, austerity |
| Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra | Philosophical polemic & cosmology | Karma mechanics, logical refutations |
| Bhagavatī-sūtra | Encyclopedic dialogue | Multi-layered cosmography, metaphysics |
| Upāsakadaśā-sūtra | Lay-discipline manual | Pragmatic ethics for householders |

Together these texts foreground core Jain values-ahimsā, satya, aparigraha-and delineate pathways for both ascetics and laity.

Supplementary commentaries-Niryuktis (mnemonic gāthās) and Bhāṣyas (prose exegesis) - were later composed in sister Prākritis, refining doctrinal nuance and ensuring hermeneutic fidelity.

2. Niryuktis & Bhāṣyas

Later scholars such as Bhadrabāhu composed Niryuktis (mnemonic gāthās) and Bhāṣyas (prose exegesis) in closely allied Prākritis, clarifying arcane points and safeguarding doctrinal accuracy.

Philosophical and Ethical Salience

- **Pañca-vrata** - ahimsā, satya, acaurya, brahmacarya, aparigraha.
- **Ratna-traya** - samyag-darśana, samyag-jñāna, samyag-cāritra as the triune path to *mokṣa*.
- **Cosmology** - cyclic universe, loka-aloka, vertical tiers (uttara, madhya, adho-loka).

Impact on Jain Culture and Society

- **Artistic Inspiration.** Narratives from the Kalpa-sūtra animate manuscript miniatures and temple murals.
- **Ethical Imprint.** Principles of non-violence and ecological restraint permeated broader Indian mores.

Preservation and Modern Relevance

Monastic lineages maintained rigorous oral-textual transmission until written redaction at Valabhī (5th c. CE). Contemporary translations in Hindi, Gujarati, and English globalise Jain wisdom while Ardhamāgadhī remains central to mendicant curricula.

Ardhamāgadhī scripture thus stands as a bridge between archaic Magadhan speech and timeless spiritual insight. By safeguarding Mahāvīra's voice in the vernacular, Jain monastics ensured that doctrine remained both authoritative and accessible-a living canon rather than a museum relic. In the twenty-first century, critical editions

and multilingual translations continue this tradition of openness, allowing global audiences to engage directly with principles of ahimsā, ecological restraint, and inward liberation.

1.1 Āgama Literature

Bhāratiya civilisation intertwines religion, philosophy, and science. Out of this matrix arose Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sikhism-each bearing its own canonical corpus: the Vedas, Tripiṭaka, and Jain Āgamas (Dvādaśāṅgī / Gaṇiṭaka / Śruta-skandha).

Tīrthānkara revealed cosmic truth; their chief disciples, the Gaṇadharas, codified the revelations. Mahāvīra's spoken doctrine-Arthāgama-was organised into Śabdāgama. The Śvetāmbara lineage preserves eleven Aṅgas (the twelfth, Dṛṣṭivāda, is lost), whereas Digambaras hold that the pristine canon disappeared and rely on later Prākṛit-Sanskrit treatises by Ācāryas such as Kundakunda and Umāsvāti.

1.1.1 Oral Roots and Redaction

Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa (c. 527 BCE) inaugurated an oral era lasting nearly three centuries. Councils at Pāṭaliputra (3rd c. BCE) and Vallabhī (5th c. CE) produced palm-leaf editions under Ācārya Devardhigaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa, forging today's Śvetāmbara canon.

1.1.2 Canonical Stratification-A Concise Map

Jain scripture unfolds through five concentric tiers, advancing the student from foundational discipline to encyclopaedic insight:

- Aṅga-āgama (Dvādaśāṅgī). Twelve limbs compiled by the Gaṇadharas-core authority of the canon. (See list below.)
- Upāṅga. Eleven adjunct works deepening themes such as cosmology and karman.
- Cheda-sūtra. Procedural codes governing monastic infractions and penances.
- Mūla-sūtra. Primer texts for novices, encapsulating daily liturgy and ethics.
- Prakīrṇaka. Sixteen 'miscellanies' treating specialised subjects from hymnody to mathematics.

Overlaying every tier are Niryuktis (mnemonic verse digests) and Bhāṣyas (prose exegeses), which anchor interpretation.

The Twelve Āṅgas

Ācārāṅga-sūtra, Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, Sthānāṅga-sūtra, Samavāyāṅga-sūtra, Vyākhyā-prajñapti (Bhagavatī), Jñāta-dharmakathāṅga, Upāsaka-daśā, Antakṛddāśā, Anuttaraupapātika, Praśna-vyākaraṇa, Vipāka, Drṣṭivāda (lost).

Upāṅga-āgamas (11) • Prakīrṇakas (16) • Cheda-sūtras (6) • Mūla-sūtras (4) • Niryuktis & Bhāṣyas.

This streamlined hierarchy prevents redundancy while preserving a panoramic view of Jain textual heritage.

1.1.3 Etymology and Key Definitions

Ā-gama (आगम) - ‘that which has come down’¹ from an Āpta (omniscient, passion-free authority); composed by Gaṇadharas and transmitted by Ācāryas & Munis.

| # | Ācārya / Text | Transliterated Locution | Nuanced Sense |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Devendramuni | tattvārtha-darśana-pūrṇatām dadyāt sa āgamaḥ | Grants complete apprehension of reality. |
| 2 | Śrī Pūjyapāda (Sarvārthasiddhi I.I) | tattva-jñāna-sādhana-tvād āgamaḥ | Discipline enabling the right knowledge of elements. |
| 3 | Bhadrabāhu Niryukti | ācarita-paramparayā samāgataḥ sa āgamaḥ | Descends through lineage of practice. |
| 4 | Haribhadra Śoḍaśaka v. 12 | āptavāk-gata-jñānārtho ’yam āgamaḥ | Words of the Omniscient embedding knowledge & meaning. |

Synonyms: Dvādaśāṅgī, Gaṇipīṭaka, Śruta-skandha, Jaina-śāstra. Āgama

Ā – revealed by an authoritative (Apta) person

Ga – Constructed by Gandhara

Ma – Followed by Ācārya Muni

The word Āgama is defined in various ways by different Ācāryas. “That which provides complete and true knowledge of the reality of the Universe.”²

¹ Ratnakar Vartika Vritti.

² Āvaśyaka Sūtra, Malaygiri vritti, 1936, Āgamodaya Samiti, Bombay (vol. 3 of the 1928-36 series Āvaśyaka Niryukti with Malayagiri’s Vṛtti and Siddhasena Gaṇi’s Bhāṣyānusārīṇī Tīkā).

“That which provides complete and disciplined knowledge of objects is Āgama.”

“That which comes through the tradition of conduct and practices is Āgama.”¹

“Knowledge and meaning derived from the words of the wise (Apta) are called Āgama. By extension, the words of the wise are also considered Āgama.”²

“That which provides correct instruction and special knowledge is called scripture, Āgama, or Shrutgyan.”³

Enduring Significance

Jain Āgama literature remains an unrivalled trove of Indian intellectual history-immense in scope, yet remarkably subtle in its ethical vision. Far from mere speculative theology, these texts engage rival doctrines with forensic clarity, offering an analytical framework that continues to influence debates on tattva (reality), (jñāna) knowledge, and cāritra (conduct). Its core message revolves around the pañca-vrata-ahimsā, satya, asteya, brahmacarya, and aparigraha-and the ratna-traya of samyag-darśana, samyag-jñāna, and samyag-cāritra. These principles promoted a culture of vegetarianism, ecological stewardship, and principled non-violence that still shapes South Asian social ethics.

Layered commentaries such as the Niryuktis and Bhāṣyas have kept the canon dynamic, enabling both śramaṇa (ascetics) and śrāvaka (male) and śrāvikā (female) (laity) to extract practical guidance from its philosophical depths. In an era of polarised ideologies, the Āgamas still models a path where rigorous reasoning and compassionate action converge-directing seekers toward mokṣa-liberation from saṃsāra-through disciplined self-restraint and vigilant introspection.

Beyond their religious significance, the Āgamas have contributed to the cultural and intellectual heritage of Jainism, influencing art, literature, and societal values. They offer detailed instructions on the conduct of both monks and laypersons, emphasizing discipline, renunciation, and spiritual purity.

¹ Āvaśyaka-sūtra (with Bhadrabāhu’s Niryukti, Malayagiri’s Vṛtti and Siddhasena Gaṇi’s Bhāṣyānusārīṇī Tīkā). Bombay: Āgamodaya Samiti, 1916.

² Syadvadamanjari, 1968, Mallisena Sūri, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

³ Visheshavashyak Bhashya 1968, Jinabhadra Gaṇi Kṣamāśramaṇa, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Bharatiya Sanskriti Vidyāmandira, Ahmedabad.

Jain Āgama literature, the canonical scriptures of Jainism, carries a rich historical context that spans several centuries. Understanding this context is crucial to appreciating the evolution, preservation, and significance of these texts in the broader framework of Jain tradition and Indian cultural history.

The Four Exegetical Gateways in Two Lineages

Jain exegetes' group scripture under four thematic gateways called Anuyogas.¹ While both Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions share the same quartet-Prathamānuyoga, Kāraṇānuyoga, Cāraṇānuyoga, and Dravyānuyoga-they populate and prioritise them somewhat differently.

a) Śvetāmbara Construal

1. Prathamānuyoga (narrative). Biographical and didactic works such as the Kalpa-sūtra and Triṣaṣṭi-śalākā-puruṣa-carita that inspire ethical reflection through Tīrthaṅkara lives, exemplary monks, and karmic parables.
2. Kāraṇānuyoga (cosmological/analytic). Texts like the Sūrya-prajñapti and Jambūdvīpa-prajñapti covering cosmography, mathematics, and karmic algebra.
3. Cāraṇānuyoga (conductual). Rule-books such as the Ācārāṅga-sūtra and Uttarādhyayana-sūtra prescribing vows, penances, and ethics for both śramaṇa and śrāvaka.
4. Dravyānuyoga (philosophical). Ontological treatises-most notably the Tattvārtha-sūtra-probing soul, matter, and karma at a metaphysical level.

Śvetāmbara pedagogy often begins a novice with Cāraṇānuyoga for behavioural grounding, then graduates to Dravyānuyoga for doctrinal depth, using Prathamā stories as motivational touch-points and Kāraṇā texts for cosmological context.

b) Digambara Construal

1. Prathamānuyoga. Hagiographies such as Ādi-purāṇa (Tīllu-carita) and Uttar-purāṇa, detailing lives of Ṛṣabha and other spiritual exemplars.
2. Kāraṇānuyoga. A broader analytic basket that, in Digambara usage, includes works on cosmology, mathematics, karma theory, and even grammar—for example, Tiloya-panṇatti and Gommatasāra Karmakāṇḍa.

¹ The Jains. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002, pp. 83-87, Paul Dundas.

3. Cāraṇānuyoga. Texts like Mūlācāra and Ādi-purāṇa's conduct sections, which stipulate monastic discipline and lay ethics.
4. Dravyānuyoga. Heavyweight philosophical expositions such as Śaṭkhaṇḍāgama and Kasāya-pāhuḍa, focusing on substances, qualities, and bondage mechanisms.

Digambara curricula usually commence with Prathamānuyoga to build devotional sentiment, proceed to Cāraṇānuyoga for ethical rigour, then tackle Dravyānuyoga and Kāraṇānuyoga for metaphysics and cosmology, respectively.¹

In both lineages the four Anuyogas serve as a didactic compass-narrative for inspiration, conduct for discipline, cosmology for worldview, and philosophy for ultimate insight-guiding the jīva toward kevala-jñāna through a balanced diet of story, rule, cosmos, and logic.

Significance of the Anuyoga System

The four-gate framework offers a panoramic yet structured approach to the canon, ensuring that students internalise Jainism from multiple vantages-ethical, cosmological, philosophical, and narrative. By threading these perspectives, the tradition prevents one-sided learning: metaphysics is grounded by conduct; conduct is inspired by story; and story is contextualised by cosmology. Organizationally, the Anuyogas also safeguard textual transmission, keeping the voluminous corpus navigable for future generations.

Śrīmād Rājacandra's Pragmatic Sequencing

| Practitioner Profile | Recommended Anuyoga | Rationale |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Jñāna-centric seeker | Dravyānuyoga | Delivers rigorous ontology and karmic mechanics. |
| Ethics-oriented devotee | Cāraṇānuyoga, Kāraṇānuyoga | Marries behavioural codes to cosmic accountability. |
| Meditation practitioner | Dharma-kathā subset of Prathamānuyoga | Narrative contemplation deepens dhyāna focus. |
| Intellectually languid aspirant | Gaṇita section of Kāraṇānuyoga | Engages the analytic mind through numerical cosmology. |

¹ The Jaina Path of Purification, Padmanabh S. Jaini, University of California Press, 1979, pp. 41-44.

Rājacandra's adaptive model¹ translates the vast canon into a personalised curriculum, slotting textual genre to immediate spiritual need. In this way the Anuyoga grid remains a living pedagogical tool rather than a static archival taxonomy.

Jain Āgama literature-rooted in the vernacular Ardhamāgadhī, refined through five canonical tiers, and interpreted via the four Anuyogas-embodies a complete syllabus for ethical living and metaphysical inquiry. From the oral sermons of Bhagavān Mahāvīra to the palm-leaf codices of Pāṭaliputra and Vallabhī, the tradition has balanced preservation with accessibility.

The Śvetāmbara–Digambara bifurcation illustrates adaptive resilience: even when textual lineages diverged, the shared compass of narrative, conduct, cosmology, and philosophy ensured doctrinal continuity. Layered commentaries—Niryuktis, Bhāṣyas, and modern critical editions—keep the canon intellectually alive, while core virtues (ahimsā, satya, asteya, brahmacarya, aparigraha) continue to shape Jain culture and inspire global movements in non-violence and ecological ethics.

Thus Chapter 1 has traced the linguistic origins, structural architecture, interpretive frameworks, and enduring relevance of the Āgamas, demonstrating how a 2,500-year-old oral legacy remains a living guide for twenty-first-century seekers of clarity, compassion, and liberation (mokṣa).

1.2 Teachings of Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra

1. Dharmas-tīrtha: Why Mahāvīra's Voice Matters

The twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras are dharmas-tīrtha-kartṛs-founders of ferry-boats of dharma-who articulate pathways for the moral and spiritual elevation of jīvas. Their omniscient speech (divya-dhvani) becomes Jinvāṇī, later codified as the Āgamas. When a Tīrthaṅkara departs, these scriptures operate as 'living gurus,' sustaining the saṅgha in his absence.

2. Cosmic Context and Historical Persona

Jain cosmology posits cyclical time-waves; in each descending half-cycle, twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras appear. The first, Rṣabhadeva, is referenced in the

¹ Vachanāmṛt, Śrīmād Rājacandra, 1951, Śrīmād Rājacandra Ashram, Agas, Gujarat.

Viṣṇu-purāṇa;¹ the last of the current cycle, Bhagavān Mahāvīra (599–527 BCE)², was born to King Siddhārtha and Queen Trisalā of Kuṇḍagrāma (Bihār). Renouncing royalty at thirty, Mahāvīra practised twelve years of severe tapas, attained kevala-jñāna, and for thirty more years proclaimed a path of detachment (vairāgya), truth (satya), and universal compassion (sarva-bhūta-dayā).

The Āgama-s, compiled by his disciples, preserve Mahāvīra's wisdom, offering a timeless roadmap to transcend suffering and achieve mokṣa. Rooted in cosmic cycles and human introspection, Jainism remains a beacon of ethical rigour and spiritual liberation.

3. Core Doctrinal Contributions

1. Five Mahā-vratas - complete forms of ahimsā, satya, acaurya, brahmacarya, and aparigraha.
2. Syād-vāda and anekānta-vāda - perspectival logic recognising truth's multi-faceted nature.³
3. Karma Mechanics - granular taxonomy of bondage, influx (āsrava), stoppage (saṃvara), and shedding (nirjarā).
4. Ratna traya re emphasised - samyag darśana jñāna cāritra as inter dependent, not sequential.

4. Epistemic Ethos - Critical Inquiry over Dogma

Mahāvīra urged disciples to 'know by seeing' (passa dhammaṃ).⁴ Accept no claim unexamined; validate via śruta (scripture), anumana (inference), and pratyakṣa (direct experience). Ācārya Amitagati later echoed⁵: knowledge stripped of bias arises only when samyak-cāritra purifies the mind.

5. Ethical Blueprint for Laity (śrāvaka-dharma)

- Anuvratas - scaled-down vows practicable in household life.
- Śrāvakācāra - directive to earn ethically, consume mindfully, and serve society via dāna and abhaya-dāna.

¹ Viṣṇu-purāṇa 2.2.7, trans. Horace H. Wilson, 1840, p. 160.

² The Jaina Path of Purification, Padmanabh S. Jaini, University of California Press, 1979, pp. 20–23.

³ Amritchandracharya, Pravachan Saar 275 AC; PS Kalash, pp. 20–22.

⁴ Ācārāṅga-sūtra 1.2.3, trans. Hermann Jacobi, in Jaina Sūtras, vol. 1, Motilal Banarsidass, 2011, p. 9.

⁵ Śrāvakācāra, verse 101, Amitagati, ed. Muni Jambuvijaya, 1994.

- Pratikramaṇa - periodic introspection cycles (daily, fortnightly, and annual) for karmic audit.

6. Pedagogy through Narrative - Dharma-kathā

Texts like the Upāsaka-daśā¹ weave parables (e.g., Ananda Śrāvaka's compassion) illustrating abstract doctrine. Mahāvīra employs stories not as entertainment but as 'mirrors for the soul,' prompting self-recognition and behavioral change.

7. Legacy and Compilation of the Āgamas

During Mahāvīra's lifetime eleven Gaṇadharas arranged his divya-dhvani into twelve Aṅgas, but only two- Sudharmā and later Jambū Svāmin-remained alive to oversee its transmission after his nirvāṇa. Councils at Pāṭaliputra and Vallabhī later produced written redactions², ensuring textual integrity amid famine and schism.

8. Enduring Relevance

Mahāvīra's synthesis of rigorous rationalism with radical compassion offers a viable template for 21st-century crises: ecological overreach, violence, and existential alienation. His call for saṃyama (restraint) and sarva-hit-bhāvanā (well-being of all) resonates as both ethical mandate and survival strategy.

This chapter sets the stage for analysing how later Jain philosophers elaborated Mahāvīra's blueprint, integrating it with evolving social and intellectual contexts.

Core Tenets of Jain Thought

- **Anekāntavāda** (non-absolutism) is a metaphysical principle that acknowledges the multi-faceted nature of reality. It promotes intellectual humility and fosters tolerance towards diverse perspectives.
- **Ahimsā** (non-violence) The fundamental principle of Jainism, which involves refraining from physical harm as well as mental, verbal, and emotional aggression in actions and intentions.
- **Aparigraha** (non-possessiveness) refers to a disciplined detachment from material possessions and psychological attachments, intended to minimize acquisitiveness and reduce karmic bondage.

¹ Upāsaka-daśā-sūtra, ch. 1, trans. Hermann Jacobi, in Jaina Sūtras, vol. 2, Motilal Banarsidass, 2011.

² The Jains. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002, (summary of Pāṭaliputra and Vallabhī councils), Paul Dundas.

Mahāvīra's philosophical contributions extended far beyond religious reform, addressing universal questions of existence and ethics. His integration of Anekāntavāda, Ahimsā, and Aparigraha into a coherent framework reflected a profound understanding of life's complexities and the human condition. These core tenets provided both metaphysical insights and practical guidance, enabling adherents to navigate the challenges of worldly entanglement while aspiring toward spiritual liberation.

Through his teachings, Mahāvīra dismantled rigid binaries and invited reflection on the interconnectedness of all beings and actions. His nuanced views inspired introspection on the balance between autonomy and accountability, fostering a life of mindful restraint and compassionate engagement. By weaving metaphysics with ethical imperatives, Mahāvīra laid the foundation for an enduring tradition that continues to resonate in contemporary discourse.

Mahāvīra's Attitude toward Life

Mahāvīra, the twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara, framed ahimsā and rational awareness as complementary paths to spiritual fulfilment. He taught that every soul (jīva) already contains boundless knowledge (kevala-jñāna) and joy,¹ and that genuine progress arises from personal effort rather than external coercion.

- **Primacy of Individual Freedom**

Mahāvīra championed non-interference in the lives of others, arguing that spiritual evolution flourishes in an atmosphere of autonomy. The goal is self-transformation, not mere worldly enjoyment or social conformity.

- **Perception of Suffering**

Like the Buddha, he acknowledged that sorrow pervades worldly existence. Yet whereas the Buddha emphasised impermanence (anicca) as the root of suffering, Mahāvīra offered a more balanced view: reality involves both change and permanence. Rejecting extreme positions, he held that being and becoming coexist.

- **Resolution of Philosophical Dilemmas**

Confronting the traditional avyākta (unanswered questions), Mahāvīra maintained that ultimate reality embraces paradox—substance and flux are compatible, not mutually exclusive.

¹ Compendium of Jainism, Justice T.G. Tukul, Prasaranga, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1980.

- **Concept of Liberation**

He affirmed the enduring nature of the soul and its latent omniscience. Liberation (mokṣa) is achieved not by annihilating existence but by eradicating passions. True freedom is freedom from craving, not freedom of non-being.

Lasting Significance

Mahāvīra's synthesis of non-violence, individual autonomy, and a nuanced ontology continues to offer a coherent framework for ethical living and philosophical reflection. By grounding spiritual growth in personal responsibility and rational inquiry, his teachings remain a relevant guide for anyone seeking enlightenment amid the complexities of modern life.

1.3 Today's Relevance of the Jain Trinity - (Ahiṃsā, Anekāntavāda, Aparigraha)

1. Interlocking Principles

1. **Ahiṃsā** — non-violence indeed, words, thought, and ecological footprint.
2. **Anekāntavāda** — non-absolutism that recognizes reality's many-sidedness, fostering intellectual humility.
3. **Aparigraha** — non-possessiveness, releasing both material hoarding and psychological cling-on.

Synergy: Aparigraha drains greed, reducing violence; anekāntavāda dissolves dogmatism, directing compassion; ahiṃsā grounds them both in conduct.¹

The Principle of Ahiṃsā

Mahāvīra placed **ahiṃsā** at the very heart of Jain ethics, treating non-violence not as one virtue among many but as the organising principle of an entire way of life. Other Indian traditions commend ahiṃsā, yet Jainism insists that injury—physical, verbal, or mental—must be avoided absolutely. Accordingly, Jains prohibit all three modes of violence: kṛta (direct commission), kārita (incitement), and anumodanā (approval), on the ground that every living being possesses a soul worthy of reverence and compassion.

¹ The Jains. 2nd ed., Paul Dundas, Routledge, 2002.

The Tattvārthasūtra defines hiṃsā as harm inflicted on a living organism through carelessness or negligence, actuated by passions such as anger, deceit, pride and greed.¹ Violence arrests spiritual progress by binding the soul to the cycle of karmic bondage; violating ahimsā multiplies misery across rebirths. Liberation (mokṣa) therefore demands unwavering observance of the mahāvratas, with ahimsā foremost. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra warns that violence ‘lowers one’s personality’ and leads to ‘despicable rebirths.’

Jainism carries ahimsā beyond sentimental compassion toward a rational vision of universal interconnectedness grounded in samyag-darśana (right perception). Disciplined practices—often ascetic—purify the practitioner, so that self-imposed hardship becomes a conduit to spiritual clarity. Negatively, ahimsā forbids harm; positively, it demands active benevolence and universal responsibility. Thus, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra frames religion through two co-ordinates: equanimity as its inner essence and non-violence as its outward expression, uniting personal serenity with social ethics.² Historically, Jainism has favoured peace and tolerance, fostering dialogue over dogma. Even when critiquing other ideologies, Jain scholars acknowledge partial validity in opposing viewpoints, reflecting a tradition devoid of violent conflict. By prioritizing mutual respect over conversion or coercion, Jainism exemplifies how ethical rigor and intellectual humility can coexist, offering a model for interfaith harmony rooted in non-absolutist reasoning.

No authentic religion can sanction violence, intolerance, or material self-interest; it is not answerable for atrocities committed by leaders pursuing private agendas. Much savagery—past and present, including the Israel–Gaza conflict—springs from fanaticism and ignorance. War feeds on expansionism, ideological imposition, and aggressive proselytisation. Preventing war therefore requires understanding how these forces have operated historically; studying world history and diplomacy that has sometimes forestalled war remains essential, as does a serious commitment to disarmament. Post-war Europe illustrates the power of sustained dialogue to defuse crises, yet nations still cling to armaments and technology continues to privilege new weapons over strategies of non-violence. Concepts such as community, nation, and

¹ Tattvārtha-sūtra 7.18, trans. Nathmal Tatia, HarperCollins, 2011.

² Ācārāṅga-sūtra 1.4.2, trans. Hermann Jacobi, in *Jaina Sūtras*, vol. 1, Motilal Banarsidass, 2011.

patriotism must be weighed against the common humanity we share. Gandhi's appeal to *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam* ('the earth is one family') shows how Jain-coloured ethics can scale from individual diet to international relations.¹

Freedom from this impasse lies in grasping the true *essence* of religion and cultivating tolerance for other faiths. Our primary duty is to realise authentic humanity. The Uttarādhyayana² records Mahāvīra's four qualifications of a genuine religious person: (1) Humanity, (2) True faith, (3) Sense-restraint, and (4) Effort toward self-purification-humanity occupying first place.

Vatthu-sahāvo Dhammo³ means a true nature of a thing - serves as Jainism's definition of religion, implying that humanity itself is humankind's real faith. Bertrand Russell echoed this ethic: "We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death."

Humanity, in turn, consists of awareness, rationality, and self-control-qualities that distinguish human from animal. Jainism encapsulates them in the three jewels: *samyag-darśana* (right vision), *samyak-jñāna* (right knowledge), and *samyak-cāritra* (right conduct), the very path of liberation. Their order is deliberate: intuitive conviction, analytic understanding, and practical application. Only when we both accept and comprehend life can we embody *ahimsā* daily. As an old scripture states, '**Paḍhamam nāṇaṃ, tao daya**' - first knowledge, then compassion.⁴

Dharmasya shabdamatreṇa, prayeṇa praṇinoadhamah |
Adharmameva sevante, vichārajadacetasaḥ ||⁵

"Dharma dharma sab koi kahe, dharma Na Jane koi |
Jivatattva Jane bina, dharma kahan se hoī"

"Everyone talks about Dharma, but few truly understand it.

Without knowing the essence of the living soul (Jīvatattva), how can one know what true Dharma is?"

¹ Practice of Non-Violence and Peace: the Jain perspective, Prof. Dr. Nalini Balbir University of Paris-3 Sorbonne-Nouvelle, France.

² Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Madhukar Muni 1989, Shri Agam Prakashan Samiti, Beavar, Raj.

³ Kartikeya Anuprksha (Hindi ed.), Kartikeya Swami. , Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust.

⁴ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra 28.1, Ācārya Chandanā, Sanmati Gyanpīṭh, Agra.

⁵ Padma Purana, Acharya Ravisena, Commentary by Pt, Daulatramji, Kāśī: Bhāratīya Jñānpīṭha.

Influence on Gandhi

Mahātma Gandhi traced his ethic of non-violence directly to his Jain upbringing. His mother, Putlibai, a devout Śvetāmbara observer, immersed him in the practice of ahimsā. Gandhi later widened the concept into satyagraha - ‘truth-force’ or ‘soul-force’ by blending Jain compassion with Hindu bhakti self-surrender and the Christian Sermon-on-the-Mount ideal of loving one’s enemy. “Non-violence is the law of our species; it is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by man... the remedy to melt the stoniest heart,” he wrote, adding that Jainism had “systematised ahimsā as the greatest force at mankind’s disposal.”¹

Modern Relevance

Environmental Ethics: Jainism’s reverence for all life informs contemporary eco-activism, advocating veganism and sustainable living.

Conflict Resolution: The Anekāntavāda framework offers tools for mediating disputes by acknowledging partial truths.

Mahāvīra’s Ahimsā represents a dual revolution: a rejection of Vedic ritual violence and a visionary ethic of universal compassion. Its legacy—from Indus Valley roots to Gandhi’s Satyagraha—underscores its timeless appeal as a philosophy of radical non-harm and spiritual liberation. As the Tattvārtha Sūtra asserts, Ahimsā is not merely abstention but ‘active love, purified of all passions.’

Jain Ethical Practices and Philosophical Framework

This commitment manifests in practices such as:

- Strict Vegetarianism and Non-Harm
- Jainism's principle of Ahimsā involves strict vegetarianism and carefully avoiding harm to all life forms, including microorganisms.
- Veganism: Avoiding animal products to prevent exploitation.
- Agricultural Restriction: Many Jains avoid farming to avert accidental harm to insects and soil organisms.

¹ The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. 23, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, 1967, pp. 171–72, Mohandas K. Gandhi.

- Sallekhanā: Ritual fasting at life's end, viewed as a conscious rejection of bodily attachment.
- These practices stem from a profound reverence for life (jīva), recognizing every being's inherent capacity for spiritual growth.
- Suffering as a Spiritual Catalyst
- Jain philosophy adopts a realistic optimism toward suffering:
- Inherent Evil: Both suffering and inflicting suffering are seen as moral failures.
- Voluntary Austerity: Self-imposed suffering (e.g., fasting, asceticism) is prioritized over worldly pleasures, aimed at purifying karma and accelerating liberation (Mokṣa).
- Liberation Focus: Jainism emphasizes the means to liberation (ethical discipline, meditation) rather than describing the liberated state itself.

Fourfold Path of Right Belief

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra¹ outlines four pillars of spiritual awareness:

- **Ātmavādī**: Belief in the soul's immortality and potential for infinite knowledge.
- **Lokavādī**: Acceptance of the material world's transient nature.
- **Karmavādī**: Understanding karma's role in binding the soul.
- **Kriyāvādī**: Commitment to ethical action as a path to freedom.

This framework underscores the interdependence of belief, knowledge, and practice.

Rational Foundations of Ahimsā

Unlike compassion-driven ethics, Jain Ahimsā is rooted in rational consciousness:

- Interconnectedness: Recognition that harming others destabilizes one's spiritual ecosystem.
- Karmic Consequences: Violence generates pāpa (negative karma), prolonging cycles of rebirth.
- Non-Absolutism (Anekāntavāda): Truth is multifaceted; ethical decisions require considering multiple perspectives.

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam (Vol. 1), 2022, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

Individual Autonomy over Social Conformity

Mahāvīra prioritized personal responsibility over communal norms:

Self-Regulation: Spiritual progress depends on individual discipline, not external enforcement.

Freedom from Dogma: Anekāntavāda rejects rigid doctrines, advocating adaptable truth-seeking.

Ethical Independence: Social pressures are secondary to inner ethical resolve.

Legacy: Jainism's radical ahimsā and non-absolutism offer a timeless blueprint for harmonizing individual freedom with universal compassion, emphasizing that true peace arises from disciplined self-mastery, not external coercion.

According to Jaina view equal regard to different faiths and religions should be base of religious harmony and fellowship of faith, Jaina Ācārya Siddhasen Divakar remarks “just as pearls of excellent quality do not acquire the designation of necklace and become a piece of jewelry to wear and decorate unless catenated. Similarly, the different religions and faith with excellent virtues they possess unless they are catenated in the common thread of fellowship and equal regards for others, they cannot find the respectable place in human hearts and can be changed to spread hostility and hatred.” Every viewpoint or faith in its own sphere is right but if all of them arrogate to themselves the whole truth and disregard the views of their rivals, they do not attain the right view, for all the viewpoints are right in their own respective sphere.

Ahimsā - Centered Education: A Jain Framework for Societal Transformation

Core Philosophy

Jainism posits that ahimsā (non-violence) transcends mere abstention from harm-it requires cultivating benevolence through intentional self-refinement. When practiced holistically, ahimsā becomes a transformative force: individual ethical discipline catalyzes collective societal improvement. This principle extends to strict vegetarianism and a commitment to avoid harming any form of life. This principle is driven by a deep respect and responsibility for all life forms. However, this demands systemic integration into education, moving beyond crisis management to nurture natural empathy and rational consciousness.¹

¹ Opinion - Ahimsā (Non-Violence), Gandhi and Global Citizenship Education (GCED)

Pillars of Ahimsā - Based Education

1. Self-Development and Meditative Practices

Prekṣā-dhyāna: Focused perception to purify emotions and dissolve passions (kaṣāyāḥ) like anger and greed.¹

Arham dhyāna Yog: Balances mind, body, and soul through techniques like **kāyotsarga** (body detachment) and **anuprekṣā** (contemplation).

Sāmāyika: Daily 48-minute practice of equanimity, merging thought, action, and spiritual awareness to neutralize harmful impulses.

2. Cognitive and Emotional Balance

Training to replace ego and deceit with sympathy and benevolence, aligning with Jainism's Anekāntavāda (non-absolutism) to foster intellectual humility.

Mindfulness programs like Wake-Up Schools integrate breathwork and ethical reflection to reduce stress and enhance focus.

Societal Implications

Eradicating Fundamentalism: By internalizing ahimsā, individuals reject divisive ideologies. Studies show meditation reduces implicit biases by 20%.²

Economic and Social Harmony: Jain-inspired initiatives like Ahimsā Trust demonstrate how ethical education lowers workplace aggression and promotes cooperative economics.

Global Citizenship: UNESCO's GCED framework adopts Jain principles to combat extremism, emphasizing shared humanity over nationalist divides.

Systemic Integration

1. Curriculum Overhaul

Mandate daily meditation sessions and ahimsā ethics courses in schools.

Train teachers in nonviolent communication and trauma-informed pedagogy.

¹ Basic Principles of Prekṣā Meditation, 1993, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhārati Institute, Lāḍnūn.

² Reading the Violences of School Through a New Lens, Jessica Cira Rubin.

2. Corporate and Policy Alignment Companies adopt Ahimsaka policies: e.g., conflict resolution training and eco-conscious operations.¹

Governments fund research on meditation's societal benefits, citing Jain models.

In the 'Evaluation of Jainism' Dr. Bansidhar Bhatt² says I humbly do feel that Jainism – on par with other discipline should be one of the regular courses in the higher studies at university level. In the present context of complex interdisciplinary set up of knowledge, Jainism no doubt remains one of the compulsory disciplines.

3. Cultural Shifts

Public campaigns normalize self-restraint (e.g., meat reduction) as markers of civic duty.

Art and media celebrate pluralism, reflecting Anekāntavāda's 'many-sided truth'.

Jain education models prove that inner peace precedes outer peace. By prioritizing self-mastery over punitive reforms, societies can dismantle structural violence at its roots. As Ācārya Tulsi noted: "Coexistence flourishes when equanimity becomes instinctual". Through meditative rigor and ethical literacy, ahimsā evolves from abstract ideal to lived reality-a quiet revolution rewiring humanity's collective psyche.

Anekāntavāda: Jainism's Doctrine of Non-Absolutism

Anekāntavāda affirms that reality is inexhaustibly complex: no single statement can capture all its dimensions. Any substance (dravya) displays **infinite attributes** (ananta-dharma), each of which comes to light only from a particular standpoint (naya).

Four dimensions of reality that compel a non-absolutist view

Temporal extension – past, present, future

Spatial extension

Dynamic/state duality – changing modes vs. enduring substratum

Permanence-in-flux – simultaneous stability and transformation

Etymology

¹Arham Bodh, 2024, Shri Pranamya Sagar, Arhat Vidhya Samiti, Gotegaon.

² Evaluation of Jainism, 1985-95, Dr Bansidhar Bhatt, Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 66(1/4).

- **aneka** – ‘manifold, infinite’
- **anta** – ‘aspects, ends’
- **vāda** – ‘doctrine, exposition’

Thus, Anekāntavāda literally means “the doctrine that things possess countless aspects.”

Logical Instruments

| Principle | Function | Key idea |
|-----------------|-----------|--|
| Nayavāda | Analytic | Each <i>naya</i> isolates one legitimate slice of truth about an object. |
| Syādvāda | Synthetic | By prefixing assertions with <i>syāt</i> (‘from a certain viewpoint’), one weaves partial insights into a provisional, many-sided account. |

Anekāntavāda supplies the ontology; Nayavāda dissects; Syādvāda re-integrates the pieces into responsible speech.

Application to the Soul (Ātmā)

Jain thinkers first honed Anekāntavāda to explain the soul’s dual nature: infinite, immutable qualities (jñāna, darśana) coexist with karmically conditioned states. Only a plurality of perspectives does justice to this complexity.

Ethical and Social Reach

Intellectual stance

- Cultivates humility: every claim is true only in context.
- Encourages perpetual inquiry and readiness to revise.

Social consequence

- Fosters tolerance and dialogue across conflicting ideologies.
- Underpins Jain commitments to ahimsā (non-violence) in thought, word, and deed.
- Provides a non-violent framework for resolving disputes—endorsed by scholars such as

T.G. Kalghatgi¹ indispensable in a pluralistic world.

¹ Study of Jainism, T.G. Kalghatgi, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur, 1988.

Aparigraha (non-acquisition / non-possession):

Aparigraha, the cardinal principle of Jainism, has been emphasized in the tradition, from its origin. One can rightly say that ahimsā, the defining principle of Jainism, and Aparigraha go hand in hand. In the contemporary period, ahimsā, anekānta and aparigraha have become a Trinity of Jainism for the World around.

Jains practice non-attachment to material possessions and worldly desires. This principle fosters a simple lifestyle and generosity, urging followers to minimize their needs and contribute to the welfare of others (book referred Compendium) The Jaina view of Aparigraha may be presented in the context of modern society in three cardinal principles – 1. Desireless, 2. non-possession and 3. Develop an attitude of non-attachment towards possessions.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, one of the primary texts of Jainism, reviews the Jain outlook on life, emphasizing that attachment to life and possessions is the root cause of suffering and bondage. The text stresses the importance of self-discipline, penance, and the subjugation of animal instincts to achieve spiritual liberation. The Sūtra outlines the significance of controlling one's passions and adopting a life of renunciation to attain spiritual freedom. The Āgama is an invaluable source for setting the soul free from the karmic cycle by cleansing it from evil influences, as it mentions several processes of self-purification.

Doctrines Recorded in the Sūtrakṛtāṅga

The Sūtrakṛtāṅga, another significant Jain text, elaborates on Mahāvīra's teachings. It emphasizes the right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct as the path to liberation. The text expands Mahāvīra's teachings, framing aparigraha as essential to right conduct alongside right faith and right knowledge. It critiques materialism, arguing that hoarding violates the Jain maxim:

“Live merely to sustain, not to accumulate.”¹

The Tattvārthasūtra defines parigraha (possessiveness) as entanglement in material or emotional cravings (mūrcchā parigraha)², which distorts judgment and fuels violence. Aparigraha-its antidote-cultivates detachment and clarity.

¹ Śrutaskṛtāṅga Sūtra (Hindi ṭīkā-sahita), 1989, Śrī Mādhukara Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Bēvār, Rājasthān.

² Commentary on Tattvārtha Sūtra of Vācaka Umāsvāti, K. K. Dixit, L. D. Series No. 44, Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1974.

The opposite of this is Aparigraha which means not getting entangled with anything, not losing all senses of discrimination out of pinning for that thing.

Accordingly, the two principles, viz. ahimsā, and Aparigraha constituted the fundamental structure of Jaina ethics and soteriology. Both the principles were defined as Mahāvratāḥ, i.e. the great vows meant for the ascetics, as well as Anuvratas, i.e. the smaller vows meant for the householders. It is interesting to note that though the two were enumerated as distinct vows, those were not kept conceptually very distinct. It was also claimed that ahimsā is a central vow and all other vows i.e. Satya, Asteya, Brahmachārya and Non-possession are like a fence, defining the expansion of ahimsā in various directions. In this manner, a close relation between ahimsā and Aparigraha was made explicit in the tradition itself. And the spirit of Anekānta flows as the undercurrent of the Jain philosophy. From the Jaina maxim of ‘respect for all life’ arises the corollary of honouring every viewpoint; thus, Anekāntavāda is revered as non-violence in the realm of thought.

Bhagavān Mahāvīra states: “Unrestrained desire leads to endless wants, encouraging unethical living and negative traits. When attachment overcomes practical use, possessiveness becomes unbreakable.”

Ācārya Mahāprajña observes: “Possession is a condition of attachment to objects that, in effect, governs and perpetuates violence.” In a socio-economic context he states that “The seed of acquisition grows into a tree of violence-its fruits are war, inequality, and ecological collapse.”¹

Socio-Economic Implications

Anti-Consumerism: Jainism’s minimalist ethos counters modern capitalism’s excesses. Gandhi, influenced by Jain thought, asserted:

“The less you possess, the more you serve humanity.”²

Conflict Resolution: By rejecting material obsession, societies mitigate greed-driven conflicts (e.g., wars over resources).

Ecological Sustainability: Limiting consumption reduces waste and habitat destruction, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals.

¹ Violence, Acharya Mahapragya, 2007, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, Rajasthan.

² Quotes of Mahatma Gandhiji.

Aparigraha extends to ideas, with Anekāntavāda discouraging rigid viewpoints, fostering dialogue across ideologies.

Legacy and Relevance Jainism's aparigraha counters modernity's consumption-driven ethos, framing non-possession as active non-violence, thus promoting:

- Personal liberation through detachment
- Social equity via wealth redistribution
- Ecological balance through mindful consumption

As the Ācārāṅga Sūtra concludes: “Freedom lies not in having, but in being.”¹ In an age of climate crises and inequality, this ancient philosophy calls for collective awakening.



¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Shri Amarmuniji, 2010, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur, Raj.



CHAPTER 2
Ācārāṅga Sūtra



Chapter 2

Ācārāṅga Sūtra

2.1 Ācārāṅga in the Dvādaśāṅgī Canon

In the Jain tradition, the collection of sacred texts (Āgamas) is known as the Gaṇipīṭaka which comprises twelve principal Aṅgas (canonical works). Among these twelve Aṅgas, Ācārāṅga holds the first and foremost position.¹ To illustrate the relative positions of the Aṅgas, the Jain sages conceived the image of a ‘Śruta-puruṣa’ (Personification of Scripture). In this metaphor, Ācārāṅga is designated as the right foot and Sūtrakṛtāṅga as the left foot of the Śruta-puruṣa – implying that the entirety of revealed scripture stands firmly supported by Ācārāṅga and Sūtrakṛtāṅga.² Without these, the remaining Aṅgas cannot stand on their own. This imagery alone highlights the great importance of Ācārāṅga.

According to the Nirukti (ancient commentary), at the beginning of a new Tīrtha (religious order), a Tīrthaṅkara first expounds the Ācārāṅga, followed by the other Aṅgas.³ The Gaṇadharas (chief disciples) then organize the first scripture as Ācārāṅga Sūtra and compile the rest of the Aṅgas thereafter. Another view suggests that a Tīrthaṅkara first delivers the Pūrvas (ancient teachings) but arranges Ācārāṅga as the first scripture in the compilation.⁴ A third opinion is that the very first teaching and composition of the scriptures both begin with Ācārāṅga.⁵ In any case, there is no doubt that, in one way or another, Ācārāṅga occupies a principal place among the Aṅgas.

The ancient commentator Bhadrabāhu (the Niruktikar) extols the greatness of Ācārāṅga by calling it ‘first among Aṅgas’ and ‘the essence of the teaching (pravachana-sāra)’. He also refers to it with the term ‘Veda,’ indicating its revered status. In Jain scriptures, two categories of scriptural knowledge (shruta-jñāna) are

¹ Samavāyāṅga Sūtra, 126, Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, 1982.

² Nandī Sūtra (Chūrṇi-pāṭha 47), edited by Madhukar Muni, published by Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, 1982.

³ Āvaśyaka Nirukti (Khaṇḍa-1), Achārya Bhadrabāhu, with commentary by Haribhadra Sūri, Śrī Bherulāla Kanaiyālāla Kothārī Dhārmika Ṭraṣṭa, Mumbai in 1981.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Cūrṇi Patra 3, edited by Madhukar Muni.

⁵ Samvayanga Sutra 136, Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, 1982.

described: (1) Aṅga-praviṣṭa – the knowledge contained within the Aṅgas and (2) Aṅga-bāhya¹ – knowledge outside of the Aṅgas. Ācārāṅga is counted among the Aṅga-praviṣṭa śruta. It is said that upon questions posed by the Gaṇadharas, the Tirthāṅkara gave the three-part teaching of utpāda, vyaya, and dhrauvya (origination, cessation, permanence), from which the Aṅga-praviṣṭa (inner) scripture arose; scriptures taught without such specified purport are termed Aṅga-bāhya (outer).² By this reckoning, Ācārāṅga clearly belongs to the Aṅga-praviṣṭa category of sacred knowledge.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra is divided into two major sections (Śrutaskandhas). The first Śrutaskandha consists of nine chapters (adhyayanās), now it is eight, and the second Śrutaskandha consists of five shorter sections called Cūlikās (appendices), at present there are four. Each of the nine chapters of the first section is called a Brahmācārya (discipline of self-restraint), so the first Śrutaskandha is also referred to by the name ‘Brahmācāryā’. Because it is a compilation of nine Brahmācārya (chapters on conduct), the first part is known by that term. In the second Śrutaskandha, each of the sixteen sub-sections is called an Ācārāṅga; thus, the collection of those is referred to by the name ‘Ācārāṅga’ for the second part.

Scholarly evidence suggests that the original Ācārāṅga comprised only what is now the first Śrutaskandha, and that the second Śrutaskandha was appended later.³ The Nirvyūktikār Bhadrabāhu indicates that originally there were ‘nine Brahmācārya containing eighteen thousand verses’ and that later ‘five Cūlikās’ were added. He notes that by his time, the fifth Cūlikās had already been lost, implying that originally there was a fifth appendix called Niśītha or Ācārakalpa, which later disappeared.⁴ (He provides two names for that lost fifth Cūlikās: ‘Niśītha’ and ‘Ācārakalpa’.) These observations reinforce that the first Śrutaskandha is the oldest core of the Ācārāṅga, with the second being a subsequent⁵ but still ancient addition.

¹ Nandi Sūtra 44, Śrī Madhukar Muniji, 1990, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, 1982.

² Viśeṣa Āvaśyaka Bhāṣya, Subhadramuni (with translation/editorial notes by Dāmodar Śāstrī), Muni Mayāram Samodhi Prakāśan, 2009.

³ Āvaśyaka Nirvyūkti 12, Ācārya Bhadrabāhu, Nirvyūktipañcaka Saṅgraha, ed. Muni Shri Jambūvijaya, Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai, 1985.

⁴ Āvaśyaka Nirvyūkti 297 Tika, Ācārya Bhadrabāhu, Nirvyūktipañcaka Saṅgraha, ed. Muni Shri Jambūvijaya, Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai, 1985.

⁵ A History of Indian Literature (Volum II), Sisir Kumar Das, Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1995, p. 437.

Even though the second part is considered later, it was already incorporated into the Ācārāṅga by the time of Bhadrabāhu, and there is no doubt that it too is very old.

The first Śrutaskandha of Ācārāṅga does not enumerate specific vows (yamas and niyamas) for monks in a list form, yet it contains a pervasive spirit of religious dedication and an all-encompassing guidance toward self-discipline in life. In essence, it preaches ātma-nigraha (self-restraint). The aphorisms of the first section convey profound philosophical reflections and fundamental principles for an aspirant monk's spiritual practice. The text does not explicitly instruct the method of spiritual practice, but through its deep contemplative teachings, it inspires the monk toward the path of self-restraint and inner realization. The sentences are succinct yet filled with great meaning and life value; readers can experience for themselves the depth of insight contained in these aphorisms.

Modern scholars have also recognized the significance of Ācārāṅga's first section. The German scholar Dr. Walther Schubring, in his German translation of the first Śrutaskandha, titled it 'Die Worte Mahāvīras' ('The Words of Mahāvīra').¹ Dr. Schubring opines that the first Śrutaskandha preserves the original words of Lord Mahāvīra. Along similar lines, scholar Shri Gopaldas Jivabhai Patel has written: "With regard to the Ācārāṅga, it can certainly be said that if any scripture contains Mahāvīra's own words, it is the Ācārāṅga."² Thus, through this compilation of aphorisms, readers are offered a glimpse of Mahāvīra's deeply meaningful utterances in their authentic form.

"If one seeks to realize spiritual contemplation, reflection, and a disciplined life, then before us stands this ancient and supreme scripture of the Śramaṇa tradition – the Ācārāṅga Sūtra."³

The primary focus of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra is ahimsā (non-violence), which is presented as the supreme principle governing all aspects of life. The text explores the nature of the soul, karma, renunciation, self-discipline, and the necessity of ascetic practices to attain spiritual liberation (Mokṣa). It provides detailed instructions on the conduct of monks and highlights the importance of self-restraint, meditation, and detachment

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Critical edition of the original text, edited by Dr. Walther Schubring.

² Mahāvīra Svāmī no Ācāra-Dharma, Gopāldās Jivabhāi Paṭe (in Ācārāṅga ke sūktā by Śrī Cand Rampuriyā).

³ Jain Sahitya ka Itihas: Ācārāṅga Sūtra (Śramaṇa yr 9 Article 1 pg.8).

from material possessions. Additionally, it discusses the various forms of life (earth, water, fire, air, and mobile beings) and their susceptibility to suffering, reinforcing Jainism's emphasis on universal compassion.

Synonyms of Ācārāṅga in Nirukti

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra is referred to by various synonyms in Nirukti (commentaries), each highlighting a different aspect of its content¹:

- Āyāra – A scripture that establishes conduct.
- Ācala – A scripture that prevents sinful bondage.
- Āgala – A scripture that establishes consciousness on a firm foundation.
- Āgara – A scripture that produces the jewels of soul purification.
- Āśāsa – A scripture that provides assurance to 'frightened consciousness' or 'distressed awareness.'
- Āyāriyasa – 'A scripture dedicated to duty' or 'a text focused on the fulfillment of responsibilities.'
- Aṅga – A primary scripture that establishes principles like non-violence.
- Aiṇṇa – A scripture that establishes the path of righteous religion.
- Ājāi – A scripture that presents knowledgeable etc. conduct.
- Āmoḍha – A scripture that establishes the process of liberation from bondage.²

Meaning of Ācār - According to Paeyasaddamahannavo, the term ācāra means:

- ācāraṇa (practice or conduct)
- anusthāna (observance of religious duties)
- calacalana (movements and behavior)
- rīti (customs and traditions)
- bhaṇṭ (manner or style)
- First Aṅga in the 12 Aṅgas (as the first Aṅga in Jain canonical literature)
- nipuṇa śiṣya (a proficient disciple, as one who follows strict conduct)

¹ Ācārāṅga Nirukti, Bhadrabāhu, Niruktipaṇcaka: Ācārāṅga Nirukti, ed. Śrī Tulasī, pradhāna sampādaka Ācārya Mahāprajñā, sampādikā Samāṇī Kusumaprajñā, anuvādaka Muni Dulaharāja; Ladnun: Jaina Viśva Bhāratī, 1st edition 1999 – Vol. 3 of Niruktipaṇcaka series.

² Ācārāṅga and Mahāvīra, 2001, Sādhvī Śubhrāyaśājī, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Lāḍanūn, Rājasthān.

The Navabrahmacarya¹ was named by Niryuktikār and emphasizes purity, restraint, and self-discipline as essential principles of Jain ascetic life. According to Cūrṇikārā one who practices Brahmacharya engages in tapa (austerity), Samyama (self-restraint), and parākrama (spiritual effort). Furthermore, Bhāṣyakāra states that Brahmacharya means Ātmavidhya² (knowledge of the self). After analyzing various connotations of Brahmacharya, it becomes evident that the name of the first division of Ācārāṅga as Brahmacharya is appropriately justified.

Philosophical View of Ācārāṅga

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra is not just a manual of conduct; it represents a deep philosophical exploration of reality and the self. It emphasizes the relativity of existence and perception, a foundational concept in Jain philosophy that later evolved into Anekāntavāda (the doctrine of multiple viewpoints). The text suggests that ethical purity is directly connected to the ability to perceive truth—a soul weighed down by karma that cannot attain true knowledge.

A central teaching in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra is the non-dualistic view of existence, as illustrated in:

“Nev se anto, Nev se dure” – “Neither is it at an end, nor is it far away.”³

This cryptic statement suggests that truth is neither bound by limitations nor infinitely distant, implying that enlightenment is accessible through self-realization rather than external pursuits.

Another key verse states:

“Je egam janai, se savvam janai; Je savvam janai, se egam janai”⁴

(“One who knows one, knows all; One who knows all, knows one.”)

This passage underlines the Jain epistemological belief that understanding the self is the key to understanding the entire cosmos. The notion is closely tied to the Jain concept of Kevala-jñāna (omniscience), which is achieved when a soul is freed from karmic obstructions. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra further explores self-realization through

¹ Ācārāṅga Nirukti gatha11, Ācārya Bhadrabāhu, Edited by Muni Jambūvijaya. Bhāvnagar: Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, 1966.

² Ācārāṅga Churni pg21.Jindasgani Mahattar.

³ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, 2022, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Lādnūn, Rāj.

⁴ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Śrī Amar Muni, 2010. Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

⁵ Acharanga Sutra3/4/129, Shri Madhukar Muni, 1989, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśan Samiti, Beawar.

introspection, as highlighted in: “Purisa tummeva tumam maittam”¹ (“O man, you are your own friend.”)

This verse emphasizes self-reliance in the spiritual journey, reinforcing that one's liberation is solely dependent on personal effort and inner purity. Additionally, another verse deepens the concept of self-purification: “Tumam cheva tam sallamahattu”² (“You alone must remove your own thorn.”)

This metaphor suggests that liberation is a personal endeavor; just as one must remove a thorn from their own foot, one must also eradicate karmic impurities independently.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra is written in a deeply poetic and secretive style, typical of early Jain scriptures. It employs:

- Repetition to reinforce ethical teachings.
- Paradoxical statements to challenge linear thinking and provoke deeper introspection.
- Elliptical phrases that leave interpretations open-ended, encouraging meditation and self-inquiry.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra ultimately presents a vision of the world where the path to truth is intricately tied to self-discipline and ethical purity. It reinforces the idea that perception of reality is not merely intellectual but experiential, requiring the ascetic to undergo deep transformation. By advocating ahimsa, self-restraint, and introspection, it provides a blueprint for spiritual liberation that is both practical and deeply philosophical.

The verses emphasize that self-reliance and personal effort are essential in achieving enlightenment. Liberation is an inward journey, where one removes karmic impurities just as one would remove a thorn embedded in the body.

With this profound philosophical framework, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra sets the foundation for Jain ethical conduct and spiritual discipline. Its insights into self-realization, truth, and perception remain central to Jain thought, influencing generations of monks and scholars.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 3/3/125, Madhukar Muni, 1989, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśan Samiti, Beawar.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra 2/4/83, Madhukar Muni, 1989, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśan Samiti, Beawar.

2.2 Significance of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra holds immense significance in Jain philosophy, ethics, and ascetic traditions. Its impact can be observed in several key areas:

1. Ethical Foundations of Jainism - At its core, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra establishes Ahimsā (non-violence) as the highest virtue, making it the foundational principle of Jain life. Unlike other Indian traditions that advocate non-violence primarily in human interactions, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra expands its scope to include all living beings, including microorganisms and elemental life forms (earth, water, fire, air, and plants). This broad and radical approach to non-violence has influenced Jain dietary, occupational, and lifestyle choices.

2. Ascetic Discipline and Spiritual Purification

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra serves as a manual for monks and nuns, detailing strict ascetic practices required for spiritual progress. These include:

- Renouncing possessions and social ties
- Avoiding violence in thought, words, and action
- Practicing austerities such as fasting, meditation, and solitude
- Adopting rigorous ethical conduct in speech, livelihood, and interpersonal interactions

The text underscores the link between ascetic discipline and the reduction of karmic bondage, leading to liberation (Mokṣa).

3. Jain Cosmology and Karma Theory

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3. Jain Cosmology and Karma Theory

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra elaborates on the nature of the soul (Jīva) and the mechanism of karma, describing how attachments and passions bind individuals to Saṁsāra (the cycle of birth and death). It teaches that liberation can only be achieved through self-restraint and renunciation, making it a crucial text for understanding Jain metaphysics and soteriology.

4. Historical and Literary Importance

As one of the oldest Jain scriptures, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra provides valuable insight into the early development of Jainism. Its Ardhamāgadhī Prākṛit composition makes it an essential linguistic and historical document, helping scholars trace the evolution of Jain doctrinal and linguistic traditions over centuries.

5. Influence on Jain Monastic and Lay Life

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra continues to shape the lives of Jain monks, nuns, and householders emphasizing:

- Minimal consumption and detachment from material comforts.
- Avoidance of harm to all living beings
- Strict dietary and lifestyle choices
- Spiritual detachment is the key to liberation.

Its teaching remains a guiding force for contemporary Jain practitioners, reinforcing the ideals of self-discipline and non-violence in daily life.

6. Bhagavān Mahāvīra's Ascetic Journey

The text vividly narrates Mahāvīra's hardships, extreme penance, and endurance of suffering, demonstrating the highest ideals of Jain renunciation. His journey serves as a model for Jain ascetics, emphasizing the power of patience, discipline, and self-purification as essential means to spiritual realization.

Thus, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra is the cornerstone of Jain ethical and spiritual thought. By presenting Mahāvīra's teachings in their purest form, it has shaped Jain philosophy, monastic codes, and ethical practices for over two millennia. It establishes non-violence, renunciation, and asceticism as essential means to attain liberation and

continues to inspire Jain ascetics and lay practitioners today. The text reaffirms Jainism's timeless commitment to compassion, truth, and spiritual discipline, ensuring its relevance across generation.

2.3 Subject Matter

The summary of the chapters of Pratham Śrutaskandha of Ācārāṅga Sūtra is as follows: This section lays the foundation for Jain monastic principles, emphasizing the core values of non-violence (Ahimsā), truthfulness, non-possession, and self-discipline. It provides detailed instructions on ascetic conduct, sensory restraint, and the path to spiritual purity. The text highlights the importance of mindfulness and vigilance in every action, ensuring that monks avoid even the slightest harm to living beings. Through unwavering adherence to these principles, an ascetic gradually moves toward liberation (Mokṣa).

Second Division: Expanding upon the first, this section further elaborates on monastic discipline, ethical dilemmas, and practical challenges faced by ascetics. It offers insights into interactions with laypeople, sustenance practices, and maintaining detachment in daily life. The text underscores the karmic consequences of negligence and stresses the necessity of continuous self-awareness. The practice of Sallekhanā (fasting unto death) is presented as the ultimate expression of renunciation, enabling monks to leave the body with spiritual consciousness and equanimity.

Here we discuss the subject matter of each Chapter (Adhyayan) of:

Chapter One - Śāstra-parijñā -

Awareness of Existence: Knowing the Self

The journey toward self-realization begins with understanding one's own existence. This awareness is the foundation of spiritual growth and leads to the highest form of wisdom, or parijñā. Knowledge of the self is central to understanding the nature of the universe and one's role within it. The following philosophical perspectives help in framing this understanding:

1. **Ātmavādī** – (affirmer of soul)¹ an ātma-vadi is one who affirms the existence of the soul and understands its continuity beyond the present life. The Ācārāṅga

¹ Acharanga ke Sukta, Shrichand Rampuriya, 1960, Oswal Press, Calcutta-7.

addresses who truly deserve to be called a believer in the soul. The one who believes in the supremacy of the soul and its independence. In Jainism, the ātman is a **real, eternal, individual soul**, distinct from the body.

2. **Lokavādī** – (affirmer of the world’s existence beyond the immediate) many people in this world do not have the awareness of where they have come from or whether they had a prior existence. They never consider, for instance, “Did I come from the eastern direction, the south, west, north, above, below, or any other direction before being born here?” Such thoughts simply do not occur to them. The one who acknowledges the existence of the material world, and its influence is lokavādī.
3. **Kriyāvādī** – (affirmer of the efficacy of spiritual action) the one who believes in actions and their consequences. In Jainism, this asserts that liberation is achieved through right conduct, not by grace or chance.
4. **Karmavādī** – (one who affirms the reality of karma) the one who understands the law of karma and its role in shaping one’s destiny. A true seeker moves beyond superficial awareness and seeks to comprehend the deeper connections between soul, action, and the material world.¹ Jainism emphasizes **karmic bondage** and its purification as the central path to liberation.

In summary, Ātmavādī, Lokavādī, Kriyāvādī, Karmavādī

These four terms collectively describe the core metaphysical and ethical realism of Jain philosophy.

Inflow of Karma and Stoppage of Karma

This section examines why living beings engage in actions that cause harm and the importance of understanding the motives behind such actions. Karma - samārambha refers to the undertaking of activities (often violent or harmful actions) that bind one with karma.

The cycle of karma is central to understanding spiritual progress. The inflow (Āsrava) of karma occurs through attachment, desires, and indulgence in worldly pleasures.

¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Śrī. Āmārmuni, 2010, Padam Prakashan, Delhi, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

Stoppage (Samvara) happens when one cultivates discipline, control, and a conscious effort to detach from harmful actions.

- **Āsrava (Inflow of Karma):** The accumulation of karmic particles due to thoughts, words, and deeds. Nine types of Kriyās are explained here.
- **Samvara (Stoppage of Karma):** Preventing new karmic particles from attaching to the soul through ethical conduct, mindfulness, and renunciation. It discusses knowledge and realization of knowledge.¹

Carefulness in Non-Harming All Six Life Forms

Ahimsā (non-violence) is the highest virtue and must be extended to all six categories of life forms:

1. Ekendriya (One-sensed beings) – Plants, water, air, and earth-bodied organisms.
2. Dvindriya (Two-sensed beings) – Worms and shellfish.
3. Trindriya (Three-sensed beings) – Ants and termites.
4. Caturindriya (Four-sensed beings) – Bees, flies, and other small insects.
5. Asaṅgānī Pañcendriya (Five-sensed beings, without mind) – non-human animals.
6. Saṅgānī Pañcendriya (Five-sensed beings, with mind) – Humans and higher beings.

A truly aware being exercises vigilance in thoughts, words, and actions to ensure non-violence in all aspects of life.

Who is Anāgāra?

In Jain tradition, Anāgāra refers to:

A person who has renounced the household life and embraced monasticism—a śramaṇa committed to spiritual liberation through non-possession (aparigraha), austerity (tapas), and self-restraint (saṁyama). Anāgāra literally means ‘homeless’ or ‘one without a house.’

It is the opposite of gr̥hastha (householder).

Mahāvīra is often referred to as the supreme Anāgāra after taking dīkṣā (renunciation).

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, 2022, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Lādnūn, Rāj.

Such a person does not engage in materialistic desires and follows the path of self-discipline and renunciation. Only a self-realized being can truly follow non-violence, as their actions are free from ego, desire, and attachment.

Comparison with Self

Self-reflection is a crucial practice for evaluating one's spiritual progress. One must compare their current state with the ideal of self-awareness and renunciation. True transformation occurs when a seeker:

- Recognizes their flaws and attachments.
- Strives for purity of thought and action.
- Cultivates discipline and control over desires.

This process of Svādhyāya (self-study) and Ātma-chintan (self-introspection) leads to genuine spiritual growth.

Feeling Renunciation

Renunciation is not merely about giving up material possessions but also about mental detachment from desires and ego. This state is attained through:

Parijñā (Highest Knowledge or Wisdom) – The realization of the self beyond the physical realm.

Jñāna-caitanya (Knowing Consciousness) – Awareness of the pure, eternal soul beyond karma.

Pratyākhyāna-parijñā (Discerning Attitude and Discipline) – The ability to renounce negative tendencies and cultivate positive spiritual attributes.

The Truth about the Weapon

True power does not lie in external weapons but in the ability to conquer one's own inner weaknesses. A weapon may destroy external enemies, but wisdom and self-discipline eliminate internal vices like anger, greed, and ignorance. The highest weapon is true knowledge (Jñāna), which leads to liberation from the cycle of birth and death.¹

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, 2022, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Lādnūn, Rāj.

By understanding these principles and cultivating self-discipline, one progresses on the path of spiritual enlightenment and liberation.

Chapter 2: Conquest of the World (Lok Vijaya)

The second chapter of the Ācārāṅga, first Śrutaskandha, is titled ‘Lokavijaya,’ often interpreted as ‘Conquest of the World.’ However, this conquest is not about world dominion but about conquering the inner world of attachments and aversions. People perform various actions for different purposes. For example, some undertake deeds for the sake of their livelihood, for rituals and sacrifices, for honor or reputation, or to gain praise and reverence. Others act out of greed for wealth or material benefit, or to fulfill worldly desires. All such undertakings that involve harm are considered karma-samārambha - actions that initiate the influx of karma.

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The conquest of the world refers to conquering one’s internal world – the realm of one’s own emotions, desires, and passions. The ‘world’ to be conquered is the worldly bondage that the soul experiences. The text teaches that true victory is not through subjugating external enemies, but through subduing the internal enemies such as anger, pride, deceit, greed (collectively called kashayas), and various attachments, because these are the causes that bind one to the cycle of birth and death.

One should neither encourage nor praise those who engage in harmful rites or violent endeavors, nor should one regard such destructive actions as good. In this second section, conquest of the inner world (bhāva-loka)² through self-restraint (saṁyama) is emphasized: the teaching here instructs that one must conquer passions (like krodha, māna, māyā, lobha) that lead to karmic bondage. Victory over those inner enemies is

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukara Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beāwar, Rāj.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukara Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beāwar, Rāj.

the true ‘world conquest’ a spiritual aspirant should seek. Thus, overcoming the impulses that cause one to start harmful karma-yielding actions is the message of this teaching.

Key Themes:

1. Victory over Greed: Replacing greed with contentment.
2. Alertness and Discipline: Recognizing the fleeting nature of life and staying disciplined.
3. Conquering Inner Enemies: Overcoming anger, passion, and attachments.
4. Symbolism of Meditation (Vichaya): Detachment as a pathway to enlightenment.
5. Valour and Endeavour (Vijaya): Striving with courage and determination in spiritual growth.

Types of Lok (Worlds) in Niryukti:

The term ‘Lok’ (लोक) in Jain philosophy, which refers to the universe or cosmos, is traditionally categorized into **eight types** based on different perspectives. Nāma (Identity or Nomenclature)

- Sthāpana (Existence or Basis)
- Dravya (substance)
- Kṣetra (Area or space)
- Bhāva (Mental Disposition)
- Bhava (State of Rebirth)
- Paryāya (Modifications or Transformations)

This chapter primarily explores Bhāva Lok, the realm of emotions, mental dispositions, and inner passions.

Six Lessons from Verse 172 of Niryukti¹:

1. Avoiding fondness for relatives and others.
2. Abandoning apathy and laxity in discipline.

¹Ācārāṅga Niryukti, Ācārya Bhadrabāhu, 1966, Edited by Muni Jambūvijaya, Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Bhāvnagar.

3. Overcoming superiority and inferiority complexes.
4. Avoiding craving for mundane pleasures.
5. Moving cautiously in the world to ensure a disciplined path.
6. Avoiding excessive attachment in all aspects of life.

In summary: A steadfast individual, unwavering in discipline, remains untouched by the lure of worldly pleasures. A true seeker of liberation (*mumukṣu*) deeply contemplates the cyclical nature of birth and death, continually strengthening their commitment to self-restraint and inner purification.

As the text affirms:

“He who understands the motivations behind violent undertakings and overcomes them is the monk who has comprehended action (*parijñāta* – Karma Muni), thus I say.”¹ In essence, the monk who fully discerns the causes and consequences of such actions and consciously renounces the impulse to engage in them-is the one who has attained true insight.

This profound understanding of karma-samarambha (the initiation of action) is foundational for spiritual advancement. By cultivating deep insight into the nature of reality and internalizing the *tattvas* (fundamental principles of existence), one begins to transcend the emotional entanglements of Bhāva Lok-the world of mental states, passions, and delusions-and moves steadily toward liberation.

Chapter 3: Cold and Hot (Śītōṣṇīya)

This chapter explores equanimity in the face of favorable and unfavorable conditions. The title literally means ‘pertaining to cold and heat.’ It teaches tolerance towards pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion.

Key Themes:

1. Śīta (Favorable Conditions): Representing pleasure, discipline, and positive karma.
2. Uṣṇa (Unfavorable Conditions): Denoting suffering, afflictions, and mental distress.

¹ Ācārāṅga ke Sūkt, 1960 Śrī Chand Raṇpurīya (ed.), Jain Svetamber Terapanthi Mahasabha, Calcutta-7.

3. Equanimity: A seeker must remain undisturbed in both favorable and unfavorable conditions.
4. Mental Awareness: In Jain philosophy, true wakefulness is not merely physical alertness but a state of spiritual awareness-a mind that sees reality clearly, unclouded by delusion. Conversely, slumber symbolizes spiritual ignorance, where the soul remains entangled in illusion and attachment.
5. Freedom from Passion: Overcoming desires, attachments, and mental agitation.

Lessons from the Chapter:

1. Distinguishing between wakefulness and spiritual alertness.
2. Recognizing that only a mentally aware seeker truly experiences joy and suffering.
3. Emphasizing that mere tolerance of pain does not make one a true spiritual aspirant.
4. Teaching that liberation comes from shedding passions and attachments.

Conclusion:

The chapter teaches “Those who are seekers of self-realization do not complain about the cold, saying ‘I am cold, I am cold,’ nor do they complain about the heat, saying ‘I burn, I burn.’” Instead, they conquer these sensations by firmness of mind. By doing so, they purify their karma and progress on the path.

Thus, Śītōṣṇīya teaches the virtue of equanimity (Samatā) in the face of opposites like cold and heat, pleasure and pain. This ability is crucial for an ascetic to concentrate on spiritual pursuits without distraction. The text likely concludes that one who has conquered the sensations of cold and heat is on the way to conquering other dualities as well, eventually attaining peace beyond all pairs of opposites. The importance of mental balance and detachment ensures that external circumstances do not dictate inner peace. True seekers transcend worldly fluctuations through discipline and wisdom.

Chapter 4: Samyaktva (Righteousness)

The fourth chapter of Ācārāṅga Sūtra elaborates on the essence of righteous conduct (Dharma) for ascetics and laypersons. The awareness or knowledge of the true form of things is samyaktva. Samyaktva means seeing things as they truly are and having unflinching faith in the principles of Jainism (such as truth of the soul, karma, and liberation).

The text emphasizes what constitutes Samyak-Darśana (Right Perception) and contrasts it with false beliefs. It likely begins by stating that right faith is the foundation of the path: without samyaktva, no amount of austerity or knowledge can lead to liberation, just as a boat without a rudder cannot reach the shore.

Bhāva-samyaktva is of four types which are part of the process of liberation. - 1. Samyak-Darśana (right perception), 2. Samyak-Jñāna (right knowledge), 3. Samyak-Cāritra (right conduct) and 4. Samyak tapa (right austerities). This chapter titled Samyaktva, is aimed at defining the fundamentals of these four types of righteousness of attitude. It emphasizes the practice of Ahimsā (non-violence), self-discipline, detachment, and renunciation as fundamental to attaining spiritual purity. The text describes the ideal way of living by highlighting the importance of restraint in speech, thought, and action, encouraging a life free from material attachments and indulgence in sensual pleasures.

In conclusion, Samyaktva (Right Faith) is presented as the first step of the three jewels (Right Faith, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct). The aphorisms here inspire the aspirant to cultivate a truthful and reverent outlook. With samyaktva established, the monk's efforts in study and discipline will bear fruit. True righteousness, according to Ācārāṅga Sūtra, is not merely ritualistic but a state of inner awakening, aligning one's actions with universal truth and compassion.

Chapter 5: Loka-Sāra (The Essence of the World)

Loka-Sāra literally means 'essence of the universe' or 'essence of worldly existence.' In this fifth chapter, the teaching likely delves into an analysis of the nature of the world, possibly highlighting its impermanent and unsatisfactory nature, thus encouraging detachment. It points out that everything in the world is temporary – all beings are subject to birth and death, all aggregations end in separation. Recognizing this truth is to grasp the 'essence of the world.'

The word 'Sāra' means result, essence, fundamental etc. The commentator (Niryukti)¹ says "The essence of the world is dharma, the essence of dharma is knowledge, the essence of knowledge is discipline, and the essence of discipline is nirvāṇa or liberation." This chapter discusses the concept of rebirth (Saṃsāra), explaining how

¹ Śrī Ācārāṅga Sūtram, Original Prakrit text with Niryukti (commentary) and Ṭīkā (sub-commentary). Publisher: Shri Siddhachakra Sahitya Pracharak Committee, Bombay.

past actions shape future existences. It emphasizes the principles of karma, rebirth, and liberation, explaining how worldly beings remain trapped in the cycle of birth and death due to ignorance and attachment. It highlights the transitory nature of existence, urging seekers to realize the impermanence of worldly pleasures and focus on spiritual awakening through self-restraint and detachment.

This chapter describes how those who attain true knowledge of Loka (the universe) develop a deep sense of detachment from material existence. It states that liberation (Mokṣā) is achieved through right perception, right knowledge, and right conduct, which leads to the dissolution of karmic bondage. Those who understand the essence of Loka-Sāra with wisdom and equanimity ultimately transcend the worldly cycle and attain Kaivalya Jñāna (absolute knowledge) and liberation.

Chapter 6: Dhūta (The Cleansed) Detachment from Worldly Desires

The simple meaning of the word dhut is washed, cleansed or purified. The commentator (Cūrṇi ¹) says – one who vibrates the karmas with the help of austerities is dhut. “Dhunanti jen kammam tavaśa tam dhutam bhanitam.”

The commentator (Vṛtti ²) defines dhut as he who has commenced his efforts to shake off eight types of karma with the help of austerity and discipline and has renounced his clan and family.

It refers to both physical purification (Dravya-dhūta) and spiritual purification (Bhāva - dhūta), where an aspirant shakes off eight types of karma through discipline and meditation.

The chapter elaborates on the five types of dhūta through five lessons:

1. Nijak Dhūta – Abandoning attachment to kin.
2. Karma Dhūta – Shaking off eight types of karmas.
3. Śarīra-Dhūta – Renouncing attachment to the body and possessions.
4. Gaurava Dhūta (Abandoning Pride): Giving up pride and ego associated with achievements, knowledge, taste, or comforts. The seeker remains humble and unattached to any honor, skills, or pleasurable experiences.

¹ Ācārāṅga Cūrṇi, Jindasagaṇi Mahattara, Edited and published by Muni Jambūvijaya. Bombay: Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, 1984. (Jain Āgama Series No. 1).

² Ācārāṅga Śīlāṅka-Vṛtti: Eka Adhyayana, Sādhvī Dr. Rājaśrī, 2001, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur, Rāj.

5. **Upasarg Dhūta** (Endurance of Hardships): Cultivating equanimity amid afflictions. The aspirant learns to tolerate all favorable or unfavorable conditions without attachment or aversion.

The terms **Abhisamvṛddha**, **Abhisambuddha**, and **Abhiniṣkrānta** hold significant meanings related to spiritual purification and liberation:

1. **Abhisamvṛddha** – This term refers to the stage of a person from childhood to growth until adolescence (approximately eight years of age).
2. **Abhisambuddha** – The term **Abhisambuddha** means one who has realized the nature of existence and freed oneself from delusion (*Mohanīya karma*). It represents a state of spiritual awakening, wherein the aspirant reaches the highest level of knowledge and understanding. A *Tīrthaṅkara* is said to be in this state from the moment of conception.
3. **Abhiniṣkrānta** – This term refers to one who has completely renounced or withdrawn from worldly attachments. It denotes a state of detachment, where the practitioner has stepped beyond materialistic ties and ego, fully committing to the ascetic life. An **Abhiniṣkrānta** is one who has crossed the threshold from worldly entanglements into the pure pursuit of the Self.

This chapter stresses that by understanding and removing the root causes of karma, an aspirant can attain the state of *Avadhūta* (absolute purification), thereby achieving true spiritual cleansing. The terms **Abhisamvṛddha** and **Abhisambuddha** highlight the states of spiritual wisdom, while **Abhiniṣkrānta** represents the act of renunciation that leads to such wisdom.

Chapter 7: Mahāparijñā (Ultimate Knowledge)

The seventh chapter of the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* is popularly known as **Mahāparijñā** and is believed to be extinct. **Mahāparijñā** refers to the realization of faults caused by attachment or fondness, which can be overcome through *Pratyākhyāna-parijñā* (renunciation through wisdom). This chapter emphasizes enduring afflictions with equanimity as a means of spiritual progress.

According to some scholars, Mahāparijñā contained Mantrāḥ, Tantrāḥ, Yantrāḥ and Guhyavidyāḥ (spiritual knowledge). Due to the potential misuse of these teachings, this chapter was separated from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra to prevent their misapplication.

Chapter 8: Vimokṣa (Emancipation)

Vimokṣa signifies ‘liberation’ or ‘release.’ This section describes the state of the liberated soul and the qualities of one who is on the verge of liberation.

It is likely opened by stating the ultimate goal Mokṣa: the release of the soul from all bondage. It may discuss the path of vimoha-kṣaya (destruction of delusion) as a prerequisite to Vimokṣa (liberation). Essentially, when a monk has destroyed all his deluding karmas, he attains omniscience and is near liberation. It is classified into two types:

- Dravya Vimokṣa – Physical emancipation.
- Bhāva Vimokṣa – Spiritual liberation. Liberation from inner passions and karmic bondage.

Further, Bhāva Vimokṣa is divided into:

- Deśa-Vimokṣa – Partial liberation.
- Sarva-vimokṣa – Absolute liberation

The text gives an inspiring picture of the liberated or nearly liberated state. For example: “Freed from all desires, free from all attachments, the sage moves about caring for none, as he has obtained inner peace.” Also, “He is neither attracted by pleasant sensations nor repelled by painful ones, seeing both as transient and external to his true self.” These are signs of one who is truly free while living (jīvan-mukta). “Having conquered anger, pride, deceit, and greed, and having ended the influx of all karma, the saint shines like a flame undisturbed by wind.” Now nothing can bind him again. The ultimate liberated state is Siddhahood - the attainment of pure, liberated existence. This perspective reflects the Jain principle of Anekāntavāda (‘many-sidedness’), acknowledging that truth and liberation have multiple aspects and viewpoints

Lessons in Vimoksha

1. Freedom from false beliefs (mithyādarśana).
2. Freedom from misaligned conduct with Jain principles (avirati, pramāda).
3. Freedom from sensual pleasures (viṣayasaṅga – detachment from sensory indulgence).
4. Progressive Renunciation from all remaining attachments - even to ascetic equipment and ultimately the body itself.

These lessons detail a progressive path of giving up one's physical supports and life itself in a disciplined manner, culminating in Sallekhanā, the vow of gradual renunciation unto death.¹

In this final phase, the ascetic prepares for twelve years of disciplined self-denial, slowly reducing food intake and bodily activity until death.²

Along this path, the text describes specific practices of holy death such as Bhaktaparijñā - complete renunciation of food and total surrender to the disciplinary vow.

Īṅgita-maraṇa - calm acceptance of death, with the monk remaining composed and minimally active while fasting to death.

Padapopagamaṇa - a prescribed ascetic conduct where the monk stands immobile 'like a tree' without food or drink until life ends.

Each successive lesson represents a deeper level of renunciation, from forsaking external wrong influences to ultimately relinquishing the body itself.

Throughout Vimokṣa, the emphasis is on progressive renunciation and strict discipline as the path to ultimate liberation. The monk advances step by step, shedding false beliefs, improper conduct, sensual attachments, and finally even reliance on the body. This disciplined gradual self-sacrifice leads to the state of a Siddha, symbolizing ultimate emancipation free of all karmic bonds.

¹ Tukol, Justice T. K. Sallekhanā is Not Suicide. Bangalore: University of Mysore, 1976.

² Flügel, Peter, ed. 2006, Studies in Jaina History and Culture, Routledge, ISBN 978-0-203-00853-9

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, tr. by Muni Śrī Saubhāgyamala, Śrī Jain Śvetāmbara Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, 1923, Beawar.

The chapter thus outlines a comprehensive journey of emancipation, highlighting how steadfast practice and letting go of every attachment culminate in mokṣa, the Jain ideal of liberation.

Chapter 9: Upadhāna-śruta (The Seccour)

The ninth chapter of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, known as Upadhāna-śruta, focuses on austerities and spiritual discipline. The term Upadhāna means support, aid, or succor, referring to both physical and mental support that aid spiritual progress. Just as a pillow provides support for comfort, austerities serve as mental support (Bhāva Upadhāna) that cleanse the soul from karmic impurities, ultimately leading to inner peace and bliss.

Concept of Upadhāna

Physical Upadhāna (Dravya Upadhāna): External aids such as water, bed, or shelter that support bodily comfort.

- Mental Upadhāna (Bhāva Upadhāna): Practices such as knowledge, perception, conduct, and austerities that remove karmic dirt and lead to spiritual purification.

This chapter highlights how Bhagavān Mahāvīra's journey, as documented in this chapter, is a testament to the power of solitude, meditation, and austere practice in attaining spiritual purity. He often spent long periods in isolated places (even through harsh monsoons in remote areas with few worldly resources¹, underscoring that genuine support for the soul comes from within rather than from external comforts.

The extreme asceticism of Mahāvīra, far from being suffering for its own sake, served the purpose of shedding karmic bonds and realizing the soul's true nature. Jain teachings hold that by right knowledge, faith, conduct, and penance, one eradicates karma and progresses toward omniscience and liberation.²

Mahāvīra's life was the embodiment of this doctrine. Indeed, after 12½ years of such rigorous austerities and meditation, he attained Kevala Jñāna (pure omniscience), and ultimately achieved mokṣā at the end of his life

In summary, Chapter 9 of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra ('The Succour') illustrates how both external aid and, more importantly, internal spiritual resolve sustain an ascetic on the path of purification. The description of Tīrthāṅkara Mahāvīra's routine and trials –

¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Samavāyāṅga Sutra, Shri Madhukar Muniji, 1989, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beāwar, Rāj.

passed down by Arya Sudharma – inspires practitioners by showing that enlightenment is achieved by perseverance in self-discipline and complete detachment from worldly pleasures. The succour that truly matters is the support of one's own purified qualities. Mahāvīra's unparalleled endurance stands as the highest example of Jain asceticism, reaffirming the principle that liberation can only be attained through steadfast self-control and renunciation.

Thus, in conclusion the first Śrutaskandha of Ācārāṅga Sūtra provides a wealth of guidance – from defining the true believer in the soul, warning against various forms of violence, advising endurance and renunciation, to ultimately inspiring the seeker towards the liberation of the soul. Each aphorism (sūkt) carries a profound message meant to transform the life of the practitioner. The Hindi translation and commentary by Ācārya Mahāprajña-Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya have endeavored to clarify these profound teachings, elucidating difficult terms immediately with synonyms and explanatory phrases so that even subtle meanings become clear. Throughout the translation, complex sentences have been broken into smaller parts where necessary and rephrased in simple language to convey the intent without distortion.

In doing so, the translator attempted to preserve the spirit and depth of Mahāvīra's original words while making them accessible to contemporary readers. As one reads these aphorisms, one gains a direct view of Mahāvīra's own powerful and deeply insightful utterances.

The hope is that through this collection of the aphorisms of Ācārāṅga, readers will receive the meaningful message of Mahāvīra's fundamental teachings and be inspired to reflect on them in their own lives. May the wisdom contained in these sacred verses guide earnest seekers on the path of truth, non-violence, and self-realization.

Summary of the Second Division

The second division of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra primarily expands on monastic discipline and practical guidelines for ascetics. It provides:

- Additional instructions on Ahimsā and non-possession.
- Clarifications on ethical dilemmas monks might face.

- Guidance on sustaining monastic life and interactions with laypeople.

It reiterates the necessity of vigilance and self-awareness, as even minor infractions can lead to karmic consequences. The text also emphasizes Sallekhanā (fasting unto death) as a dignified way for monks to leave the body with complete spiritual awareness.

The division acts as a supplementary guide, reinforcing that only through strict renunciation, unwavering self-discipline, and deep contemplation can an ascetic attain true liberation. Every moment of a monk's life must be governed by absolute vigilance, as even minor infractions can have profound karmic consequences. By adhering to these rigorous spiritual principles, an ascetic can transcend worldly bondage and attain ultimate liberation.

2.4 Commentaries on Ācārāṅga Sūtra

Commentaries on Ācārāṅga Sūtra till Today

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra is traditionally attributed to Gaṇadhara Sudharma, who is believed to have composed it while directly listening to Mahāvīra around 550 BCE. Originally written in Ardhamāgadhī Prākṛta - the vernacular language of Magadha at the time-the text represents one of the earliest Jain scriptures. However, the compilation of the Ācārāṅga as it exists today is credited to Devardhagaṇi in the 5th century CE,¹ with significant commentarial work by Śīlāṅka in the 8th century CE. The text is composed using a combination of prose, sūtra, verse, and mixed forms, depending on the section.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, revered as the first Aṅga of the Jain canon, encapsulates Tīrthaṅkara Mahāvīra's foundational teachings on conduct and non-violence. This is one of the most important Āgama in terms of content. Among the Ardhamāgadhī Prākṛta scriptures, Ācārāṅga is considered prominent. Over centuries, Jain scholars and monks have enriched its interpretation through numerous commentaries, reflecting evolving linguistic, philosophical, and scholarly traditions. While the Ācārāṅga presents its subject matter straightforward and spiritual manner, the commentators based on their perspectives have expanded it further with stylistic and linguistic refinement, thereby illuminating its deeper

¹ Ācārāṅga., Dr Shugan C, Jain, ISJS Notes.

meaning. They have explained every deliberation along with the context and clarified the meaning of each word. They presented the essence of the entire sūtra and explained its implied meanings while also addressing various criticisms and interpretations.¹ This overview highlights major traditional and modern expositions on the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, underscoring their significance.

Traditional Commentaries

Śvetāmbara Tradition

- Ācārya Bhadrabāhu's (first) Nirvyukti (4th–6th century CE)² – The earliest extant commentary, in verse form, distilling key concepts of the sūtra
- Jinadasagaṇi Mahattara's Cūrṇi (7th–8th century CE)³ – A prose commentary that elucidates complex words and ideas, enhancing understanding.
- Ācārya Śīlāṅka's Ṭīka (876 CE)⁴ – A comprehensive Sanskrit exegesis that became a primary reference for later scholars.
- Medieval Commentaries – Works such as Dīpikā by Maṇikyasekhara Sūri and Jinahansa Sūri, along with Bālavayākhyā Ṭīkā by Pārśvacandra Sūri, further clarified interpretations.
- 19th-Century Vernacular Commentaries – Including Padyānuvāda in Old Rājasthānī and a Vārtika by Śrīmaj Jayācārya, making the text more accessible.
- Ācārya Amolak Ṛṣij has translated 32 Āgama-s in Hindi.
- Herman Jacobi, a German scholar translated Ācārāṅga Sūtra which provide insight into Jain monastic conduct and the lives of the Tīrthaṅkaras particularly Mahāvīra.

Digambara Tradition

Though Digambaras do not accept the extant Ācārāṅga Sūtra, they preserved similar ascetic principles through works like Mūlācāra⁵ (1st century BCE or later).

¹ Ācārāṅga – Śīlāṅkavṛtti: Eka Adhyayana, Sādhvī Dr. Rājaśrī, p.36, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Vyākhyā Sahitya Ek Parishilan, Shastri Vijay Muni, Ratnamuni Smṛiti Granth p.58.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Prakrit Bhasha aur Sahitya ka Alochanatmak Etihās, p.201, Dr Nemichandra Shastri.

⁵ Jaina Dharma Darśana Saṃskṛti, 1989, Dr. Sagarmal Jain, Pārśvanātha Vidyāpīṭha, Vārāṇasī.

Digambara scholars, including Ācārya Kundakunda, addressed comparable themes in their conduct manuals, ensuring continuity in Mahāvīra's ethical teachings.

Modern Commentaries and Perspectives

From the 19th century onward, both Jain and non-Jain scholars have produced critical translations and commentaries, incorporating modern languages and scholarly methods:

- Ācārya Vijayānanda 'Ātmaram' Sūri (1837–1896) – Pioneered the revival of Jain Āgama studies, aiding Hermann Jacobi in his translation.
- Hermann Jacobi (1850–1937) – Produced the first English translation in Jaina Sūtras, Part I (1884), introducing Jain philosophy to Western academia.
- Paṇḍit Ghasilājī Mahārāj (1885–1971) – Authored an exhaustive Hindi commentary (900+ pages), bridging ancient and modern interpretations.
- Ācārya Hīrā Muni wrote Hindi commentary
- Ācārya Tulsi & Ācārya Mahāprajña (20th century) – Published the Āyāro (Prākṛit with Hindi/Sanskrit commentary) and Ācārāṅga Bhaṣyam, providing contemporary insights.
- Muni Madhukara (1980s) – Created critical Sanskrit-Hindi editions with detailed doctrinal notes.
- Muni Amara (2010) – Produced an illustrated commentary, enhancing accessibility with visuals and translations.
- Sādhvī Śubhayaśā (21st century) – Represents the growing role of female scholars, analyzing the Ācārāṅga's philosophical depth.

Thus, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra has inspired a vast continuum of commentaries, from the ancient Nirukti to modern translations and exegeses. Commentaries give detailed description of each concept written in the original text. Traditional commentators ensured its survival through rigorous analysis, while contemporary scholars and monks have expanded its reach. These interpretations collectively enrich our understanding of Jain ethics, non-violence, and renunciation, preserving Mahāvīra's legacy for future generations.





CHAPTER 3

Traits of Personality Development



Chapter 3

Traits of Personality Development

3.1 Personality

Meaning of Personality

Personality refers to the unique set of characteristics, behaviors, emotions, and thought patterns that define an individual's way of interacting with the world. It encompasses both innate dispositions and learned traits shaped by experiences, culture, and environment. Personality development is not limited to external behaviors but includes the cultivation of inner virtues and self-awareness.

Personality development is a dynamic and multifaceted process that continues throughout an individual's lifespan. In modern psychology, it is understood as the ongoing evolution of a person's characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish them from others. This process is influenced by a complex interplay of genetic predispositions, environmental factors, personal experiences, and social interactions.

These traits are considered relatively stable over time but can be influenced by various life experiences and environmental factors.

Personality Development in Jain Philosophy

In the study of karmaśāstra, two distinct types of personality are described within every individual: ādayika personality and kṣayopaśamika personality. The ādayika personality represents the inherent traits and tendencies we have accumulated over time through our actions and emotions. These impressions and karmic residues continuously influence our behavior and choices. Conversely, the kṣayopaśamika personality emerges from deliberate efforts to cultivate positive traits and virtues. Together, these two facets shape our overall personality. However, while psychology acknowledges the existence of dual personalities, it often falls short of addressing their karmic roots and resolution. This chapter delves into the synthesis of spiritualism and science in understanding and nurturing personality development, drawing from the teachings of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra and modern methodologies.

In Ācārāṅga and karmaśāstra,, personality is viewed as a dynamic interplay between the karmic influences of past deeds and the conscious efforts to refine and transcend them. This dual perspective highlights the need for holistic approaches that integrate spiritual insight and scientific reasoning. Spiritual texts emphasize self-awareness, ethical living, and the purification of karma as essential elements of personality development. There is a verse in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra that states –

Je egam jaṇai se savvaṃ jaṇai, je savvaṃ jaṇai se egam jaṇai

(One who knows the Self knows all; one who knows all knows the Self).¹

The findings of spiritualism shall remain incomplete without the discovery of physical substance. Similarly, the findings of physical substance are not complete without the findings of spiritualism. Life cannot be interpreted based on only spiritualism or physics. Mahāvīra has said **Appāṇā saccaṃ mēsijjā**² - Find the truth yourself.

This is the great mantra for the discovery of truth. This is a scientific point of view. Mahāvīra says - The equipment which you construct and the equipments you use for discovering the truth are within your own self. There are infinite possibilities of development of your consciousness. If this consciousness develops then one can discover the subtle, distant (viprakriṣht) and truth with obstacles without the aid of microscopic equipments. Such truths can be experienced; such consciousness can be awakened which transcends the boundaries of time and place.

The Yardstick of Spiritual Personality

A **spiritual personality**³ is characterized by self-awareness, self-similarity, and the harmonious integration of inner consciousness with external actions. This state of being fosters balance within oneself and positive interactions with others, forming the foundation for personal growth and societal well-being.

1. Key Question: Einstein's Reflection

In his final moments, Albert Einstein expressed a desire to understand the soul, prioritizing self-awareness over material pursuits. His acknowledgment of the soul's

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya, 1994, Ācārya Mahāpragya Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnun.

² Daśavaikālikasūtra, 1990, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśan Samiti, Beāwar, Rājasthān.

³ Spiritual Scientific Personality - Concept of Development-Views of Ganadhipati Shri Tulsi and Acharya Mahapragya).

significance reflects the essence of spiritual personality, seeking deeper truths beyond physical existence.

2. Control over Senses

A spiritual individual exercises mastery over their senses and emotions, maintaining composure even in challenging situations. This self-control prevents impulsive reactions and ensures ethical behavior, contributing positively to society. Cāṇakya has stated that the one who leads society should foremost be a conqueror of senses. One should not be a slave to his senses rather one should be master of senses. Mastery over the senses is presented as a prerequisite for effective and ethical leadership. This principle is foundational in his treatise, the Arthaśāstra, and is echoed throughout his teachings on leadership and statecraft.

3. Realization of Artha (Money) in the Context of Vṛtti (Livelihood)

The spiritual perspective on wealth emphasizes vṛtti-livelihood-as opposed to materialism. Economic systems often distort values, prioritizing wealth accumulation over ethical living. Education should nurture innate talents and focus on holistic development rather than solely preparing individuals for material success. Mahāvīra said, ‘Restrain Thyself’. Patañjali stated, ‘Restrain the dispositions of mind.’¹

4. Non-Attachment

True spiritual growth requires detachment from material desires while remaining connected to divine consciousness. This journey involves constant awareness and dedication to higher truths, enabling individuals to transcend worldly distractions. A spiritual personality distinguishes between self and non-self. The truth is that nothing is ours in reality. Only the soul is mine.

5. Self-Exertion (Adhyavasāya)

Regular self-discipline strengthens mental stability and emotional resilience. Through consistent effort, individuals can overcome challenges and maintain balance in their personal and professional lives.

¹ Yogasutra, Maharshi Patanjali.

6. Bhāva-dhārā (Stream of Emotion)

Imbalanced emotions can lead to mental distress or disorders. Spiritual practice encourages managing emotions effectively to maintain harmony within oneself and with others. Maharṣi Patañjali wrote in first sūtra of Yogasūtra: Cittavṛttinirodhaḥ yogaḥ¹ Yoga is the cessation of mental modifications.

7. Science and Spirituality

Science complements spirituality by fostering curiosity about the universe and enhancing understanding of life's mysteries. Together, they provide a balanced approach to exploring both external phenomena and internal consciousness. In essence, a spiritual personality embodies self-purification, discipline, and alignment with universal truths, leading to a fulfilling life that benefits both the individual and society at large.

Yardsticks of a Scientific Personality

The Quest of Truth

The quest for truth embodies a scientific personality, characterized by an absence of false prejudices and an Anekāntavāda (multi-faceted) viewpoint. This mindset is driven by an insatiable curiosity and a constant effort to uncover unknown facts. Bhagavān Mahāvīra, the 24th Tīrthaṅkara of Jainism, eloquently stated, “Truth is unlimited, meanings are unlimited, laws are unlimited.” In this context, truth refers to the contemporary law (Samāyika Paryāya), emphasizing the dynamic nature of reality. While ‘Samāyika Paryāya’ represents the momentary or formal state of equanimity, or in a metaphysical context - the transient mode associated with a particular state of being.

Discovery of Consciousness

The objective of religion is the refinement and elevation of consciousness beyond the confines of the sensory world, while the aim of science is to uncover elements and forces that also lie beyond direct sensory perception. Both pursue a parallel journey- from the tangible to the intangible, from the gross to the subtle. This shared trajectory forms the basis for a new synthesis: a culture that unites spiritual insight with

¹ The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, Patañjali, Tr. by Swami Satchidananda. Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications, 2012.

scientific reasoning. As Swami Vivekananda remarked, “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.” Similarly, Sri Aurobindo observed that “The spirit is a greater reality than the body; the inner self more enduring than the outer form.” The ancient Greek philosopher Plotinus echoed this ethos: “Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue... carve away all that is superfluous.” These voices across traditions converge on one insight: the discovery of consciousness is not merely intellectual, but experiential, requiring an inward refinement that opens the door to deeper truths and boundless human potential. At the metaphysical level, Mahāvīra declared:

“No soul is inferior or superior (Na hīne airitte) – all are alike (savve jīvā samā sammā).”¹

- The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, one of the oldest and most authoritative Jain Āgama, explicitly discusses the independence and equivalence of all souls. It states that souls are not created by any deity, nor are they subordinate to any higher power; all souls are inherently independent and equal in their essential nature.
- The commentary and exegesis (bhāṣya) on the Ācārāṅga Sūtra further elaborate that all souls are infinite in number, eternal, and possess the same intrinsic qualities. The differences observed among living beings (such as gods, humans, animals, plants) are due to the varying karmic conditions, not due to any inherent superiority or inferiority among souls.
- The Tattvārtha Sūtra describes the essential equality of all souls, stating that the differences in experience and status are the results of karmic bondage, not of any intrinsic inequality.²

This formula has today become a scientific formula.

“According to Mahāvīra, the highest science (parama vidyā) is governed by three interdependent principles: Ahimsā (non-violence), aparigraha (contentment through non-attachment), and samatva (equality of all souls). This triune framework defines both ethical inquiry and enlightened conduct.”

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, Vol. I, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

² Tattvārthasūtra, Ācārya Umāsvāti, trans. K. K. Dixit (Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute of Indology, 1974).

The Jain system of philosophy and ethics is also known for having had a major impact on modern figures like Dayanand Sarasvati and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

The great German scholar George Buhler writes “In grammar, astronomy as well as in all branches of Belles letters the achievements of the Jains have been so great that even their opponents have taken notice on them and that some of their works are importance for European science even today.”¹

Bühler’s remark underscores the Jain community’s profound impact on Indian intellectual traditions, particularly in fields that intersected with scientific and literary scholarship.

Mahāvīra’s teachings were influential. According to Rabindranath Tagore,

Mahāvīra proclaimed in India that religion is a reality and not a mere social convention. It is true that salvation cannot be had by merely observing external ceremonies. Religion cannot make any difference between man and man.²

Modern Relevance

- **Scientific Ethics:** Guides AI development (non-exploitative algorithms), ecological research (non-violent fieldwork), and equitable resource distribution.
- **Social Justice:** Informs movements like BlackLives Matter and climate activism through its emphasis on systemic equality.
- **Consciousness Studies:** Aligns with neuroscientific research on meditation’s neural benefits (e.g., reduced amygdala reactivity linked to aggression).

Personality Development in Indian Psychology

Personality development in Indian psychology offers a unique and holistic perspective rooted in ancient wisdom and spiritual traditions. This approach emphasizes the integration of various aspects of human nature and focuses on the realization of one's true self. Indian psychology views personality as a dynamic synthesis of inherent qualities (Svabhāva), elemental compositions (Pañca Mahābhūtāḥ), and the interplay of three fundamental forces (Triguṇāḥ). This explores the frameworks, their

¹ Georg Bühler, *Indian Sectarian Literature*, edited by Rudolf Hoernlé (Calcutta: Government of India Central Printing Office, 1898), p.58.

² Rabindranath Tagore, quoted in Bal Patil, *Nineteen Centuries of Jainism in South India* (Nanda, 1997), p.27.

interconnections, and their implications for modern psychology. Here are the key elements of personality development according to Indian psychology:

Fundamental Concepts

Pañca Kośāḥ (Five Sheaths) of Human Existence

Indian psychology describes personality as composed of five interconnected layers or sheaths:¹

1. Annamaya (Physical sheath) - This outermost layer pertains to the physical body, nourished by food (Anna). It governs basic survival instincts and sensory experiences. Imbalances here, such as poor nutrition, can destabilize higher layers, leading to anxiety or lethargy.
2. Prāṇamaya (Vital energy sheath) - The vital energy (Prāṇa) sheath regulates physiological processes like respiration and circulation. It influences vitality and emotional resilience, disrupted Prāṇa manifests as chronic fatigue or mood swings.
3. Manomaya (Mental sheath) - This layer encompasses the mind (Manas), responsible for perception, memory, and emotional responses. A cluttered Manomaya Kośāḥ leads to distractibility and impulsivity, whereas clarity fosters focus and decisiveness.
4. Vijñānamaya (Intellectual sheath) - The seat of intellect (Buddhi) and ego (Ahaṅkāra), this sheath governs discernment and self-identity. Over identification with ego (e.g., excessive pride) distorts reality, while balanced ViJñānamaya cultivates wisdom and ethical judgment.
5. Ānandamaya (Bliss sheath) - The innermost layer represents spiritual joy (Ānanda), transcending dualities. Realization of this sheath leads to self-actualization and liberation (Mokṣa).

This model suggests that personality development involves nurturing and harmonizing all these layers

¹ Pañca Kośa Theory of Personality 2018, Dr. Biswajit Satpathy, The International Journal of Indian Psychology 6, no.2.

Triguṇaḥ (Three Qualities)

The concept of Triguṇaḥ is central to understanding personality in Indian psychology.

These three Guṇāḥ are:¹

1. Sattva – associated with purity, harmony, clarity, and intellectual discernment
2. Rajas – linked to activity, passion, restlessness, and dynamism
3. Tamas – characterized by inertia, ignorance, lethargy, and confusion

Personality development, within the framework of triguṇa theory, entails the dynamic regulation and harmonization of these three fundamental qualities. Optimal psychological well-being arises not from the dominance of any one guṇa in isolation, but through the conscious cultivation of sattva, which stabilizes the disturbances of rajas and dispels the obscurations of tamas. The proportional expression of these guṇas shapes an individual's behavior, temperament, decision-making, and moral disposition, thereby forming the psychological foundation of their personality.

The Cakras: Energy Centers and Their Influence on Psychological Functioning

The Cakras (cakraḥ, lit. 'wheel') are subtle energy centers aligned along the suṣūmṇā nāḍī (central channel of the subtle body), corresponding to major nerve plexuses and endocrine glands in the physical body. Each chakra governs distinct psychological, emotional, and existential dimensions of human experience.² The seven main Cakras are:

1. Mūlādhāra – Root Chakra (survival, stability)
2. Svādhiṣṭhāna – Sacral Chakra (creativity, sexuality)
3. Maṇipūra – Solar Plexus Chakra (willpower, self-esteem)
4. Anāhata – Heart Chakra (love, compassion)
5. Viśuddha – Throat Chakra (communication, expression)
6. Ājñā – Third Eye Chakra (intuition, insight)
7. Sahasrāra – Crown Chakra (spiritual consciousness, transcendence)

¹ A psychometric analysis of the three gunas. Wolf D.B. (1999). Journal of Indian Psychology, 17(1), 26–43.

² Chakras: Energy Centers of Transformation, 1987, Harish Johari, Rochester, VT: Destiny Books.

Balancing and activating these cakras through yoga, dhyāna (meditation), prāṇāyāma, and mantra japa is believed to harmonize bodily energies and elevate psychological well-being. Blockages or imbalances in these centers are thought to manifest as emotional dysfunction or personality disturbances, while their alignment contributes to wholeness, self-awareness, and integrated personality development.

Karma and Reincarnation in the Formation of Personality

Core to the Indian worldview is the doctrine of karma and saṃsāra-the cyclical process of birth, death, and rebirth. This paradigm posits that an individual's personality is not a product of only present-life conditioning but also reflects karmic saṃskāras (latent impressions) accumulated over multiple lifetimes. Traits such as fears, inclinations, talents, and dispositions may thus be understood as karmic residues from prior existences.

This approach expands the scope of personality development beyond a single lifetime, urging individuals to take conscious responsibility for their thoughts, actions, and inner states, not merely for psychological well-being in the present life, but also for spiritual evolution across lifetimes. It situates personality within a trans-temporal framework, where the self (*jīva*) evolves progressively toward mokṣa (liberation).

Key Aspects of Personality Development

Self-Realization (Ātman)

Indian psychology places great importance on realizing one's true self or Ātman. This involves developing deeper awareness and wisdom about one's essential nature, which is considered the core of personality development. The belief in the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit drives individuals to explore their inner selves and attain higher levels of consciousness. Through practices like meditation, self-reflection, and the pursuit of self-realization, individuals strive to understand their true nature.

Holistic Integration

The Indian approach emphasizes the integration of various aspects of personality, including physical, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions. This holistic view aims to create a harmonious and well-rounded individual.

Ethical and Spiritual Growth

Personality development in Indian psychology is closely tied to ethical and spiritual growth. It involves cultivating virtues, developing self-discipline, and pursuing higher consciousness.

Mindfulness and Self-Awareness

Practices like meditation and yoga are integral to personality development, fostering mindfulness and self-awareness.

Modern Applications

Professional Growth

Indian psychological concepts are being applied in organizational settings to enhance leadership skills, emotional intelligence, and overall professional development.

Education

The Indian approach to personality development influences educational philosophies, emphasizing character building alongside academic achievement.

Mental Health

Traditional concepts are being integrated with modern psychotherapy to provide a more comprehensive approach to mental health and personal growth.

The Indian approach to personality development offers a rich, multidimensional perspective that goes beyond mere behavioral modifications. It emphasizes the cultivation of inner qualities, self-realization, and the harmonious integration of various aspects of human nature. This holistic view continues to influence modern psychology and provides valuable insights into personal growth and well-being.

Modern Western Perspective

The most widely accepted model in modern psychology is the Five-Factor Model or HEXACO¹:

Honesty-Humility (H): Sincerity, fairness, modesty. Emotionality(E), Extraversion (X), Agreeableness (A), Conscientiousness (C), Openness to experience (O)

¹ The HEXACO model of personality, Michael C. Ashton and Kibeom Lee.

The HEXACO model is a six-dimensional framework for understanding personality, developed by Michael C. Ashton and Kibeom Lee through cross-cultural lexical studies. It offers a nuanced, culturally robust framework for personality assessment. Its inclusion of Honesty-Humility and refined emotional/agreeableness factors make it particularly valuable for understanding ethical behavior, workplace dynamics, and cross-cultural psychology. While related to the Big Five, its unique structure provides deeper insights into traits critical to prosocial and antisocial behaviors. These traits are considered relatively stable over time but can be influenced by various life experiences and environmental factors. Structural Components of the HEXACO Model.

The Six Primary Dimensions

Each HEXACO dimension comprises four facets, offering granular insights into personality¹:

1. Honesty-Humility (H)

- **Sincerity**: Avoidance of deception for personal benefit.
- **Fairness**: Resistance to exploiting others.
- **Greed Avoidance**: Indifference to material wealth.
- **Modesty**: Rejection of self-aggrandizement.

High scorers exhibit prosocial behaviors, such as altruism and ethical decision-making, while low scorers are prone to manipulative or exploitative conduct.

2. Emotionality (E)

- **Fearfulness**: Anxiety about physical dangers.
- **Anxiety**: Tendency to worry.
- **Dependence**: Reliance on emotional support.
- **Sentimentality**: Attachment to close relationships. Unlike Neuroticism, Emotionality emphasizes attachment-related vulnerabilities rather than general negative effects.

¹ Religion, Personality and Social Behavior. 2013, Michel C. Ashton, Kibeom Lee, ISBN 9780203125359.

3. Extraversion (X)

- **Social Self-Esteem:** Confidence in social settings.
- **Social Boldness:** Willingness to approach strangers.
- **Sociability:** Preference for social interaction.
- **Liveliness:** Attachment to close relationships. Unlike Neuroticism, Emotionality emphasizes attachment-related vulnerabilities rather than general negative effects.

4. Agreeableness (A)

- **Forgivingness:** Willingness to reconcile after conflicts.¹
- **Gentleness:** Avoidance of harsh criticism.
- **Flexibility:** Tolerance for divergent viewpoints.
- **Patience:** Resistance to frustration. Low Agreeableness predicts workplace conflict and marital dissatisfaction.

5. Conscientiousness (C)

- **Organization:** Preference for orderliness.
- **Diligence:** Persistence in task completion.
- **Perfectionism:** Attention to detail.
- **Prudence:** Deliberate decision-making. This trait is a robust predictor of academic and occupational success.

6. Openness to Experience (O)

- **Aesthetic Appreciation:** Interest in art and nature.
- **Inquisitiveness:** Intellectual curiosity.
- **Creativity:** Generation of novel ideas.
- **Unconventionality:** Receptivity to non-traditional values. Openness is linked to innovation in artistic and scientific domains.

¹ The HEXACO Model of Personality, Religiosity and Trait Forgiveness, Krzysztof Matuszewski, Marcin Moroń, 2022.

The HEXACO model of personality¹ and Jainism's spiritual-ethical framework share striking parallels in their emphasis on self-regulation, prosocial behavior, and moral integrity. Both systems prioritize inner transformation as the foundation for ethical conduct, though they emerge from distinct cultural and epistemological traditions. Below is an analysis of their key convergences:

1. Honesty-Humility (HEXACO) ↔ Jain Virtues of Truth (Satya) and Non-Possessiveness (Aparigraha)

- **HEXACO:** This dimension emphasizes fairness, sincerity, greed avoidance, and modesty. High scorers reject exploitation and material excess.
- **Jainism:** The vows of satya (truthfulness) and aparigraha (non-possessiveness) align closely. Jains avoid deceit and prioritize equitable dealings in business and personal life. The principle of aparigraha discourages hoarding wealth, mirroring HEXACO's greed avoidance facet.
- **Example:** Jain merchants historically implemented profit caps to prevent exploitative practices reflecting high Honesty-Humility.

2. Agreeableness (HEXACO) ↔ Non-Violence (Ahimsā) and Forgiveness

- **HEXACO:** Includes forgiveness, gentleness, and patience. Low Agreeableness correlates with workplace conflict.
- **Jainism:** Ahimsā (non-violence) extends beyond physical harm to include harsh speech or thoughts. Jains practice kṣamā (forgiveness) daily, seeking reconciliation.
- **Empirical Link:** Studies show HEXACO Agreeableness predicts forgiveness, similar to Jain practices of resolving conflicts peacefully.

3. Conscientiousness (HEXACO) ↔ Discipline in Right Conduct (Samyak-Cāritra)

- **HEXACO:** Involves organization, diligence, and prudence. High Conscientiousness predicts academic and occupational success.
- **Jainism:** Samyak - Cāritra (right conduct) requires strict adherence to ethical vows, dietary rules, and meditation schedules. Monks follow ascetic practices (e.g., limited possessions, timed meals) demanding exceptional self-control.

¹ The H Factor of Personality (ISBN 9781554588640), Michael C. Ashton and Kibeom Lee, 2007.

- **Overlap:** Both frameworks view disciplined behavior as essential for personal and communal well-being.

4. **Emotionality** (HEXACO) ↔ Equanimity and Detachment

- **HEXACO:** High Emotionality involves fearfulness and dependence, while low scores indicate emotional resilience.
- **Jainism:** Practitioners cultivate *Samāyika* (equanimity) to remain detached from fleeting emotions. The *Anekāntavāda* philosophy (non-absolutism) reduces anxiety by accepting multiple truths.
- **Contrast:** While HEXACO Emotionality acknowledges vulnerability, Jainism aims to transcend it through spiritual practices.

5. **Openness to Experience** (HEXACO) ↔ *Anekāntavāda* (Non-Absolutism)

- **HEXACO:** Values curiosity, creativity, and unconventional thinking.
- **Jainism:** *Anekāntavāda* encourages considering diverse perspectives, fostering intellectual humility. However, strict ethical codes limit unconventional behavior compared to HEXACO's openness.

Comparative Table: Key Traits and Ethical Principles

| HEXACO Trait | Jain Ethical Principle | Shared Focus |
|--------------------|------------------------|--|
| Honesty-Humility | Satya, Aparigraha | Rejecting greed, prioritizing fairness |
| Agreeableness | Ahimsā, Kṣamā | Conflict resolution through compassion |
| Conscientiousness | Samyak Cāritra | Discipline in daily conduct |
| Emotionality (Low) | Sāmāyika | Emotional equilibrium |
| Openness | Anekāntavāda | Intellectual flexibility |

Divergences

- **Spiritual vs. Secular:** HEXACO is a descriptive psychological model, while Jainism integrates ethics with spiritual liberation (*Mokṣa*).
- **Non-Attachment:** Jainism's radical detachment (e.g., fasting unto death) exceeds HEXACO's conceptual scope.
- **Universalism:** HEXACO applies cross-culturally, whereas Jain ethics are rooted in specific doctrinal vows.

Thus, both frameworks converge on promoting honesty, self-discipline, and prosocial behavior but diverge in their ultimate aims. The HEXACO model provides an empirical lens for understanding traits that Jainism cultivates through spiritual practice. Together, they highlight the universal human aspiration to harmonize individual character with ethical living.

Lifespan Perspective

Modern personality development theory emphasizes the concept of lifelong development. While earlier theories suggested that personality was largely set by adolescence, current research indicates that significant changes can occur well into adulthood.

The most active period of personality development appears to be between the ages of 20 and 40, with traits becoming increasingly consistent but never reaching complete stability.¹

Influences on Personality Development

Several key factors contribute to the shaping of an individual's personality:

Genetic Factors

Research suggests that there is a genetic component to personality traits. Infant temperament, which is believed to have a biological basis, can be linked to adult personality characteristics.

Environmental Influences²

The social cognitive theory posits that personality development is significantly influenced by an individual's social environment. People learn from observing others and interacting with their surroundings, which shapes their cognitive processes and behavioral patterns.

Personal Experiences

Humanistic approaches to personality development emphasize the role of personal experiences and choices in shaping one's character. This perspective views personality development as a process of self-actualization and personal growth.

¹ The development of personality traits in adulthood, Roberts BW, Wood D, Caspi A.2008.

² Genetic and Environmental influences on Personality Trait, J Pers Soc, Psychol.2012.

Modern Applications for Personality Development

In contemporary society, personality development has taken on practical significance beyond theoretical understanding:

Professional Growth

Many organizations now recognize the importance of personality development in the workplace. Programs and tools are being developed to enhance employees' self-awareness, communication skills, and leadership abilities.

Personal Well-being

There is an increasing focus on personality development as a means of improving the overall quality of life. This includes developing emotional intelligence, resilience, and coping strategies to navigate life's challenges.

Therapeutic Approaches

Modern psychotherapy often incorporates personality development concepts to help individuals understand and modify maladaptive patterns of thinking and behavior.

Conclusion

The modern definition of personality development encompasses a holistic view of human growth and change. It recognizes that personality is not a fixed entity but a fluid construct that can be shaped and refined throughout life. This understanding has profound implications for education, career development, mental health treatment, and personal growth strategies. As research in this field continues to evolve, our comprehension of the intricate processes that make each individual unique will undoubtedly deepen, offering new insights into human experience and potential for personal transformation.

3.2 Traits of Personality

Personality traits are relatively stable and enduring patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that distinguish one individual from another. These traits are consistent across different situations and over time, meaning a person who is, for example, sociable or organized, will generally display these characteristics in various contexts and throughout their life.

Key traits of a well-developed personality include:

1. **Emotional Stability:** The ability to remain composed and balanced in the face of challenges.
 - Emotional stability is emphasized in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra as a prerequisite for spiritual progress. An unstable mind is easily swayed by desires and aversions, leading to karmic accumulation.
2. **Self-Awareness:** Understanding one's emotions, thoughts, and actions.
 - The Sūtra advocates for continuous self-reflection and mindfulness to identify and correct one's flaws.
3. **Empathy:** The capacity to understand and share the feelings of others.
 - Spiritual texts often describe empathy as the realization of the interconnectedness of all beings, fostering compassion.
4. **Integrity:** Adherence to moral and ethical principles.
 - Living a life of truth and righteousness is fundamental to reducing karmic bonds, as per Ācārāṅga's teachings.
5. **Adaptability:** Flexibility in adapting to changing circumstances.
 - The Sūtra teaches that adaptability stems from a detached perspective, allowing individuals to respond to life's challenges without becoming overwhelmed.

These traits align with the principles outlined in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, which advocates self-discipline, mindfulness, and a commitment to personal and spiritual growth. Achieving this balance requires consistent introspection and practice.

Aspects of Spiritual Personality Development

Spiritual personality development involves cultivating traits that align with higher consciousness and universal values. The following aspects are central:

1. Self-Similarity

Spirituality fosters a sense of oneness with all beings. Recognizing that every individual shares the same essence of consciousness leads to compassion, humility,

and respect. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra emphasizes the equality of all souls, inspiring a harmonious coexistence.

Self-similarity involves developing an inner perspective that aligns personal values with universal truths. When individuals see others as reflections of their own soul, it naturally fosters a sense of responsibility and interconnectedness.

2. Conquering the Senses

Control over one's senses and desires are essential for spiritual growth. The dissatisfaction arising from unchecked sensory cravings can lead to unrest. A spiritual personality emphasizes restraint and mindfulness to overcome these impulses, reflecting the Sūtra's call for mastery over one's passions.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra¹ warns against the dangers of sensory indulgence, stating that it binds the soul to the cycle of birth and death. By conquering the senses, one creates space for inner peace and higher consciousness.

3. Refinement of Suppressed Lusts

Refining and purifying latent desires and passions is crucial. Suppressed emotions can manifest as distortions in personality, whereas their transformation can lead to inner harmony. Through meditation and ethical practices, one can achieve this refinement.

The Sūtra describes methods to refine desires, such as practicing non-violence, truthfulness, and asceticism. These practices help cleanse the mind of impurities and bring clarity.

4. Non-Attachment

The practice of non-attachment helps individuals view material possessions and external achievements objectively. This detachment fosters inner peace and reduces suffering. Ācārāṅga advocates seeing beyond material desires to cultivate true contentment.

Non-attachment does not imply indifference but rather the wisdom to engage with the world without becoming bound by it. The Sūtra emphasizes that true freedom arises from relinquishing the illusion of ownership.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukara Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beāwar, Rāj.

5. Realization of Vṛtti in Livelihood

Balancing economic pursuits with ethical and spiritual values ensures that material success does not overshadow inner fulfillment. The Sūtra underscores the importance of righteous livelihood and aligning one's actions with higher principles.

A spiritual personality regards livelihood not as an end in itself, but as a supportive means for one's inner journey. The Sūtra's teachings on right livelihood and voluntary minimalism underscore this balance between material responsibility and spiritual aspiration.

Aspects of Psychospiritual Mentoring

Psychospiritual mentoring integrates psychological principles with spiritual practices to guide individuals toward holistic development. Key aspects include:

1. Emotional Regulation

Mentoring helps individuals manage emotions effectively through mindfulness and meditation, promoting mental clarity and resilience. Emotional balance is critical for aligning spiritual values.

2. Awakening Consciousness

Encouraging self-reflection and awareness of one's inner state helps in understanding the root causes of challenges and conflicts. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra's teachings inspire this inward journey.

3. Integration of Science and Spirituality

Modern neuroscience supports practices like meditation and mindfulness as tools to rewire the brain and foster emotional well-being. Combining these with spiritual insights provides a comprehensive approach to mentoring.

4. Development of a Scientific Perspective

A psychospiritual mentor fosters open-minded inquiry and a sincere quest for truth, integrating scientific curiosity with spiritual insight. This mirrors the Sūtra's emphasis on discovering truth through self-awareness, while also advocating ethical livelihood and minimalism as expressions of inner balance.

Management of Sufferings through Meditation:

Meditation serves as a transformative tool for managing physical, emotional, and mental suffering. It achieves this through:

1. Stress Reduction

Meditation calms the mind, reduces cortisol levels, and alleviates stress-related ailments. This practice aligns with Ācārāṅga's emphasis on mental tranquility.

2. Emotional Balance

Practices like Preksha Dhyān¹ focus on observing and regulating emotions, fostering inner stability.

3. Biochemical Changes

Meditation influences biochemical processes, such as the regulation of serotonin and melatonin, which affect mood and behavior. These changes reflect the holistic principles in the Sūtra.

4. Enhanced Awareness

By cultivating mindfulness, individuals gain clarity and perspective, enabling them to address the root causes of suffering. The Sūtra's teachings guide this process.

5. Releasing Negative Energy

Meditation helps release pent-up emotions like anger, jealousy, and resentment, creating space for positive transformation. This purification process is a cornerstone of spiritual development.

Conclusion

The journey of personality development is a continuous interplay of inner refinement and external expression. Integrating the wisdom of spiritual traditions like the Ācārāṅga Sūtra with modern scientific insights offers a robust framework for nurturing a balanced and harmonious personality. By embracing practices like meditation, fostering self-awareness, and striving for a synthesis of spiritual and scientific approaches, individuals can transcend their limitations and realize their highest

¹ Prekṣā Dhyāna: Theory and Practice, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

potential. This holistic view paves the way for a fulfilling life aligned with both personal aspirations and universal values.

3.3 Aspects of Personality Development

Personality development is a multifaceted process influenced by various factors. The key aspects of personality development include:

Psychological Factors

Intellectual Development

Intellectual capacity affects a person's ability to adjust in society. Intellectually bright individuals often have better personal and social adjustment skills, though they may sometimes develop a superiority complex.

Emotional Development

Emotions play a crucial role in shaping personality. Factors like emotional deprivation, catharsis, and stress directly impact personality development. Some people are naturally predisposed to certain emotions which influence their behavior.

Self-disclosure

The ability to express emotions healthily is vital for maintaining mental balance. People with low self-esteem often struggle with self-expression.

Aspirations and Achievements

Achievements boost confidence and self-image, but unrealistic aspirations can lead to delusions or unhappiness. Balanced aspirations can provide hope and positively influence personality.

Cultural and Environmental Factors

Family Influence

The family environment significantly shapes personality, establishing early connections, norms, and values. It affects the formation of roles, ethics, and ideals.

Cultural Values

Each culture has unique values that influence thinking, behavior, and attitudes. These values shape an individual's goals, motivation, and life choices.

Social Environment

The broader social context, including school, peer groups, and community, plays a crucial role in personality development. It influences social skills, communication abilities, and cultural identity.

Core Components of Personality Development

1. **Emotional:** Developing emotional intelligence and relationship skills.
2. **Physical:** Maintaining physical well-being through proper nutrition, exercise, and stress management.
3. **Spiritual:** Exploring self-awareness and values, regardless of religious beliefs.
4. **Mental:** Enhancing cognitive abilities and maintaining mental fitness.
5. **Social:** Improving interpersonal skills and social interactions.
6. **Professional:** Developing career-related skills and competencies.

Stages of Personality Development

1. **Infancy (0-2 years):** Developing trust or mistrust.
2. **Toddler (18 months-3 years):** Developing autonomy and self-confidence.
3. **Preschool (3+ years):** Developing initiative and imagination.
4. **School-age:** Developing competence in various skills.
5. **Adolescence:** Exploring identity and future roles.
6. **Young adulthood:** Forming intimate relationships.
7. **Middle adulthood:** Contributing to society and nurturing the next generation.
8. **Late adulthood:** Reflecting on life and developing a sense of integrity.

Understanding these aspects of personality development can help individuals focus on holistic growth and achieve a more balanced and fulfilling life.

Aspects of Personality Development as per Jaina Philosophy

According to Jainism, personality development occurs through 14 stages known as **Guṇasthānas** or ‘Stages of Spiritual Development’¹.

¹ Studies in Jaina Philosophy, Dr. Nathamal Tatiya, P.V. Institute, Varanasi, 1951.

The Guṇasthānas: Stages of Spiritual Evolution

The Guṇasthānas delineate the soul's progressive journey toward liberation (mokṣa) and inner purification, reflecting a structured framework of spiritual development unique to Jain philosophy. Each stage marks a refinement in the soul's disposition, conduct, and freedom from karmic impurities.

Early Stages (1–4): Cultivating Right Belief

1. **Mithyātva** – The state of false belief or delusion, where the soul is dominated by ignorance and wrong perception.
2. **Sāsādana** – A stage where one retains a residual taste of right belief after having regressed from a higher state.
3. **Mishra-dṛṣṭi** – A mixed state, oscillating between right and wrong belief.
4. **Avirata Samyag-dṛṣṭi** – Right belief is firmly established, though not yet supported by disciplined conduct or vows.

Intermediate Stages (5–7): Developing Ethical Restraint

5. **Deśa-virata** – Partial self-restraint is observed, as the aspirant begins to follow selected ethical vows.
6. **Pramatta-samyata** – Complete self-discipline is adopted, though occasional lapses or negligence still occur.
7. **Apramatta-samyata** – Perfect observance of vows without any negligence; discipline becomes steadfast.

Advanced Stages (8–14): Dissolution of Passions and Attainment of Omniscience

8. **Apūrva-karaṇa** – A stage of unprecedented spiritual transformation and intense inner effort.
9. **Anivṛtti-bādarasamparāya** – The soul becomes firmly established on the path with no possibility of regression; only subtle passions persist.
10. **Sūkṣma-samparāya** – Only the most refined, subtle passions remain; the soul nears total karmic purity.
11. **Upaśānta-kaṣāya** – Passions are fully subdued, though not destroyed; this state is reversible.

12. **Kṣīṇa-kaṣāya** – All passions are permanently eradicated, ensuring irreversible progress.
13. **Sayoga-kevalī** – The soul attains omniscience (*kevalajñāna*) while still engaged in minimal bodily activity.
14. **Ayoga-kevalī** – All physical and mental activities cease; the soul is poised for final liberation.

As the soul ascends through these stages, it progressively sheds karmic bonds and reveals its inherent attributes of pure knowledge, perception, faith, and conduct in ever-refined forms. The first five stages are generally attainable by householders (*śrāvakas*), while the higher stages pertain to monastic life and rigorous spiritual discipline.

It is important to note that advancement through the *Guṇasthānas* is not strictly linear. One may ascend or descend depending on the intensity of spiritual effort, ethical conduct, and karmic influences. The ultimate goal is to reach the fourteenth stage, achieving *mokṣa*, the final liberation from the cycle of *samsāra* (rebirth).

Aspects of Personality Development as per Indian Psychology

Cultivation of Soul-Forces

Indian psychology emphasizes the holistic evolution of personality through the cultivation of intrinsic soul-forces that support both individual growth and spiritual realization. Four primary faculties are identified as essential to this process:

1. Knowledge (*jñāna*) – The pursuit of truth and discernment through self-inquiry and scriptural understanding.
2. Harmony (*samatva* or *sāmarasya*) – The development of inner balance and peaceful coexistence with others.
3. Skill and Dexterity (*kauśalatā*) – The capacity to act effectively and ethically in the world, with competence and clarity.
4. Self-Possession and Self-Mastery (*sva-niyantraṇa*) – Mastery over impulses, desires, and emotions, leading to inner steadiness.

Spiritual Practices

To support the refinement of these soul-forces, Indian traditions prescribe a range of spiritual disciplines that cultivate awareness, ethical conduct, and transcendence. Core practices include:

1. Yoga – The systematic path of union through physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines.
2. Meditation (dhyāna) – Focused inward contemplation to transcend mental fluctuations and realize the Self.
3. Prayer (stuti or bhakti) – Devotional connection to the divine as a means of inner purification.
4. Self-Reflection (svādhyāya or vicāra) – Reflective inquiry into one's thoughts, actions, and spiritual progress.
5. Ethical Living (dharma and ahimsā) – Living in accordance with moral principles to purify intention and action.

These practices aim to discipline the mind, expand consciousness, and foster a connection with the divine, universal self, or higher awareness.

Transcendence and Integration

Indian psychology envisions spiritual development as a dual movement:

- Transcendence of ego-bound limitations, attachments, and ignorance
- Integration of spiritual insights into daily living, roles, and relationships

This dynamic interplay ensures that inner realization is not isolated from worldly engagement but actively informs ethical action, emotional maturity, and social responsibility.

By addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual dimensions of the self, Indian psychology offers a comprehensive framework for personality development-culminating in self-realization (ātma-jñāna) and ultimately, liberation (mokṣa).

3.4 Psycho-spiritual Monitoring

Psychospiritual monitoring is not a widely recognized or established concept in mainstream psychology or spirituality. However, based on the available information, we can explore some related ideas that may shed light on this topic.

Understanding Psychospiritual Monitoring

Psychospiritual monitoring appears to be a combination of psychological and spiritual concepts related to self-awareness, personal growth, and mental well-being. While there is no formal definition, it may involve:

1. **Self-reflection:** Observing one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors from both psychological and spiritual perspectives
2. **Tracking personal growth:** Monitoring progress in psychological and spiritual development over time
3. **Assessing well-being:** Evaluating one's mental, emotional, and spiritual health in response to life's challenges

Some tools and approaches that may be relevant to psychospiritual monitoring include:

Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes (IPPA-32R)¹: This self-scoring tool measures psychological responses to stressful conditions, ranging from anxious dysregulation to internal composure

1. **Reflective self-inquiry:** Engaging in introspection about one's responses to life's challenges and disequilibrium
 2. **Spiritual mobile applications:** Some individuals use apps for meditation, self-reflection, and spiritual practices to support their psychospiritual growth
- Potential Benefits

Engaging in psychospiritual monitoring may offer several benefits:

1. **Increased self-awareness:** Developing a deeper understanding of one's thoughts, emotions, and spiritual experiences.
2. **Resilience building:** Learning to approach life challenges with greater internal composure and creativity.
3. **Personal growth:** Recognizing opportunities for maturational growth within life's disequilibrium.

¹ The Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes, Kass, J. D. (1998), Unpublished manuscript, 1998.

4. **Improved well-being:** Experiencing psychological well-being even during problems by reframing challenges as opportunities for growth it's important to note that psychospiritual monitoring should not be confused with harmful or superstitious beliefs about 'monitoring spirits' or other supernatural entities. Instead, it focuses on personal growth, self-awareness, and the integration of psychological and spiritual aspects of one's life. When exploring psychospiritual concepts, it's advisable to approach them with critical thinking and seek guidance from qualified professionals if needed. Psychospiritual practices should complement, not replace, evidence-based psychological and medical care.

Ācārāṅga Principles and Psycho-Spiritual Monitoring

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, a fundamental Jain text, provides guidelines for ethical conduct and spiritual practice. We can align these principles with psycho-spiritual monitoring in the following ways:

1. Self-restraint and Self-awareness

The Ācārāṅga¹ emphasizes self-restraint (yatana) in respect to six kinds of living beings.

This aligns with psycho-spiritual monitoring's focus on self-awareness and mindful behavior. Practitioners can use meditation and self-reflection techniques to observe their thoughts and actions towards all living beings. This self-balancing scale is the same for everyone. One who finds this awakening of consciousness is a spiritual personality.

All are equal No individual is special or inferior. The feeling of differences and inequality, feeling of inferiority and arrogance lead to many deformities and lead to mental deformities and several diseases. When the feeling of equality is established in a man, it automatically cures many diseases.

2. Abandoning Ego:

Both Ācārāṅga² and psycho-spiritual approaches emphasize letting go of ego:

An individual who understands the value of control over his own senses and mind is a spiritual personality. Psycho-spiritual monitoring can incorporate practices to

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, Vol. I, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

² Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam (Vol. 1), 2022, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

recognize and release egoic patterns, fostering humility and spiritual growth. One should not remain subordinated to the flights of mind rather one should exert control over the mind.

3. Overcoming Life's challenges:

The Ācārāṅga teaches conquering trials and tribulations. Psycho-spiritual monitoring can provide tools for resilience-building and reframing challenges as opportunities for growth. One should not remain subordinated to the flights of mind rather one should exert control over the mind.

4. Ethical Living:

The Ācārāṅga's focus on righteousness aligns with psycho-spiritual monitoring's emphasis on ethical behavior and moral development. Practitioners can use self-reflection to ensure their actions align with their values.

Bhagavān Mahāvīra, the revered Jain teacher, offered a timeless path to contentment through the principles of non-violence (Ahimsā) and equality. His wisdom, encapsulated in the saying “**Savve Akant Dukkha ya Aava savve Ahimsāya**”¹ (Sorrow is disliked by all; therefore, none should be killed), underscores the universal relevance of non-violence. If embraced by people in the 21st century, these teachings have the power to transform our world. By recognizing the shared desire for happiness and aversion to suffering in all beings, we can cultivate empathy, make ethical choices, and promote environmental stewardship. Coupled with the principle of equality, which fosters social harmony and inner peace, Mahāvīra's philosophy provides a practical framework for reducing global suffering and building a more compassionate society. In our interconnected world, these ancient teachings offer valuable guidance for addressing modern challenges and creating a more harmonious existence for all.

Practical Integration

To coordinate the principles of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra with psycho-spiritual monitoring, the following practices are proposed:

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

1. Daily Reflection:

Establish a daily practice of self-reflection, observing one's thoughts, emotions, and actions in light of the Ācārāṅga's teachings. This may include journaling or meditative introspection focused on ethical challenges and spiritual progress.

Modern education is often economy-oriented and society-oriented but not self-oriented; it fails to engage the individual's inner dispositions (vṛttis). Students are rarely taught that internal vṛttis also contribute to social unrest and economic competition. These suppressed desires become sources of mental friction and social disintegration. Contemporary education encourages individuals to be influenced by circumstances rather than empowering them to influence the circumstances.

Only by confronting and transforming these vṛttis can one begin to navigate life consciously. This was a core insight of spiritual Ācāryas. As Bhagavān Mahāvīra declared: 'Saṃyamā me jīviā' (Restrain thyself). Patañjali echoed this in the Yogasūtra: 'Citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ' (Restrain the modifications of the mind). The central tenet of Anuvrata is: 'Saṃyama eva jīvana' — Restraint is life. A spiritual personality, therefore, is one that meditates on the vṛttis and seeks purification of personal, economic, and social realities through their transformation.

2. Mindfulness of Speech (Bhāṣā-samiti):¹

The Ācārāṅga emphasizes the discipline of speech as a component of ethical living. Practicing mindfulness in communication is aligned with ahimsā (non-violence) and satya (truthfulness)-is essential for cultivating internal harmony and ethical resonance. In the current age, a conscious transformation in lifestyle and communication is necessary to foster a scientific-spiritual personality.

3. Ecological Awareness:

Psycho-spiritual monitoring should extend to one's environmental footprint, in accordance with Jain principles of universal compassion (jīva-dayā) and non-violence towards all life forms. This includes mindful consumption, sustainable living, and a recognition of the interconnectedness of all beings.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, (2019), Ācārya Hīracandra, Samyak Jñāna Prachāraka Maṇḍala, Jaipur, Rajasthan.

4. Emotional Regulation: (Upekṣā and Vairāgya)

Use psycho-spiritual techniques to cultivate equanimity and detachment from worldly affairs, as emphasized in the Ācārāṅga. The spiritual personality is one which regards matter as matter, money as necessary and useful but not as intimate or pertaining to self. The body is mine is merely a myth, not a truth. The wise realize: ‘Na kiñcid mama’. Nothing is mine, if it had been mine nothing would be separated from me.

This can involve practices like cognitive reframing and mindfulness-based stress reduction.

5. Ritual and Contemplation:

Incorporate Jain contemplative practices like samāyika (the practice of equanimity) into psycho-spiritual routines, fostering a sense of inner harmony and a direct experience of the self (ātman). The story of the spiritually awakened child illustrates this truth beautifully:

A child, playing in the sand, is approached by a king who offers to take him to the palace. The child replies, “This body is made of sand-shouldn’t the creation of sand play with sand?” When the king offers to adopt the child, the child imposes two conditions: “You must stay with me at all times and remain awake when I sleep.” The king admits he cannot fulfill these, to which the child replies: “Then I cannot leave my God, who always stays with me and remains awake even when I sleep.”

This profound awareness-that only the soul is mine, and everything else is transient-is the foundation of non-attachment. Without awakening to consciousness, the experience of detachment (vairāgya) remains incomplete. A true spiritual personality lives with the ātman, not with possessions or titles.

Conclusion

By integrating these aspects, individuals can create a comprehensive approach to personal growth that honors the ancient wisdom of the Ācārāṅga while leveraging modern psycho-spiritual monitoring techniques. This coordinated practice can lead to deeper self-understanding, ethical living, and spiritual development.





CHAPTER 4
Enlightened World View of Jainism



Chapter 4

Enlightened World View of Jainism

4.1 The Ideal of Niṣkarmadarśi in Jain Thought

Introduction

Jainism presents a radical spiritual psychology that does not merely caution against wrongful actions but seeks to eliminate the very impulse to act when born of ignorance, attachment, or ego. In this light, the term Niṣkarmadarśi, encountered in early Jain scriptures such as the Ācārāṅga Sūtra represents more than a behavioral model; it is a metaphysical and ethical culmination of Jain soteriology. The Niṣkarmadarśi, is not simply one who abstains from karma, but one whose inner state has become so pure that karma no longer finds a foothold. It is a state of luminous witnessing-mokṣadarśi, ātmadarśi, paramadarśi, and samatvadarśi¹ - rooted in unwavering equanimity and non-reactivity.

This ideal is particularly emphasized in Śramaṇic traditions, which stand in contrast to the ritual and action-oriented models found in early Vedic practices. While Brāhmaṇical frameworks emphasized external sacrificial duties (yajña), Jain thinkers, led by Tīrthaṅkara such as Mahāvīra, turned inward arguing that liberation is achieved not through ritual, but through conscious withdrawal from the inner triggers of karmic influx. Mahāvīra, according to the Ācārāṅga, did not merely cease to perform actions but actively disengaged from their psychological causes, becoming a true Niṣkarmadarśi, a seer who sees yet does not act, nor cause others to act. Mahāvīra, the archetype of a liberated seer, remains untouched by the triad of karma: action, instigation, and endorsement. This is not external passivity but inner dissociation from the causes of karmic bondage (karaṇa-traya).

Etymology and Semantic Overview The word Nishkarmadarshi is a compound of:

- **Niṣ:** a prefix, meaning ‘without’ or ‘free from’
- **Karma:** in the Jain context, not generic ‘action’ but specifically karma-dravya, the subtle material substance that binds the soul due to passion and activities

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

- Darśi: ‘one who sees’, i.e., a seer, often referring to someone with samyagdarśana, the right insight or worldview

Therefore, Niṣkarmadarśi means “One who sees rightly and is free from all karmic action or karmic engagement.” This is not simply one who abstains from external actions, but one who remains unaffected by karmic influx (āsrava) even while perceiving or existing in the world. This ideal is rooted in Jain metaphysics that emphasizes the differentiation between the jīva (soul) and karma (matter), culminating in the Jain model of mokṣa as the state of a completely detached, all-seeing self (kevalin).

Scriptural Foundations – the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the oldest Śvētāmbara Jain canonical text, introduces the Niṣkarmadarśi ideal through vivid verses:

- “So na karai, na kāraei, na annan tiṇṇaṃ kāraṇaṃ bhavai.”¹

(He does not act, nor cause others to act, nor becomes the cause of action by others.)²

- “Samyag-darśanaṃ hi niṣkarman bhavati”

“Right vision is indeed actionless.”³

This explicitly identifies true vision (samyag-darśana) as niṣkarman - devoid of action. The seer becomes a witnessing self (sākṣi-ātman) who remains uninvolved in karmic causation. This forms the conceptual link between darśana and niṣkarman, giving rise to the niṣkarmadarśi ideal.

Commentarial Interpretations

- **Ācārya Śīlaṅka’s Ṭīkā:** Total abstention from causal chains of karmic involvement, including passive approval.
- **Abhayadeva’s Vṛtti:** Emphasizes psychological detachment; karmic action includes volitional, verbal, and mental engagements. The niṣkarmadarśi therefore withdraws from all three channels of karmic influx.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra, ed Muni Nathmal, 1950, (Āṅgasuttāni Series, vol.1). Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, ed Muni Shri Punyavijay, Jaina Āgama Series 1 vol. 1 (1957-1977). Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai.

- Malayagiri: “Bhikṣuḥ niṣkarmadarśī bhavati ‘-jñāna-darśana-pariśuddhena ātmabhāvena sarvaṃ paśyati, kintu na karoti’.” (Purified knowledge and perception).

Malayagiri clarifies that the niṣkarmadarśī bhikṣhu (actionless seer-monk) is one whose inner being is purified by Jñāna (knowledge) and darśana (perception). He sees everything through this clear, enlightened self, yet remains without action.

- Ācārāṅga Sūtra (Ed. Jacobi) “Nivvaṇamaggaṃ paḍipanno, nikkammadarśī bhikkhu...”¹ “He has entered the path to nirvaṇa; the monk who neither acts himself nor causes others to act...” The word niṣkarmadarśī is used to highlight this complete renunciation of karmic activity.
- Ācārya Mahāprajñā: Focuses on inner renunciation and abhāva hiṃsā (non-violence of thought).

Insights from Ātmasiddhi and Karma Theory

Attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa), and ignorance (ajñāna) are the three fundamental knots of karmic bondage. Jain metaphysics illustrates that deluding karma arises not from lack of knowledge, but from misperception and emotional reactivity. Attachment and aversion are the root cause of karma, and karma originates from infatuation. Karma is the root cause of birth and death, and these are said to be the source of misery. None can escape the effect of their own past karma.

As Śrīmad Rājchandra writes:

“Rāga-dveṣa-ajñāna ye mukhya karma ni grantha...”²

(Attachment, aversion and ignorance are the knots to be removed for smooth spiritual progress.)

The word niṣkarmadarśī aligns with Jain principles:

- Ahimsā (non-violence): non-violence in thought, word, and deed
- Apramatta (vigilance): vigilance to avoid unconscious karmic influx
- Saṃyama: self-discipline across speech, body, and mind
- Āsrava-nirodha: conscious stoppage of karmic flow

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, I.2.3.4–6 (Ed. Jacobi, Jaina Sutras, SBE Vol. 22).

² Ātmasiddhi, Śrīmad Rājacandra, tr. Dr. Manu Doshi Shrimad Rājacandra Sādhana Kendra, Koba 2003, gāthā 100.

The niṣkarmadarśi is one who achieves nearly complete niścālatā (stillness) in body and mind. Unlike the niṣkāma karma of the Bhagavad Gītā (action without desire), Jain philosophy calls for cessation of action itself. It is not detachment from the fruits of action but detachment from the **causation of karma**.

Agra and Mula Metaphor

- Mula (Root): Delusions, attachments, and aversions
- Agra (Tip): Manifest expressions—speech, physical action, mental activity

“aggaṃ ca mūlaṃ ca vigiṇṇa dhīre, palicchindiyāṇaṃ nikkamma-damāsī”

O seeker! Recognize that suffering caused by sins. The seeker, through patience and restraint, transforms the bondage caused by attachment into detachment and becomes niṣkarmadarśi (one who perceives without acting, detached observer).

That niṣkarmadarśi is liberated from the fear of death. (He has perhaps seen the path to liberation).

- That niṣkarmadarśi sage sees the world (the living beings) and the supreme goal (liberation or the restraint that leads to it). He lives a detached life (free from attachment and aversion). He is awakened, equipped with the five great vows, and accompanied by the conduct of a true monk (right conduct and knowledge).

“Na kevala agra chettavyam, mula-upacchedaḥ kartavyaḥ.”

(Do not only prune the top; uproot the cause.)

The root means delusion, the top the rest of sins.¹

A Niṣkarmadarśi severs karmic roots, not just fruits.

Akarma State - the Jain ‘state of non-action’: The Transcendent Seer unlike the Bhagavad-Gītā’s ideal of niṣkāma-karma (desireless action), where one still acts in the world but renounces the fruits, the Jain kevalin perceives reality without initiating (yoga). No new karman is bound, and residual karmic matter disintegrates. This is the perfected niṣkarmadarśi (“one who contemplates without acting”) state.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1884, Jaina Sutras: Part I, Herman Jacobi, SBE 22, Clarendon, Oxford.

Niṣkarmadarśi vs kartā (Doer)

| kartā | Niṣkarmadarśi |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Acts with ownership | Perceives without attachment |
| Bound by outcomes | Untouched by result |
| Driven by ego | Dissolved doer-identity |

The Knots of Bondage and the Path to Liberation

Remaining under the sway of mohanīya-karma-the deluding karma-is the principal cause of bondage. Among all varieties of karmic matter, it is the most intracable to overcome, for it is rooted in three persistent defilements: rāga (craving), dveṣa (aversion), and mithyātvā (ignorance of the Self). Whereas the obstructive and obscuring karma can be neutralized through sustained effort and discipline, deluding karma resists dissolution because these inner afflictions cling so tenaciously. The Jain tradition rightly calls them the fundamental granthi (knots) of bondage.

To untie these knots is to free oneself. Just as sewing thread moves smoothly when unknotted, so too does the path to liberation become clear when the tangles of attachment and aversion are removed. But once a knot forms-whether in sewing, in relationships, or on the spiritual path-progress halts until it is undone.

In daily life, we maintain harmonious relations so long as these psychic knots do not form; but when the mind entangles itself in lingering attachments or resentment harmony collapses. The same dynamic governs the soul's journey: we must identify and resolve our knots if we are to advance. Since time immemorial, we have carried conditioned tendencies (saṃskāra) that predispose us to like or dislike at first encounter. A favorable impression breeds attachment; an unfavourable one, aversion. Both bind us. Repeated across lifetimes, these reactions reinforce karmic accumulation.

Life situations - pleasant or painful-are fruits of past karma and therefore impermanent. If one remains samatva (equanimous) amid both, no new karma is bound. But conditioned by habit, we crave the pleasant and resist the unpleasant. This reactivity fuels new karma and perpetuates the cycle.

The third knot - ajñāna (ignorance) - is not sheer absence of knowledge, but the presence of false knowledge. Every soul possesses intrinsic knowledge, yet it is clouded by jñānāvaraṇīya-karma (knowledge-obscuring karma). More insidiously, one may possess learning yet misunderstand its essence-this is delusion expressed in terms such as mati-ajñāna or shruta-ajñāna. Here, one may study scriptures and still miss the truth they point to. This misapprehension is the work of darśana-mohanīya-karma-the delusion of perception. Misidentifying with external circumstances, one abandons true nature and acts from ignorance and emotional turbulence, thereby binding further karma.

So long as rāga, dveṣa, or mithyātva persist, mohanīya-karma keeps the soul fettered and the cycle of birth and death turns. But when these three knots are undone, **samyag-darśana** (right vision) dawns. Right perception engenders the resolve to relinquish karmically binding conduct and to embrace self-restraint; thus begins liberation. This is the essence of karma philosophy as revealed by the Ācāryas enlightened through their own inner realization.

Attachment and aversion are not attributes to the soul, but their annihilation is not merely possible, but historically realised by countless liberated beings. Knowledge (jñāna) is the inherent quality of the soul, yet it remains obscured so long as these defilements persist. The soul is indivisible, perfect, and complete; its capacity for omniscience remains intact, awaiting recognition.

This supreme truth (śruta), must be heard repeatedly, contemplated deeply, meditated upon with clarity, and internalized with unwavering conviction. When reflection is combined with direct insight, realization is inevitable. The journey to completeness begins the moment one turns inward. And once begun, its fulfillment unfolds naturally.

Completeness is not a distant goal, it is fully present in this very moment. It only awaits recognition, realization, and embodiment. Let completeness be.

Niṣkarmakarmathatā (Selfless Diligence)

Mahatma Gandhi (Bāpu) embodied niṣkarmakarmathatā¹-the Jain ideal of action without desire for personal gain. Jain philosophy, in every doctrinal formulation, upholds selfless action as indispensable. Gandhi imbibed this ethic from childhood

¹ Bhāratīya Saṃskṛti: Ek Samājśāstrīya Samīkṣā, 1965, Gaurishankar Bhatta, Sahitya Sadan, Dehradun.

and later wielded it as a mainspring for resolving personal and societal conflicts. As Śrī Gaurīśaṅkar Bhaṭṭa observed:

“In the struggle for independence, the virtue of niṣkarmakarmathatā proves indispensable.”

Gandhi’s ethic arose directly from Jain teachings. His broader worldview bears a transcendental stamp, yet his model of the ideal human is rooted in ethical and worldly responsibility. Jain principles of ahimsā (non-violence) and aparigraha (non-possession) infuse his commitment to lokakalyāṇa (universal welfare). Hence his doctrine of Satyāgraha (non-violent resistance) rests squarely on Jain ethics.

For Gandhi, therefore, true selfless action is inextricable from lifelong observance of non-violence, truth, restraint, and spiritual discipline.

Modern Interpretative Echoes

- Daniel Goleman – Self-regulation within emotional intelligence.
- Viktor Frankl – “Between stimulus and response there is a space....”
- Carl Jung – The necessity of inner reflection and withdrawal of projections.

Anecdote: A Jain monk, insulted during alms-round, replied, “You give anger; I return peace.”

Personality Development Through Niṣkarmadarśī Practice

- Fearless – no self-image to defend.
- Silent – a non-reactive mind.
- Compassionate – action free of compulsion.
- Centred – inner stability expressing as authentic leadership.

Śrāvaka-dharma and Daily Renunciation

Even householders (śrāvaka) can cultivate niṣkarmadarśī qualities. Detachment in everyday duties, practised with vigilant apramāda (awareness), becomes spiritual renunciation (tyāga).

Glossary

| Term | Meaning |
|----------------------|--|
| Niṣkarmadarśī | One who sees without karmic action |
| Apramāda | Constant, alert awareness |
| Samatva | Equanimity |
| Upayoga | Focused, conscious engagement |
| Nirvikalpa | Free from mental constructs or doubt |
| Akārma | Non-doing; beyond karma |
| Guṇasthāna | The fourteen stages of spiritual evolution |
| Nirjarā | Shedding of karmic matter |

Conclusion – The Soul as Mirror

To become niṣkarmadarśī is to perfect the art of living and dying. Nothing leaves a mark on the consciousness of the detached. In the depths of such a consciousness there is neither attachment nor aversion; one neither clings to the world nor flees it. The seer becomes a mirror-clear, luminous, unattached. In that very seeing lies liberation: not a distant reward but the immediate essence of right perception.

Those who grasped Mahāvīra's teaching turned within and found peace; they experienced a revolution that irradiated their lives, becoming Mahāvīra themselves. Thus, Mahāvīra's silence remains a living instruction: the niṣkarmadarśī does not renounce the world to escape it, but to see it rightly-and in that seeing, transcends it altogether.

4.2 Essence of the World - The Inner Awakening

‘Possession to Perception’

The word sāra means ‘result’ ‘essence’ ‘fundamental’ etc. the commentator (Niryukti)¹ says “The essence of the world is dharma, the essence of dharma is jñāna (knowledge), the essence of knowledge is discipline, and the essence of discipline is nirvāṇa (liberation).”

In the materialistic worldview, the ‘essence’ of life is often construed through the prism of possessions, achievements, and sensory gratification. This delusion, deeply

¹ Śrī Ācārāṅga Sūtram (Original Prakrit text with Niryukti and Tīkā), n.d., Śrī Siddhachakra Sāhitya Prachārak Committee, Bombay.

rooted in the karmic cycle, binds the soul (jīva) to saṃsāra. However, from the standpoint of Jain philosophy, the true ‘essence of the world’ is not external acquisition but internal realization. This chapter articulates the life-mantra of a spiritually awakened being who rises above the mire of materiality to realize the inherent luminosity of the self.

If humankind is to be liberated from selfishness, violence, exploitation, corruption, and the manifold afflictions arising from them, it is imperative to transcend a materialistic outlook and cultivate an attitude that can truly be termed spiritual. The Sanskrit word ādhyātma - derived from adhi (above, superior) and ātma (soul) - signifies the superiority and sublimity of the soul-force (ātma-śakti)¹. Spirituality, thus, centers upon the recognition of the soul’s primacy over material and sensory existence.

In the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the term ajjhaviṣohi² is used, denoting inner purity and self-realization - the turning inward towards the soul’s inherent luminosity. This idea is further illuminated in the Uttarādhyayana-sūtra (20.37), where it is said:

appā kattā vikattā ya, duhāṇā ya suhāṇā ya,
appā mittamamittam ca, duppatthiyā supatthiyo.³

That self is both a doer and enjoyer of happiness and misery. It is its own friend when it acts righteously and foe when it acts unrighteously. An unconquered self is its own enemy, unconquered passions and sense organs are its own enemy.

The soul is both the architect of its bondage and the liberator of itself. No external entity governs its fate; realization and purification must arise from within.

Appāṇam eva jujjhāhi, kiṃ te jujjhena bajjhāo?⁴

“Battle with yourself (inner enemies); what will accrue from warring with others?”

Purisa! Tumaṃ eva tumaṃ mittam, kiṃ bahiyā mittamicchasi?

“O man! You are your own friend. (Then) why seek one outside?”⁵

¹ An Introduction to Jain Sādhana 1995, Dr Sagarmal Jain, Parshvanath Vidhyapith, Varanasi.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

³ Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 1997, Ācārya Chandanājī, Sanmati Gyanpith, Agra.

⁴ Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 1997, Ācārya Chandanājī, Sanmati Gyanpith, Agra.

⁵ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, Vol. I, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

This concept encourages self-reliance and introspection, suggesting that the most reliable source of guidance and companionship is one's own self. Jain metaphysics teaches that the path to liberation (mokṣha) is paved not through conquest of the world but by conquering the self. This conquest is marked by niḥsvarthata (selflessness), niṣhkamata (desirelessness), and niṣkarmadarśi sbhava—the state of witnessing without karmic involvement.

Je ekaṁ jāṇai, se savvaṁ jāṇai; je savvaṁ jāṇai, se ekaṁ jāṇai.

“He who knows the one (soul), knows all; He who knows all, knows the one.”¹

“Ke ahaṁ āsī?”² “Who indeed was I?” (an existential inquiry that initiates self-realisation) By deepening Jñānacetanā, refining Karmacetanā, and internalizing Karmaphalacetanā, one moves toward Kevala-jñāna, ultimately achieving Mokṣa—the state of absolute liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

The Essence of a Person

The essence of an individual is the distinctive constellation of qualities—character traits, deeply held values, formative experiences, and enduring aspirations—that constitute the core self. It is this inner synthesis that endows a person with uniqueness, coherence, and a continuous sense of identity across time and circumstance.

Goals

The primary goal of Jainism is to become a perfected or liberated soul, known as Siddha, Paramātmā, or God. The perfected soul is pure consciousness and possesses perfect knowledge, infinite power, total bliss, and omniscience.

In Jainism, liberation is defined as self-unity, an endless calm, freedom from anger, ego, deceit, greed, and desire, and freedom from birth, death, and rebirth. When it is reached, a human has fulfilled their destiny as a perfect being or God. Every living being has a potential to become God. For Jains, there is no creator God and therefore no communion with Him.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

The Path of Attainment

The spiritual path consists of an integrated trinity: Right Faith (Samyak Darśana), Right Knowledge (Samyak Jñāna), and Right Conduct (Samyak Cāritra).¹ They must coexist in person if one is to make any progress on the path of liberation.

Initially, one needs to acquire the proper knowledge of the true nature of the soul and other realities. When one is totally convinced of one's knowledge, at that moment this knowledge will remove the ignorance about one's own nature. This stage of spirituality is called the realization of truth or attainment of Right Faith and Right Knowledge, popularly known as the Samyaktva stage.

Right perception is the essence of spiritual jewels; it is the root of the great tree of liberation. It needs to be understood from the absolute as well as from the practical point of view.

In Jain Philosophy, right knowledge is the knowledge of nine Tattvas and six Dravya (substances). Right knowledge is also considered knowledge of truth, knowledge of self.

Knowledge gained for the purpose must be effectively used to realize the objective. Knowledge without practical application remains sterile. Thus, if we want to realize any objective, we must have the right concept, appropriate knowledge, and the right type of activity.

The realization of truth leads to Right Conduct. Right Conduct includes compassion and non-violence (Ahimsā) towards all living beings, pluralism of views (Anekāntavāda or Syadvada) towards all faiths and ideas, non-possession (Aparigraha) or limitation of possessions and non-possessiveness, self-purification, self-control, austerity, penance, asceticism, and meditation. There are various spiritual stages that exist in practicing the Right Conduct called Guṇasthānas. Through continuous self-reflection and conscious living, we realize that everything we seek is already within us—waiting to be acknowledged and embraced.

Six Dravya – The Substances that Constitute Reality

According to Jain Cosmology, the universe is a collective form of five or six substances, viz.: the medium of motion, the medium of rest, space, soul, matter, and

¹ Tattvārtha Sūtra, 2011, Ed Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Printers, Deharadun.

time. Beyond it there is nothing, but pure and endless space known as transcosmos (Āloka).¹ Jain philosophy asserts that the universe is extraordinarily vast. Remarkably, many of the insights found in Jain scriptures are now being echoed into the discoveries of modern physics, revealing fascinating parallels between ancient wisdom and contemporary science.

The Jain concept of existence—defined by origination, cessation, and persistence—explains that while forms change, essence remains. For instance, when curd turns into butter, old modes vanish and new ones arise, but the substance endures. This view aligns with the Big Bang Theory, which holds that matter is not created or destroyed, only transformed. Reality, according to Jainism, flows through ever-changing modes, yet persists eternally.

The Tīrthaṅkaras, endowed with supreme perception, have expounded that the universe is constituted of six fundamental substances (Dravya): Jīva, Pudgala, Dharmāstikāya, Adharmāstikāya, Ākāśa and Kāla.

- Jīva (Soul): The conscious, sentient entity capable of perception, knowledge, and liberation.
- Pudgala (Matter): The non-sentient substance that constitutes physical forms and sensations.
- Dharmāstikāya (Medium of Motion): The passive medium enabling movement in living and non-living beings.
- Adharmāstikāya (Medium of Rest): The passive medium that enables rest and stability for moving entities.
- Ākāśa (Space): The boundless expanse that accommodates all substances.
- Kāla (Time): The continuous sequence that enables change, transformation, and continuity.

Nine Tattvas – The Fundamentals of the Jain Path:

For successfully pursuing any objective there are some factors to be considered. For instance, if we intend to undertake a manufacturing activity, we should acquaint ourselves with the article to be produced. We should know its properties, condition of

¹ Scientific Vision of Lord Mahavira, 2005, Dr Samani Chaitanya Pragya, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, Raj.

the raw materials together with any impurities associated with them, the method of removing the impurities, the circumstances under which the product may be contaminated, other materials that can compete with it, the ways to avert the contamination and competition, etc. Similarly if our objective be to attain the liberation, we have to understand the true properties of soul (Jīva), other objects (Ajīva) that compete with it for attracting our attention, merits and demerits (Puṇya and Pāpa) that tend to pollute it, the ways one gets influx (Āśrava) of Karma, adulterated state of soul on account of the bondage (Bandh) of Karma, ways to avert (Saṃvara) the influx, elimination (Nirjarā) of adulteration and attainment of the perfect purity of soul, which is called liberation (Mokṣa)¹. These nine factors are known in Jain terminology as Navtattva or nine fundamentals.

Some scholars do not distinguish Puṇya (merit) and Pāpa (demerit) as separate categories and therefore speak of only seven fundamental principles (tattvas), incorporating Puṇya and Pāpa under the broader category of Āśrava (influx). This difference is essentially numerical, not substantive, as both perspectives ultimately convey the same doctrinal essence.²

What is critical, however, is the aspirant's sincere belief in these core principles—whether enumerated as seven or nine. Such faith provides a correct understanding of the soul, its current condition, the ultimate goal of liberation (Mokṣa), and the means to attain it. This clarity of vision naturally awakens the inner energy necessary for spiritual progress. Consequently, faith in these fundamentals is itself regarded as Samyak Darśana - right perception or right faith.

1. **Jīva (Soul):** The eternal self, inherently pure and capable of liberation.
2. **Ajīva (Non-soul):** All entities that lack consciousness, including the five non-living Dravya.
3. **Āśrava (Influx):** The process through which karmic particles flow into the soul due to passions and actions.
4. **Bandha (Bondage):** The binding of karmic matter to the soul, obscuring its true nature.

¹ Sādhvī Vijayashrī Āryā (comp.). Illustrated Fundamentals of Jainism (Pacchīs Bol). tr. by Dr Priyadarśanā Jain; ed. by Sanjay Surana. Mumbai: Hindi Granth Karyālay, 2nd ed., 2009. Pacchīs Bola

² Essence of Jainism, Manubhai Doshi. Indira Mansukhlal Doshi Memorial Trust 1992.

5. **Samvara (Stoppage):** The process of stopping further karmic influx through discipline and awareness.
6. **Nirjarā (Shedding):** The dissociation and elimination of accumulated karma.
7. **Mokṣa (Liberation):** The ultimate state of the soul free from all karmic bondage.
8. **Puṇya (Merit):** Auspicious karma leading to favorable worldly experiences.
9. **Pāpa (Demerit):** Inauspicious karma resulting in suffering and lower births.

There is a fundamental difference in the **purpose**, **attitude**, and **method** between one who does not know the truth and one who does.

| S.No | Type of Person | Purpose | Attitude | Method |
|------|--|---------------------------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | One who does not know the truth | Physical (material) pleasures | Attached | Unrestrained |
| 2 | Tattvadarśī ¹ (knower of truth) | Body sustenance for self-growth | Detached | Restrained |

Introduction to Karma in Jain Philosophy

At the heart of Jain philosophy lies the recognition that the essence of religion is to realize the soul-the ātman, the conscious Self. This soul is eternal, uncreated, and formless; it exists before birth and continues beyond death. In its pure state, the soul is inherently omniscient, omni percipient, blissful, full of energy, and untouched by suffering.

However, these attributes remain latent in the worldly state because the soul is bound by karma-subtle material particles that cling to it due to vibrations caused by actions rooted in passions.² This encrustation of karma conceals the soul's true nature, distorting its perception, knowledge, and conduct. The soul's entanglement with karma is referred to as bandha, or bondage.

Jain scriptures classify karma into countless types, often organized into 148 or 158 subcategories. Yet all karmas fall broadly into eight principal types, further divided into two overarching categories:

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, Vol. I, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

² Bandha Tattva, (Karma Granth-1), Shri Kahnyalal Lodha, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

- Ghātiyā karma (Destructive karmas): Those that obstruct the soul's intrinsic qualities, such as knowledge and perception.

- Aghātiyā karma (Non-destructive karmas): Those that influence the soul's worldly experiences but do not obscure its essential nature.

I. Ghātiyā karma (Destructive to the soul's pure qualities):

1. Jñānavarāṇīya karma (Knowledge-Obscuring):

Obstructs the soul's inherent ability to know, covering five kinds of knowledge from sensory to omniscience.

2. Darśanāvaraṇīya karma (Perception-Obscuring):

Veils the soul's capacity to perceive, affecting both waking and sleep states across nine forms.

3. Mohanīya karma (Deluding):

Deludes the soul, causing wrong beliefs and unethical conduct, subdivided into 3 belief-deluding and 25 conduct-deluding types.

4. Antarāya karma (Power Obstructing):

Obstructs the exercise of energy, hindering giving, receiving, enjoyment, usage, and exertion.

II. Aghātiyā karma (Non-destructive, but binding to embodiment):

5. Vedanīya karma (Feeling-Producing):

Produces feelings of pleasure (Śātā) or pain (Asātā).

6. Āyuh karma (Lifespan Determining):

Determines the lifespan and realm (heavenly, human, animal, or hellish)

7. Nāma karma (Physique-Determining):

Determines physical attributes and characteristics; includes 42+ subtypes, including the rare Tīrthāṅkara body-making karma.

8. Gotra Karma (Status-Determining):

Determines the social/religious status one is born into-noble (ucca) or humble (nīca).

Four Modes of Bandha (Bondage)¹

| Mode | Sanskrit term | Explanation |
|------|--|---|
| 1 | Prakṛti-bandha | The type of karma that binds (e.g., knowledge-obscuring, deluding). |
| 2 | Sthiti-bandha | The duration for which the karma remains bound—ranging from fractions of a moment to countless sāgaropama-s (cosmic time units). |
| 3 | Anubhāga-bandha (or Anubhava-bandha) | The intensity with which karma will ripen; intense passions forge stronger, indelible (Nikācita) bonds. |
| 4 | Pradeś-bandha | The extent or multitude of karma particles adhering to the soul. |

There are states in which the soul is completely free from passion, either through suppression or destruction. However, even in such states, vibrations may persist. As a result, the influx (Āśrava) and bondage (bandha) of karma still occur, albeit only momentarily. This specific type of karmic influx and bondage, arising from activity devoid of passion, is technically termed Īryāpathika ‘non-affecting.’ In contrast, when activity is accompanied by passions, the resulting karmic influx and bondage are called Saṃparyāyika ‘affecting.’

Ācārya Amitgati says,

ajcñānī badhyate yatra sevyamāne akṣagocare |

tatraiva mucyate jñānī paśyatām āścaryam īdṛśam ||²

Karma, Rebirth, and Liberation

Jains hold a detailed doctrine of karma as a material substance (karma pudgala) that binds to the soul due to passion and activities. This karmic accretion obscures the soul's true nature and perpetuates transmigration through various realms—heaven, hell, human and animal. Based on the quality of one's actions, one experiences corresponding fruits in subsequent lives.

Āśrava—the inflow of karmic particles—arises from passion-driven actions. Bandha occurs when that karma adheres to the soul through ignorance and defilement.

¹ Bandha Tattva, (Karma Granth-1), Shri Kahnyalal Lodha, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

² Ācārya Amitgati, Samayik Path in Sāmāyikasūtra. Agra: Sanmati Jñānapīṭha, 3rd ed., 1979.

Liberation is secured by Saṃvara, which blocks further influx, and Nirjarā, which exhausts the karma already bound.

Not only the deed but the intention behind it carries karmic weight. Jainism therefore distinguishes between puṇyānubandhī-puṇya (meritorious karma that germinates further merit) and pāpānubandhī-pāpa (demeritorious karma that breeds more vice).

In each rebirth, conduct unfolds according to ingrained traits. As long as the soul's innate awareness remains veiled—a state called ajñāna (ignorance) - one lives impulsively, chasing sensory pleasures. Liberation begins with awakening self-awareness and recognising unwholesome tendencies. Through confession and ceaseless vigilance against the kaṣāya-s (defilements), the inward discipline of antar-tapa (internal austerity) is set in motion. As vigilance deepens, meditation and concentration take root, purifying the inner being.

Concurrently, the aspirant must voluntarily endure outer hardships—unfavourable climates, hunger, bodily discomfort - as bāhya-tapa (external austerity). Patience and endurance intensify both forms of tapa. Sustained internal and external tapa together bring about nirjarā, the shedding of karmic matter that encrusts the soul.¹

prāṇihanti kṣaṇārdhena saṃyamālambya karma tat |
yan na hanyān naraś tīvraiḥ tapasaḥ janma-koṭibhiḥ ||

Karma that cannot be destroyed by the fiercest austerities over billions of births is annihilated in half a moment through equanimity.

Through samyag-darśana (right perception) one realises that both pleasant and unpleasant circumstances arise from past karma. Recognising this, the aspirant refrains from craving and aversion, cultivating unshakeable equanimity and weakening defiling instincts.

Authentic emancipation-nirvāṇa or mokṣa-occurs only when all karmic matter is either fully destroyed (kṣaya) or rendered permanently ineffectual (upaśama). Liberation is purely individual; it cannot be bestowed from outside but must be earned through self-purification.

¹ Essence of Jainism, Manu Doshi, Lake Forest, IL: Indira Mansukhlal Doshi Memorial Trust, 2nd ed., 2003 (first ed. 1992).

The liberated soul ascends to Siddhaśilā, the pinnacle of the universe, dwelling eternally as a siddha beyond the realm of matter, time, and rebirth.

Concept of God in Jainism

Jainism rejects the notion of a supreme creator-deity and posits instead that every jīva (soul) can, through its own disciplined effort, attain the state of a Siddha—a fully liberated, omniscient being entirely free of karma-bandha (karmic bondage) and forever abiding in blissful stillness. The tradition venerates the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras—historic Jinas who, by their own effort, rediscovered and illuminated the path to liberation—not as dispensers of favors but as living proofs of human potential. Their consummate virtues include kevala-jñāna (omniscience), ahimsā (non-violence), satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (chaste discipline), aparigraha (non-possessiveness), kṣamā (forbearance), karuṇā (compassion), upekṣā (equanimity), śīla (flawless conduct), saṁvara (restraint), and ardent tapa (austerity). Manifested through unwavering samyak-darśana (right insight), these qualities inspire every jīva to undertake its own ascent toward Siddhahood.¹

Jain ethics crystallize in rigorous vows: the absolute mahāvratas for monastics and the moderated aṇuvratas for laity, complemented by external austerities (fasting, non-possession, vigilant care for all life-forms) and internal practices of meditation and detachment that together erode karmic accretions.² Because karmic particles (puṅgava) adhere to the soul through attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa), each act of mindful restraint loosens the fetters that propel endless rebirths. Philosophically, Jainism's doctrine of anekāntavāda (non-absolutism) insists that reality is many-sided, urging intellectual humility and compassionate pluralism. In sum, divinity in Jain thought is not a distant sovereign but an achievable perfection latent in every being, realized through self-governed moral discipline, universal compassion, and the steady cultivation of equanimity.

Aṇuvratāḥ are scaled-down vows suitable for laypersons, aiming to guide spiritual growth within the responsibilities of household life.

¹ The Jaina Path of Purification Padmanabh S. Jaini, first published by the University of California Press in 1979.

² An Introduction to Jain Sadhana, 1995, Dr Sagarmal Jain, Parshvanath Vidhyapith, Varanasi.

The twelve vows undertaken by Jain Śrāvakas (householders) are grouped into three categories:

I. Five Aṇuvratās (Lesser Vows):

1. Ahimsā-aṇuvrata– Vow of limited non-violence
2. Satya-aṇuvrata – Vow of limited truthfulness
3. Asteya-aṇuvrata – Vow of limited non-stealing
4. Brahmacharya-aṇuvrata – Vow of limited celibacy or chastity
5. Aparigraha-aṇuvrata – Vow of limited non-possession or non-attachment

II. Three Guṇavratās (Three Merit Vows):

6. Dig vrata – Restriction of movement to a predetermined area or set of directions
7. Bhogopabhoga - parimāṇa-vrata –Self-imposed limits on all consumable and durable possessions
8. Anartha-daṇḍa-vrata – Renunciation of purposeless or injurious activities

III. Four Śikṣāvratās (Four Disciplinary or Training Vows):

9. Sāmāyika-vrata – Daily practice of equanimity: spend a fixed period in meditation and impartial goodwill toward all beings.
10. Deśāvakāśika-vrata – Temporal and spatial restriction of activities
11. Pauṣadha-vrata – Periodic retreat to live, for a set time, like a monk or nun
12. Ātithi-saṁvibhāga-vrata – Offering food and hospitality to ascetics and the needy

These twelve vows (dvādaśa-vratāḥ) furnish the śrāvaka (lay Jain) with a graduated ethics that harmonises worldly responsibilities and spiritual ascent. By practising ahimsā, satya, restraint, detachment, and generosity through these aṇuvratas, guṇavratas, and śikṣāvratas, householders mitigate the inflow (āsrava) and bondage (bandha) of karman-pudgala, steadily purify the jīva, and prepare for deeper renunciation-ultimately moving closer to mokṣa, liberation from saṁsāra.

The Eleven Pratimās of Jainism

The Pratimās are eleven progressive stages of spiritual development for Jain householders, guiding them from basic faith to near-monkhood over a period of 5.5 years.¹ Each stage deepens discipline and detachment from world life:

1. Darśana-pratimā– Firm establishment of samyak-darśana (right faith).
2. Vrata-pratimā - Unbroken observance of the twelve lay vows (dvādaśa vrata).
3. Sāmāyika-pratimā–Regular practice of sāmāyika-meditative equanimity toward all beings.
4. Proṣadhopavāsa-pratimā– Fasting (upavāsa) on prescribed proṣadha days to heighten self-control.
5. Kāyotsarga-pratimā– Intense bodily detachment (kāyotsarga), curbing sensory indulgence.
6. Brahmacharya-pratimā– Embraces complete celibacy and purity of conduct.
7. Sācitta-tyāga-pratimā–Renunciation of raw/sentient foods to minimize harm to life.
8. Ārambha-tyāga-pratimā– Cessation of personal involvement in occupations that entail violence.
9. Preṣya-tyāga-pratimā– Refraining from ordering or endorsing others to perform violent acts.
10. Uddiṣṭa-tyāga-pratimā– Refusal of food specially prepared for oneself; restriction of speech and social dealings.
11. Śramaṇa-bhūta-pratimā– Near-monastic life, observing virtually all rules of a śramaṇa (monk); the doorstep to full renunciation.

Over approximately five and a half years, these pratimāḥ lead the lay Jain (śrāvaka) from foundational faith to the threshold of monkhood, progressively deepening discipline, detachment, and readiness for liberation (mokṣa).

¹ Upāsakadaśāṅga-sūtra, 1989, Madhukar Muni, Śrī Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

The 14 Stages of Spiritual Development in Jainism (Guṇasthana)

The Guṇasthanas are the fourteen sequential spiritual stages a soul traverses on its journey from ignorance to liberation (mokṣā), classified by the degree of right perception (Samyak darśana), right knowledge (samyak Jñāna), and right conduct (samyak cāritra). The 14 stages are explained in the second chapter.

These stages reflect the soul's gradual purification, culminating in mokṣā after the 14th stage.

Anekāntavāda: The Plurality of Essence

“Jeṇa vinā loassa pi, vavahāro savvahā na nivvahai;
Tassa bhuvanekaguruṇo, namo anekāntavāyassa.”

“Obeisance to Anekāntavāda (the doctrine of non-one-sidedness), the unique guide of the universe, without which even worldly transactions cannot be rightly carried out.”¹

Jainism rejects absolutism in favor of Anekāntavāda - the doctrine of manifold aspects. Reality is complex and multifaceted; no single viewpoint suffices. The essence of the world is not one fixed idea, but a constellation of perspectives shaped by context, substance, time, and condition.

Through Syādvāda, the conditioned predication (“in some respect, it is...”), the soteriological vision broadens. Even spiritual essence must be contextualized - it is experienced differently by a householder, an ascetic, and a siddha. This relativism is not ambiguity but epistemic humility.

About truth, Jain philosophy firmly states that the whole truth cannot be observed from a single viewpoint. We must strive to be openminded and embrace the positive thoughts and vantage points of other human beings, religions, and philosophies.

Jainism states that; Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Vegetation, the five basic elements of our environment also possess life. However, the destruction of one or the other form of life and limited possession is essential for our survival. Therefore, the goal is to minimize the negative impact of our existence on other living beings and the

¹ Samana Suttam, verse 660.

environment. Hence Jainism advocates Vegetarianism and against raising animals for food for both, ethical as well as environmental reasons.

Jainism is unique in allowing a very spiritually advanced person to move slowly towards his own death by certain practices (principally fasting) under specified circumstances. This is a voluntary act and is permitted only when a person is not capable of doing any austerities (removal of his own karma - Nirjarā) due to terminal illness / old age.

The principles of Jainism if properly understood in their right perspective and faithfully adhered to, have great relevance for modern times. These principles can bring contentment, inner happiness and joy in the present life through spiritual development based on freedom from passions and kindness towards all beings.

Non-violence (Ahimsā) which strengthens the autonomy of life everywhere, non-absolutism (Anekāntavāda) which strengthens autonomy of thoughts & speech, and non-possessiveness (Aparigraha) which strengthens our satisfaction and compassionate activities are the three realistic principles, which strengthen our belief that every living being has a right to self-existence. All life is interdependent, because each jīva both shapes and is shaped by every other, Jainism roots its ethics-ahimsā (non-violence), ecological stewardship, and social responsibility-in this lattice of mutual interdependence. No life form exists in isolation; harmony and survival depend on reciprocal care.

“Parasparopagraho jīvānām”.¹ “Living beings are of mutual assistance (upagraha) to one another.”

These principles translate into three practices: one should not kill, one should not trample others’ thoughts, and one should not trample nature.

Philosophical Pluralism and Moral Positivity

Through Anekāntavāda, Jainism acknowledges that reality is multi-faceted and cannot be fully grasped by any single viewpoint. Thus, it affirms a deep respect for diverse philosophical and religious perspectives-so long as they aid in reducing the soul’s

¹ Tattvārtha Sūtra: That Which Is, Umāsvāti, 2007, Nathmal Tatia, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

impurities like ego, greed, hatred, or ignorance. Every doctrine that advances self-control and compassion is considered śubhāśrava (a wholesome influx).¹

This openness fosters interfaith harmony, tolerance, and the reconciliation of competing ideologies-political, religious, and cultural-without collapsing into relativism.

If humanity were to truly embody three core Jain principles-non-violence (ahiṃsa), non-possession (aparigraha), and non-absolutism (Anekāntavāda)-then the world would witness the cessation of war, the end of economic exploitation, and the reversal of environmental degradation.

Jain Ethical Framework for a Just and Sustainable World

To live a genuinely ethical life and protect the delicate balance of our natural world, Jain philosophy advocates the following:²

- Establish Universal Friendship and Peace: Foster harmony across human and non-human realms through the rigorous practice of non-violence in thought, word, and deed.
- Cultivate Compassionate Coexistence: Extend reverence not only to human life but to all sentient beings and ecosystems, recognizing the interdependence of existence.
- Ensure Social Justice through Non-Acquisitiveness: True equality arises when the urge to possess, dominate, or accumulate is abandoned. Jainism envisions a society free from greed and structured around mutual respect.
- Promote Religious and Social Pluralism: Reconcile religious, political, racial, and communal divisions through Anekāntavāda, the doctrine of manifold viewpoints, fostering dialogue over dogma.
- Champion Environmental Stewardship: Embrace an austere lifestyle marked by restraint, humility, and gratitude. Ecological conservation follows naturally from living minimally and mindfully.

¹ Puṇya-Pāpa Tattva: Āgama evaṃ Karmasiddhānta ke Āloka meṃ, 1990, Kanhaiyālāl Loḍhā, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Śrāvakācāra kī Prasāṅgikatā kā Praśna, 1998, Dr Sagramal Jain in Abhinandan Granth, Sāgaramala Jaina Abhinandana Grantha, ed. Śrīprakāśa Pāṇḍey, Parshvanath Vidhyapith, Varanasi.

- **Adopt a Plant-Based Lifestyle:** Avoid all products derived from animal exploitation-including meat, dairy (milk, cheese, butter, ghee, and ice cream), eggs, fish, honey, leather, fur, silk, and pearls-as these contribute to immense suffering and ecological damage.
- **Limit Consumption:** Voluntarily reduce needs and desires to essential levels, resisting consumerism in favor of conscious simplicity.
- **Respect Natural Resources:** Use with care, reuse with thought, and recycle with responsibility. Share resources rather than hoard them, recognizing nature's generosity is not infinite.
- **Uplift the Downtrodden:** Serve others selflessly, especially those suffering or marginalized. Jain ethics call for compassion not only in spirit but in action.

Mahatma Gandhi, who drew profoundly from Jain wisdom reminded us: “Nature provides enough to satisfy every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.”¹

Guided by that insight, let us commit to a life of compassion, ethical restraint, and reverence for all beings, always striving to lessen the harm we inflict upon the world.

Universal Forgiveness and Friendship (Jain Kṣamā Prayer)

Khamemi savve jīvā, savve jīvā khamantu me;
Metti me savva bhūesu, veraṃ majjha na keṇāi.

I grant forgiveness to all living beings,

May all living beings grant me forgiveness?

My friendship is with all living beings,

I have no animosity towards any living beings.

In embracing this spirit of mutual forgiveness and universal friendship, we honour the very heart of the Jain creed and move one step closer to peaceful coexistence with every form of life.

¹ Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, 1958–1994, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, New Delhi.

Essence of the World

This chapter distills the Jain worldview. The world's essence lies not in its myriad externals but in the inner radiance of Ātma-darśana-the pure, unobstructed vision of the soul. Grounded in Anekāntavāda (non-absolutism), Guṇasthāna (the fourteen stages of spiritual ascent), Syādvāda (conditional predication), and Niṣkarmadarśī-bhāva (the stance of karmic non-doership), this insight is central-not peripheral-to Jain soteriology.

Nature of the Soul and Its Destiny

In Jain metaphysics, **every jīva** (soul)-is eternal, uncreated, and distinct. It is never truly born and never truly dies; rather, it cycles through embodiments governed by the inexorable law of karma. The soul's telos is mokṣa-liberation characterized by infinite knowledge (kevala-jñāna), bliss (ānanda), perception (darśana), and energy (vīrya).

Liberation is entirely self-earned. No savior can intervene; no deity can grant absolution. Freedom demands disciplined conquest of attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa) through relentless personal effort, making Jainism one of history's most exacting, self-accountable spiritual paths.

The Ethical Path to Liberation

The three jewels (Ratnatraya) - Right Vision, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct-are described in Jainism as the path to mokṣa. These are developed through:

Vows (vrata)

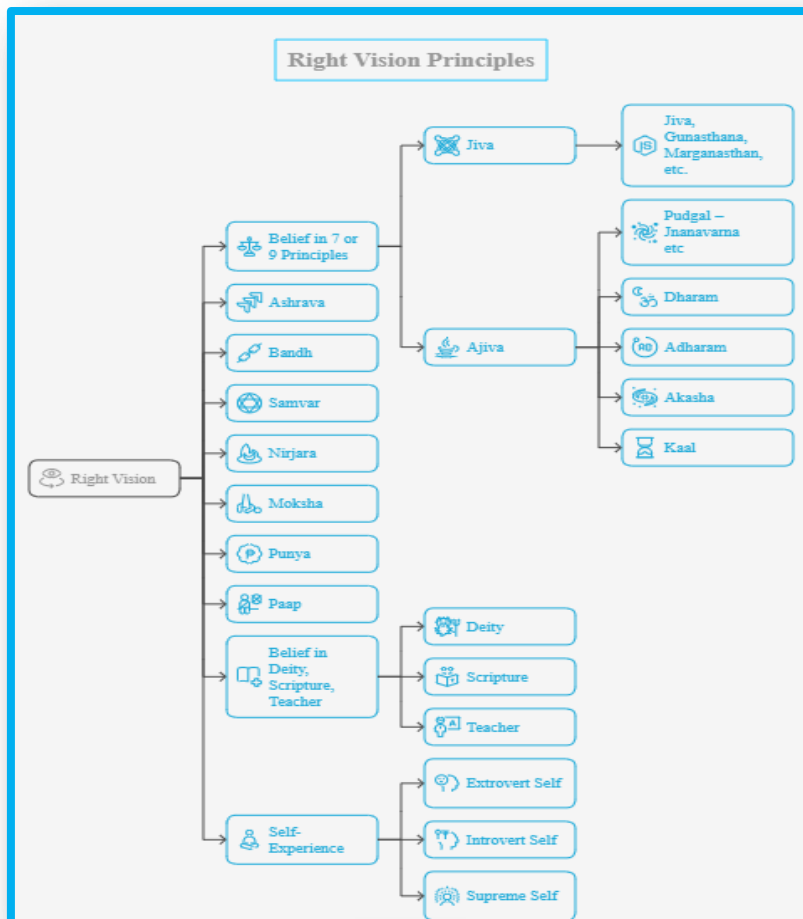
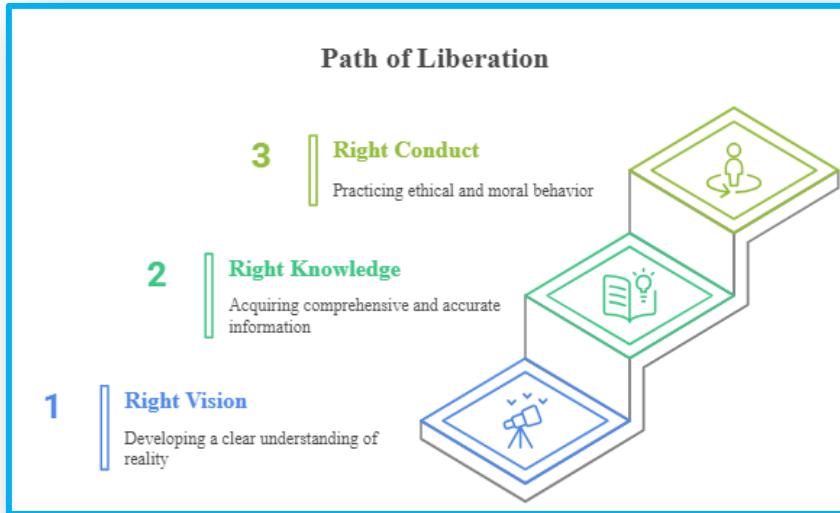
Careful conduct (samiti)

Meditation (dhyāna)

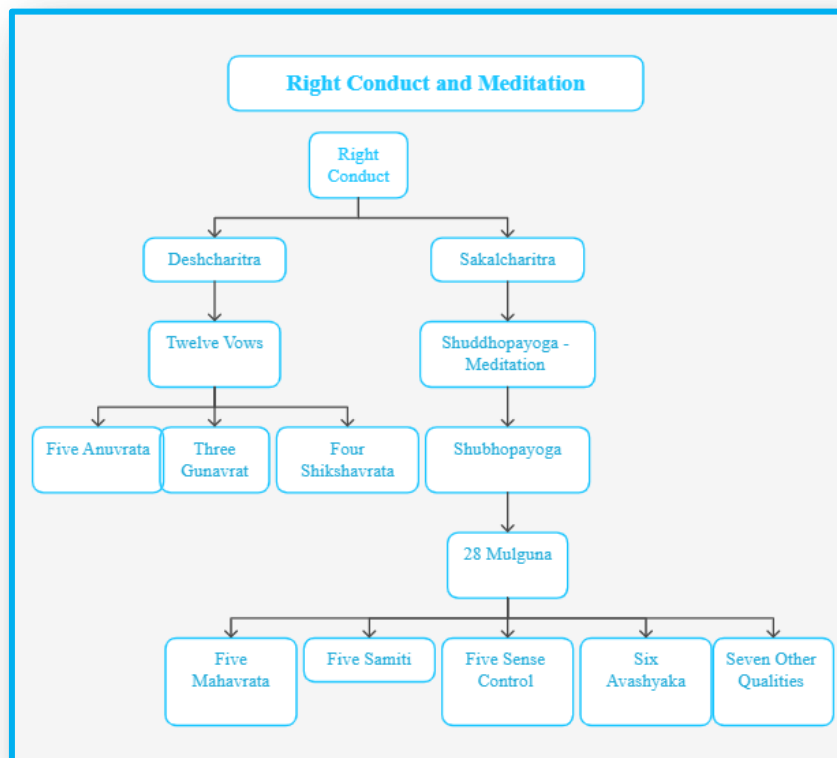
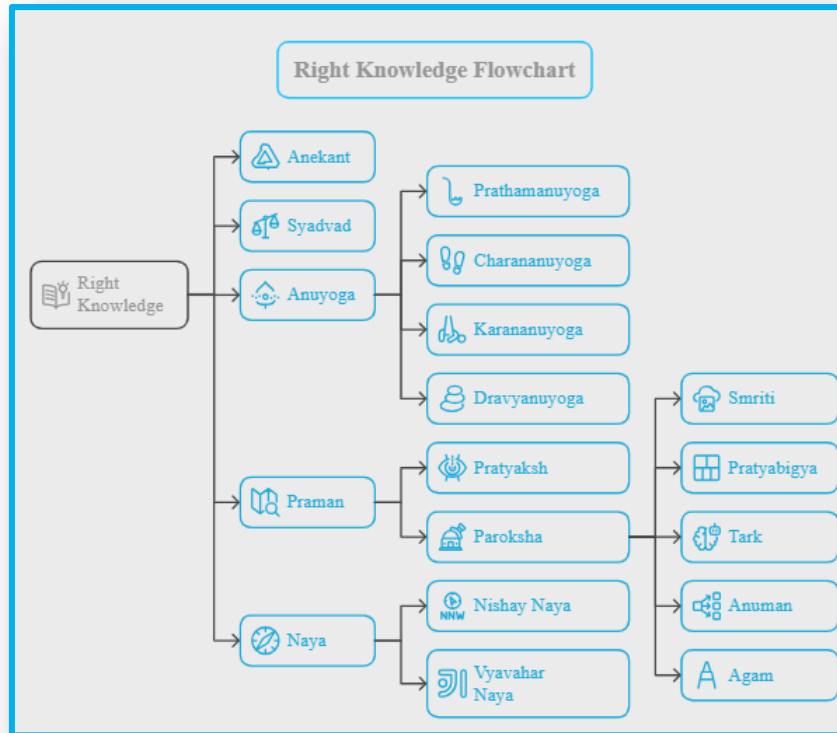
Ascetic practice

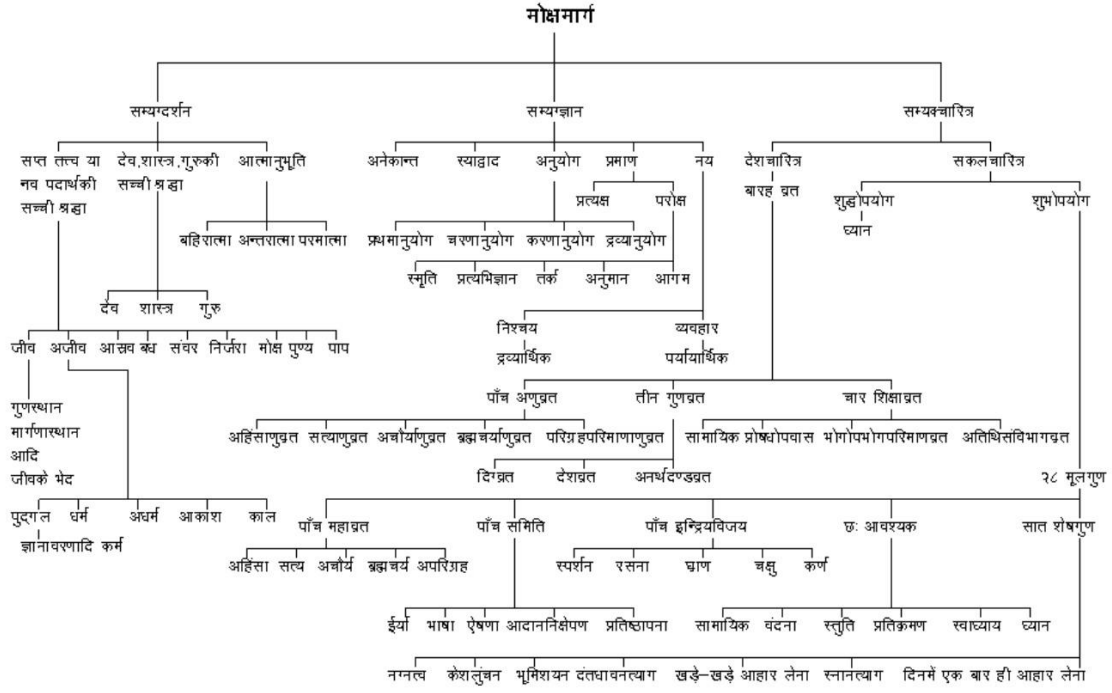
The Āgamas, which are Jainism's canonical scriptures, provide ethical and spiritual guidance for individuals following this approach.

Ratnatraya Chart (from Mokṣamārga-Prakāśaka) follows in Hindi and English.¹



¹ Mokṣamārga-Prakāśaka, c.1760 Ācāryakalpa Paṇḍit Todarmal, Paṇḍit Todarmal Smarak Bhavan, Jaipur.





The Liberated Self

The truly liberated soul has abandoned every action, every desire. Freed of craving, it sees reality precisely as it is—direct, undistorted, and whole. Having traced both the origin and the destination of its own journey, it no longer hungers for the world's fleeting delights. Released from the wheel of birth and death, it rejoices in mokṣa, perfect emancipation.

Even intellect reaches its limit here. As the Ācārāṅga Sūtra puts it, ‘savve sara niyattanti’¹ - ‘all sounds turn back.’ Words, concepts, even the keenest thought recoil before this truth. The mind—the subtlest instrument of embodied existence cannot transgress that frontier. The sage who realizes this understands that the ultimate stands unsupported and independent, untouched by the scaffolding of matter or mind.

In liberation, all categories collapse. The soul is neither long nor short, round nor angular. It bears no shape, boundary, or color—neither black nor white, red nor green. It cannot be described as sweet or bitter, soft or hard, hot or cold. It transcends smell, taste, sound, and touch; it eludes every duality of good and evil, pleasure and pain, male and female.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 11989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Bodiless, unborn, and unformed, it cannot be located or compared. Its essence is formless, unconditioned, ungraspable. In that state there is nothing to hear, nothing to see, nothing to touch and yet therein abides the most unshakeable truth.

4.3 Discovery of Self

The journey toward liberation in Indian philosophical traditions is rooted not in abstract speculation but in a sincere and disciplined quest for the realization of the Self. Far from being theoretical systems, these philosophies arise from an existential urgency, to transcend the bondage of worldly existence, which is afflicted by delusion, limitation, and suffering. The common aim is the perfect unfolding of the soul's inherent potential. Each school, including Jainism, articulates its unique path, but all converge on the truth that the highest realization lies in direct knowledge and experience of the ātma.

The pursuit of truth is not peripherality is foundational, even existential. It is not merely a philosophical exercise, but a deep, lived inquiry that emerges from the soul's most primal question: Ko ahaṃ āsī? "Who was I?".¹ This is not a question born of idle curiosity-it arises from an inner thirst, a spiritual jijñāsā (inquisitiveness), pointing toward the essence of the self.

In the first aphorism, ("Who was I?"), The seeker turns inward, igniting the first spark of self-awareness. So'ham सोऽहम् ("That am I"),² reveals the recognition or affirmation of one's identity-not in the egoic sense, but in the awakened sense of the soul (jīva). It marks the moment where inquiry turns into insight.

The act of remembrance (anusmaraṇa) of one's true nature-reflected in the repetition of सोऽहं-is itself a kind of unbinding. But this remembrance, in Jain metaphysics, is not the same as in Vedic traditions. While Upaniṣhadic expressions like सोऽहं अस्मि, स एवऽहमस्मि³ equate the self with the Absolute (Brahman), Jain tradition maintains the distinct individuality of each soul. The Sohaṃ of the spiritual aspirant is not one

¹ Illustated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

³ Chandogya Upnishad 4/11/1/etc, in Ācārāṅga Sūtra p.5, Śrī Madhukar Muni.

of metaphysical identity with the universal, but a recognition of the soul's distinct, uncreated, eternal reality.

Truth, once realized, must become lived experience. And because truth cannot remain the privilege of a few, the Indian philosophical traditions have labored to chart public pathways-methods of liberation that anyone with commitment and sincerity may follow.

This movement from mode (paryāya) to substantive, eternal (dravya) understanding of the soul represents the shift from ignorance to faith, from disorientation to anchoring in the self. It is only when one begins to believe in the permanence and purity of the soul that they become a śrāvaka, a true spiritual aspirant. The worldly soul accepts the reality of saṃsāra (transmigration), but the awakened seeker recognizes it as a realm of karmic bondage. The perception of ātman as unbound, luminous, and infinite is not just theoretical-it is transformative.

Nature of Self

While defining the nature of self, the Ācārāṅga mentions:

“Je āyā se viṇṇā, je viṇṇā se āyā.”¹

The self is the knower, and the knower is the self, thus the real nature of self is regarded as pure knower.

Modern psychology identifies three aspects of consciousness: cognitive, affective, and conative. The affective and conative dimensions correspond to experiencing (enjoying) and doing (acting), respectively. As long as the soul remains entangled in experiencing or doing, it does not exist in its pure, ideal state. True selfhood lies in abiding as the pure knower, beyond pleasure, pain, desire, and aversion.

In this pure state, mental equanimity is preserved. If the soul oscillates between pleasure and pain, or between desires and attachments, its natural tranquility is disturbed. When consciousness is realized as pure knowing, the soul enters deep tranquility and detachment from suffering.

The Samayasara further asserts:

"Jahā phaliyamāṇi śuddho ṇa sayam pariṇamadi rāgamādihiṃ..."²

¹ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam, Vol. I, 1994, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

² Samayasāra Anushilan part 4, 1998. Dr Hukamchand Bharill. Pt. Todarmal Smarak Trust, Jaipur.

The soul is likened to a quartz crystal: inherently pure and colorless but appearing colored when reflecting nearby objects. Similarly, the soul's pure knowing remains untouched by love, hatred, or attachment - these arise due to karmic influences, not from the soul's own nature. Love, hatred, passions, and other disturbances are not modifications of the soul itself, but distortions caused by external karmic matter.

Thus, the soul in its true state is pure, steady, and free.

Thus, the pursuit of truth is not a matter of knowledge acquisition alone; it is an existential unraveling - a shedding of illusions, a piercing through karmic layers, and a deepening into what truly is. This process begins with that timeless question: "Who am I?" And it flowers into the unshakable awareness: "I am that eternal soul."

Ordinary means of knowledge-sense perception and even reason - are limited. Intellect, though organizing and interpreting sensory data, is prone to contradictions and incomplete truths. As noted in both Indian and Western philosophy (e.g., Kant), reason alone cannot furnish the certainty or fullness required for ultimate truth. It can tell us what reality is not, but not what it is. In this context, Jain epistemology also recognizes the fallibility of singular viewpoints and upholds *Anekāntavāda* (the doctrine of manifold aspects) to appreciate the complexity of truth.

Samatā-equanimity-is the core of Jain ethics. It signifies an inner serenity that remains unshaken by pleasure or pain. This steady poise undergirds the three jewels of the Jain path-right vision, right knowledge, and right conduct-making equanimity both the method and the destination of spiritual growth.

Jain thought insists that equilibrium is our innate state. Biologically, every organism strives for homeostasis; psychologically, people gravitate toward calm rather than conflict, contentment rather than anxiety. Thus, mental balance is not an imposed discipline but the natural expression of the soul's own drive for harmony and integration.

In modern evolutionary or materialist frameworks Darwin's 'struggle for existence' or Marxist dialectical materialism conflict is treated as life's engine. Jainism decisively rejects this view. It holds that violence, rivalry, and competition are distortions produced by external karma-matter (*para-dravya*); they do not stem from the intrinsic

nature of living beings. Life's authentic impulse is toward peaceful coexistence and inner harmony.¹

Equanimity (*samatā*) is more than the heart of ethical life; it is the very definition of dharma. The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* states: “*vatthu-sahāvo dhammo*” - dharma is the natural quality of a thing. For the soul, that innate quality is equanimity. To realize mental balance is therefore to realize one's own essential nature.

Ācārya Amṛtacandra, commenting on *Samayasāra*, clarifies:

“Mukti consists in excluding para-dravya and realizing one's true nature.”²

Similarly, Ācārya Hemacandra in his *Yogaśāstra* teaches that liberation unfolds when the soul's original purity is uncovered.

Within the Indian tradition, reason performs a critical yet ultimately negative role: it shows what ultimate reality is not. To know what is - positively and transformatively- we must turn inward through *dhyāna* (meditation). All major systems-Vedāntic, Buddhist, Sāṃkhya, Jain-agree sustained self-meditation is the only reliable means of truth-realization.

Meditation moves the practitioner from *bahirātman* (outward-turned self) to *antarātman* (inward-oriented self), culminating in *paramātman* (perfected self). Freed from distractions and passions (*kaṣāyas*), the mind becomes a clear mirror of the soul's true nature (*svabhāva*). Grasping that nature is simultaneously a cognitive insight and a transformative act.

The path begins with *śraddhā*-a conviction sparked by a guru's guidance or a sudden inner clarity. Without trust in the goal, no one undertakes the journey. Once faith is firm, each tradition supplies its own disciplines, leading the seeker from belief to direct realization. All, however, arises from an unwavering commitment to discover the Self, the sole truth that liberates.

From a metaphysical standpoint, it is essential to understand that substance and its qualities are inseparable qualities cannot exist without a substance, and no substance is conceivable devoid of qualities. When qualities are perceived, the existence of their underlying substance is implicitly affirmed. In Jain philosophy, the soul (*jīva*) is

¹ Jain Dharma Darshan evam Sanskriti, Part 4, Dr Sagarmal Jain, Parshvanath Vidhyapith, Varanasi.

² Samayasara, Atmakhyati 305, Acharya Amritchandra.

recognized as such a substance-conscious, sentient, and the locus of specific attributes.

The Bhagavatī-sūtra¹ enumerate qualities uniquely associated with the soul: right and wrong knowledge, perception, memory etc. attesting to its real, independent existence apart from body or matter. Only a conscious entity can initiate or cease karmically potent actions.

Furthermore, cognitive and volitional states such as the desire to know, resolve, retention, effort, strength, energy, mature or nascent consciousness-arise solely where a sentient Self is present. So too with emotional phenomena: pleasure, pain, anger, greed, pride, hatred, deceit, and attachment. Their very occurrence presupposes a spiritual substratum-the Self.

The journey of self-discovery begins with acknowledging this fundamental truth-that the Self is not merely a function of the body or the brain but a distinct, enduring reality that underlies all experiences and actions.

In Jainism, this foundational faith is called samyak - darśana - right vision or right perception. It marks the first stage of spiritual ascent and is the gateway to further practices like samyak-jñāna (right knowledge) and samyak - cāritra (right conduct). Only with this alignment can one proceed from belief to experience, and from experience to liberation.

Thus, the discovery of self is not a mere psychological introspection; it is a rigorous, ethical, and meditative journey from bondage to freedom, from ignorance to omniscience. This is the central task of the spiritual aspirant-to know oneself not as the body, mind, or name, but as the immortal, pure, conscious self that is ever free, yet momentarily clouded by karma.

“According to Jain doctrine, discovering the self-entails the unmasking of the soul’s true nature from layers of karmic impurities. Jaini (1979) explains this process as one of radical self-knowledge and detachment, aimed at realizing the soul’s intrinsic purity and omniscience.”²

¹ Bhagavatī-sūtra (Vyākhyāprajñapti). Prakrit text with Hindi ṭīkā by Muni Nathmal (Ācārya Mahāpragya). 2 vols. Lādnūn: Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, 1989.

² The Jaina Path of Purification, 1979, Padmanabh S. Jaini, University of California Press, Berkely.

A lake, calm and pure, full of water and teeming with life, reflects the serenity of a mind free from agitation. Just as the teacher stands firmly in the stream of knowledge, protected from all sides, the seeker of truth must anchor himself in awareness. Behold! The awakened ones - the Seers - have walked this path. They perceived the truth not merely through external rites, but from a profound desire to live a life rooted in inner purity and wisdom.

The journey of self-discovery requires steadiness of mind. One whose thoughts are scattered cannot reach the heights of deep contemplation. There are those bound by worldly ties who still grasp the truth - and there are those unbound, detached from desires, who walk the path of truth. The mark of a true follower is not in appearance or affiliation, but in the clarity of inner vision.

Truth, however, is not static. A faithful and discerning seeker may find that what he once held to be true may, upon deeper reflection, appear otherwise. Likewise, what he once rejected may reveal itself to be true. Such is the evolving nature of perception on the path of self-realization. Wisdom does not cling to rigid conclusions but remains open, examining beliefs in the light of deeper understanding.

Thus, the discovery of the self is not a one-time revelation but an ongoing act of discernment - a living inquiry. Only through such contemplation does the seeker draw closer to the essence of the soul - the ātman - pure, eternal, and unbound.

“The true self, in Jain thought, is not discovered but revealed-freed from the distortions of karmic matter. Self-discovery thus becomes an ethical and ontological cleansing.”¹

The sixth chapter of Ācārāṅga is dhūta - the cleansed, washed or purified. One who has shaken off eight types of karma with the help of discipline and meditation is called bhāva-dhuta or spiritually cleansed.

Just as a tortoise entangled in greedy leaves cannot rise from a lake, and trees, though shaken by storms, remain rooted, so too do men, bound by attachment to sensory pleasures, cry out in suffering across generations. Their bondage to sin prevents them from attaining liberation, and they are seen to endure afflictions like leprosy, blindness, lameness, and deformity. Those conquered by lust sink into misery.

¹ ISJS Notes Study, Article by Dr Shagun Jain.

Therefore, one must not shrink from the hard path of discipline. A steadfast man - detached, unmoved by passions, free from worldly desires, yet ceaseless in his spiritual journey - should live the life of a true ascetic.

The qualities of an ideal ascetic:¹

- Uses ascetic tools without attachment.
- Endure suffering patiently.
- Avoids lethargy or stupor.
- Detached from pleasures and relations.
- Steadfast in austerity and discipline.
- Free from worldly desires.
- Committed to purification and spiritual discipline.
- Renounces libido and relationships with equanimity.
- Renounces personal grooming (physical and mental).
- Follows unclad or minimal-clad spiritual practice.
- Lives a wandering life.
- Eat tasteless leftovers; follow austerities like unodari (eating less).
- Bears pain and pleasure equally.

Liberation – The Way of the Wise

The distinction between the heretic and the enlightened is made evident through their conduct. A heretic, bound by delusion and desires, continues the cycle of bondage. In contrast, noble and tranquil souls - those who are enlightened - are characterized by self-exertion and steadfast commitment to ethical principles. These individuals are free from sinful actions, defined by the rigorous observance of three cardinal disciplines:²

1. Non-violence (Ahimsā) towards all living beings,

¹ Jain Āgama Sāhitya: Manana aurā Mīmāṃsā, 1977, Ācārya Devendra Muni, Śrī Tārak Guru Jain Granthālay, Udaipur Rajasthan.

² Hermann Jacobi (translated), Jain Sutras: Part I, in The Sacred Books of the East, Volume XXII, edited by Max Muller.

2. Absolute truthfulness (satya) in speech and conduct, and
3. Complete abstention from forbidden activities such as theft, illicit pleasures, and material greed.

Tīrthāṅkara Mahāvīra, the supreme teacher, is designated as unfettered the one who lives without desires and causes no harm to any being across the vast expanse of existence. In this light, the ideal mendicant, in pursuit of liberation, must adhere unwaveringly to these principles.

A true ascetic should not:

- Persuade others to act on his behalf,
- Accept possessions that are expressly prepared for him,
- Receive anything that has been stolen,
- Or benefit from offerings obtained through violence, harm, or deceit.

Every act of acceptance must be weighed against the test of non-violence and purity.

“Taṃ eva saccaṃ niśaṅkaṃ, je jīṇehi paveiyaṃ.”¹

“That alone is truth and beyond doubt, which has been expounded by the Jinas.”

This is meant to dispel the disciple’s indifference arising from the inability to comprehend the subtle essence. Even if you are unable to understand the subtle essence, do not harbor doubt about it. Those who are vītarāga (free from passions) do not expound untruth; hence, firmly anchor your faith in what the vītarāga has said. That is indeed the truth and beyond doubt. This same idea is found in the Bhagavati-sūtra as well.

The mendicant, with full and unshakable faith in Mahāvīra’s teachings, must align his life completely - in thought, word, and deed - to the ideal path. This commitment is not merely intellectual but is tested against the challenges of bodily afflictions. He must cultivate equanimity and detachment even amid physical suffering:

- Thorn-pricks and sharp grasses,
- The searing heat of summer and the bitter cold of winter,

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

- Biting insects, mosquitoes, and other discomforts.

None of these should agitate the mind or weaken his resolve. His detachment must be so complete that bodily discomforts are perceived with indifference, neither sought after nor fled from.

Yet even the diligent practitioner may occasionally falter - for the force of past karma is profound. However, recognizing the arrival of death not with fear or yearning, but with serene acceptance, the enlightened mendicant undertakes Sallekhanā - the final and supreme act of religious discipline.

Sallekhanā is not suicide; it is the gradual, conscious, and passionless embracing of death through a voluntary reduction in food, desires, and bodily attachments. It is observed with:

- No craving for life,
- No aversion to death,
- No disturbance of mind,
- And complete immersion in self-contemplation (ātma-dhyāna).

Through this final practice, the soul strives for absolute purity, shedding the last vestiges of karmic bondage and moves closer to the supreme goal: liberation (mokṣa)

Thus, liberation is not an abstract idea but a living reality - achieved by the gradual purification of the soul through unwavering practice, supreme renunciation, and fearless, conscious acceptance of life and death.

In the next chapter, we shall explore how these ideals are practically realized in the art of living and dying - a life lived consciously, and a death embraced with spiritual dignity.

4.4 Art of Living and Art of Dying

Everyone desires happiness and the eradication of misery. Yet, even amidst material prosperity, suffering persists. The root cause of misery remains unknown to the common man due to ignorance and lack of right understanding. Everything is transient except the Ātma (Self) is permanent. Indeed, permanence amid change is the hallmark of every dravya (substance).

“We look before and after, and pine for what is nought.” - Percy Bysshe Shelley

Most of us remain discontented, ever chasing new desires. This restless appetite blocks true contentment and peace. Lasting happiness emerges only when we recognise and live in harmony with our intrinsic nature-an insight fully supported by Jain śāstras.

Religion, in the Jain view, is ‘vatthu-sahāvo dhammo’,¹ the innate nature of reality itself. When we hunt for happiness without self-knowledge, we fall into moha (delusion). Only by realising our own essence do we break that cycle.

The soul’s ultimate telos is self-realisation-attaining its pure, flawless state. This requires the triad of samyag-darśana (right faith), samyag-jñāna (right knowledge), and samyag-cāritra (right conduct). A practical entry point is to reflect deeply on six fundamental questions:

1. Who am I?
2. Where do I come from?
3. Why am I the way I am?
4. What is the purpose of my life?
5. What and where is real happiness?
6. How can I realize real happiness?

1. Who am I?

Why question this when it seems obvious through the senses?

Mahāvīra differentiates vyavahāra satya (empirical truth) from niścaya satya (ultimate truth). Empirically we identify with body and mind; ultimately, we are bodiless, boundless jīva. Across beginningless time the soul has hoarded external sense-data while neglecting self-knowledge.

Only you can close the gate to unwholesome thoughts and plunge inward. Only you can awaken your latent energy, manifest your potential, and arrest the endless saṃsāra.

¹ Kartikeya Anupreksha, 478, Acharya Kartikeya.

Khāṇaṃ jāṇāhi paṇḍie.¹

“Seize the moment, O wise one.”

Life is fleeting: every breath is a diminishing asset. Choose now whether your footprints will show indulgence or bear witness to purpose, compassion, and wisdom. Awareness is the seed of meaningful living.

Conscious living means decisions cohering with a lucid purpose, resilient amidst distraction. This discipline is for your own liberation, not for external validation.

Purisa, saccameva samabhijānāhi.²

“Human, know the truth for yourself alone.”

Cultivate samyak anuśīlana-disciplined alignment of thought, speech, and deed. Vigilance in right perception, knowledge, and conduct honours life’s opportunity and opens the path to mokṣa.

2. Where have I come from?

As stated in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra - there are 18 directions, referred to as bhāva-diśā (direction of existence) and Dravya diśā (direction of substance).³

Jō emāo disāo aṇṇadisāo vā sañcarai,

Sabbāo disāo sabbā aṇṇadisāo jō aggā aṇṇasañcarai so’haṃ.⁴

“The one who moves through these directions and sub-directions (vidiśāḥ), the one who comes from all directions and sub-directions, that is me.”

Where did I originate?

Where shall I go after death?

Why am I ensnared in the cycle of birth and rebirth?

Such questions arise naturally when one turns inward. Authentic answers are found only through the Guru and the śāstra, which bring to light the first principles of reality. The Āgamas admonish:

¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁴ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

“Bhūehiṃ jāṇā paḍileha sayam, samie aiyāṇupaṣṣi.”¹

Encourages the seeker to ‘know by oneself the fetters of existence’ and to ‘see appropriately (rightly) the nature of the soul and its karmic entanglements.’

In other words, it is an exhortation to self-inquiry-not blind acceptance. The Jīva (soul) is bound by karma due to passions (kaṣāya), ignorance of the self (Ajñāna), and vibrations (yoga) of mind, body, and speech. These karmic particles cling to the soul and dictate its experiences of pleasure, pain, birth, and death and draws fresh karma toward the soul.

From this triad arise pleasure, pain, birth, and death. The samyag-darśī-one who has attained right vision knows by direct experience that:

1. Karma is impermanent. It is acquired, matures, fructifies, and can be destroyed.
2. Bandha (bondage) occurs through activity sullied by passion.
3. Udaya (fruition) is the pleasure–pain we presently undergo.
4. Samvara (stoppage) begins when passions are weakened by awareness, and nirjarā (shedding) follows through meditation, austerity, and detachment.

Thus, the realized one becomes an active analyst of cause and effect, ceases to identify with transient states, and consciously erodes karmic layers until only the luminous Self remains.

3. Why am I the way I am?

From infancy we swim in a culture that mistakes fleeting objects for lasting happiness. When we first close the five sense-doors, the mind-addicted to external stimuli revolts with restlessness and lack. Ācārya Hemacandra clarifies in the Yogaśāstra:

“Indriyaiḥ parābhūtaḥ saṃsaktaḥ, indriyairvaśīkṛtaḥ bandhaḥ;

indriyaiḥ parājitaḥ muktaḥ, indriyairvaśīkṛtaḥ bodhaḥ.”

“The soul that is overpowered by the senses is bound, while the soul that overpowers the senses is free and awakened.”²

¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

² Yogaśāstra, 2002, Ācārya Hemacandra, svopajñāvṛtti-bhūṣita, Edited by Muni Jambūvijaya; assisted by Muni Dharmacandravijaya. Mumbāi: Jaina Sāhitya Vikāsa Maṇḍala, 1 st saṃskaraṇa.

This highlights that bondage arises not from the world itself, but from the loss of mastery over one's inner faculties. True freedom, therefore, begins with inner discipline - the ability to redirect the senses inward rather than being enslaved by them.

Here Sadguru, a Self-realized guide, is indispensable. Such a teacher is a living demonstration that joy comes not from possession but from self-command.

4. What is the purpose of my life?

Deep contemplation reveals the extraordinary rarity of human birth. Confronted with impermanence and suffering, a sincere seeker resolves to shatter karmic chains through disciplined sādhana. The aim crystallizes:

To seek truth and to realize the Self.

Our thoughts shape our inner cosmos; the inner cosmos shape our outer life. Refinement of thought is therefore foundational. A mind steeped in purity naturally cultivates compassion, resilience, and wisdom while eroding anger, greed, attachment, and delusion. Living consciously, ethically, and purposively is not mere discipline, it is the **art** of sculpting one's existence into an instrument of realization.

Living consciously, purposefully, and ethically is not merely discipline but an art - the art of sculpting one's life into an instrument for the realization of truth.

5. What and where is real happiness?

Through practices such as deep meditation and introspection, the seeker gains the clarity to distinguish between the ephemeral and the eternal. This journey of self-discovery is marked by moments of profound insight, where the layers of ignorance begin to peel away, revealing the soul's pure essence.

As this process unfolds, the individual experiences a shift from seeking happiness in external achievements to realizing the boundless joy that resides within. The awakening of bheda-jñāna, discriminative knowledge, empowers the seeker to navigate life's complexities with wisdom and grace. This inner transformation is not merely a passive state but an active engagement in refining one's thoughts, actions, and intentions.

“Happiness is not obtained outside - it is the unfurling of bliss inherent in the Self.”¹

Turning from the clamour of matter toward the soul’s innate attributes-knowledge, perception, bliss, energy-one discovers that genuine happiness flows unobstructed, immune to life’s vicissitudes. Real joy is simply the radiance of the Self recognized.

6. How can I realize real happiness?

Real happiness is realized not through accumulation, but through transformation.

The art of living calls for a disciplined, inward journey anchored in timeless virtues:

Equanimity (Samatā):

Cultivate a steady mind, free from selfish reactions and evil instincts.

Non-violence (Ahimsā):

Refrain from harming any living being, in thought, word, and deed.

Universal Love (Viśva-Prema):

Foster unconditional love and compassion for all forms of life.

Subjugation of Passions and Attachments (Kaṣāya-jaya):

Recognize that passions - anger, pride, deceit, greed - are the true chains of bondage, and steadily work to overcome them.

Victory over Inner Enemies:

True conquest is not domination over others but mastery over oneself.

Self-Reliance (Taking refuge in soul):

Understand that liberation is an inward journey - no external force shapes your destiny. Your soul, intrinsically pure, is your supreme divinity.

Thus, the art of living is the art of awakening. It is the movement from unconscious existence toward conscious, blissful being. By aligning with the soul’s true nature, one transcends sorrow and touches the infinite reservoir of happiness that was always within.

¹ Inner Engineering, 2016, Sadguru Jaggi Vasudev, Penguin Random House, Gurgaon, India.

According to the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, samyaktvadarśi attains three direct insights (trividyā): 1. Knowledge of previous birth, 2. Knowledge of birth and death, 3. Knowledge of influx of karma (asrava) and shedding of karmas (nirjarā).¹

Supreme devotion to self-knowledge and meditation is the gateway to liberation. There is no religion higher than non-violence and truth. Religion is the art of living. As fire never gives up its nature of heat, true religion, too, remains unchanged and eternal.

By correct discrimination of the nature of each substance (through knowledge of tattvas), recognizing one's pure knowing nature, and remaining immersed in it - authentic happiness is realised.

Samyag-darśana, samyag-jñāna, and samyag-cāritra-Right Faith, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct-constitute the tripod of liberation. Abide in this triad, and the boundless bliss of the Self will shine of its own accord.

The Art of Living: A Psychological Framework

From a psychological perspective, the 'art of living' is the disciplined cultivation of mental habits and emotional competencies that enable a life of balance, resilience, and meaning. It shifts the focus from external milestones to the inner capacity to remain well, stable, and self-realised amid life's unavoidable trials.

Core Dimensions

| Dimension | Key Elements | Practical Intent |
|--|---|--|
| Self-awareness & Self-mastery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic examination of thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. • Deliberate regulation of impulses and affect. • Intentional strengthening of signature virtues and steady pruning of liabilities. | Build an accurate inner compass and the discipline to steer by it. |
| Resilience & Adaptability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance that suffering, uncertainty, and change are normal. | Remain functional and forward moving under stress or disruption. |

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

| Dimension | Key Elements | Practical Intent |
|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological flexibility to adjust to shifting conditions. • Growth mindset that converts setbacks into fuel for development. | |
| Purposeful, Value-driven Living | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification of non-negotiable personal values. • Commitment to act from values rather than transient emotions. • Capacity to extract meaning from ordinary routines and adversity alike. | Anchor daily choices to an enduring sense of purpose. |
| Mindfulness & Presence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-judgemental attention to the here-and-now. • Reduction of rumination on the past and anxiety about the future. | Cultivate mental clarity and emotional steadiness. |
| Compassion & Connection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitual kindness toward self and others. • Construction of empathetic, mutually supportive relationships. | Strengthen social bonds that buffer stress and enrich life. |

The art of living is a dynamic, lifelong practice of strengthening self-mastery, resilience, meaning, mindfulness, and compassion. It is not an innate trait but a learnable discipline—one that must be consciously refined throughout the life span to meet evolving challenges and opportunities.

The Art of Dying

In Jainism, death (maraṇa) is not a mere cessation of existence but a spiritual culmination—the final battlefield (Sangram)¹ where one faces not external foes, but internal enemies: attachment, fear, and bodily delusion.

je ṇa vijai maraṇe, so vijai samaṇe

“जे ण विजइ मरणे, सो विजइ समणे।”²

“He who gains victory over (the moment of) death is truly victorious as an ascetic.”

¹ Sutrakṛitanga Sūtra, Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ibid.

As taught in the Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra, true victory is not found in conquering others, but in remaining completely undisturbed now of the body's disintegration. This is known as “macchu-kāle hoi ya sarīra-pāo saṅgāma-sīse”¹

“At the moment of death the ‘fall of the body’ is the very battlefield - a noble state in which the aspirant confronts death with unwavering equanimity, transcending fear, attachment, and bodily delusion to move toward spiritual liberation.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra paints this victory vividly: just as bark peels effortlessly from a tree, the enlightened soul sheds the body without distress or clinging. This ideal-phalaga-vaṭṭhī muni² - Literally: “(one) whose condition is like a plank,” i.e., perfectly rigid and unmoving - symbolizes complete disidentification from the body (deha-viyoga) through years of internal and external austerity (tapa), right perception (samyak darśana), and pure conduct (samyak cāritra).

The practice of dying consciously (paṇḍita maraṇa) is not accidental. It is the outcome of a life lived in spiritual discipline, not a desperate act at life's end. This conscious embrace of death is institutionalized in the Jain vow of Sallekhanā or samthārā - a gradual, voluntary relinquishment of passions, desires, and even food, with full mindfulness and detachment.

As the Bhagavatī-ārādhana states, the soul prepared through Sallekhanā discards the body like a tree shedding dry leaves-gracefully, naturally, and joyfully.³

The essence of Jain preparation for death lies not in external arrangements but in internal detachment and soul-centered awareness. The aspirant neither craves life nor fears death, remaining rooted in madhyastha - bhāva -the middle state of absolute equanimity.

Mahāvīra's revelations emphasize this inner awakening. Most beings, he taught, wander blindly, unaware of their eternal nature (aṇega jīva), trapped in cycles of birth and death. True liberation begins when one realizes that they are not the body, nor its pains and pleasures, but the eternal witness (jñātā-draṣṭā), the pure self beyond decay.

¹ Āyāro, Ācārya Tulsi, Edited by Muni Nāthamala & Muni Śrīcandra, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśana, Lādnun.

² Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnun, Rajasthan.

³ Essence of Sallekhana, Dr Jayantilal Jain, Dr Priyadarshana Jain, 2019, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

The Niyamsāra further refines this vision through the ideal of niścaya cāritra - the pure conduct of the soul, unaffected by external conditions. Death becomes auspicious (śubha maraṇa) when approached with steadfast realization (ātma-bodha) and unwavering clarity (samyak-jñāna)¹.

Thus, in Jainism, the art of dying is inextricably linked to the art of living. A seeker who cultivates restraint, forgiveness, meditation, and non-possession throughout life transforms death into a final act of liberation, not bondage.

Plato spoke of Political Communism, Karl Marx spoke of Economic communism, and Jainism speaks of Spiritual Communism whether it be in living or dying. The Gītā reveals that just as person changes clothes every day, the soul changes body.

Ultimately, Jain thought insists how one dies reflects how one has lived. For the wise (paṇḍita), death is not a fall but an ascension - a serene return to one's indestructible, immortal nature.

Understanding Death in Jainism: An Integrated Perspective

In Jain philosophy, death is recognized through terms such as maraṇa, vigama, vināśa. It is conceived as a process wherein the matter (pudgala), specifically the form, anubhūyamāna separates from the soul (ātman) and subsequently perishes. The clarify Āgamas that mere loss of physical life or body does not constitute the full completion of death; rather, true death is achieved only with the successful destruction of the āyu karma (karma determining lifespan)².

Philosophical inquiry across traditions has revolved around both life and death, but Jain thinkers devoted particularly rigorous attention to death. Indeed, understanding their view of death is indispensable for grasping the core of their philosophy of life. Jain logic systematically identifies 48 types of death, grouped under three principal categories:

1. **Bala-maran (Ignorant Death):** Characterized by acts such as suicide, this form of death is unequivocally condemned, as it offers no spiritual advancement or liberation.

¹ Essence of Niyamsara 2022, Dr. Jayantilal Jain, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

² Essence of Sallekhana 138, Dr Jayanti Lalji Jain, Dr Priyadarshana Jain, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

2. **Paṇḍita-maraṇa (Wise Death):** Indicative of a partial realization of true knowledge, this type of death is accepted with certain reservations, recognizing some degree of spiritual progress.
3. **Paṇḍita-paṇḍita-maraṇa (Death of the Supremely Wise):** Highly esteemed and strongly encouraged, this death represents the culmination of complete wisdom, leading to total liberation and the final severance of all karmic bonds.

In this framework, the first type of death yields no spiritual fruit, the second brings partial rewards, while the third results in ultimate release from bondage and the cycle of rebirth.

In Jainism, death is ultimately understood as the separation of the soul from the body and the cessation of embodied life. Art of living and art of dying are two facets of the same coin. One lives life in a manner that one dies in a meaningful way, and one embraces the inevitable death full of life, positively and fearlessly.

The Dharmakathā-sūtra-vṛtti elaborates that Sallekhanā is “the activity by which the body is weakened, and the passions are overcome.”¹ It is described metaphorically as the ‘peeling away’ of passions, through deliberate forfeiture of bodily strength to fortify the spirit.

This practice is categorized into two forms:

- **Dravya - Sallekhanā:** Weakening the physical body.
- **Bhāva - Sallekhanā:** Eradication of passions at the level of internal disposition.

Jain doctrine regards the body as a prison for the soul, and passions as chains that bind the soul to this prison. Therefore, it becomes critical to systematically weaken both body and passions to facilitate the soul’s liberation.

Sallekhanā is a continuous spiritual practice aimed at gradually diminishing bodily desires and internal defilements. It is an open-ended penance, preparing the aspirant for the final act of death without necessarily culminating in immediate death. Some texts mention that Sallekhanā may extend over a prolonged period-twelve years, twelve months, or twelve week-demonstrating its nature as a gradual process rather than a sudden act.

¹ Dharma katha-sutra-vritti, Acharya Haribhadra Suri, 8th century.

The primary goal of Sallekhanā, particularly kaṣāya-sallekhanā (mortification of passions), is to eliminate attachment (rāga) and hatred (dveṣa). Through fasting and meditation, the practitioner is brought to the threshold of death while simultaneously advancing toward spiritual victory. However, success in Sallekhanā depends on overcoming specific pitfalls (aticārāḥ):

- Desire to live
- Desire to die
- Fear-driven flight
- Recollection of old companions
- Expectation of comforts or rewards in the next existence as compensation for present suffering
- When these aticharas are conquered, death through Sallekhanā is elevated into saṁthārā or samādhi-maraṇa-a positive, spiritually victorious death.

Thus, Sallekhanā is not merely the process of dying but a preparatory and purificatory discipline that enables the aspirant to meet death with full awareness, serenity, and detachment, fulfilling Jainism's ultimate aim: the liberation of the soul.

Sallekhanā and Saṁthārā: Death with Dignity in Jain Thought

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra categorically instructs that a monk must gradually reduce food intake and weaken the body, turning to saṁthārā only after he recognizes genuine physical incapacity. Ācārya Samantabhadra likewise teaches that sallekhanā is to be adopted amid acute afflictions-famine, incurable disease, or extreme old age.

Saṁthārā versus Sallekhanā

- Sallekhanā (lit. 'slenderisation') is an open-ended ascetic discipline that may extend over years, progressively 'thinning' both body and passions.
- Saṁthārā is the final, deliberate embrace of death, undertaken in full equanimity once bodily vitality is clearly exhausted.

The Ācārāṅga enumerates three ascending rigours of the dying rite:

| Term | Essential features |
|----------------------------|--|
| Bhakta-pratyākhyāna | Solid food abandoned; water permitted; posture flexible; assistance accepted. |
| Īṅginī-maraṇa | Food and water renounced; no external help; movement confined to a small space. |
| Prāyopagamana | Total abstention from food, water, movement, and aid until death. |

Conditions for adoption

1. Contingent: begun in crisis, but reversible if circumstances improve.
2. Irrevocable: embraced on unmistakable signs of imminent death or inability to sustain vows.

Throughout, the aspirant reduces intake, lengthens fasts, deepens meditation, and relinquishes the body in serene awareness.

The Spiritual Rationale

“Just as the closing and opening balance of a ledger are identical, so the **leśyā** at death determines the next birth.”¹

Sallekhanā is **not** despair; it is an act of tapah, samyag-darśana, and samyag-cāritra-a conscious transcendence of śarīra and upādhi to reveal the pure jīva.

Gāthā of renunciation

Āhāra, śarīra, upādhi, paccakkhu pāpa aṭhāra,
maraṇa pau to vosire, jīu to agāra.

“Food, body, possessions, and the eighteen sins-I renounce as one already dead; if I yet breathe, it is solely the soul’s residual duty.”

The **jñānī** thus “dies like a hero on the battlefield of life,” vigilant, fearless, and unattached.

¹ Essence of Sallekhana, Dr Jayantilal Jain, Dr Priyadarshana Jain, 2019, Prakrit Bharati Academy, Jaipur.

Tattvārthasūtra on Death (maraṇa)

Tattvārthasūtra 6.18 defines death as “the cessation of life concomitant with the exhaustion of karmically-allotted lifespan (āyuh-karma) and bodily vitality.”¹

Sallekhanā, within this framework, is a voluntary, peaceful thinning of body and passions, utterly distinct from suicide.

Sallekhanā ≠ Suicide

Justice **T. K. Tukol** distinguishes the two on four counts²:

| Criterion | Suicide | Sallekhanā |
|------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intention | Escape from misery | Quest for mokṣa |
| Situation | Emotional turmoil | Unavoidable bodily decline |
| Means | Violent, abrupt | Gradual, non-violent renunciation |
| Outcome | Grief and stigma | Reverence and spiritual edification |

Unlike suicide, sallekhanā is public, conscious, and dignified; practitioners can be interviewed as they pass in equanimity.

Modern Parallels

Euthanasia grants control over dying but aims chiefly at escape from suffering; sallekhanā aims at spiritual purification. It is an affirmative, courageous culmination of the Jain pursuit of liberation: by facing death without rāga or dveṣa, the ascetic transforms mortality into the final, joyous realisation of the Self.



¹ Tattvartha Sutra 4.13, Acharya Umaswati, That Which Is.N. Tania. Harper Collins Publication.

² Tukol, T.K. (1981). *Sallekhanā is Not Suicide*. Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology.



CHAPTER 5
Enlightened View of Ācārāṅga



Chapter 5

Enlightened View of Ācārāṅga

5.1 Spirituality in Ācārāṅga through Aphorism

Spirituality in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra is deeply connected with awareness (jāgrti). The text teaches that mindfulness in every action, be it walking, speaking, eating, or thinking, leads to heightened consciousness. By living in the present moment and avoiding harmful habits, an individual can purify the mind and stay connected to the soul's true nature. In addition to monastic conduct, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra establishes the ethical foundations of Jainism, significantly influencing subsequent texts on Jain ethics, conduct, and philosophy.

The text advocates self-introspection and penance as the means to dissolve karmic impurities. It explains that suffering is not external but a result of one's own karmic burden. Through continuous self-discipline, meditation, and right knowledge, one can attain a state of equanimity (samyaktva), which is essential for spiritual liberation.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra serves as a timeless spiritual guide that bridges ethical living with spiritual enlightenment. It teaches that true liberation is achieved not through rituals or external acts, but through self-realization, inner purity, and unwavering commitment to non-violence and truth. By following its principles, one can experience deep inner peace, self-awareness, and ultimately, liberation from the cycle of rebirth. In today's world, where materialism and distractions dominate, the spiritual wisdom of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra offers a pathway to genuine self-discovery and lasting happiness.

1. The Spiritual Essence of 'Ke ahaṃ āsī?' in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra

This aphorism of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra - 'Ke ahaṃ āsī?' (Who was I?) - explores the existential journey of the soul (Ātma) across lifetimes. It highlights the interplay of jñānacetanā (awareness of knowledge), karmacetanā (awareness of karmic actions), and karmaphalacetanā (awareness of karmic consequences) in shaping the soul's past, present, and future.

The Essence of Transmigration

Jainism holds that the soul is beginninless and eternal and subject to rebirth is determined by karmacetanā, the awareness and accumulation of karmic actions. This aphorism invites introspection through four key questions:

1. Where do I come from? –understanding past lives through karmaphalacetanā, the realization of prior deeds shaping the present.
2. Where shall I go? – the future is conditioned by karmacetanā, each action influences the next birth.
3. Who was I? –reflecting on past identities through jñānacetanā, recognizing the continuity of consciousness.
4. What shall I become? – Ethical conduct and spiritual awareness determine future existence.

एवमेगेसिं नो णातं भवति अत्ति मे आया ओववाइए, णत्ति मे आया ओववाइए, के अहं आसी?

के वा इओ चुओ इह पेँचा भविस्सामि?¹

Evamegesim̐ ño ñātaṁ bhavati - Atthi me āyā ovavāie, Natthi me āyā ovavāie,
Ke ahaṁ āsi? Ke vā io cuo iha peccā bhavissāmi?

Path to Spiritual Awakening

Jñānacetanā unfolds across five progressive levels of knowledge (jñāna):

- mati-jñāna (sensory/inferential cognition)
- śruta-jñāna (scriptural/linguistic cognition)
- avadhi-jñāna (clairvoyant cognition)
- manahparyāya-jñāna (telepathic cognition)
- kevala-jñāna (omniscience)

Modes of experience (anubhava-cetanā)-sukha (pleasure), duḥkha (pain), rāga (attachment), and the cultivation of virāga (dispassion) toward mokṣa-shape one's karmic trajectory. Recognizing the transience of these experiences fosters detachment.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Breaking the Cycle of Rebirth

The soul traverses four realms of existence (gati): deva (celestial), mānuṣya (human), tiryāṇc (animal/plant), and nāraka (hellish), governed by karmacetanā and karmaphalacetanā. Among these, only human birth uniquely enables spiritual progress through vivekaśīlatā (discerning capacity) and ātma-saṃyama (self-restraint)—key elements on the path to liberation.

The Key to Mokṣā

To awaken the real self, one must:

- Develop through jñānacetanā scriptural study and introspection.
- Refine karmacetanā by aligning actions with non-violence, truth, and discipline.
- Understand karmaphalacetanā, realizing that present experiences are shaped by past deeds.
- Detach from anubhava-cetanā, recognizing pleasure and pain as fleeting.

Conclusion

‘Ke ahaṃ āsī?’ is not just a philosophical question but a path to self-realization. By deepening jñānacetanā, refining karmacetanā and internalizing karmaphalacetanā,¹ one moves toward kevaljñāna, ultimately achieving mokṣa-, the state of absolute liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

2. Core Teachings and Aspirations

Aphorism of the Ācārāṅga Sūtradistills essential Jain teachings, highlighting four foundational doctrines that underline the Jain path. It emphasizes that only with a correct understanding of these doctrines can one truly practice Ahimsā (non-violence) and progress spiritually. Additionally, the aphorism inspires Jain seekers (śrāvakas) with three Manoraths – profound spiritual aspirations that guide a devotee from household life towards renunciation and ultimate liberation.

से आयवाइ, लोगवाइ, कम्मवाइ, किरियावाइ ।²

Se āyāvāi, logavāi, kammāvāi, kiriyāvāi.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

² Illustated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

Four Fundamental Doctrines:

The Ācārāṅga Sūtrahighlights four fundamental doctrines essential for spiritual progress:

1. **Ātmavāda (Reality of the Soul):** The soul (ātman) is an independent, eternal entity, possessing consciousness and knowledge. It undergoes rebirth due to karma but can attain purity and liberation through self-discipline.
2. **Lokavāda (Reality of the Universe):** The world is real and eternal, governed by natural laws, including karma. Unlike illusionist views, Jainism asserts that both soul and matter exist as objective realities.
3. **Karmavāda (Law of Karma):** Every thought, word, and action generate karma, shaping the soul's experiences and future births. Ethical living and self-restraint are key to karmic purification and spiritual growth.
4. **Kriyāvāda (Efficacy of Action):** Actions determine bondage or liberation. Vibrations caused by desires and passions attract karma, while disciplined action and non-violence dissolve it, leading the soul toward Mokṣā.

Three Manorath-Aspiration have been described inṬhāṇaṃ:¹ (3.497):

1. Aspiration to renounce possessions?
2. Aspiration to Embrace Monkhood
3. Aspiration for the Final Emancipation (Sallekhanā)

The three manoraths are described form a vital part of the spiritual path in Jainism. They signify the aspirant's gradual journey toward complete detachment-from material possessions, emotional attachments, and, finally, the body itself. Through the progressive practice of renunciation, self-discipline, and forgiveness, the soul becomes free from karma, ultimately leading to liberation. A seeker who understands these principles gains insight into non-violence, renunciation, and self-purification, advancing on the path to liberation.

3. The Root Causes of Violence and the Path to Non-Violence

Violence-whether physical, verbal, or mental-stems from ignorance, attachment, and aversion, binding the soul to the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra) through karmic

¹ Ṭhāṇaṃ, 1976, Muni Nathmal, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

accumulation. The path to liberation lies in practicing non-violence (Ahimsā), which purifies the soul and fosters spiritual progress.

तं से अहियाए, तं से अबोहिए ।¹

Taṁ se ahiyāe, taṁ se abohīe.

Such an act of violence proves baneful for him.

Such an act of violence deprives him of enlightenment.

The message of this aphorism can be closely related to the ancient Vedic prayer: “Asato mā sadgamaya, mṛtyor mā amṛtaṁ gamaya.”² - “Lead me from untruth to truth, from darkness to light, and from death to immortality.” In the Jain context, violence is the ‘darkness’ that veils the soul, while non-violence (Ahimsā) is the ‘light’ that leads the soul toward spiritual truth and liberation (mokṣa).

Violence-whether physical, verbal, or mental-stems from ignorance, attachment, and aversion, binding the soul to the cycle of birth and death (saṁsāra) through karmic accumulation. The path to liberation lies in practicing non-violence (Ahimsā), which purifies the soul and fosters spiritual progress.

Eight Causes of Violence:

1. **Anger (Krodha)** – Leads to loss of control and harmful actions.
2. **Pride (Māna)** – Creates superiority and disrespect, fostering conflict.
3. **Deceit (Maya)** – Misleads others for personal gain, fueling violence.
4. **Greed (Lobha)** – Drives desire for possessions, leading to harm.
5. **Delusion (Moha)** – Prevents understanding of reality, causing suffering.
6. **Attachment (Rāga)** – Leads to possessiveness and jealousy, inciting violence.
7. **Hatred (Dveṣa)** – Breeds enmity, justifying aggression.
8. **Fear (Bhaya)** – Provokes defensive or preemptive violence.

Inner Violence: Rāga and Dveṣa

Attachment and hatred are subtle forms of violence, disturbing inner peace and binding the soul to saṁsara. True spiritual progress requires detachment and equanimity.

¹ Ācārāṅga vṛtti, 1978, Muni Jambuvijay, Motilal Banarasidas, New Delhi.

² Bṛhadaraṇyaka Upaniṣad, Acharya Shankar, tr by Rahul Sankrityayan, 1952, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

The Power of Ahimsā

Aphorism 46 of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra highlights that violence obstructs enlightenment. Ahimsā is the essence of Jain philosophy-without it, all virtues lose meaning. Non-violence is the highest vow, forming the foundation of truth, compassion, and liberation.

4. The Knot of Bondage: Violence, Granthi, and Transmigration

Aphorism 25 of Chapter 1.2 of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra profoundly illustrates how violence binds the soul to samsara through karmic accumulation. The term granthi (knot) represents attachments-both internal (anger, pride, deceit, greed, attachment, aversion) and external (possessions, material wealth). These knots entangle the soul in delusion, obstructing liberation.

सोच्चा भगवओ अणगाराणं वा अंतिए इहमेगेसिं णातं भवति –

एस खलु गंथे,

एस खलु मोहे,

एस खलु मारे,

एस खलु नरण।¹

Soccā bhagavao aṇagārāṇaṃ vā aṁtie ihamegesim̐ ṇātaṃ bhavati –

Esa khalu gaṁthe,

Esa khalu mohe,

Esa khalu māre,

Esa khalu ṇarae.

Violence is not just physical harm but an act that deepens karmic bondage, leading to delusion, spiritual death, and suffering in hellish realms. Every violent thought, word, or deed strengthens these knots, perpetuating the cycle of birth and rebirth. Transmigration results from this accumulation of karma, where the soul, burdened by its past actions, continues to cycle through various existences.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

This text powerfully conveys a universal truth—everyone desires to survive, and no one exists in isolation. Recognizing this interconnectedness fosters non-violence and detachment, essential for liberation. The Śaḍjīvanikāya principle, emphasizing all life forms’ coexistence, is essentially an ecological philosophy that aligns with Ahimsā. Understanding and practicing non-violence is the only way to break free from karmic bondage and progress toward enlightenment.

5. Whirlpool of Sensory Attachment

The Ācārāṅga Sūtrawarns that attachment to sensory pleasures entangles the soul in anger, conceit, deceit, greed, delusion, and ignorance, obstructing spiritual progress. Like a whirlpool that pulls everything into its depths, indulgence in desires leads to endless craving and karmic bondage, trapping the soul in saṃsāra.

जे गुणे से आवट्टे, जे आवट्टे से गुणे।

Gihacāiṇo vi gihavāsa-padāṃ

Je guṇe se āvaṭṭe, je āvaṭṭe se guṇe.

Anger fuels aggression and disrupts inner peace. Conceit inflates the ego, creating a false sense of superiority. Deceit manipulates truth for personal gain, leading to dishonesty and conflict. Greed arises from sensory indulgence, fostering attachment and ethical compromises. Together, these four passions corrupt the soul, deepen karmic entanglements, and obscure the path to enlightenment.

A spiritually aware person should renounce anger, conceit, deceit, and greed, along with superiority and unnecessary violence, recognizing all beings as equal. By controlling consumption and minimizing harm to all life forms—earth-bodied, water-bodied, fire-bodied, air-bodied, plants, and mobile beings—one attains true meaning and fulfillment in life. True liberation requires detachment, introspection, and prioritizing spiritual growth over material gain.

6. Spiritual Comprehension and Worldly Knowledge

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra teaches that understanding the self and the external world are interconnected. True knowledge arises from introspection, which in turn enhances awareness of the world’s transient nature. This dual comprehension is essential for breaking ignorance and progressing toward enlightenment.

जे अज्जत्तं जाणइ, से बहिया जाणइ । जे बहिया जाणइ, से अज्जत्तं जाणइ ।¹

Je ajjhattham jāṇai, se bahiya jāṇai. Je bahiya jāṇai, se ajjhattham jāṇai.

One who knows the inner-self knows the external (world) as well;

One who knows the external (world) knows the inner-self as well.

Ahimsā: The Foundation of Jain Ethics

Ahimsā (non-violence) is the core of Jain philosophy, interwoven with vows of truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy, and non-possession. Breaking Ahimsā leads to a chain reaction of ethical transgressions-violence fosters deceit, theft, attachment, and material greed. Ahimsā is not limited to physical actions; it extends to thoughts and words, ensuring respect for all life.

Types of Violence:

1. Saṅkalpī Himsā - intentional violence is deliberate harm done with awareness and desire, often driven by passions (kaṣāya), and is considered the gravest; examples include hunting, fishing, killing for pleasure, and animal sacrifice.²
2. Ārambhaja/Virodhi Himsā-occupational or defensive violence-arises in self-defense or while performing necessary duties such as farming (injuring earth-bodies), cooking, and defending against attack.³
3. Udyogī Himsā - professional violence covers injury caused in trade, industry, or livelihood, for example using machinery that crushes insects or commercial fishing.⁴
4. Gṛhārambhī Himsā - domestic violence (household maintenance) is the injury involved in daily household work such as sweeping the floor (harming micro-organisms) and cleaning utensils.⁵
5. Mānasa Himsā - mental violence comprises wishing harm and nurturing hatred, jealousy, or cruelty in thought, e.g., harboring thoughts of revenge.⁶

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Tattvārtha Sūtra: That Which Is, Umāsvāti, 2007, Nathmal Tatia, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

³ Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya, 2012, Ācārya Amṛtacandra, Ed and tr Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Printers, Dehradun.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya, 2012, Ācārya Amṛtacandra, Ed and tr Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Printers, Dehradun.

⁶ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

6. Vācika Himsā-verbal violence includes speech that causes harm, incites violence, or spreads fear, such as abusive language, slander, or provoking someone to kill.¹
7. Kāyika Himsā - physical violence is direct harm through bodily action, such as killing an insect or cutting trees for pleasure.²
8. Violence is also classified by the victim's sense-capacity, where harming five-sensed beings (humans, animals) is gravest and harming one-sensed beings (plants, earth-bodied) is less grave though still binds karma³, and by type of injury based on harm to the prāṇas (vitalities) of beings.

Thus Ahimsā is declared as the highest dharma, ; one who avoids harming any living being, even in the smallest form, attains self-restraint and purity of soul.

Karma, Passion, and Liberation

The Uttarādhyayana Sūtra and Tattvārthasūtra stress that knowledge and austerity purify the soul. Passions-anger, conceit, deceit, and greed-are the root causes of karma, binding the soul to samsara. Breaking Ahimsā strengthens these passions, adding layers of karmic bondage.

Path to Liberation

To transcend worldly attachments, Jainism advocates:

- Meditation (dhyāna): Deep contemplation on the self.
- Detachment: Renouncing material and emotional attachments.
- Compassion: Treating all beings equally and minimizing harm.

Spiritual progress requires faith, knowledge, and discipline. Without correct means, one cannot attain true happiness. Only by following the right path-rooted in non-violence and self-control-can one purify the soul and attain liberation.

7. True Asceticism - The Path of Knowledge and Renunciation

This aphorism of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra defines true asceticism (Parijñāta karma Muni) as the discernment (Jñā Parijñā) and renunciation (Pratyākhyāna Parijñā) of actions

¹ Daśavaikālika Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

³ Tattvārtha Sūtra: That Which Is, Umāsvāti, 2007, Nathmal Tatia, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

causing harm to the six systems of living beings. These beings range from one-sensed organisms (e.g., plants) to five-sensed beings with a mind (e.g., humans).

The Six Systems of Living Beings

In Jainism, living beings are categorized into six systems based on their sensory faculties and levels of consciousness:

1. One-sensed beings (e.g., plants, water-bodied beings)
2. Two-sensed beings (e.g., worms, insects)
3. Three-sensed beings (e.g., ants)
4. Four-sensed beings (e.g., flies)
5. Five-sensed beings without a mind (e.g., higher animals like fish or birds)
6. Five-sensed beings with a mind (e.g., humans, celestial beings)

जस्सेते छज्जीव-णिकाय-सत्त-समारंभा परिण्णाय भवन्ति, से हु मुणि परिण्णाय-कम्मे।¹

**Jassete chajjīva-ṇikāya-sattha-samāraṁbhā pariṇṇāyā bhavamti,
se hu muṇi pariṇṇāya-kamme.**

Jñā Parijñā refers to the deep understanding of the soul, karma, and non-violence (Ahimsā), allowing an ascetic to recognize subtle forms of harm. Pratyākhyāna Parijñā follows as the formal vow to renounce all violent actions in thought, speech, and deed. The two are interconnected knowledge without renunciation lacks impact, while renunciation without understanding is directionless.

A true Parijñāta karma Muni is one who discerns and actively renounces violence in all forms, ensuring spiritual progress toward Mokṣā through strict adherence to non-violence.

8. Attachment and the Cycle of Transmigration

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra equates carnality (sensual attachment) with samsara (mundane existence), highlighting how attachment to sensory pleasures prolongs the cycle of birth and death. Sensory experiences-sound, color, taste, smell, and touch-create desire and aversion, intensifying passions like anger, pride, and deceit, which bind the soul through karma.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

जे गुणे से मूलठ्ठाणे, जे मूलठ्ठाणे से गुणे।¹

Carnality is (nothing but) mundane existence; (and) mundane existence is (nothing but) carnality.

Jain texts like the Tattvārtha Sūtra² and Uttarādhyayana Sūtra³ emphasize detachment (Vairāgya) as the key to liberation (Mokṣā). True freedom is attained by transcending sensory attachments and recognizing the soul's pure nature beyond material desires.

Detachment also fosters Ahimsā (non-violence), reducing harmful thoughts and actions. By breaking free from sensory cravings, one weakens karma, progressing toward Keval Jñāna (omniscience) and Keval Ananda (infinite bliss), ultimately attaining liberation from samsara.

9. Present Awareness: Knowing Time

The aphorism 'Khaṇaṃ jāṇāhi Paṇḍie!' (O wise man! Know Time) from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra urges mindfulness and awareness of the present moment, essential for spiritual progress. Time is not just a sequence but the only reality we possess, guiding conscious and deliberate choices toward liberation.

Awareness and Detachment

- Āyatta-cakkhu (Clear Vision): Seeing beyond illusion helps detach from fleeting emotions and external pressures.
- Vipassanā and Equanimity: Observing thoughts without attachment fosters present awareness and inner stability.
- Lokvijay (Conquering Desires): Recognizing the transient nature of sensory pleasures weakens attachment to samsara.
- Contentment & Focus: Detachment from material excess ensures commitment to spiritual goals.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

² Tattvārtha Sūtra, Acharya Umaswati, That Which Is. N. Tania. Harper Collins Publication.

³ Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Firmness in Ascetic Life

True ascetics maintain unwavering discipline, resisting distractions and karmic bondage. As Seneca said, “We do not have a short time, we just waste much of it.”

Knowing time means valuing each moment as an opportunity for self-realization. By cultivating mindfulness, detachment, and discipline, one transcends worldly distractions and progresses toward mokṣa - true liberation.

10. Āyatta-cakkhu - The Vision of Spiritual Awakening

The phrase ‘**Āyatta-cakkhu Loka-Vipassī**’¹ from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra symbolizes spiritual awareness, where one perceives the true nature of reality beyond superficial appearances. It reflects the path toward Kevala Jñāna (perfect knowledge) and the Jñāyaka state, embodying complete understanding of existence.

In Jainism, wide-open eyes signify mindfulness and right perception (samyak darśana), crucial for spiritual progress. Bhagavān Mahāvīra meditated on the three worlds (upper, middle, lower) using methods such as:

1. Focusing on the vault of heaven
2. Fixing the gaze on a vertical or slanting wall
3. Concentrating on the interior of the earth

These meditative practices helped him comprehend elevation, degradation, and balance in existence.

This sūtra also emphasizes living in the present moment, a principle echoed across spiritual traditions. By cultivating awareness, self-responsibility, and mindfulness, one transcends ignorance and progresses toward mokṣā. Ultimately, true vision leads to spiritual liberation, guiding aspirants toward their highest potential.

11. Internal Purity: Harmony of Mind and Action

The aphorism “**Jaḥā aṁto taḥā bāhiṁ, jaḥā bāhiṁ taḥā aṁto.**”

from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra highlights the need for balance between internal purity (thoughts and emotions) and external conduct (actions and behavior).

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

जहा अंतो तहां बाहिं, जहा बाहिं तहां अंतो ।¹

Jaḥā aṁto tahā bāhiṁ, jaḥā bāhiṁ tahā aṁto.

- Internal impurities like anger, greed, and deceit manifest unethical actions.
- External impurities in behavior further corrupt the soul.
- Bhagavān Mahāvīra emphasized that neither internal purity nor external conduct alone is enough-both must align to avoid repression or hypocrisy.

Purity and Spiritual Progress

Confluence of inner and outer purity leads to spiritual perfection.

- ‘Yathā aṇḍe tathā piṇḍe.’ the microcosm reflects the macrocosm; inner clarity should be seen in outward actions.
- Detachment and contentment reduce material distractions, aiding in liberation (Mokṣā).

True spirituality lies in uniting pure thoughts with ethical actions. By cultivating inner virtues and practicing righteous conduct, one moves toward self-realization and liberation.

12. Aparigraha (Non-Possessiveness)

The aphorism teaches that true renunciation is not merely physical but requires forsaking the deep-rooted sense of mineness (attachment to possessions and desires).

जे ममाइय-मत्तिं जहाति, से जहाति ममाइयं ।

Je mamaiya-matiṁ jahāti, se jahāti mamaiyaṁ.²

Detachment and non-possessiveness

Jainism emphasizes that the attachment to material possessions binds the soul to worldly suffering. Aparigraha is the practice of letting go, allowing a seeker to move beyond material cravings and ego-driven ownership. True renunciation occurs only when the sense of mineness is eradicated from within, leading to inner peace and equanimity. This ego-centered view leads to fear, and sorrow, and is the root cause of karmic bondage.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

Example of the Tortoise

The metaphor of the tortoise is often employed in Jain texts to illustrate the idea of withdrawal and self-restraint. Just as a tortoise retracts its limbs into its shell when threatened, a seeker should withdraw from worldly attachments and focus inwardly on spiritual growth. This analogy highlights the importance of introspection and self-discipline in achieving detachment.

Svarūpācaraṇa Acharan

Svarūpācaraṇa Acharan refers to living in accordance with one's true nature or essence. In Jainism, this means aligning one's actions with the soul's pure qualities, such as non-violence, truthfulness, and detachment. By embodying these virtues, individuals can transcend their material limitations and realize their true spiritual potential.

Seeker's Path

A seeker in Jainism embarks on a journey to perceive and follow the truth by cultivating right knowledge (samyak-jñāna), right perception (samyak-darśana), and right conduct (samyak-cāritra). This path leads to liberation by destroying karmic bonds and realizing the soul's true nature. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra emphasizes that only by adhering to these principles can one attain spiritual enlightenment.

Thus, the teachings of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra underscore the importance of detachment, ethical conduct, and self-realization in pursuing spiritual enlightenment within Jainism. By overcoming the instinctive sense of acquisitiveness and embracing a life aligned with one's true nature, individuals can achieve liberation from worldly attachments. It serves as a timeless guide for those seeking to transcend material desires and realize their spiritual potential. Through its profound insights into human nature and spirituality, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra continues to inspire seekers on their path to enlightenment.

13. Perceive the Self through Self

जे अण्णदंसी, से अण्णारामे, जे अण्णारामे, से अण्णदंसी ।

Je aṇaṇṇadaṁsī, se aṇaṇṇārāme, Je aṇaṇṇārāme, se aṇaṇṇadaṁsī.

He who looks inwardly at the Self revels in the Self; one who revels in the Self looks inwardly at Self.

Main Teachings:

- Apramāda (Constant Vigilance): The core of Mahāvīra's asceticism, requiring unwavering self-awareness.
- Introspection & Self-Revelation: Looking inward leads to inner joy, reducing reliance on external pleasures.
- Right Knowledge, Right Perception, and Right Conduct:
 - Knowing the Self → Right Knowledge (Samyak jñāna).
 - Perceiving the Self → Right Perception (Samyak darśana).
 - Reveling in the Self → Right Conduct (Samyak cāritra).
- Living in the Present: True awareness requires full engagement in the current moment, avoiding distractions from the past or future.

This verse underscores self-awareness, vigilance, and present moment focus as essential for spiritual progress. By perceiving and rejoicing in the true self, one follows the path to liberation (mokṣa).

14. The Root Cause of Suffering and Path of Liberation

“अंगं च मूलं च विगिच्छ धीरै, पलिच्छिंदियाणं णिक्कम्मदंसी॥”¹

Aggaṃ ca mūlaṃ ca vigimccha dhīrai, palicchindiyāṇaṃ ṇikkammadaṃsī ||

English Translation:

“O wise one! Discern both the tip (effects) and the root (cause) of suffering. Sever them completely and become one who perceives without attachment.”

This verse calls upon the seeker to perceive suffering at both its visible and hidden levels, recognizing its karmic origins and cutting off its root cause-attachment and aversion. True liberation lies in eliminating suffering from its very foundation, not just addressing its outward manifestations.

¹ Illustrated Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

Unveiling the Layers of Karma and Suffering

The term Agra (tip) and mool (root) symbolize the superficial effects and deep-seated causes of bondage:

- Mohanīya karma (Delusion-Karma) is the root of all karmic entanglement, corrupt perception and judgment.
- The other seven karmas-such as Vedanīya (pain/pleasure-experiencing karma) are the tips, manifesting suffering in various ways.
- Falsehood fuels ignorance, while passions, indiscipline, and vices are merely branches extending from it.

Understanding these karmic structures is not an intellectual exercise but an existential realization. One who truly sees the torments caused by karma and violence does not indulge in them, nor does he incite or approve them. Awareness transforms action.

Niṣkarmadarśī: The Four Stages of Karma-Free Vision

A soul that destroys attachment, aversion, and resultant karma through discipline and austerities achieves niṣkarmadarśī (unveiled perception). This state unfolds in four progressive realizations:

1. Ātmaradarśī (Soul-Perceiving) – Free from karma, the seeker perceives the true self beyond bodily existence.
2. Sarvadarśī (All-Perceiving) – Without attachment or aversion, vision expands beyond duality.
3. Akriyādarśī (Inactively-Perceiving) – Freed from karmic consequences, one remains unshaken by external events.
4. Mokṣadarśī (Liberation-Perceiving) – In complete karmic dissolution, the soul attains infinite bliss and omniscience.¹

The one who recognizes life and death as mere cycles of fear is already liberated from them. Such a person embodies:

- Fearlessness, having severed the root of suffering.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

- Pure absorption in the soul, untouched by worldly fluctuations.
- Mastery over the Five Samitis, ensuring non-violence in thought, speech, and action.
- Complete dispassion, free from craving and aversion.

A New Perspective: Fear as the Last Bond

While karma binds through attachment, fear is its final chain. The fear of suffering, loss, and death keeps beings entangled in saṃsāra. The self-realized one does not merely seek to end suffering but ceases to be defined by it. When the fear of suffering is transcended, suffering itself loses its hold.

Liberation is not the End-It is the Unveiling of the Real

The Paramadarśī (self-realized one) does not escape life; rather, he transcends its illusions. He moves beyond suffering not by avoiding it but by understanding its emptiness. In realizing the Self beyond karma, beyond fear, beyond identity, he attains what was always present—the pure, boundless state of mokṣa

15. True Friend - The Self as the Ultimate Companion

The aphorism of Chapter 3.3 “O man! You are your own friend. (Then) why seek one outside?” from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra emphasizes the profound idea that true friendship and support come from within. This concept encourages self-reliance and introspection, suggesting that the most reliable source of guidance and companionship is one’s own self.

Inner Friendship and Self-Reliance

The notion of being one’s own friend is rooted in the idea of self-awareness and self-acceptance. By understanding and embracing who we are, we cultivate a sense of inner peace and contentment. This aligns with the teachings of Carl Jung, who stated, “Who looks outside, dreams, who looks inside, awakes.” By looking inward, we awaken to our true selves and find the strength and wisdom needed to navigate life’s challenges.

The Journey of Self-Discovery

Self-discovery is a lifelong journey that requires courage and honesty. As Natalie Goldberg noted, “If you are not afraid of the voices inside you, you will not fear the

critics outside you.” By confronting our inner thoughts and emotions, we build resilience against external judgments. This inner strength allows us to stand firm in our beliefs and values, regardless of external pressures.

“पुरिस! तुममेव तुमं मित्तं, किं बहिअ मित्तमिच्छसि?”¹

Purisa! Tumameva tumam mittam, kim bahiya mittamicchasi?

O man! You are your own friend. (Then) why seek one outside?

This verse from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra presents a profound realization: the greatest friendship we can cultivate is with ourselves. In a world where people often seek validation and companionship externally, Jain philosophy teaches that true support, strength, and guidance come from within. Self-reliance is the foundation of spiritual and personal growth.

The Illusion of External Friendship

We often believe that external relationships will complete us, yet true completeness arises from within. While companionship has its value, dependence on external validation makes us vulnerable to disappointment, change, and loss. The nature of relationships is impermanent when people come and go, but the self is always present. When one realizes this, the craving for external dependence fades, replaced by inner stability.

The Self as the Source of Strength

Modern psychology aligns with this Jain teaching-self-acceptance is crucial for well-being. A person at peace within can face solitude without fear. When we become our own friends, we develop inner dialogue that nurtures rather than criticizes, fostering resilience against external circumstances. Self-support is the highest form of empowerment.

Authenticity and Inner Truth

Mahāvīra’s wisdom implies that seeking friendship outside is unnecessary when one has cultivated Svarūpācaraṇa - right knowledge with right conduct. The more we

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

align with our true nature, the less we need external validation. Being at home with oneself is the true definition of contentment.

The Role of Introspection in Self-Friendship

Jain asceticism values *apramāda* (constant awareness), which fosters self-reflection. Through introspection, we develop an authentic friendship with ourselves—one that is free of illusion, expectation, and dependence. The practice of meditation, silence, and self-inquiry strengthens this inner relationship, allowing us to act with clarity and purpose.

Breaking the Dependency on External Attachments

The verse challenges the human tendency to seek companionship to escape loneliness. Jain philosophy encourages detachment not from people, but from the need for people. A true seeker finds solace in self-awareness, where the companionship of the self outweighs the transient nature of external bonds.

Self-Friendship as the Ultimate Liberation

By embracing self-reliance, inner dialogue, and introspection, we free ourselves from the illusion that happiness lies outside. The greatest companionship is found in self-awareness, making one fearless, self-sufficient, and spiritually liberated. When the self becomes the friend, the search for external validation dissolves, leaving only peace, wisdom, and true freedom.

16. Grasp the Soul: The Path to Liberation

The aphorism emphasizes self-realization as the key to liberation. By deeply engaging with one's inner self, detaching from desires and illusions, and cultivating self-awareness, one transcends suffering and attains *mokṣa* (liberation).

“पुरिस! अत्ताणमेव अभिणिग्गिज्ज, एवं दुक्खा पमोच्छसि।”¹

“Purisa! Attāṇameva Abhiṇiggijjha, Evaṃ Dukkha Pamokkhasi.”

“O man! Grasp the Soul. This is how you will be emancipated from suffering.”

¹ Illustrated *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, 2010, Śrī Amarmuni, Prākṛta Bhāratī Akādamī, Jaipur.

Key Insights:

1. Self-Realization as Liberation – True freedom from suffering comes not from external changes but through deep engagement with the soul (self-awareness).
2. Introspection and Awareness – Understanding consciousness, mind, and body allows one to transcend fears, attachments, and desires.
3. Mindfulness and Transformation – Observing inner experiences without judgment fosters clarity and peace, breaking habitual patterns of suffering.
4. Nigrah (Self-Control) as Truth – Controlling the mind is not suppression but realization of truth; by aligning with truth, one attains mokṣā (liberation).

This aphorism calls for turning inward to discover strength, wisdom, and peace. By embracing self-awareness and living authentically, one achieves freedom from suffering and true spiritual fulfillment.

17. The Wisdom of Oneness: Self-Knowledge as the Key to Universal Understanding

The verse from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra Chapter 3.4 - “One who understands one, understands all; and one who understands all, understands one,” conveys a central truth of Jain philosophy: profound self-knowledge opens the doorway to understanding the universe itself. This aphorism emphasizes that knowledge is not fragmented but holistic. By understanding one’s own essence, a person gains insight into the broader nature of existence, reflecting the deep interconnection between the self and the cosmos.

In Jainism, this journey inward is central to the soul’s liberation. The process of self-realization involves stripping away layers of karmic attachment and ignorance that obscure the soul’s true, pure nature. By knowing the self, the seat of consciousness and perception-one unlocks universal truths, as the soul is intrinsically linked to the cosmos. The idea is that the self and the universe mirror each other, embodying the principle that the microcosm reflects the macrocosm.

जे एगं जाणइ, से सव्वं जाणइ, जे सव्वं जाणइ, से एगं जाणइ ।¹

Je egam jāṇai, se savvaṃ jāṇai,

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Je savvaṃ jāṇai, se egaṃ jāṇai.

One who cognizes one, cognizes all.

One who cognizes all, cognizes one.

The Interconnection of Self and Cosmos

This profound aphorism from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra (3.4) expresses the deep interrelation between self-knowledge and universal wisdom. It suggests that true understanding is holistic, not fragmented-by fully grasping the essence of one's own being, one attains insight into the entire cosmos. The self and the universe are reflections of each other, illustrating the Jain principle that the microcosm mirrors the macrocosm.

Self-Knowledge as the Gateway to Liberation

In Jain thought, the journey inward is the key to spiritual liberation (mokṣa). The soul, inherently pure and omniscient, is obscured by karmic veils that distort perception. Through self-awareness, detachment, and introspection, these karmic layers are shed, allowing one to experience the world without illusion or distortion. This realization is the essence of Kevala Jñāna (absolute knowledge)-the state where reality is perceived as it truly is.

Beyond Accumulation: Transformative Wisdom

This sūtra challenges the modern tendency to view knowledge as a mere accumulation of facts. True wisdom is not external information, but an inner realization that integrates knowledge into being. Understanding oneself is the key to understanding existence-self-discovery leads to universal insight, just as knowing the nature of water leads to an understanding of rivers, oceans, and rain.

The Role of Detachment and Non-Violence

As one journeys inward, introspection reveals the sources of attachment, desires, and aversions that cloud perception. Letting go of these distractions allows for deeper clarity, reinforcing the Jain principles of non-attachment (Aparigraha) and non-violence (Ahimsā). Recognizing the interconnectedness of all life naturally fosters compassion and responsibility toward others.

Content and Simplicity as Paths to Wisdom

A tranquil mind is a receptive mind. Contentment (saṃtoṣa), central to Jain thought, frees the mind from distractions, making self-reflection and higher awareness possible. By reducing material cravings and living simply, one becomes more attuned to inner wisdom and the soul's higher purpose.

The Ultimate Realization: The One and the All

A true seeker of wisdom understands that knowing the self is knowing the whole of the soul, the essence of life, is the same in all beings. The path to enlightenment is not through external pursuits but through deep self-awareness, discipline, and detachment.

The Transformative Power of Inner Knowledge

This aphorism is a timeless reminder that wisdom is not a collection of knowledge, but a transformation of perception. To know oneself deeply is to unlock the truths of the universe. Through continuous self-reflection and conscious living, we realize that everything we seek is already within us—waiting to be acknowledged and embraced.

18. The Dual Nature of Karma: Pathway to Bondage or Liberation

Understanding the Nature of Karma

This verse highlights the duality of karma, emphasizing that the very actions that lead to bondage can also lead to liberation—depending on awareness and intention. Āsrava (influx of karma) occurs when actions are driven by attachment, ignorance, and aversion, binding the soul to the cycle of rebirth. However, parīśrava (efflux of karma) occurs when the same actions, performed with self-awareness and discipline, purify the soul and free it from karmic bondage.

“जे आसवा ते परिसवा, जे परिसवा ते आसवा।

जे णासवा ते अपपरिसवा, जे अपपरिसवा ते णासवा॥”¹

“Je āsavā te parissavā,

Je parissavā te āsavā,

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Je aṇāsavā te aparissavā,

Je aparissavā te aṇāsavā.”

“That which causes influx also causes efflux.

That which causes efflux also causes influx.

That which prevents influx also prevents efflux.

That which prevents efflux also prevents influx.”

Transformation through Awareness

Jain philosophy teaches that karma is not an inescapable force but a modifiable influence—one that can be shed through right knowledge (Samyak jñāna), right perception (Samyak darśana), and right conduct (Samyak cāritra). Self-awareness, mindfulness, and ethical discipline determine whether an action binds or liberates. This realization empowers individuals to transform their lives through conscious living.

Apramāda: Vigilance as the Key to Freedom

The practice of apramāda (constant vigilance) plays a crucial role in navigating karma. By maintaining continuous awareness, one can:

- Avoid actions that lead to karmic accumulation
- Perform daily activities with detachment and discipline
- Cultivate introspection to weaken passions and attachments

This inner discipline ensures that actions do not reinforce karmic chains but contribute to spiritual progress.

The Non-Absolutist Perspective: Anekāntavāda

Jainism embraces the multiplicity of viewpoints (Anekāntavāda), acknowledging that reality is complex and interconnected. This sūtra embodies that idea—what appears to bind one person may liberate another, depending on their intentions and state of awareness. Actions are neither inherently good nor bad but rather defined by the consciousness behind them.

Practical Application: Shedding Karma through Discipline

Liberation requires conscious efforts to engage in purification practices, such as:

- Meditation and mindfulness to detach from worldly distractions
- Ethical conduct and non-violence (Ahimsā) to prevent new karma
- Self-restraint (saṃyama) to eliminate past karmic influences

These practices gradually reduce karmic burdens, leading the soul toward mokṣā (liberation) a state of pure, unconditioned existence.

Liberation Lies in Awareness

The aphorism “Je asava te parisava” serves as a powerful reminder that karma is not just a force of bondage but also a potential tool for liberation. With the right knowledge, intention, and discipline, every action can become a step toward self-purification and freedom.

Through continuous self-reflection, mindful living, and ethical discipline, we unlock the wisdom that everything we need for liberation is already within us, waiting to be realized.

19. Be Vigilant: The Path to Awareness and Liberation

Vigilance as the Key to Self-Realization

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra provides timeless wisdom that remains profoundly relevant in today’s fast-paced world. The call to vigilance (apramāda) is not just a spiritual directive but a guiding principle for modern life. It urges us to cultivate constant awareness, mindfulness, and self-discipline, recognizing that the quality of our lives is shaped by our own choices, thoughts, and actions.

In a world dominated by distractions-social media, material pursuits, and external validations - this teaching is more relevant than ever. The phrase “**Uṭṭhie ṇo pamāyae**” reminds us that once we have awakened to a higher truth, we must persist in our pursuit of wisdom and self-mastery. This is akin to the modern philosophy of continuous self-improvement-where awareness and persistence are the pillars of success.

“उट्ठिए नो पमाए।”¹

Uṭṭhie ṇo pamāyae.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

“One should not cease to be vigilant after having risen up (for the sadhana of vigilance).”

“जाणितु दुक्खं पत्तेयं सायं।”

Jāṇittu dukkhaṃ patteyaṃ sāyaṃ.

“Happiness and unhappiness are purely individual experiences, knowing this fact, one should not cease to be vigilant.”

The Power of Personal Responsibility

The verse “Jāṇittu dukkhaṃ patteyaṃ sāyaṃ” shifts the focus from external blame to internal responsibility. It teaches that pleasure and pain are self-created, a revolutionary concept that aligns with modern psychological principles. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), for instance, emphasizes that our perceptions shape our experiences rather than external circumstances themselves.

In today’s world, people often seek happiness in external achievements, relationships, or material gains, but Jain philosophy offers a different perspective: true peace comes from within. By taking ownership of our emotions and reactions, we can shape our reality and free ourselves from suffering. This echoes the modern mindfulness movement, which emphasizes responding rather than reacting to life’s challenges.

Time: The Most Valuable Resource

The Uttarādhyayana Sūtra¹ reinforces this urgency with the phrase:

“Samayaṃ goyama mā pamāyae” (Do not waste time).

Modern neuroscience shows that the human brain is wired for distraction, making conscious effort essential to stay present and focused. The world's most successful people, whether in business, science, or spirituality, recognize that time is their most valuable asset. Jain philosophy calls us to value every moment, using it for self-improvement and spiritual growth rather than trivial pursuits.

Wise individuals do not wait for the ‘right time’ to act; they create the right time through discipline and commitment. Whether in business, personal development, or spiritual practice, this wisdom remains universally applicable.

¹ Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, Edited by Panniyas Shri Vajrasen Vijaygani; translated by Jethalal Haribhai. Ahmedabad: Bhadrakar Prakashan, 1973.

Self-Knowledge as the Gateway to Universal Understanding

The interconnected nature of knowledge is captured in the Jain saying: “**Je egam jāṇai, se savvam jāṇai; Je savvam jāṇai, se egam jāṇai.**” One who understands one, understands all; one who understands all, understands one.”

This aligns with modern holistic thinking-where understanding one core truth deeply provides insight into the broader structure of reality. It is seen in disciplines like systems thinking, quantum physics, and even artificial intelligence, where a deep understanding of fundamental principles leads to mastery over complex systems.

In spiritual terms, this verse emphasizes deep introspection-the idea that by fully understanding oneself, one can unlock the nature of the universe itself. Self-awareness is not just personal growth; it is the gateway to enlightenment.

The Pursuit of Truth in a World of Illusions

Another powerful directive from Jain teaching states:

Appāṇā saccam mēsijjā

“Ascertain the truth for yourself and align (establish) your view with the Truth.”

Saccañci diṭṭhi kuvvaha.

“Make your view grounded in truth; by this path the wise burn up all sinful karma.”

Follow the Truth and Truth alone. First personally verify the truth, then base your conviction upon it. In today’s age of misinformation, social media biases, and sensationalism, this call for truth is crucial. The ability to differentiate between illusion and reality, whether in personal decisions or societal narratives, is more vital than ever.

Truth in Jainism is not just about honesty but about aligning one’s life with reality as it is, free from distortion by personal biases or emotions. In a world filled with confirmation biases and echo chambers, cultivating this perspective is essential for true wisdom.

Application to Modern Life: Living with Awareness

The teachings of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra offer a framework for navigating life with clarity and purpose. Whether in career decisions, relationships, or self-growth, applying these principles can lead to a more conscious and fulfilling life:

- **Practice mindfulness** – Engage fully with the present moment. Avoid distractions and live deliberately.
- **Take responsibility** – Own your thoughts, emotions, and actions. Stop externalizing blame.
- **Value time** – Every moment is an opportunity for growth; use it wisely.
- **Seek deep knowledge** – Instead of chasing surface-level information, understand fundamental truths deeply.
- **Live by truth** – Avoid illusions, self-deception, and misinformation. Align with reality.

Awake, Arise, and Be Vigilant

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra’s teachings are applicable to everyone, not just monks or ascetics. In a rapidly changing, distraction-filled world, these principles encourage us to achieve our full potential, remain diligent in seeking truth, and live each moment with awareness and intention.

As a guiding principle states: “Awake arise and stop not till the goal is achieved.”¹

This is not merely a spiritual guideline-it is a life philosophy. Stay aware. Stay vigilant. Shape your path with clarity and truth.

20. Benefits of Unleashing Spiritual Energy

“No Nihejja Viriyam”²

“Do not hide your energy”

The fifth chapter of the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, in its third subchapter, contains the profound instruction ‘no nihejja viriyam,’ which translates to ‘do not conceal your energy’ in practices leading to liberation. This teaching emphasizes the importance of fully dedicating one’s energy and efforts towards spiritual growth and enlightenment.

¹ Swami Vivekanand, Original source he’s echoing: Kaṭha Upaniṣad **1.3.14** - “uttiṣṭhata jāgrata prāpya varān nibodhata.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra 5/2/157, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Understanding “No Nihejja Viriyam”

The phrase “no nihejja viriyam” encapsulates a fundamental principle in Jain philosophy and practice. It urges practitioners to channel their full energy and potential into their spiritual journey, without holding back or concealing any part of their vigor. This concept aligns closely with the Jain emphasis on self-discipline, perseverance, and unwavering commitment to the path of liberation.

The Significance of Energy in Spiritual Practice

In the context of spiritual practice, energy refers not only to physical vitality but also to mental focus, emotional dedication, and spiritual resolve. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra recognizes that the journey towards liberation requires a holistic application of one’s entire being. By instructing practitioners not to conceal their energy, the text emphasizes the need for transparency, authenticity, and wholehearted engagement in spiritual pursuits.

Manifestations of Concealing Energy

Concealing energy in spiritual practices can manifest in various ways:

1. Hesitation: Holding back due to fear or doubt
2. Partial commitment: Engaging in practices half-heartedly
3. Inconsistency: Fluctuating between periods of intense practice and negligence
4. Selective application: Applying energy to some aspects of practice while neglecting others

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra’s instruction challenges practitioners to overcome these tendencies and fully immerse themselves in their spiritual journey.

Benefits of Unleashing Spiritual Energy

By not concealing one’s energy, a practitioner can experience numerous benefits:

1. Accelerated progress: Full engagement leads to faster spiritual growth
2. Deeper insights: Unreserved application of energy can result in profound realizations
3. Increased resilience: Wholehearted practice builds strength to overcome obstacles
4. Authenticity: Open expression of spiritual energy fosters genuine self-discovery

Quotes on Not Concealing Energy

To further illustrate the importance of not concealing one's energy in spiritual practices, consider the following quotes: "Energy is the essence of life. Every day you decide how you're going to use it by knowing what you want and what it takes to reach that goal, and by maintaining focus."

This quote by Oprah Winfrey emphasizes the importance of directing one's energy purposefully towards one's goals, which in the context of spiritual practice, aligns with the Ācārāṅga Sūtra's teaching.

"The energy of the mind is the essence of life"

Aristotle's words highlight the crucial role of mental energy in shaping our experiences and pursuits. In spiritual practice, this mental energy is vital for progress and should not be concealed or diminished.

"Where focus goes, energy flows"

This concise statement by Tony Robbins encapsulates the idea that our energy naturally follows our attention. In the context of spiritual practice, this underscores the importance of maintaining unwavering focus on liberation, allowing our full energy to flow towards that goal.

"Your energy is unique. Embrace it. Use it wisely. Make it count"

Robin Sharma's words encourage individuals to recognize and utilize their unique energy, which resonates with the Ācārāṅga Sūtra's instruction not to conceal one's vigor in spiritual pursuits.

"Energy is the currency of the universe. You get what you give"

This quote by Oprah Winfrey reflects the reciprocal nature of energy, suggesting that the more energy we invest in our spiritual practice, the more we receive in return.

Thus, the Ācārāṅga Sūtra's instruction "no nihejja viriyam" serves as a powerful reminder for spiritual practitioners to fully engage their energy in the pursuit of liberation. By not concealing or holding back one's vigor, individuals can accelerate their spiritual growth, deepen their insights, and authentically progress on their path to enlightenment. This teaching encourages practitioners to overcome hesitation,

inconsistency, and partial commitment, instead embracing a wholehearted approach to spiritual practice

As we reflect on this wisdom from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, we are reminded of the transformative power of fully dedicating our energy to our spiritual journey. By heeding this ancient advice, practitioners can unlock their full potential and move closer to the ultimate goal of liberation.

21. Internal Struggle and Self-Conquest

इमेणं चेव जुज्झाहि, किं ते जुज्जेण बज्झाओ?¹

Imeṇaṁ ceva jujjhāhi, kiṁ te jujjheṇa bajjhao?

Battle with this (enemy i.e., the karma body); what will accrue from warring with others?

Key Teachings and Inspiration:

This powerful verse from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra emphasizes that the greatest battle is within, not against external adversaries. Jain philosophy teaches that karma binds the soul, obscuring its purity. True liberation comes from conquering one's own passions, attachments, and ignorance, rather than engaging in external disputes.

Self-conquest is the highest victory, as echoed in the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, which states that mastering oneself leads to lasting peace, unlike temporary external victories. This fosters personal responsibility, mindfulness, and spiritual growth, shifting the focus from blame to self-improvement.

How This Inspires Us Today:

1. **Prioritize Inner Work:** Instead of focusing on external conflicts, resolve internal struggles-anger, ego, and attachments.
2. **Self-Discipline as Power:** True strength lies in self-awareness and restraint, not in overpowering others.
3. **Mindfulness for Transformation:** Through meditation, introspection, and ethical living, one can shed karmic burdens and move toward liberation.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 5/2/159, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan

4. **Inner Peace over External Chaos:** External disputes fade, but spiritual progress remains eternal.

This verse is a call to inner mastery, urging us to fight the real battle against our own weaknesses. By conquering the self, we transcend suffering and achieve true liberation, leading to a life of clarity, peace, and spiritual fulfillment.

22. Wisdom Requires Detachment

In this world, there are completely (by mind, speech and body) hermetic sages who are endowed with ultimate knowledge and wisdom and are free of sinful activities. In this Chapter the qualities of an Ācārya have been explained with the metaphor for a lake. The commentator (vṛtti)¹ has elaborated the subject by mentioning four types of lakes -

1. One type of lake is where there is an outflow as well as an inflow of water.
2. The second type is where there is only outflow and no inflow.
3. Third type is that where there is only inflow and no outflow.
4. The fourth type is that where there is neither outflow nor inflow.

The first category includes senior Ācāryas who both give and receive scriptural knowledge. The second category comprises Tirthankars, who only give discourses. The third category features Jinakalpi ascetics, who practice in isolation and acquire knowledge without teaching. The fourth category consists of pratyek-buddhas, who attain enlightenment without giving or receiving guidance.

An Ācārya embodies thirty-six virtues, follows five codes of conduct, achieves eight types of attainments, and holds pure knowledge. The eight attainments are: conduct, scriptural knowledge, a well-built body, speech, discourse, judgment, translating thought into action, and awareness of acquisition. They reside in pleasant areas, suppress passions through karma control, and protect six forms of life or religious organizations. Their teachings prevent low births, and they play a central role in scriptural knowledge and its dissemination.

¹ Śīlāṅka-vṛtti, Jaina Āgama-Series, Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai.

“अवि हरए पडिपुण्णे चिट्ठइ समंहि भोमे।
उवसंतए सारभक्खमाणे, से चिट्ठइ सोयनज्जए॥”

“Avi harade paṇḡṇe ciṭṭhati samaṃsi bhohme.

Uvasantarae sāra bhakkhamāṇe, se ciṭṭhati soyaṇajjāe.”

“Just as stagnant water in a pond appears still on the surface, but when disturbed, the underlying impurities rise and cloud their clarity, so too does the mind become unsettled and lose its wisdom when influenced by desires and distractions.”

This analogy from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra illustrates how external influences, and inner turmoil can disrupt clarity and wisdom.

- A calm and undisturbed pond symbolizes a focused, peaceful mind.
- When disturbed by movements (representing attachments, cravings, and desires), the impurities rise to the surface, obscuring their clarity.
- Similarly, a mind filled with distractions, indulgences, and attachments loses its ability to perceive truth clearly.

Modern Application:

In today’s fast-paced world, our minds are constantly bombarded with distractions—social media, material pursuits, and external validation.

Like a disturbed pond, an unsettled mind cannot reflect reality clearly.

Mindfulness, introspection, and detachment are essential to maintaining mental clarity and spiritual wisdom.

This verse teaches us that true wisdom arises from inner stillness. Just as a pond must remain undisturbed to reflect the sky, the mind must remain free from distractions and desires to perceive truth.

23. The Self as Awareness

जे आया से विण्णाया, जे विण्णाया से आया ।

जएण विजाणति से आया ।¹

Je āyā se viṇṇāyā, je viṇṇāyā se āyā.

Jeṇa vijāṇati se āyā.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 5/6/171 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

In the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the ancient Jain aphorism “Je āyā se viṇṇāyā, je viṇṇāyā se āyā” succinctly means “the self is the knower, and the knower is the self.” In other words, the soul (jīva) and consciousness are fundamentally identical. This teaching conveys profound philosophical depth: awareness is the very essence of the self. The soul does not acquire knowledge as an external attribute - rather, the soul is knowledge and perception itself, by its very nature. Jain philosophers thus describe the soul as pure consciousness (upayoga), the faculty of knowing and perceiving inherent to our being. He who knows is knowledge itself, not a separate knower apart from knowing.¹

In this view, cognition and the true self are inseparable – like a flame and its light. Just as a flame’s very being is to shine, the soul’s very being is to know and be aware.

The Pure Soul and the Veil of Karma

According to Jainism, every soul (jīva) is originally immaculate, radiant, and filled with infinite knowledge and perception. However, in worldly existence this brilliance is obscured by the accumulation of karma – subtle particles born from our actions and passions that cling to the soul. Our spirit is inherently pure, simply waiting to be uncovered. Recognizing this encourages a shift of focus inward – from outer impurities to the inner light that is ever-present. No matter how thick the dust is, the mirror of self can always be polished to its original shine

Jain philosophy emphasizes that liberation is achieved not by accumulating new knowledge from outside, but by removing the karmic veils to reveal the knowledge within. The soul’s omniscience is compared to a hidden treasure or a buried mirror – we do not need to import treasure, only dig it out; we do not need to forge a new mirror, only polish it. The Bhagavatī-sūtra², one of Mahāvīra’s dialogues, reinforces this idea by illustrating how monks attained enlightenment through self-purification, realizing that the battlefield of truth lies within. The true conquest is over our own ignorance and attachments, uncovering the soul’s natural omniscience. In Jain teachings, even the Tattvārtha Sūtra echoes: “Consciousness (upayoga) is the distinguishing characteristic of the soul,”³ which implies that our very identity is defined by awareness, only temporarily masked by karma.

¹ Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 2005, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

² Bhagavatī-sūtra (Vyākhyāprajñapti). Prakrit text with Hindi ṭīkā by Muni Nathmal (Ācārya Mahāpragya). 2 vols. Lādnūn: Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, 1989.

³ Tattvārtha Sūtra, 2011, Ed Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Printers, Deharadun.

Inner Mastery over External Conquest

Both Jain scripture and philosophy extol inner mastery as far superior to any external conquest. Conquering cities or earthly foes means little if one remains a slave to anger, greed, or ego. As the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra declares: “Difficult to conquer is oneself; but when that is conquered, everything is conquered.”¹

This Jain teaching, like a poignant verse of spiritual chivalry, reminds us that the greatest battle is fought within. True heroism is measured by self-discipline and the subjugation of one’s own passions, not by the subjugation of others. The Bhagavatī-sūtra contains dialogues where Mahāvīraguides kings and warriors to realize that ruling one’s own senses and mind is the ultimate kingship, greater than ruling any kingdom. Indeed, Bhagavān Mahāvīra himself earned the title Jina (Conqueror) not for vanquishing external enemies, but for conquering inner attachment and aversion.

In the Jain perspective, the soul’s victory is introspective. We turn the spotlight of awareness back upon ourselves. The verse “Je āyā se viṇṇāyā...” is an invitation to recognize that the only true knower of the self is the self itself – no external achievement can substitute for that direct self-realization. This aligns with similar wisdom in other traditions (for example, the Bhagavadgītā extols the yogi who has mastered his self as ‘supreme among conquerors’). Jain texts drive home the point that mastering the self is the key to mastering life. When we know who we are at the deepest level – a being of awareness – worldly victories and defeats lose their sway. Gaining lordship over our own impulses and ignorance is depicted as a far more glorious and enduring triumph than any outward acclaim. In practice, this means channeling our energies toward self-improvement, ethical perfection, and meditation, rather than chasing dominance or validation in the outer world.

The Bhagavatī-sūtra and Uttarādhyayana Sūtra together reinforce a singular message: conquest of the self-precedes and surpasses all other conquests.

When one achieves victory over the inner realm – over desire, fear, anger, and delusion – one indirectly conquers the world, because nothing in the world can then conquer one’s peace. A person who has attained inner mastery carries a quiet dignity

¹ Uttarādhyayana Sūtra -Ek Adhyayan, 2001, Ācārya Chandana, Sanmati Gyanpith, Agra.

and strength that no external loss can diminish, and no external success can inflate. This internal victory is the essence of spiritual progress in Jainism.

Poetic Reflections: Mirrors, Flames, and Lotuses

This Jain verse invites a poetic contemplation of the nature of cognition and self-awareness. We might envision the soul as a mirror – in its purity, it flawlessly reflects truth and reality. Knowledge is the mirror-like quality of the soul, shining with clarity. When dust settles on a mirror, the reflection warps or dims; yet the mirror's essence has not changed. In the same way, our consciousness becomes blurred by the dust of karma and distraction, but underneath, the capacity to reflect truth remains intact. Spiritual practice is the gentle, patient act of polishing this inner mirror, wiping away each layer of grime through mindfulness and penance, until one day it gleams with undistorted truth. In that polished mirror of the self, one finally perceives reality as it is – and recognizes the face of one's own soul, luminous and free.

We can also liken the soul to a flame of consciousness. Even when enclosed by a lamp smeared with soot, the flame still burns. Its light of awareness may seem faint from outside, but it persists. As we cleanse the lamp's glass - removing anger here, ego there - the flame's radiance grows more visible. Eventually, the full light of knowledge shines forth, revealing that the soul was a brilliant flame all along. This flame does not receive light from elsewhere; it *is* light. Just so, our awareness doesn't come from external sources - it is the soul's innate brilliance, which simply needs unveiling.

A classic Eastern metaphor is the lotus flower. The soul is like a lotus bud submerged in a muddy pond. Our ignorance and vices are the mud that clings to it during its long sojourn in saṃsara (the cycle of birth and death). Yet the bud carries within it the blueprint of bloom. With spiritual effort, it rises toward the light, and the lotus of consciousness unfolds petal by petal, emerging clean from the mud. Each petal might be seen as a virtue or a realization (compassion, truth, clarity, peace...), opening as we cultivate awareness. Finally, the lotus blossoms fully above the water, representing the soul in its liberated state - pristine, open to the sky, untainted by the mud it arose from.

Such poetic analogies not only beautify the philosophy but also deepen our intuitive grasp: our true self is like a hidden treasure, a light in a cave, or a seed beneath the soil – it has always been there, waiting to be discovered and actualized. Awareness is both the path and the destination: we use the small lamp of attention we currently possess to ignite the sun-like knowledge that is our true nature.

Self-Discovery and the Power of Cognition in Liberation

In conclusion, this refined Jain teaching offers an inspiring message: true wisdom and victory come not from conquering the outer world, but from mastering the inner self. The soul, (jīva), is of the nature of knowing - and realizing this is the key to mokṣa (liberation). When we internalize that “the self is the knower, and the knower is the self,” we begin to seek knowledge not as something to possess, but as our very being to uncover. Life’s purpose then shifts from external accumulation to inner realization. We understand that every challenge or temptation is an opportunity to polish the mirror, to steady the flame, to bloom another petal of the lotus.

The journey of self-discovery empowered by cognition is a transformative one. As we cultivate awareness, moment by moment, we gradually dissolve the ignorance and attachments binding on us. We come to experience what Jain texts call the Swayambhu Jñāna, the self-illuminating knowledge that arises from within when the layers are removed. This journey requires courage and consistency - indeed, ‘difficult to conquer is oneself’ - but the reward is absolute freedom and peace.

The enlightened soul, having conquered itself, wants nothing from the world and fears nothing in it. It shines by its own light, having realized its oneness with knowledge and its kinship with all life.

Let the final thought be a gentle reminder and inspiration: within you is a vast, tranquil awareness as deep as an ocean and as bright as a million suns. It is your essence. No worldly accomplishment can equal the wonder of recognizing this truth. As you turn inward and nurture the flame of consciousness, you become your own guide and conqueror. In the words of the Jain masters, know yourself, conquer yourself, for in doing so, you have known and conquered all¹ Self-realization as the gateway to universal understanding.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1/5/5/1, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

“The soul that knows itself as separate from the body, mind, and passions, that soul is the knower, the conqueror.”¹ Self-illumination is liberation; awareness is one’s true nature.

24. The Form of Liberated Soul

“सव्वे सरा णियत्थंति।”

Savve sarā niyaṭṭamiti.

All vowels (and consonants) fail (to explain the form or bliss of that liberated soul.

The ascetics stable (engrossed) in the path of liberation crosses the vicious circle of life and death.

The soul cannot be explained by logic. Even intellect cannot grasp it. It is impossible to express the nature of pure soul in words. The pure soul cannot be realized/understood/experienced through any symbolic expression. As per Pravacanasāra² five senses are incapable of perceiving the pure soul, visualization of pure soul is impossible, it cannot be acquired by external objects. The soul is not bound associated with karmic particles as these are physical and in animate. It is formless and it has nothing to do with external religious symbols like temple, mosque, dress code of ascetics, yogis, flags or any such symbols adopted by religious followers.

It is characterized by consciousness. It enjoys its own abundant infinite nature. It always lives in its own innumerable but definite number of spaces. It has infinite and indivisible properties and is pure entity. There are two distinguishing characteristics of the soul, viz. to see and to know. A soul can know self and other substances as well.

Further, the soul has an inherent characteristic to remain pure forever, although when attracted to other things, it encounters karmic particles, and it gets associated with the impurities. For example, dust may settle on gold or mirror but becomes clean once the dust is removed. A Soul may ‘see’ and ‘know’ objects in the universe as bad, good or pure (true nature). When viewed as bad, it attracts negative karma (Aśubha) which worsens external conditions in life; if viewed as good (śubha), one attains better or congenial external conditions in life. Only when one views the self as pure, one

¹ Samayasāra, 1935 Ācārya Kuṇḍakuṇḍa, A. N. Upadhye Parama-Śrūta-Prabhābaka-Maṇḍala, Mumbai.

² Pravacanasāra, Ācārya Kuṇḍakuṇḍa, 2000, A. N. Upadhye, Shrimad Rajachandra Ashram, Agas, Gujarat.

becomes pure and liberates oneself from all bondage. When permanently and continuously views oneself as pure, one achieves mokṣa, i.e., liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.

The true nature of the soul is ineffable, beyond speech, thought, or external identifiers. Jain philosophy teaches that self-awareness and detachment from karma lead to ultimate freedom, where the soul exists in its pure, blissful state, beyond all expression.

25. Faith in Jina's Order

Āṇae māmagāṃ dhammaṃ.¹

The munis who are conversant with the Way of life I have laid down carry out my injunctions (throughout their life) and observe asceticism.

The verse ‘Āṇae māmagāṃ dhammaṃ’ from the Ācārāṅga Sūtra Chapter 6.2 highlights the significance of following the disciplined way of life laid down by the Tirthankaras. This principle is central to Jain philosophy, emphasizing that true religious practice involves adherence to these teachings and observing asceticism. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, as one of the foundational texts, provides guidance on living a life aligned with Jain values, focusing on self-discipline, personal responsibility, and spiritual purity.

This teaching is mirrored in other religious philosophies, such as in the Bhagavadgītā where Kṛṣṇa advises, ‘Give up all and come to me,’ urging individuals to surrender to divine guidance and focus on their spiritual duties. In Jainism, this surrender is directed towards understanding and realizing the soul's true nature. The soul is inherently pure and full of infinite qualities, yet due to ignorance or lack of faith, individuals often remain unaware of their true potential.

The story of a rickshaw puller whose grandfather buried coins for him serves as a poignant metaphor. Unaware of this hidden wealth, he lived in poverty, believing himself to be poor. Similarly, many people remain disconnected from their inner potential due to ignorance. This ignorance prevents them from realizing the infinite qualities inherent in their soul.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 6/2/185, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Faith in the teachings of the Jinas, as emphasized in ‘Āṇae māmagāṃ dhammaṃ,’ involves following the disciplined way of life they prescribed. This means adhering to their guidance and practicing asceticism to cultivate self-awareness and spiritual growth. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra suggests that by internalizing these teachings, one can align with the path of righteousness and achieve liberation. To follow this path, individuals should engage in meditation, ethical living, and continuous reflection, allowing them to transcend ignorance and realize their true nature. This commitment to self-discipline fosters a deeper connection with the soul’s inherent qualities.

The commentary interprets this aphorism in two ways: first, that a muni should follow the way of life according to Jina’s exhortation; second, that nothing belongs to one except the disciplined way of life, hence carrying out the instructions of the Tirthankara is essential. This reflects a deep commitment to living a life of discipline and spiritual focus.

The Bhagavatī-sūtra further elaborates on this by explaining that the soul and consciousness are one and the same. It states that the soul is certainly a jīva and so is consciousness. This understanding underscores the importance of self-awareness and introspection in realizing one’s true nature. By recognizing and embracing our inner wealth, we can transcend ignorance and realize our true potential.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra also highlights various manifestations of knowledge through which the soul passes at different moments. For instance, when engaged in hearing, it is called the ‘auditor’ soul; when gaining knowledge through mental processes, it is termed the ‘psychic’ soul. This illustrates how different aspects of cognition contribute to a deeper understanding of the self.

By recognizing these manifestations, individuals can better understand their true nature and work towards shedding karmic impurities. This journey requires introspection and a commitment to personal growth, aligning with teachings that emphasize internal mastery over external conquest.

Ralph Waldo Emerson’s quote, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us,” resonates with this idea. It emphasizes that true wisdom comes from within and that by cultivating self-awareness, individuals can unlock their inner potential.

Ultimately, obedience to the teachings of the Jina is seen as a path to liberation. By surrendering to these teachings and focusing on internal transformation, individuals can overcome ignorance and realize their true nature. This journey requires dedication but ultimately leads to profound transformation and spiritual freedom.

In conclusion, the teachings from Jain texts like the Ācārāṅga Sūtra provide valuable guidance for those seeking enlightenment. By emphasizing self-awareness, personal responsibility, and continuous reflection, these texts offer a comprehensive framework for spiritual development. Through dedication to understanding oneself, one can achieve profound transformation and ultimately attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

5.2 Righteousness (Dharma) and Ethical Conduct (Śīlā or Cāritra)

1. Righteousness (Dharma) in Jainism

Definition and Metaphysical Foundations

In Jainism, dharma (righteousness) is the universal principle of moral law that sustains cosmic order and facilitates spiritual progress. It encompasses both empirical duty (social and ritual obligations) and transcendent virtue (non-violence, truth, and self-control).

1.1 Definition and Scriptural Foundations

The Daśavaikālika Sūtra¹ (1st century BCE), a foundational Śvetāmbara text, opens with the seminal aphorism defining dharma:

“Non-violence (Ahimsā), self-restraint (saṃyam), and austerity (tapas) constitute dharma. Even celestial beings bow to one whose mind is established in this triad.”

The phrase, “Vatthu-sahāvo Dhammo”² is a foundational concept in Jain philosophy, articulated by Bhagwan Mahāvīra. It translates to “**Dharma is the intrinsic nature of a substance**” and underscores the principle that every entity’s essence defines its moral and existential purpose.

“Vatthu-sahāvo Dhammo” in Jain Philosophy

¹ Daśavaikālika Sūtra, 1990, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Kartikey Anupreksha, Ācārya Kartikeya, 478.

- Definition:
- Vatthu (Sanskrit: Vastu) = Substance or entity.
- Sahāvo (Sanskrit: Svabhāva) = Intrinsic nature.
- Dhammo (Sanskrit: Dharma) = Righteousness or moral law.

The dharma of any entity is to remain true to its intrinsic nature. Just as the nature of fire is to burn and that of water is to cool, the essential nature of the soul is to strive for liberation (mokṣā) through the path of non-violence (Ahimsā) and self-realization. To live in accordance with one's true nature is the highest form of dharma.

Metaphysical Basis:

- Jain ontology recognizes six eternal substances (dravya): soul (Jīva), matter (pudgala), motion (dharma), rest (adharma), space (ākāśa), and time (kāla). Each operates according to its svabhava (intrinsic nature).
- The soul's svabhava is consciousness (caitanya), bliss (sukha), and energy (virya), obscured by karmic bondage.

In Jainism, righteousness (dharma) represents the core moral law, guiding both actions and intentions. It involves aligning with universal truth (satya), maintaining equanimity (samatā), and practicing virtues like non-violence (ahimsā), compassion (karuṇā), and self-control (saṃyama). This principle is essential for ethical conduct and spiritual growth.

2. Ethics: Origins and Key Concepts

2.1 Etymology and Definitions

- **Ethics:** From Greek êthos ('character' or 'habit'), ethics studies principles of right conduct.
- **Morality:** From Latin mores ('customs'), it refers to societal norms about good and bad.
- **Dharma:** In Indian philosophy, dharma combines duty, law, and virtue, often interpreted as righteousness or moral order.

2.2 Core Questions in Ethics

Ethics addresses dilemmas such as:

- Is happiness the ultimate goal of action?
- How do duty and self-interest align?
- What defines ‘good’ or ‘right’?

2. Ethical Conduct (Śīla) in Jainism

2.1 The Five Great Vows (Mahāvratas)

Śīla operationalizes dharma through vows:

1. **Non-violence** (Ahimsā): Avoiding harm through body, speech, and mind.
2. **Truth** (Satya): Speaking gently and avoiding falsehood.
3. **Non-stealing** (Asteya): Respecting others’ property and time.
4. **Celibacy** (Brahmacarya): Chastity for monastics; fidelity for laypersons.
5. **Non-possession** (Aparigraha): Rejecting material and emotional attachments.¹

2.2 Universal Principles

- **Anekāntavāda** (Non-absolutism): Resolving ethical dilemmas by acknowledging multiple perspectives.
- **Syādvāda** (Relativity of Truth): Qualifying statements with ‘maybe’ (syāt) to avoid dogmatism.
- **Parasparopagraho jīvānām**² (Interdependence): Recognizing all life forms as interconnected.

3. Role in Liberation (Mokṣa)

3.1 Karma Eradication

- **Righteousness** (Dharma) dissolves karma by aligning the soul with cosmic truth.
- **Ethical conduct** (Śīla) prevents new karma through disciplined actions and dissolves the existing karma.

¹ Tattvārtha Sūtra, Ācārya Umaswati, That Which Is.N. Tania. Harper Collins Publication.

² Tattvārtha Sūtra, Ācārya Umaswati, 5/21, Vivechana of Pt. Sukhlal Singhavi.

3.2 Three Jewels Synergy

Liberation requires harmonizing:

1. **Right Faith** (Samyak darśana): Belief in Jain teachings.
2. **Right Knowledge** (Samyak Jñāna): Understanding Anekāntavāda and karma.
3. **Right Conduct** (Samyak cāritra): Practicing vows and austerities¹.

3.3 Hierarchy of Virtues

Non-violence supersedes all other vows. For example, truth is secondary if it causes harm.

3.3 Relationship between Dharma and Śīla

| Aspect | Dharma (Righteousness) | Śīla (Ethical Conduct) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Scope | Universal principle and inner virtue | Practical rules and behaviors |
| Focus | Being (intent, attitude) | Doing (actions, discipline) |
| Role in Liberation | Foundation for spiritual growth | Means to achieve liberation |

3.4 Comparative Analysis

- Kantian Ethics²: Shares emphasis on duty and universal law but lacks Jainism's metaphysical framework.
- Virtue Ethics: Aligns with Jain focus on character but prioritizes ascetic practices.

4. Discussion: Synergy of Theory and Practice

Jainism bridges the gap between abstract ethics and lived experience:

1. Righteousness as Guidance: Dharma provides the 'why' of ethics-aligning with cosmic truth.
2. Conduct as Implementation: Śīla provides 'how' - practices like fasting, meditation, and non-violence.

¹ Tattvārtha Sūtra, 2011, Acharya Umaswati, Ed Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Printers, Deharadun.

² Sacred book of the East, pg 47, Lec 5, lesson 4, Herman Jacobi, Motilal Banarasidas 1964, Varanasi.

3. Holistic Progress: Inner virtue and outer discipline together eradicate karma and advance the soul.¹

Thus, **Ethical conduct**, is an outward expression of righteousness. Śīla means either samyam, control with its 18000 subdivisions, or it consists of 1. The five great vows, 2 .the three guptis, 3. the restraint of the senses, 4. The avoidance of sin (Kaṣāya). Ethical conduct is how an individual actualizes righteousness in daily life, purifies the soul, and progresses towards liberation.²

Ethics, in both Western and Jain traditions, seeks to harmonize individual and universal good. Jain philosophy uniquely unifies righteousness (dharma) as the cosmic ideal and ethical conduct (Śīla) as its tangible expression. This synergy offers a path to spiritual liberation while addressing practical moral challenges, making Jain ethics a timeless framework for holistic living.

5. Modern Relevance

Shaping Personality

- **Moral Integrity:** Practicing Ahimsā and satya cultivates empathy, reducing aggression and dishonesty.
- **Resilience:** Ascetic practices like fasting build self-discipline, aiding stress management.
- **Social Harmony:** Anekāntavāda resolves conflicts by fostering respect for diverse viewpoints.

Contemporary Applications

- **Environmental Ethics:** Aparigraha promotes sustainable living by rejecting consumerism.
- **Leadership:** Jain vows inspire ethical governance, prioritizing public welfare over personal gain.
- **Mental Health:** Meditation reduces anxiety by aligning actions with cosmic order.

¹ The Jaina Path of Purification. Jaini, P. S. (1979), University of California Press.

² An Introduction to Jain Sadhana, Dr. Sagarmal Jain, Parshvanath Vidhyapith, Varanasi.

Summum Bonum of Life: The Supreme Good

The summum bonum-Latin for ‘the highest good’ - is a foundational concept in ethics and philosophy, representing the ultimate end or purpose that human conduct should aim for. Across traditions, it serves as the guiding principle for framing moral rules and making life choices.

Philosophical Perspectives on Summum Bonum

- **Western Philosophy:**
- **Aristotle** identified the highest good is the realization of the soul’s activity in accordance with excellence (virtue) over a complete life. This is expressed as living a rational life-engaging in ‘theoria,’ or the unimpeded contemplation and discovery of truth. Happiness (eudaimonia) results from this virtuous activity, which harmonizes reason and the other parts of the soul, making individual and social well-being compatible.¹
- **Utilitarians** like Bentham and Mill equated it to ‘the greatest happiness of the greatest number,’ focusing on maximizing collective pleasure and minimizing pain.²
- **Kant** saw the summum bonum as the union of virtue and happiness, where actions are performed out of respect for moral law, not just for consequences or inclinations.³
- **Stoicism** defined it as living virtuously and in harmony with nature, leading to a deeper, stable form of happiness (eudaimonia) rooted in self-mastery and moral excellence.⁴
- **Indian Philosophy:**
- Indian traditions distinguish between Preyas (short-term pleasure) and sreyaś (long-term, true good). Śreyaś is associated with lasting happiness, growth, and spiritual fulfillment, while preyas is linked to fleeting pleasures⁵.

¹ Outlines of the History of Ethics, 1906, Henry Sidgwick, Macmillan London.

² Ibid.

³ History of Philosophy, 2019, Frank Thilly, p.443, Prestige Publishers.

⁴ The Stoic Concept of Summum Bonum : The Stoic North Star, Brechen MacRae, Aug 13, 2023. (Online article).

⁵ Jaina Ethics, 1968, Dayānanda Bhārgava, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi.

- The ultimate goal (summum bonum) is often identified as mokṣa (liberation), transcending both worldly pleasure and pain.
- **Jainism** emphasizes (spiritual upliftment) Śreyas over Preyas (worldly well-being), advocating for a life of self-control, inner calm, and transcendence beyond mere virtue and vice.

Happiness, Misery, and the Nature of Good

While people pursue various ends-wealth, knowledge, fame-these are generally means to a deeper end: happiness or the removal of misery. However, happiness is not simply the accumulation of external goods; it is fundamentally a state of inner poise and self-mastery, often described as bliss or beatitude. This inner state cannot be bought or externally imposed and is sometimes defined negatively as the absence of pain.

There is a happiness which comes from within and not from without, which is more commonly known as ‘bliss’ or ‘beatitude’. Sometimes this state is explained in negative terms as absence of pain. In fact, this state is inexplicable in words. The two ends of worldly happiness and spiritual bliss are termed as Preyas and Śreyas, respectively.

Preyas vs. Śreyas: Worldly vs. Spiritual Good

| Concept | Meaning | Focus | Outcome |
|---------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Preyas | Short-term pleasure | Immediate gratification | Often leads to later problems |
| Śreyas | Long-term, true good (beneficial) | Lasting happiness, growth | True fulfillment, liberation |

Choosing shreyas over preyas is seen as the wiser path, leading to genuine happiness and personal growth. Indian philosophies encourage balancing but ultimately prioritize shreyas for a meaningful life.¹

Jainism’s View: Transcending Good and Bad

Jain ethics places the highest value on spiritual progress, suggesting that both virtue and vice are ultimately bonds to the material world. The ideal is a state of self-absorption and inner awakening, transcending dualities of good and bad. However, for

¹ Katha Upanishad, Harikrisnadas Goyanka, 2017, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.

most people, virtuous conduct remains essential as a preparatory stage for higher spiritual attainment.¹

The summum bonum of life is not merely the pursuit of external goods or transient pleasures, but the attainment of a higher, lasting state of happiness often described as spiritual bliss, self-realization, or liberation. While traditions vary in their definitions and emphases, they converge on the idea that true fulfillment comes from within, through virtue, wisdom, and self-mastery, rather than from the accumulation of material possessions or fleeting pleasures.



¹ Jaina Ethics, 1968, Dr. Dayanand Bhargava, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi.



CHAPTER 6

**Psycho, Social, Emotional and
Spiritual Aspects of
Personality Development**



Chapter 6

Psycho, Social, Emotional and Spiritual Aspects of Personality Development

6.1 Psychological Aspects and Stability

Introduction: A stable inner life is a cornerstone of healthy personality development. Both ancient spiritual traditions and modern psychology have long examined how one cultivates internal stability – a mind unperturbed by tumultuous emotions and firmly anchored in ethical clarity. Psychological stability refers to the ability to maintain internal equilibrium amidst external fluctuations. It includes emotional regulation, cognitive clarity, and an integrated sense of self. A central concept in both ancient Jain psychology and modern clinical psychology is the management of *kaṣāyas* - inner passions such as anger, pride, deceit, and greed - which disrupt mental stability.

This chapter bridges insights from Indian spiritual literature – including Jain scriptures (*Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *Bhagavatī Sūtra*) and Hindu yogic texts (the *Bhagavad Gītā* and Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*) – with key psychological theories from Freud, Jung, Maslow, William James, and Daniel Goleman. We will explore how practices of introspection, detachment, mindfulness, and ethical conduct contribute to inner equilibrium. In doing so, we undertake a comparative analysis of pivotal concepts – emotional regulation, self-awareness, *apramāda* (heedfulness, vigilance), and equanimity – as understood across these spiritual and psychological frameworks. The goal is to illustrate that, despite differing languages and contexts, there is a convergent understanding of how an individual can achieve a tranquil and resilient psyche.

Kaṣāya Management and Mental Equanimity: A Jain Perspective through the Lens of Ācārāṅga Sūtra

Ancient Indian wisdom traditions, particularly Jainism, uphold equanimity (*sāmya*, *śamata*) and vigilant self-restraint (*saṁyama*, *apramāda*) as the very foundation of spiritual ascent. The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, the earliest canonical text of the Śvetāmbara Jain tradition, proclaims unequivocally: “*Samahiṃ dhammam āhu loge*”¹ – Equanimity (*samāhi* = *samāyika*) is called religion by the wise.

¹ *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*, 29/58, H. Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, SBE 45189.

Here samāhi/samāyika is the Jain vow and practice of positional equanimity¹ (≈ 48-minute meditation period) taken daily by householders and monks. The couplet is an exhortation: real religion is the steady, passion-free mind. Ācārya Haribhadra reinforces this trajectory, declaring that unwavering cultivation of samabhāva unfailingly culminates in liberation-whatever one's sect, school, or creed.

This is not mere moral instruction, but a psychological directive appeals to establish an unshakeable inner center during worldly turbulence.² Equanimity here is not passivity but dynamic stability: the soul's natural, uncorrupted state, radiant with Ananta-jñāna (knowledge), Ananta-darśana (perception), Ananta-sukha and Ananta-vīrya.

Psychological Stability and the Inner Battlefield

In modern terms, psychological stability refers to the capacity to retain internal harmony despite external disturbances. It involves:

- Emotional regulation
- Cognitive clarity
- A stable, integrated sense of self

| Kaṣāya | Meaning | Effect on Mind |
|--------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Krodha | Anger | Agitation, Reactivity |
| Māna | Pride | Arrogance, inflexibility |
| Māyā | Deceit | Manipulativeness, inauthenticity |
| Lobha | Greed | Craving, possessiveness |

In Jain thought, kaṣāyas-anger (krodha), pride (māna), deceit (māyā), and greed (lobha)-are viewed not merely as emotional reactions, but as deep-seated tendencies that bind the soul by attracting karmic matter. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, one of the oldest Jain canonical texts, emphasizes vigilant awareness (apramāda) and restraint (saṁyama) as antidotes to these defilements.

¹ Śoḍaśaka, 2014, Ācārya Haribhadra, N. R. Banerjee, B. L. Institute of Indology, Delhi.

² Daśavaikālika-sūtra, 6.9, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

“Vigiñca kohe avikampamāṇe, iṃ niruddvāyumaṃ sampehāe ...”¹

The Chūrṇikāra² and Vṛttikāra,³ commenting on this sūtra, explain it thus: “Because our lifespan is limited, we must exercise discriminating insight with regard to anger.”

The Bhāṣyakāra, however, does not link the term ‘niruddvāyumaṃ’ with lifespan but with anger itself. He therefore takes the sūtra to mean: “Realise that the duration of an outburst of anger is brief and, on that basis, examine and master it.”⁴

Anger is not eternal; it is a fleeting impulse, and even a momentary human being can control it by keeping his emotions under vigilant scrutiny.

The Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya, its authoritative commentary, introduces the term ‘ayana’⁵ in this context. While ‘ayana’ literally means path or direction, here it refers to the inner psychological channels or patterns through which passions arise and perpetuate bondage.⁶ These ayanas act as conduits for karmic influx when left unchecked, aligning kaṣāya not just with momentary passions, but with habitual cognitive-behavioral circuits.

“Je gunē se multhāṇe” teaches that every experience of sensual pleasure (gunē) instantly becomes the mūla-sthāna, the taproot of fresh attachment: the delight itself germinates future bondage. Conversely, “je multhāṇe se gunē”⁷ warns that passions already rooted in the soul (kaṣāya-anger, pride, deceit, greed) drive one to re-engage the senses and harvest yet more pleasure, thereby thickening the cycle. Together, the two halves describe a self-reinforcing loop in which gratification breeds attachment and latent attachment spurs the search for new gratification, locking the jīva ever more tightly into saṃsāra.

Managing Each Kaṣāya through Jain Practices

In the Daśavaikālika Sūtra, each kaṣāya is met with a counter-practice aimed at closing its corresponding passions:

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 4/34, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga Chūrṇi p.147, edited by Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

³ Ācārāṅga Vṛtti-patra 190-191, Jaina Āgama-Series, Śrī Mahāvīra Jaina Vidyālaya, Mumbai.

⁴ Ācārāṅga and Mahāvīra p.49, Dr. Sādhvī Śubhrayāśā, 2001, Jain Visva Bharati, Ladnun.

⁵ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

⁶ Ācārāṅga and Mahāvīra, Dr. Sādhvī Śubhrayāśā, 2001, Jain Visva Bharati, Ladnun.

⁷ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2/1/63, 1995, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

| Kaṣāya | Meaning | Corresponding Practice | Purpose |
|--------|---------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Krodha | Anger | Kṣamā (Forgiveness) | Disrupts reactivity |
| Māna | Pride | Vinaya (Humility) | Weakens ego pathway |
| Māyā | Deceit | Ārjava (Straightforwardness) | Builds congruence |
| Lobha | Greed | Aparigraha (non-possession) | Erodes clinging |

One should subdue anger with tranquility, conceit with humbleness, deceit with simplicity and greed with contentment.¹

Each practice is not just a virtue, but a method of intercepting and collapsing the corresponding passion, thus halting the karmic flow.

“Wrong belief, non-restraint, negligence, passions, and activities are the causes of bondage.”²

Jainism views the passions-anger (krodha), pride (māna), deceit (māyā), and greed (lobha)-not merely as fleeting emotions but as deeply ingrained tendencies that bind the soul to saṃsāra through karmic accumulation. Effective spiritual progress demands not suppression, but transformation of these passions through a systematic regimen of introspective and behavioral disciplines.

The Ācārāṅga’s Prescription: Silence, Stillness, and Self-Mastery

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the earliest Śvetāmbara Jain text, prescribes a transformative path that transcends ritual formalism and external austerity. Its core message is clear: without conquering the inner disturbances of the mind, no outward penance holds true spiritual value. The Sūtra outlines a fourfold inner discipline:

- Mauna (inner and outer silence), to still the constant mental chatter and cultivate receptivity.
- Dhyāna (meditation), to observe and dissolve defiling mental patterns.
- Apramāda (unceasing vigilance), to guard against unconscious lapses and preserve moral clarity.
- Saṃyama (restraint), not just of the body, but of speech, thought, and impulse.

¹ Daśavaikālika Sūtra, Ārya Sayyambhava, tr. Kastur Chand Lalwani. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973.

² Tattvārthasūtra, Ācārya Umaswati, That Which Is. N. Tania. Harper Collins Publication.

- Bhāvanā and svādhyāya weaken latent passions, reducing the compulsion to hunt new pleasures.

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra emphasizes mental control through restraint:

“The worthy one abstains from passions, overcomes delusions, and becomes steady like a rock amidst storms.”¹

The monk is urged to become like a dry log that does not catch fire-untouched by provocations, unburned by passions. The analogy implies non-reactivity as spiritual strength-not indifference, but freedom from compulsive response.

“Na hi teṇa tapena tappae jo kaṣāeṇa tappae.”

Indeed, one does not perform true penance who is tormented by passion.

Se vanta kohaṃ ca māṇaṃ ca māyaṃ ca lobhaṃ caeyaṃ pasagassa dāṃsaṇaṃ uvaraya-satthassa pāliyanta-kārassa āyaṇaṃ sagaḍabbhī

“One who has flung away anger, pride, deceit and greed—such is the vision taught by the Seer who has sheathed every weapon of violence, broken every chain and proceeds unhampered on the path.”

A true aspirant first cuts off the four root-passions-anger (krodha), pride (māna), deceit (māyā), and greed (lobha). Only when these inner fires are extinguished can he or she live the ethic of ahimsā in its fullest sense, harming no being in thought, word, or deed. This is precisely the path taught by an all-knowing, all-seeing Tīrthaṅkara (sarvajña-sarvadarśī):

1. Saṃvara – blocking the inflow of new karma. Restraint and vigilance stop fresh karmic matter from attaching to the soul.
2. Nirjarā – annihilating the karma already bound. With no new karmas entering, planned austerities and equanimity can ‘burn off’ the old stock until nothing remains.

When inflow is halted and backlog exhausted, the soul sheds every vestige of bondage and attains kevala-jñāna-infinite knowledge, perception, bliss, and energy.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.2.1.5, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Thus, in a single verse, the sūtra ties the psychology of passion-abandonment to the metaphysics of non-violence and karmic extinction: halt fresh karma, shatter old chains, and the soul moves forward free.

This verse clarifies that authentic asceticism is not defined by physical hardship but by mental purification and emotional mastery. The mere act of fasting, wandering, or enduring discomfort is hollow if anger, ego, or greed continues to dominate the inner life. In this light, kaṣāya management stands at the very centre of the Jain spiritual project: once the inflow of karmic ‘glue’ is stopped, the existing layers can be burned away. True penance is a cooling of the soul, a return to its native luminosity, not the mere heating of the body.

Practically, the verse serves as a litmus test for monks and lay-seekers alike: if the four passions persist, one’s tapas has yet to reach its mark; if they are steadily cooling, the wheel of bondage is already losing its grip.

Daily Applications: Transforming Passion into Equanimity-an Integrated Guide

Genuine passion-management begins with humility: the aspirant willingly submits to a mentor hierarchy so that ego cannot distort judgment. From this deference flows irrevocable vows-non-negotiable commitments that seal every avenue through which mental turbulence normally escapes. Right conduct, rooted in these vows, is three-fold: (1) restraining all censurable movements of mind, speech, and body; (2) weakening and finally destroying every passionate impulse; and (3) cultivating non-attachment and inner purity.¹

Right faith then inspires the right knowledge, which must in turn translate into faultless daily behavior. To protect that behavior, one must engineer the environment: practice digital minimalism, adopt mindful eating, schedule deliberate downtime, “drawing in the senses like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs.”² As the scriptures put it “As a tortoise withdraws its limbs within its own body, so the valiant withdraws his mind (and the senses) from all sins; this is the true heroism.” Discipline should move from heroic bursts to relentless routine; small, steady austerities-such as a weekly fast from media or non-essential purchases-slowly bleed the passions dry.

¹ Aspects of Jaina Religion, 1990, Dr. Vilas A. Sangave Bharatiya Vidhyapith, Delhi

² Sūtrakṛtāṅga Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Woven together-deference to mentors, vigilance over vows, controlled surroundings, and unbroken incremental effort-these strands create the scaffolding of moral strength on which enduring self-mastery rests. To disarm the passions, Jainism prescribes daily practices that methodically build self-awareness and moral resilience:

- **Pratikramaṇa** (confession-cum-introspection) reviews every action, word, and thought, identifies where passions flared, and neutralizes their karmic seed through repentance and resolve.
- **Sāmāyika**, the vow of equanimity, is practiced stabilizing the mind and weaken emotional impulsivity. It nurtures mental neutrality in the face of praise or blame, gain or loss.
- **Dhyāna**, or focused meditation, helps refine inner perception, revealing the subtlest forms of pride, attachment, or aversion, and empowering the practitioner to dissolve them consciously. Dhyāna (focused meditation) – Jain canon classifies meditation into four distinct modes:

1. **Artadhyāna** (sorrow-laden, anxious brooding),
2. **Raudradhyāna** (wrathful, cruel scheming),
3. **Dharmadhyāna** (virtuous, doctrinal reflection), and
4. **Śukladhyāna** (Supremely pure contemplation).

The first two are inauspicious and deepen bondage; only Dharmadhyāna and Śukladhyāna purify karma and advance the soul toward liberation.¹

- **Vratas** (minor and major vows) create a behavioural fence, reducing the opportunities for new karma to bind.

These four are the operational heart of daily practice; they correspond to the canonical six Āvaśyaka rites observed morning and evening by Śvetāmbaras-sāmāyika, chauviśattho, vandanā, pratikramaṇa, kāyotsarga, and pratyākhyāna-and already supply a twice-daily rhythm of restraint, reflection, and recommitment.

¹ Tattvārthasūtra 9.30-9.36, Ācārya Umaswati, Vijay Jain , Vikalp Printers, Dehradun.

Enriching Supplements

- **Svādhyāya** (scriptural study) Couples right faith with right knowledge, refreshing doctrinal memory each day. Traditionally paired with dhyāna as the twin ‘mental austerities’ (tapa).¹
- **Anuprekṣā** (twelve contemplations) - Systematic reflections-on impermanence, solitude of the soul, inevitability of karma, etc.-keep the mind disenchanted with sense-objects and alert to subtle passions.²
- **Poshadha** days-observed fortnightly or monthly-extend lay practice toward near-monastic rigour, combining fasting, silence, and intensified study.
- The **eleven pratimā** stages offer householders a graduated ladder: each rung tightens diet, speech, and possession limits, steadily shifting the centre of gravity from indulgence toward equanimity.³
- **Sallekhanā** (the terminal fast) crowns the ladder. When death is imminent or faculties fail, it compresses renunciation, austerity, and equanimity into a final karmic purge, severing the last bonds without fresh passion or fear.⁴

Psychodynamics of Passion Management

In both doctrinal and psychological terms, kaṣāyas are obstacles to freedom-internal distortions that bind perception, cloud judgment, and perpetuate suffering. Jainism does not demonise emotion; it transmutes it through silence (mauna), vigilance (apramāda), reflection (anuprekṣā), and restraint (saṃyama). True penance is therefore a cooling of the soul, a return to its natural luminosity, not the mere heating of the body.

Moments of upaśama-temporary subsidence of passion-attest that the deluding karma can and does lift; they are the clarity flashes in which the self-glimpses, reality “as a cloud part to reveal the sun.” If such pauses are stabilised by the practices above, the aspirant enters kṣayopaśama, a combined attrition and subsidence of karma. Saṃvara (blocking new inflow) and nirjarā (burning off old stock) then proceed in tandem until

¹ Tattvārthasūtra, Ācārya Umaswati, That Which Is. N. Tania. Harper Collins Publication.

² Ratnakaraṇḍa-śrāvaka-cāra, 1926, Ācārya Samantabhadra, d. Jugal Kiśor Mukhtār. Manikacandra Digambara Jaina Granthamālā 24. Bombay.

³ Śaḍdarśanasamgraha; Haribhadrāsūr, Ed. M. K. Jain. New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 3rd ed., 1989.

⁴ Ācārāṅga II.15; H. Jacobi, Jaina Sūtras, SBE 45189.

the ledger is erased and the four infinitudes of the soul-ananta-jñāna, ananta-darśana, ananta-sukha, ananta-vīrya-shine forth.

“One whose anger, pride, deceit, and greed are but faint traces; whose mind is serene; who restrains his own soul and is steadfast in yoga; who pursues austerity, speaks with measured words, is calm, and has the senses well-subdued endowed with all these disciplines, that person is transformed into the Padma (lotus) leśyā.” - Describes the sage whose anger, pride, deceit and greed are ‘minimal,’ leading to an undisturbed mind.¹

One Integrated Routine (illustrative)

| Time of day | Practice | Function |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Dawn | Sāmāyika → Svādhyāya → <i>One anuprekṣā</i> | Establish equilibrium, feed right knowledge, set perspective. |
| Work hours | Mind-speech-body gupti; digital minimalism as modern samiti | Maintain behavioral restraint amid stimuli. |
| Dusk | Pratikramaṇa → Kāyotsarga (relaxed self-awareness) | Audit the day, repent, release bodily tension. |
| Weekly | Minor fast, vrata renewal, extended dhyāna | Deep-clean latent passions. |
| Fortnightly / Monthly | Poshadha day in partial silence | Near-monastic reset. |
| Lifecycle | Gradual ascent of the pratimā; sallekhanā when life nears its close | Long-range karmic strategy. |

Freedom is not bestowed; it is engineered-one restrained impulse, one reflective pause, one humbled decision at a time. The Jain path supplies an integrated behavioral technology that turns raw passion into stable equanimity, cools the soul to its native radiance, and clears the way for the unimpeded blossoming of knowledge, perception, bliss, and energy.

Awakening through Inner Discipline

Thus, the calmness born of conquering the kaṣāyas is not an end in itself, but a precondition for liberation. Such calmness empowers the soul to:

¹ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra. Jaina Sūtras. Part II. The Sacred Books of the East, vol. 45, Tr. By Herman Jacobi edited by F. Max Müller, Clarendon Press, 1895, pp.194-95.

- Make deliberate moral efforts (puruṣārtha)
- Employ conscious awareness (upayoga)
- Act independently of karmic impulses (karma-upādhi)

This is the path the Ācārāṅga lays before us-not of escapism, but of radical presence, unflinching awareness, and inner sovereignty. It is a path that leads not only to peace but to awakening.¹

In the Bhagavatī Sūtra (1.9), Tirthankara Mahāvīra declares that the intrinsic nature and ultimate goal of the soul is equanimity (sāmyabhava)-a state of perfect inner balance and harmony². In this context, equanimity is not a passive neutrality but an awakened consciousness, one that is free from mental flickering, agitation, and emotional disturbances. It is a condition in which the mind is profoundly pacified, anchored in clarity and freedom from reactivity.

To attain such a state, Jain philosophy elevates apramāda-heedfulness or vigilant awareness-as a central ethical and spiritual virtue. Apramāda literally means the absence of negligence; it denotes an unrelenting attentiveness to the present moment. As described by some interpreters of Mahāvīra’s teachings, it is “continuous, breakless, choiceless awareness-the awareness of all time throughout”. Unlike situational or selective attentiveness, apramāda is all-encompassing: it embraces every thought, every emotion, and every action with undiminished presence and responsibility.

For both ascetics and lay followers, apramāda is the gateway to spiritual steadiness. It demands ongoing introspection - a form of inner watchfulness that guards against distraction, carelessness, or unconscious impulses. This constant vigilance stabilizes the mind, preventing it from being swayed by external circumstances or internal emotional surges. In doing so, it nurtures a steadfastness of purpose that is essential for progress on the path to liberation (mokṣa).

“This very instant is the present moment of the gross body. Therefore, the one who probes for even the tiniest fissures (chidranveṣī) remains perpetually vigilant (apramatta).

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1.4.2–3, trans. Hermann Jacobi, in *Jaina Sūtras, Part I, Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 22, ed. F. Max Müller.

² Mahāvīra: His Life and Teachings, Acharya Mahāprajña, trans. N. Kumar, Ladnun, Jain Vishva Bharati, (2002), 61.

Having roused himself to pursue the discipline that leads to liberation, the seeker must on no account lapse into heedlessness (pramāda).”¹

Ultimately, in the Jain framework, equanimity is not achieved through detachment alone, but through a cultivated discipline of awareness-a life lived with precision, restraint, and clarity of intent. Apramāda is thus not only a spiritual safeguard but a dynamic tool of transformation, ensuring that the soul remains aligned with its true nature: calm, conscious, and free.

Equanimity across Indian Wisdom Traditions

Equanimity-the poised and unwavering steadiness of mind-is a foundational ideal in multiple Indian philosophical systems. While differing in metaphysical orientation, Jainism, Vedānta, Yoga, and the Gītā tradition all converge on the principle that true liberation is impossible without inner balance.

The Bhagavad Gītā defines samatva-equanimity-as the essence of Yoga. “Samatvam yoga ucyate”² – “Equanimity is called Yoga.”

Krishna urges the seeker to act with full commitment to dharma but to relinquish attachment to the results:

“Steadfast in Yoga, O Arjuna, perform your duty. Abandon all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is Yoga.”

Here, equanimity is not apathy or withdrawal from life-it is a deliberate discipline of inner detachment. The Gītā warns that those obsessed with the results of their actions live in constant anxiety. In contrast, vairāgya (detachment) leads to spiritual awareness and serenity. The ideal of the sthita-prajña-the person of steady wisdom-is one who is unshaken by pleasure or pain, gain or loss, victory or defeat.³ This archetype bears a striking resemblance to the Jain muni described in the Ācārāṅga Sūtra, who is samatvadarśī “The one who sees with the lens of equanimity” and ātmadarśī “The one who beholds the Self (ātmadarśī) is freed from death.”⁴

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Ācārya Ātmarāmjī Mahārāj2005, ed. Muni Phulchandra.

² Bhagavad Gītā,2.48, Vyāsa., the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Translated by Radhakrishnan 1948.

³ Bhagavad Gītā 2.56. Vyāsa.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Bhāṣyam 3.36, 2005, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Vishva Bhāratī Ladnun.

Patañjali's Yoga Sūtras: Dispassion and Mental Discipline

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali offer a step-by-step psychological framework for cultivating equanimity. Patañjali identifies two core methods to achieve citta-vṛtti-nirodha (cessation of mental fluctuations):

“Abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyām tan-nirodhaḥ”¹ – “Through sustained practice and dispassion, the mind is stilled.”

- **Abhyāsa** (persistent practice) builds concentration and resilience.
- **Vairāgya** (non-attachment) prevents the mind from becoming agitated by cravings or aversions.

Moreover, Patañjali prescribes a social-emotional strategy to stabilize emotions:

“Maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇāṁ sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayāṇāṁ bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam”

“Through the deliberate cultivation (bhāvanātaḥ) of

- Friendliness (maitrī) toward the happy (sukha-viṣayāḥ),
- Compassion (karuṇā) toward the suffering (duḥkha-viṣayāḥ),
- Appreciative joy (muditā) toward the meritorious (puṇya-viṣayāḥ), and
- Equanimity (upekṣā) toward the unmeritorious (apuṇya-viṣayāḥ),

The mind (citta) becomes clear, calm, and pleasant (prasādanam).”

When these four brahma-vihāras (‘sublime abodes’) are consciously cultivated, they purify and steady the mind. Patañjali prescribes them as an immediately available, ethical means to inner tranquillity, making the mind fit for deeper concentration and insight. This implies that equanimity is not only an inward stance but also an interpersonal ethic-responding to others without envy, anger, or judgment. These practices are not theoretical ideals but methods of emotional self-regulation with practical benefits: reduced reactivity, enhanced clarity, and deeper concentration.

¹ Yoga-sūtra of Patañjali, 1.12

Advaita Vedānta: Knowledge as Equanimity

In Advaita Vedānta, equanimity arises from the realization that the world is impermanent, and the Self (ātman) is eternal. The Vivekachūdāmaṇi asserts:

“He alone is wise who remains undisturbed amidst the dualities of life.”¹

This wisdom leads to śānti (peace) and titikṣā (forbearance), culminating in jñāna (knowledge) that dissolves all distinctions. The jīvanmukta, or liberated person, acts without ego or desire, rooted in the knowledge that Brahman alone is real.

Jainism: Equanimity as the Soul’s Nature

In Jainism, samyaktva (right vision) begins with the recognition that equanimity (sāmyabhāva) is the soul’s natural state. As declared by Mahāvīra in Bhagavatī Sūtra², equanimity is the goal and essence of spiritual life. The ideal Jain sage is one who has conquered kaṣāyas (passions), maintains apramāda (vigilant awareness), and remains centered through daily practices such as sāmāyika (equanimity vow), dhyāna, and pratikramaṇa.

Even for householders, Jain dharma prescribes the cultivation of four noble dispositions (bhāvanās) to foster internal purity and right conduct in social life. These are:

- Maitrī – benevolent friendliness toward all living beings, arising from the understanding of the interconnectedness of all souls.
- Karuṇā – deep compassion toward those who are afflicted, motivated not by pity but by the desire to reduce the karmic suffering of others.
- Pramoda – genuine joy and reverence for the virtues and spiritual progress of others, free from jealousy or competitiveness.
- Mādhyasthya– neutrality or equanimous detachment toward those engaged in harmful acts, maintaining non-reactivity without harboring anger or contempt.

¹ Vivekachūdāmaṇi, Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Translated by Swami Madhavananda. 10th ed. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2022.

² Bhagavatī Sūtra, 1.9, 1990, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

As per Samāyika Path of Achārya Amitagati's:

Sattveṣu maitrīm guṇiṣu pramodam kliṣṭeṣu jīveṣu kṛpā-paratvam | mādhyastha-
bhāvaṃ viparīta-vṛttau sadā mamātmā vidadhātu deva || 1||¹

“O Lord, may my soul ever abide in:

- Friendliness toward all living beings,
- Joyful appreciation of the virtues in the worthy,
- Compassionate concern for those who suffer, and
- Equanimity toward those whose conduct opposes my own.

This single verse encapsulates the four universal attitudes (maitrī, pramoda, karuṇā, mādhyasthya) that Jain ethics urges one to contemplate repeatedly as a daily discipline. They are not mere emotions but cultivated attitudes that align with right vision (samyagdarśana) and promote the reduction of kaṣāyas (passions). By practicing these dispositions consistently, the lay practitioner gradually weakens attachments and aversions, laying the foundation for śuddhopayoga-the pure state of soul-awareness essential for liberation.

In this way, Jainism emphasizes that spiritual equanimity is accessible and necessary at all levels of practice, not just for ascetics but also for those living in the world, engaged in family and society.

These teachings suggest that equanimity is not accidental but rather the result of consistent effort.

Psychological Perspectives on Inner Equilibrium

Inner equilibrium refers to a state of psychological balance, emotional stability, and a sense of wholeness within the self. Achieving such an inner balance has been a central concern for many psychologists and theorists, though each approach it from different angles. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, Carl Jung's analytical psychology, Abraham Maslow's humanistic perspective, William James's philosophical psychology, and Daniel Goleman's concept of emotional intelligence all shed light on how inner stability and psychological wholeness can be understood.

¹ Bhāvanā-Dvātrīṃśikā, Ācārya Amitagati Sūri, Hindi/Gujarati commentary, Āhmedābād: Gurjar Granth Ratna Kāryālaya, 1935.

Freud: The Psychoanalytic View of Balance

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory was one of the first frameworks to address inner equilibrium in the psyche. Freud proposed that the mind is structured into three parts - id, ego, and superego which exist in dynamic tension, constantly vying for satisfaction or control.¹ The id represents primal drives seeking immediate gratification, the superego embodies internalized moral codes and ideals, and the ego mediates between them according to the reality principle. Inner equilibrium, in Freud's view, is achieved when these three components are in balance, allowing the individual to meet instinctual needs in socially acceptable ways. As Freud wrote in *The Ego and the Id*, the ego "serves three severe masters: the external world, the superego, and the id."²

Although Freud was skeptical of religious systems, the outcome he aimed for in therapy - a strong, well-functioning ego that harmonizes the competing demands of instinct and morality - mirrors the spiritual notion of equanimity. It reflects an internal governor capable of sustaining psychological balance amid the tensions between primal desires and ethical standards.

When the ego buckles under the id's raw urges or the superego's stern verdicts, psychic tension surfaces as anxiety or neurosis. Freud saw psychoanalysis as a means to shore up the ego, enabling it to referee these rival forces and restore internal equilibrium. In his own blunt formulation, the aim was simply to swap 'neurotic misery' for 'common unhappiness.'³

Jung: Individuation and Wholeness

Carl Jung diverged from Freud by emphasizing not just the ego's mediation but the integration of the entire psyche. Jung believed that the human psyche contains unconscious elements such as the shadow (the repressed aspects of the personality) and archetypes like the anima (the unconscious feminine side of a man) and animus (the unconscious masculine side of a woman).⁴ In *Psychological Types* and other

¹ Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. Translated by Joan Riviere, W.W. Norton & Company, 1962.

² Freud, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. Translated by Joan Riviere, edited by James Strachey, Vol.19 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Hogarth Press, 1923. p. 56.

³ Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* 348.

⁴ Jung, Carl Gustav. *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Translated by R.F.C. Hull, Princeton University Press, 1981.

works, Jung defined individuation as the process of integrating these unconscious elements into consciousness to become a unified and balanced personality.

Jung drew openly on Eastern contemplative disciplines, noting that meditation and yoga still the ego's chatter and reveal unconscious material, thereby accelerating individuation. The fully individuated Self-his central archetype-mirrors the spiritual ideal of an enlightened soul: a stable inner axis that is calm, integrated, and resilient rather than split by inner conflict.

Equilibrium, in Jungian terms, arises only when the person becomes '*in-dividual*,' literally undivided. The Self symbolizes this wholeness, achieved by transcending narrow ego-identification and embracing the psyche's totality. As Jung puts it, "Individuation means becoming a single, homogeneous being, and, insofar as 'individuality' embraces our innermost, last, and incomparable uniqueness, it also implies becoming one's own self."¹

In short, Jungian equilibrium is the fruit of conscious integration: the psyche ceases its civil war and stands as a coherent, self-possessed whole.

Maslow: Needs, Self-Actualization, and Inner Stability

Maslow's research shows that people who reach self-actualization exhibit three unmistakable markers of psychological balance: serenity, acceptance, and harmony, (Maslow 153).² For Maslow, this stage is not merely a higher rung on the needs ladder; it is a state of radical self-acceptance. Such individuals:

- Know themselves clearly – they are candid about their motives and emotions.
- Regulate themselves gracefully – they can absorb failure without collapse and meet success without arrogance.
- Live by intrinsic values – decisions are steered by ethics and purpose rather than by deficits or social pressure.

These traits parallel what many contemplative traditions label equanimity or detachment: an unshakable calm grounded in self-knowledge. Maslow described self-actualized people as possessing 'a democratic character structure,' high autonomy,

¹ Carl Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* 173, Translated by R.F.C. Hull, Princeton University Press, 1966.

² Maslow, Abraham H. *Motivation and Personality*. Harper & Row, 1954.

and an unwavering moral compass. Inner stability, in his view, emerges when a person is no longer driven by unmet needs but by the full expression of their capabilities. Hence his conclusion that the self-actualized are “more integrated, more at peace with and the world.”¹

William James: The Divided Self and Unification

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James contrasts the ‘healthy-minded’ personality with the ‘sick soul,’ the latter beset by inner division and despair (pp. 137–140). He argues that genuine psychic harmony is usually recovered through a transformative experience-most dramatically in conversions-that “shifts the centre of personal energy toward harmony and away from discord”.² (p. 161)

For James, equilibrium is not merely the absence of conflict. It is the positive presence of a self that is integrated, receptive, and willingly surrendered to a reality larger than egoic control. Such surrender-whether overtly religious or secular-produces enduring changes in character marked by tranquility, coherence, and what he calls “a stable sense of self and peace.” (p. 265)

Goleman: Emotional Intelligence and Regulation

Daniel Goleman’s model of emotional intelligence (EI)³ reframes inner balance in contemporary psychological terms. In *Emotional Intelligence* he defines five core capacities - **self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill**-that together determine how well a person can monitor inner states and modulate them under pressure.

Goleman stresses that EI is trainable. Mindfulness practice, in particular, sharpens self-awareness and builds the impulse-control circuitry the brain needs for resilience. Neuroimaging studies summarized in Goleman & Davidson’s *Altered Traits* show that as little as 30 hours of mindfulness-based stress-reduction diminishes amygdala reactivity and strengthens pre-frontal regulation-physiological markers of emotional steadiness. Thus, for Goleman, inner equilibrium is both a psychological and physiological achievement, rooted in reflective awareness and

¹ Maslow, *toward a Psychology of Being* 216.

² James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, p. New York: Longmans, Green & Co, 1902.

³ Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books, 1995.

disciplined self-management that mirrors the equanimity long prized in spiritual traditions.

Goleman's popularization of these concepts aligns with age-old spiritual counsel. For example, mindfulness meditation – a practice Goleman has written about extensively – is known to enhance emotional self-awareness and impulse control. In fact, Goleman explicitly ties meditation to cultivating equanimity and well-being. He notes that the “steady and patient practice of mindfulness meditation can give us the present of emotional regulation, the light and wise art of managing our heart-mind.” This is essentially a scientific endorsement of *apramāda* and *dhyāna* (meditation) as tools for psychological resilience.

Synthesis

Across the major theories we have surveyed, a common thread emerges:

- **Freud** – ego strength.
- **Jung** – individuation.
- **Maslow** – self-actualization.
- **James** – transformative unification.
- **Goleman** – emotional self-regulation.

All converge on a single principle: authentic balance arises when the mind is integrated, self-aware, and guided from within rather than driven by unmet needs or external pressures.

Introspection and Self-Awareness

A key theme uniting both classical Indian traditions and modern psychology is the centrality of introspection for cultivating inner stability. Introspection-the disciplined observation of one's thoughts, emotions, and impulses-forms the foundation of self-awareness and self-mastery. In Jainism, this principle is deeply embedded in a set of contemplative practices aimed at ethical refinement and detachment from passions.

Jain teachers have long emphasized the directive to “perceive the soul through the soul,”¹ encouraging deep inward concentration to access one’s true nature, free from sensory distraction.

‘Appaṇam appaṇe pekkhae’ - “the soul must be perceived by the soul.”² Ācārya Haribhadra, for example, asserts that authentic spirituality lies in realizing one’s essential self and eradicating inner defilements like attachment and anger. Such introspective purification lays the groundwork for equanimity (samatva).³

This is operationalized through core practices such as Samāyika (equanimous meditation), Pratikramaṇa (ethical reflection and repentance), Swādhyāya (scriptural self-study), Ālochanā (confession of faults), Kāyotsarga (disidentification from the body), and Dhyāna (meditative concentration). Each practice engages the individual in active self-observation and inner reconditioning. Psychologically, they correspond to emotion regulation, cognitive reframing, and identity deconstruction-concepts echoed in contemporary therapeutic modalities.

In Samāyika, practitioners withdraw from reactive tendencies, fostering neutrality and balance. Pratikramaṇa enables catharsis and cognitive correction by confronting daily moral lapses. Swādhyāya reinforces ethical clarity and self-understanding, aligning one’s mindset with long-term spiritual values. Ālochanā cultivates humility through honest disclosure. Kāyotsarga encourages detachment from bodily sensations, strengthening non-reactivity. Dhyāna synthesizes these into sustained inner focus, leading to serenity and insight.

This framework resonates with other Indian traditions as well. The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali stress svādhyāya (self-study) and īśvarapraṇidhāna (surrender to higher awareness) as crucial for calming the mind.⁴ The Gītā speaks of attentional training:

¹ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra, Ācārya Chandana, Sanmati Gyanpeeth, Agra.

² Ācārāṅga-sūtra. 1.6.4. Āyāro (Ācārāṅga) Sūtra: The First Aṅga Āgama of the Jainas. Ed. & trans. Hermann Jacobi, Sacred Books of the East, vol. 22, Clarendon Press, 1884.

³ Yoga-dṛṣṭi-samuccaya. vv. 44-46, Haribhadra Sūri, Critical ed. Muni Jambūvijaya, Jīvarāja Jaina Granthamālā, 1968; English tr. Christopher Chapple in *Three Jain Texts on Yoga*, Harvard Oriental Series 61, Harvard UP, 2003, pp. 126-28.

⁴ Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali.

“Wherever the mind wanders... lead it back and rest it in the Self,”¹ teaching that inner peace arises from constant inner redirection and disidentification from transient thoughts.

Western psychology has, in recent decades, converged on similar insights. William James considered introspection foundational to psychological inquiry and described the ‘paradise of inward tranquility’ that arises through sincere inner examination. Freud institutionalized this through free association—a form of guided introspection aimed at illuminating unconscious motives and strengthening ego control. Jung’s active imagination went further, engaging with archetypal content through introspective dialogue to restore psychic balance.

Humanistic psychology elevated introspection as a route to authenticity. Maslow observed that self-actualizing individuals displayed a rare capacity for honest self-reflection and recalibration, which empowered them to live in accordance with their deepest values. Goleman’s framework of emotional intelligence placed self-awareness at its core: the ability to monitor one’s internal landscape without judgment and to regulate reactions effectively.

Neuroscience now substantiates this ancient insight: mindfulness and introspection reliably engage the brain’s regulatory hubs—the pre-frontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex²—blunting amygdala reactivity and promoting measured emotional responses.³ This dovetails with the Jain principle of *apramāda* (unceasing vigilance), which keeps impulsive passions from hijacking awareness; when anger or desire is observed at its onset, its grip loosens.

Across cultures and centuries, a consensus emerges: introspective self-awareness is the indispensable first step toward inner equilibrium. By shedding light on the mind’s subtle workings, it enables detachment, resilience, and integration—whether cultivated through the structured disciplines of Jainism and Yoga or through the reflective methods of modern psychology.

¹ The Bhagavad Gītā. 6.26, Tr. by Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, 2007.

² How Does Mindfulness Meditation Work? Proposing Mechanisms of Action from a Conceptual and Neural Perspective, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, vol. 6, no. 6, 2011, pp. 537-59, Hölzel, Britta K., et al.

³ Effect of Mindful-Attention and Compassion Meditation Training on Amygdala Response to Emotional Stimuli, *PLOS ONE*, vol. 7, no. 8, 2012, e44413., Desbordes, Olivier, et al.

Core Jain practices that operationalize introspection

| Discipline cluster | Key practices | Psychological function |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Ethical & cognitive refinement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pratikramaṇa – systematic review, confession, and repentance of daily lapses • Svādhyāya – scriptural self-study for ethical clarity • Alochanā – candid disclosure of faults | Emotion regulation through moral accountability; cognitive reframing of motives; cultivation of humility |
| Concentration & detachment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samāyika – periodic practice of equanimous stillness • Kāyotsarga – ‘releasing the body, ’ i.e., dis-identification from bodily sensations • Dhyāna – sustained meditative absorption | Training non-reactivity; strengthening attentional control; deepening insight into the impermanent nature of mental states |

As outlined above, the classical theories-whether phrased as ego strength, individuation, self-actualization, transformative unification, or emotional self-regulation-all point to the same architecture of balance. The Jain and yogic disciplines provide the practical means of cultivating it.

Detachment and Emotional Regulation

Detachment (non-attachment) is the corollary to introspection: it is the attitude one cultivates toward the contents of awareness. Detachment does not mean indifference or lack of care; but the disciplined refusal to cling to passing thoughts, pleasures, pains, or outcomes. It is the corollary of introspection-while introspection turns inward to observe; detachment refine our relationship to what is observed. Jainism extols this ideal as central to spiritual maturity. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra states:

“Nāhaṃ, na me, na mamāya”¹ – “Not I, not mine, not for me.”

This declaration encapsulates the non-identification that detachment demands relinquishing the ego’s hold over objects, emotions, or identity.

In spiritual traditions, detachment is praised as a supreme virtue for achieving steadiness of mind. The Uttarādhyayana Sūtra advises, “Seek refuge in the attitude of detachment and you will amass the wealth of spiritual awareness.”² By letting go of excessive attachment, one paradoxically feels more internally rich and secure. In Jainism, this detachment is cultivated through upayoga-attentive yet non-attached awareness. The aspirant is taught to perceive without possession, to act without appropriation. As the Sūtra commands:

“Na ceva piṇḍaṃ pariggaṇheyavvaṃ, na ceva piṇḍaṃ abhinanditavvaṃ”

“One should neither covet food nor delight in it.”³

Such restraint applies to all experiences-material or emotional. It teaches that clinging, even subtly, seeds future agitation and karmic bondage (*āsrava*).

The Ācārāṅga adds:

“Je bhikkhū samāhiyā, saṃjamā, uvasamamāṇā... na tesu kaṣāyā pavattanti.”⁴

“Those monks who are disciplined, restrained, and tranquil... for them, passions no longer arise.” “Remaining balanced in success and failure” is called Yoga in the Gītā⁵ and such balance is exactly what psychologists mean by an emotionally regulated temperament. Modern translations of the Gītā emphasize that a person who renounces the fruits of action avoids the anxiety that plagues those fixated on results. Free from that anxiety, the individual can focus with a calm mind on the task at hand and accept whatever comes. This mindset is strikingly like the ‘challenge attitude’ that resilience researchers in psychology say helps people cope with stress: an orientation of doing one’s best but accepting uncertainty about outcomes.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra I.2.1, in Hermann Jacobi, trans., *Jaina Sūtras, Part II* (SBE 45; Oxford: Clarendon, 1895), 5.

² Uttarādhyayana Sūtra, 9.34, in Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras, Part II*, 73.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.6.1.4, ed. Muni Punyavijaya 214

⁴ Śīlāṅka. Ācārāṅga-Bhāṣya, Patrank 231, Edited by Muni Jinavijaya, vol. 1, Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha, 1966.

⁵ Bhagavad-Gītā 2.48, Tr. by Eknath Easwaran, Nilgiri Press, 2007.

In psychological terms, detachment can be likened to cognitive distancing or reappraisal – the capacity to step back from one’s immediate emotions or desires and view them with some objectivity. Freud might describe a detached person as having a well-developed ego that is not enslaved by the id’s cravings. Jungian psychology might call it identifying with the Self rather than the ego – seeing one’s problems and desires from a higher plane, which naturally reduces overreaction. Daniel Goleman’s self-regulation competence involves what he calls ‘metacognitive awareness’ of emotions – the metacognitive capacity to notice a feeling (e.g., anger), but not let it drive behavior.

Crucially, detachment is not suppression. Eastern texts and Western psychology both warn that suppressing emotions or desires can backfire, leading to inner conflict or neurosis. The ideal is to acknowledge feelings but not be ruled by them. The Jain and yogic tradition handle this by cultivating an attitude of witness-like detachment – observing sensations or longings rise and fall without grabbing onto them. Buddhism explicitly teaches that clinging to pleasant feelings or self-centered desires is the root of suffering, and that letting go (*Vairāgya*) leads to freedom. Modern therapies like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy¹ (ACT) echo this wisdom: one learns to accept the presence of certain thoughts or feelings (e.g. anxiety) without attaching significance or judgment to them, thereby robbing them of their power to disturb. This is a psychotherapeutic form of detachment that yields emotional stability. We see here a direct parallel to the Jain notion of *upayoga* (judicious use of consciousness) – to recognize a passion arising but remain unattached to it, thereby preventing it from causing ‘*āsrava*’ (karmic influx) that would unsettle the soul.²

Studies on impulse control show the same logic as spiritual detachment. In the ‘marshmallow test,’ children who picture the treat abstractly—or shift attention elsewhere—delay gratification and later display lower stress and greater stability. Adults use similar re-framing tactics, treating setbacks as lessons to stay calm. All these techniques echo the *Gītā*’s advice to act without clinging to outcomes: enlarging one’s viewpoint dissolves the bait of immediate gain or loss, keeping the mind steady.

¹ Acceptance and Commitment Therapy: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change. 2nd ed., Guilford Press, 2011, Hayes, Steven C., Kirk D. Strosahl, and Kelly G. Wilson.

² *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*., Acharya Chandanaji, Sanmati Gyanpeeth, Agra.

The fruits of detachment, both spiritually and psychologically, are a lasting reduction in emotional volatility. A detached person experiences emotions fully but is not owned by them. In Jain terms, they have subsided the passions (kaṣaya) so that even if anger or greed arises, it is mild and brief like a line drawn on water, leaving no trace of agitation.¹ “Never be swept away by the eddies of a mercurial mind ...”², capturing the same ideal of unshakable poise.

Modern research confirms the description. In lab tests, veteran meditators startled by sudden blasts showed virtually no amygdala surge and kept heart rate and cortisol flat—physiological proof of equanimity³ (Davidson and Goleman 33). Psychology would tag such a profile, low neuroticism, high emotion regulation.

Thus, detachment forms the bridge between self-awareness and samatva: one recognises inner currents yet refuses to let them steer behaviour. Far from cold withdrawal, it is ‘luminous awareness’ freed from craving-water gliding off a lotus leaf, touched by the world but never bound to it.

Ācārāṅga succinctly reminds:

“Esa dhammo suhasāe”⁴ - “This is the religion of the serene.”

Mindfulness (Apramāda) and Vigilant Calm

Detachment cannot survive without **apramāda**—continuous, non-judgemental awareness of mind, speech, and body. “Never be swept away by the eddies of a mercurial mind,” Mahāvīra warns; maintain the vigilance you vowed at renunciation. The classic Jain repentance litany reinforces this watchfulness:

*Khamemi savva jīve, savve jīvā khamantu me; maittī me savva-bhūesu, veram majjha na kenai.⁵

May I forgive all beings, may all beings forgive me; may I bear friendship to every creature, enmity to none.

¹ Yoga-drṣṭi-samuccaya, Verse 26, Acharya Haribhadra, Ahmedabad: L. D. Institute, 1989.

² Gender and Salvation. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991, Jaini, Padmanabh S.

³ Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body. New York: Avery, 2017, Davidson, Richard J., and Daniel Goleman.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, Prākṛit Mūla tathā Hindī Tīppanī. Edited by Muni Punyavijay and Muni Lalitkumar, 2nd ed., vol. 1, Āgam Prakashan Samiti, Beawar, 2003, p. 3.

⁵ Iryāpathikī Sūtra gāthā 7 and Pratikramaṇ Sūtra.

Neuroscience now confirms apramāda's power: mindfulness practice strengthens pre-frontal and anterior-cingulate circuits while damping amygdala reactivity, producing calmer affect and faster recovery from stress.¹ Daniel Goleman calls the result 'flow'—total absorption without egoic static, simultaneously effective and serene.²

In Jainism, apramāda is ceaseless watchfulness over thought, speech, and deed; it underwrites every other virtue, because what is unseen cannot be mastered. The Uttarādhyayana Sūtra lists sloth and carelessness as obstacles to right knowledge, cured only by this alertness, and praises the monk who 'walks, stands, sits, sleeps, eats, and speaks mindfully' and so 'binds no evil karma.'

Jayam care jayam ciṭṭhe, jayamāse jayam sae,

Jayam bhunjanto bhāsanto, pāvam kammam na bandhai.³

Pāli Buddhism calls the same quality appamāda; Yoga treats it as steady attention (dhāraṇā–dhyāna).

Modern science echoes tradition. Mindfulness-based programs such as Kabat-Zinn's MBSR reliably cut anxiety and damp emotional reactivity; neuro-imaging shows strengthened pre-frontal control and quieter amygdalae in long-term meditators (Hölzel et al. 544). Daniel Goleman summarizes focused breath practice 'restores equanimity' by engaging the parasympathetic nervous system (Insights at the Edge, 2017).

Goleman's emotional-intelligence model splits this vigilance into self-awareness (noticing feelings) and self-regulation (shaping response); Jain thought treats them as inseparable—the practitioner sees anger rise, recalls ahimsā, and lets it pass without expression. Thus, apramāda links knowing oneself to shaping oneself, gradually loosening karmic knots and yielding samatva-calm, clear, centred living. Liberation, on this path, is not a flash of insight but the patient, mindful dismantling of distraction.

¹ How Does Mindfulness Meditation Work? Hölzel, Britta K., et al.

² Emotional Intelligence (New York: Bantam, 1995), 87-88, Goleman, Daniel.

³ Dasavaikālika-sūtra 4.8 (parallels Sāmaṇ-suttam 395) Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

Equanimity and Emotional Balance

Equanimity (*samatva*) is the summit of the inner work sketched so far. Defined as steady composure amid pain or pleasure, it is neither indifference nor lethargy, but a cultivated ‘disposition of psychological stability.’ Every tradition surveyed prizes this state: it is the sign of the liberated soul in Jainism, the *sthita-prajña* in the *Gītā*,¹ and one of the four *brahmavihāras*² (sublime states) in Buddhism. In modern terms, it amounts to mature emotional balance—the capacity to meet praise or blame without being swept into extremes.

How Jain practice secures equanimity

Jain texts insist that *samatva* rests on three pillars:

1. Vigilant awareness (*apramāda*) – the continuous noticing of mental movements.
2. Ethical conduct (*samyak cāritra*) – the five great vows that keep conscience clear.
3. Self-restraint (*saṃyama*) – daily disciplines such as *pratikramaṇa* (moral review), *sāmāyika* (periods of equanimous stillness), and interior austerities (*tapa*).

Together these practices let a monk watch anger, pride, or greed arise and pass without reaction. Over time, this watchfulness yields *sthirtā*—a stable, delusion-free mind that the *Ācārāṅga* calls ‘the very essence of religion.’³

Psychological parallel

Contemporary psychology names the same skill emotion regulation: perceiving inner agitation and choosing a measured, non-violent response. Longitudinal studies show that people who live by clear ethical standards—non-violence, honesty, non-stealing, chastity, non-possessiveness—report lower guilt and anxiety, suggesting that morality itself quiets the mind. Thus, ethics is not mere rule-keeping but a practical stabiliser of affect.

Equanimity is the fruit of self-awareness, detachment, mindfulness, and ethics. It does not suppress emotion; it transforms the individual’s relationship to emotion, granting the fearlessness of one who stands on firm moral ground and sees each mental wave without drowning in it.

¹ Bhagavad-Gītā. Verse 2.56, Vyāsa., the Commentary of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Translated by Radhakrishnan 1948.

² Nyanaponika Thera. The Four Sublime States: Contemplations on Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity. Buddhist Publication Society, 1994. (section IV, “Equanimity (*Upekkhā*).”)

³ *Ācārāṅga Vṛtti-patra* 181, Edited by Muni Jinavijaya, vol. 1, Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha, 1966.

Tolerance (Kṣamā / Titikṣā) in Personality Development: A Jain Perspective from Ācārāṅga

1. Emotional Aspect in Jainism: Centering Tolerance

In Jain thought, tolerance is not passive endurance, but a cultivated, conscious response rooted in deep self-awareness and non-violence (ahimsā). It is a central emotional discipline that tempers reaction to pain, provocation, and differing worldviews-critical for emotional maturity and personality development.

The sahiṣṇu sādḥaka (tolerant spiritual aspirant) accepts dharma and, through this acceptance, experiences the soul and its true nature. One who experiences beyond the senses alone can experience true bliss (sukha).¹ Whoever tolerates without attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa) can free themselves from the whirlpool of worldly illusion (lok-alok), sensory illusion (prapañca), and karmic bondage. This is not merely ethical idealism; it is a psychospiritual method for emotional transcendence and lasting peace.

2. Ācārāṅga Sūtra and Emotional Endurance:

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, the earliest canonical text of the Śvetāmbara Jain tradition, is rich with verses on forbearance, restraint, and self-discipline. Mahāvīra's life, as depicted here, becomes the embodiment of tolerance in action, even under extreme adversity.

Key Verses and Their Significance “I say the Arhats sustain their lives in circumspection. Enduring cold and heat, they bear pleasure and pain, uncaring for the body, steady of mind.”² Tolerance is not merely physical endurance, but a stable emotional posture toward suffering. This illustrates titikṣā-patience with the pairs of opposites (dvandvas) like pleasure/pain and heat/cold. “Being struck, he does not shake; being abused, he does not respond. This is the conduct of the Sage.”³ Here, emotional non-retaliation is the highest form of tolerance. The spiritually evolved person becomes unshaken-demonstrating emotional regulation, a foundational quality in personality development today. “He bears pain inflicted by others, without

¹ Ācārāṅga and Mahāvīra, pg 88, Dr. Sādhvī Śubhrayāśā, 2001, Jain Visva Bharati, Ladnun.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra I.2.1.1, trans. Hermann Jacobi.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra I.8.3.4–5, trans. Hermann Jacobi.

resentment or complaint, knowing that the self is separate from the body.”¹ This reflects the Jain psychospiritual framework-tolerance arises from the knowledge of self as soul (jīva), not the body or ego. It offers a pathway for emotional detachment without emotional indifference.

3. Tolerance as a Trait in Jain Personality Theory:

In Jain ethics, the ideal personality (e.g., muni or śramaṇa) is forged through restraint and reflection. Tolerance functions as:

- A regulator of impulses (manonigraha)
- A detoxifier of kṣāyas (passions), especially anger (krodha) and pride (māna)
- A manifestation of right conduct (samyak-cāritra)

As Ācārya Haribhadra writes: “He who bears pain caused by others without retaliation, truly understands the essence of religion.”²

“**esa samiṃā-pariyāe viyāhie**”³ “He is declared to be samiṃa-pariyaya.” A monk who endures hardship without violence or complaint is said to have samiṃa-Pariyāya-that is, he “moves in the right (samiṃa) and tranquil (pariyāya) course.” In other words, he has fully grasped the true path of equanimous asceticism.

4. Modern Interpretation: Emotional Intelligence and Jain Tolerance From a psychological lens, tolerance in Jainism aligns with emotional intelligence, especially:

- **Self-regulation:** Mahāvīra’s teachings advocate remaining composed even under intense provocation.
- **Empathy:** Practicing forbearance because one sees all beings as souls (ātmaupamya-bhāva). “One should not react even when insulted, for every being is bound by karma.”⁴ An insight that shifts the focus from the aggressor’s act to the underlying karmic chain, reinforcing composure and compassion.

5. Educational Implication: Building the Tolerant Self In the context of personality development, Jainism advocates:

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra I.2.3.1, trans. Hermann Jacobi.

² Śaddarśana Samuccaya, verse 84, Ācārya Haribhadra Sūri, ed. & trans. J. Glasener (Ahmedabad: L. B. Institute, 1989), 112.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra.5/2/152, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Sūtra I.4.2.5, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

| Jain Concept | Modern Equivalent | Developmental Outcome |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Kṣamā (forgiveness) | Emotional regulation | Resilience, non-reactivity |
| Titikṣā (forbearance) | Tolerance to discomfort/uncertainty | Mental stability, stress coping |
| Ahiṃsā (non-violence) | Compassion and empathy | Reduced aggression, moral clarity |

Conclusion

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra presents kṣamā–titikṣā as a transformative discipline that transmutes raw reactivity into spiritual strength. By depicting Mahāvīra as the archetypal sahiṣṇu sādḥaka-serenely absorbing abuse and pain¹ - the text models a program of personality development where disciplined forbearance blossoms into resilience, patient equanimity, and eventual release from karmic bondage. Such traits remain cornerstones of contemporary psychological and educational discourse.

“So muni sahiyāṇaṃ dukkhāṇaṃ na vibhañjeyā” – “The monk bears pains without breaking (his resolve).” (Āyāro 1.5.2.3)

“Na veraṃ karoti, na veraṃ patthesi” – “He neither harms nor intends harm.” (Āyāro 1.4.1.1)

These verses present tolerance as active resilience: the aspirant remains unmoved by hurt and refuses retaliation, reinforcing self-mastery and outward harmony.

The ideal sahiṣṇu sādḥaka (tolerant seeker) epitomises this synthesis: through enduring provocations without attachment (rāga) or aversion (dveṣa), he loosens karmic bonds and experiences the soul’s innate serenity.

Jain philosopher Ācārya Haribhadra crystallises the liberating payoff:

“Je samabhāvaṃ āṇadi, so mokkhaṃ āṇadi” – “One who attains equanimity attains liberation.”²

Here, samabhāva (equanimity) is both fruit and foundation: it crowns the triad of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct, while simultaneously sustaining them.

¹ Āyāro 1.5.2.3; 1.4.1.1, Ācārāṅga Bhāṣya, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Visva Bharati, Ladnun.

² Śāstravārtāsamuccaya 770, Ācārya Haribhadra, ed. & trans. J. Glasener (Ahmedabad: L. B. Institute, 1989), 112.

Thus, ethical conduct works as a training ground for psychological stability. By refusing to harm or deceive, the practitioner rehearses the very skills—mindful awareness, detachment, and self-control—that calm inner turbulence and create durable equilibrium.

From a **personality-development** lens:

- Resilience & Non-reactivity → forged by disciplined bearing of dvandvas (heat/cold, praise/blame).
- Emotional Stability → cultivated by recognising the separateness of jīva from bodily sensations.
- Prosocial Behaviour → grounded in ahimsā, converting inner steadiness into outward non-harm.

Modern psychology prizes similar qualities—conscientiousness, reliability, benevolence, and underscoring that ethical composure is the scaffolding of stable personality. Jainism thus offers a time-tested curriculum where self-awareness, detachment, and self-control co-evolve:

Equanimity is not the extinction of feeling; it is the refinement of feeling—compassion remains, possessiveness dissolves, and action arises from clarity, not compulsion.

In practical terms, cultivating kṣamā equips individuals and learners to navigate stress, pluralism, and moral complexity without surrendering to aggression or apathy. The Ācārāṅga vision therefore remains sharply relevant: a life of steady awareness, restrained conduct, and unwavering peace, attuned to both personal well-being and social harmony.

6.2 (Social Aspects-Acceptance of now) Personality as a Social Construct

1. Relational Foundations of Personality

Personality is never forged in a vacuum. Contemporary social psychology demonstrates that personal character unfolds inside relationships. From birth onward every attitude, value, and habit are negotiated within networks of kin, peers, institutions, and the larger culture. Erik Erikson's life-span theory illustrates this truth: each developmental stage poses social crises—learning to trust, cultivating autonomy,

forming identity-that are resolved only in dialogue with others.¹ Neuroscience corroborates the point: neural circuits for self-control and empathy mature most robustly within caring relational environments, not in isolation.² Modern identity research accordingly describes the self as ‘co-constructed’ through reciprocal perception, feedback, and shared norms.³

The Jain canon anticipated this relational insight more than two millennia ago. The Ācārāṅga Sūtra, first of the Jain Āgamas, opens by portraying the ideal mendicant as one who “moves without hurting the world, without harming beings - with friendliness and equanimity.”⁴ This theme reverberates through the wider canon. Sūtrakṛtāṅga exhorts ascetics to “live for the benefit of both himself and the whole world.”⁵ Uttarādhyayana reminds householders that “all creatures are mutually dependent; no one lives alone.”⁶ Daśavaikālika equates right conduct with “guarding the welfare of self and others.”⁷ Systematic treatises echo the principle: Tattvārtha Sūtra defines compassion (dayā) toward every being as the litmus of genuine faith,⁸ while the Bhagavatī Sūtra explains saṁyama as restraining any act that could disturb another’s life-breath.⁹

Taken together, these passages articulate an ethic of radical interdependence: personality is inseparable from conduct calibrated to universal well-being. The remainder of this chapter demonstrates how non-violence (ahimsā), mindfulness (apramāda), non-possessiveness (aparigraha), and self-restraint (saṁyama)-virtues lauded throughout Jain scripture-cultivate the prosocial dispositions that contemporary psychology recognises as foundations of healthy personality.

By reading Ācārāṅga in conversation with Erikson’s psychosocial stages, Daniel Goleman’s emotional-intelligence model, and contemporary stress-buffering research,

¹ Childhood and Society. 2nd ed., W. W. Norton, 1993, p. 238, Erik Erikson.

² Prosocial Behavior and Well-Being, Social and Personality Psychology Compass, vol. 14, no. 12, 2020, p. 4, Keltner, Dacher, and Jason Marsh, editors.

³ Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, vol. 55, no. 1, 2000, p. 70. Self-Determination Theory, Ryan, Richard M. and Edward L. Deci.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.1.1.4, trans. Hermann Jacobi in *Jaina Sūtras*, Sacred Books of the East 22 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1884), 6.

⁵ Sūtrakṛtāṅga 1.11.23, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁶ Uttarādhyayana 6.5, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁷ Daśavaikālika 4.8, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁸ Tattvārtha Sūtra, Ācārya Umaswati, That Which Is. N. Tanti. Harper Collins Publication.

⁹ Bhagavatī Sūtra, 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

the chapter will show how ethical conduct functions simultaneously as the fruit of inner stability and its most reliable guarantor: living gently nurtures equanimity, and equanimity, in turn, makes gentle living sustainable.

2. Jain Textual Foundation-Walking Gently in the World

Ācārāṅga opens with Mahāvīra's directive that the ideal mendicant "moves without hurting the world, without harming beings... with friendliness and equanimity."¹ Ahimsā is therefore not merely a private virtue; it is an interpersonal posture that shapes the ascetic's entire mode of being. By treating every encounter as morally consequential, the monk cultivates a reflexive awareness of interdependence. The scripture thus links self-realisation with compassionate action: non-violence is both evidence and engine of spiritual maturity.

- **Parasparopagraha** - Radical reciprocity. The maxim *parasparopagraho jīvānām*² ('living beings support one another,') underlies the mendicant's vigilance. Each foot-step is weighed for its ripple effect on the full hierarchy of life, from five-sensed humans to one-sensed plants and micro-organisms. Moral merit (*puṇya*) is therefore relational, not merely an interior state; harming another accrues *pāpa* that veils one's own soul.
- **Maitrī and Ātmopamyabhāva** - Affective orientation. *Maitrī* (universal friendliness) joined with *ātmopamyabhāva* ('seeing others as oneself,' same-as-self empathy) gives Jain social presence its distinctive tone. The aim is not passive non-interference but active benevolence: the practitioner radiates goodwill while remaining inwardly balanced, and, in doing so, anticipates the later doctrinal ideal of *śukla-dhyāna* (the fourth and purest stage of Jain meditation). *Śukla-dhyāna* is possible only when the passions (*kaṣāyas*) are utterly pacified and the meditator sees no distinction between self and other-a state precisely cultivated by continuous *maitrī* and *ātmopamyabhāva*. Thus, the social practice of extending same-as-self empathy prepares the psychological ground for the non-dual, crystal-clear concentration that texts like *Tattvārtha Sūtra*³ and *Niyamasāra*⁴ describe as *śukla-dhyāna*.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra. Attributed to Ganadhara Sudharmasvāmin. Translated by Hermann Jacobi, in *Jaina Sūtras*, vol. 1, Motilal Banarsidass, 2011, 1.2.3, p. 9.

² *Tattvārtha Sūtra* (*Tattvārthādhigama-Sūtra*). By Ācārya Umāsvāti/Umāswāmī. Tr by Nathmal Tatia, Jain Publishing, 1994, 5.21, p. 119.

³ *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 9.40, Vijay K. Jain, Vikalp Pinters, Deharadun

⁴ *Niyamasāra* 176–180, Dr. Jayantilal Jain.

Commentarial tradition reinforces these insights. Haribhadra's Śoḍaśaka glosses *yathā-sthitam saṃyamam* ('restraint grounded in one's station')¹ as *saṅgha-suhṛt-bhāva* – actively nurturing heartfelt welfare for the entire saṅgha of living beings. Earlier, Ācārya Abhayadeva's (11th c.) 's Ācārāṅga-Bhāṣya ties genuine *ātmopamyabhāva* to daily mindfulness of six life-forms;² Hemacandra's *Yogaśāstra* links *maitrī* directly to purification leading to *śukla-dhyāna*.³

Across centuries the ācāryas present social mindfulness (*apramatta-yoga*) as a dual instrument: it blocks fresh karmic influx and simultaneously polishes the soul's innate luminosity.

3. Prosocial Behavior and Empathy: Scripture Meets Science

Social psychology labels such conduct 'prosocial' - voluntary acts intended to benefit others. Meta-analyses confirm that habitual helpers report higher life satisfaction, lower depression, and greater meaning.⁴ Neurobiologically, such conduct stimulates the brain's reward circuitry (e.g., oxytocin and dopamine release), while sociologically it builds social capital-networks of trust and reciprocity that buffer stress and amplify well-being.⁵

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra offers an ancient charter for this prosocial stance. Immediately after its opening on non-harm, it explains:

"All beings are fond of life; they like pleasure and dislike pain... Therefore, one should not injure any creature, however small."

"Savve pāṇā pia-ūyā suhasātā dukkha-paḍikūlā apiya-vaddhā piya-jīviṇo jīvitukāmā; savvesiṃ jīvittaṃ piyaṃ"⁶

This empathic observation supplies the cognitive root of altruism: recognising that every organism prefers happiness over suffering. It establishes the empirical premise behind empathy: everyone values his own welfare. The same *uddēśaka* directs the

¹ Śoḍaśaka 52, Ācārya Haribhadra Sūri, ed. & trans. J. Glasener (Ahmedabad: L. B. Institute, 1989), 112.

² Abhayadeva Sūri. Ācārāṅga-Bhāṣya. Edited by Amritlal P. Shah, L.D. Institute, 1964, p. 112.

³ Hemacandra. *Yogaśāstra*. Translated by Olle Qvarnström, Harvard UP, 2005, 2.45.

⁴ Prosocial Behavior and Well-Being, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 14, no. 12, 2020, pp. 7–8, Keltner, Dacher, and Jason Marsh, editors.

⁵ Prosocial Behavior and Well-Being, *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 14, no. 12, 2020, pp.10-11, Keltner, Dacher, and Jason Marsh, editors.

⁶ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, pg 51,2/3/78 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

mendicant to “wander speaking words that are sweet, true, and beneficial, gladdening all beings,”¹ framing prosocial speech as a daily discipline. Later still, Ācārāṅga depicts “pāṇā pipāsāe ... samaṇo kamaṇḍalum appaṇaṁ osiṅkai”² the ideal ascetic who, seeing thirsty animals, “sets down his own water-pot so that they may drink.” Such vignettes translate compassion into concrete, measurable acts-exactly the ‘kindness behaviours’ tracked in contemporary prosociality studies. Tu-aṁ si ṇaṁ taṁ cheva³, This formulation makes the equivalence between self and other explicit, transforming the original expression (tumam si nam tam chev) into a concise proclamation of radical empathy at the heart of Jain ethics.

Even the famed discipline of careful walking⁴ illustrates micro-level prosocial vigilance: each foot-fall is placed so as not to harm insects and seeds. “āyā tule payāsu ... jaha appaṇa na pīyaṁ dukkhaṁ, taha parassa”⁵ “Just as pain is unpleasant to you, so it is to the other.” (classic ātma-upamā bhāva). It encapsulates the same ethic in poetic form, reminding the practitioner to extend to others the care one instinctively gives one’s own life-essence. “Parasparopagraho jīvānām”⁶ - “Souls exist through mutual support.” Ācārya Pūjyapāda’s Sarvārthasiddhi gloss upagraha as four kinds of aid: instrumental, material, essential, and inspirational.⁷ Every act of restraint or generosity is, therefore, a way a soul “keeps the universe running.” By anchoring ethics in ontology, these aphorisms let Jain thinkers argue that protecting ecosystems, curbing consumption, or designing humane institutions are not optional ‘values’ but requirements of reality maintenance. That frame dovetails neatly with 21st century policy language about ‘planetary boundaries’ and ‘mutualistic economies,’ giving ancient scriptures aphorisms unexpected practical bite today. Modern experiments on ‘micro-kindness’ (holding doors, yielding seats) likewise show cumulative boosts in mood and communal trust, offering empirical resonance with Jain practice.

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 2/6. 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

² Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 6/67, 2005, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 5/5/170. 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁴ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 3/2/116 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁵ Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra I.10.3 1989, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

⁶ Tattvārtha-sūtra, By Ācārya Umāsvāti/Umāswāmī. Tr by Nathmal Tatia, Jain Publishing.

⁷ Sarvārthasiddhi, Acharya Pūjyapāda, Tr by Shashi S. Jain, Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1960, p. 44.

Thus, Jain ahimsā maps neatly onto what psychologists call communal orientation - a style of interacting that centres empathy and mutual benefit. Moreover, communities that internalize this ethic generate durable trust networks. Historical evidence shows that Jain caravan merchants, bound by vows of honesty and non-harm, were trusted trading partners across India;¹ contemporary research on high-trust societies similarly records lower cortisol baselines and better public-health outcomes.²

4. Erikson's Psychosocial Stages through a Jain Lens

Erik Erikson argued that healthy personality unfolds through eight crises, each resolved in a social arena. The first two—basic trust versus mistrust, and autonomy versus shame—turn explicitly on caregivers' responsiveness. Later stages (identity vs. role confusion; intimacy vs. isolation) likewise depend on constructive social feedback. A Jain approach that continually affirms non-harming and truthfulness supplies exactly the relational conditions necessary for positive resolutions: dependable caregiving, honest feedback, and a secure moral compass that sustains intimacy without exploitation.

| Eriksonian Crisis (Age) | Core Social Requirement | Jain Ethical Parallel | Facilitated Virtue |
|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Trust vs Mistrust (Infancy) | Consistent, gentle caregiving | Ahimsā expressed as tender, non-violent nurture | Hope |
| Autonomy vs Shame (Toddler) | Respectful limits with encouragement | Apramāda (vigilant guidance) + mild saṃyama | Will |
| Initiative vs Guilt (Early Childhood) | Space to explore goals while learning consequences | Introduction to small vows (aṇuvratas) | Purpose |
| Industry vs Inferiority (School Age) | Cooperative mastery of skills | Communal study (svādhyāya) & service (seva) | Competence |
| Identity vs Role Confusion (Adolescence) | Value framework with openness | Ethical identity via ahimsā, critical thinking via anekāntavāda | Fidelity |

¹ Samvatsarī Pratikramaṇa: A Sociological Study, Manju Singh, Jain Vishva Bharati, 2018, p. 65.

² Prosocial Behavior and Well-Being, ed Keltner, Dacher, and Jason Marsh, Social and Personality Psychology Compass, vol 14, no. 12, 2020, p. 12.

| Eriksonian Crisis (Age) | Core Social Requirement | Jain Ethical Parallel | Facilitated Virtue |
|--|---|---|---------------------------|
| Intimacy vs Isolation (Young Adult) | Empathy and trust in close relations | Vegetarian ethics, truthful speech, non-possessiveness | Love |
| Generativity vs Stagnation (Mid-Life) | Mentorship and altruistic contribution | Charity, abhayadāna (giving fearlessness), community leadership | Care |
| Integrity vs Despair (Old Age) | Reflective life review within community | Pratikramaṇa (daily/annual repentance) & equanimous acceptance | Wisdom |

Erikson viewed virtues as socially negotiated. Jain practice supplies the relational conditions – compassion, honesty, disciplined freedom – that allow each crisis to resolve positively.¹

5. Goleman’s Emotional-Intelligence Model—Ethics as Self-Regulation

Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Ethics

Daniel Goleman’s five EI competencies map neatly onto Jain virtues:

1. Self-awareness → Apramāda (mindful vigilance)
2. Self-regulation → Saṃyama (restraint of anger, pride, deceit, greed)
3. Motivation → Tapas-driven diligence toward moral goals
4. Empathy → Ahimsā-rooted perspective-taking
5. Social skill → Right speech & courteous interaction²

Ācārāṅga 4.40 summarizes a three-stage practice-āpīḍana, prapīḍana, niṣpīḍana-that maps neatly onto EI growth

“Cāritra kī urvar bhūmi par hi jīvan kī viśuddhi kā paudha lahlahātā hai—aur isi ādhār par chaitanya kī ārādhana ke liye Ācārāṅga tīn bhūmikāeṃ batātā hai.”³

“Only on the fertile soil of pure conduct can the plant of life’s purity flourish; upon this foundation the Ācārāṅga sets out three platforms for the worship of consciousness.”

¹ Table adapted from Erikson, *Childhood and Society*.

² *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam, 1995, pp. 54–78, Daniel Goleman.

³ Ācārāṅga and Mahāvīra PG 210, (JVB, 2001).

Ācārāṅga further clarifies the precedence of scriptural insight over mere austerity: “Āgāya maṃsasonīe¹-jñāna-bhakti pradhāna, tapa anukūla.” - “The mind steeped in scripture is foremost; penance serves as its supportive ally.” This verse underscores that the first bhūmikā, āpīḍana, begins with reflective engagement before rigorous self-discipline.

Ācārāṅga Sūtra summarizes the progressive refinement of character (cāritra) in three steps that powerfully echo-and enrich-Goleman’s EI framework:

“Āvalīṇe pāvalīṇe nippilīṇe — jahittā puṇva-saṃjogaṃ hicchā uvasamaṃ.”²
 “First softening (āpīḍana), then realignment (prapīḍana), and finally complete pressing-out (niṣpīḍana): having cast off former entanglements, one desires only appeasement.”

Early commentators interpret these three bhūmikās as follows:

| Bhūmikā | Process | EI Parallel | Jain Virtue |
|--|---|--|--|
| Āpīḍana (“ Gentle softening ”) | Recognizing and loosening coarse passions; the soil where virtue can sprout | Self-awareness – noticing anger, pride, deceit, greed | Apramāda + beginning saṃyama |
| Prapīḍana (“ Realignment/ pressing again ”) | Actively reshaping habits toward non-harm through vows and mindful practice | Self-regulation & Motivation – disciplined redirection of impulses | Mature saṃyama + ahimsā |
| Niṣpīḍana (“ Complete pressing-out ”) | Final extrusion of subtle ego; equanimity becomes spontaneous | Empathy & Social Skill – effortless compassion and harmonious action | Ātmopamyabhāva leading to śukla-dhyāna |

Seen through Goleman’s lens, Ācārāṅga 4.40 supplies a developmental blueprint for emotional intelligence:

¹, Ācārāṅga-bhāṣyam, 2nd Śrutaskandha, 6/67, 2005, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

² Āyāro (Ācārāṅga Sūtra). p.171, Muni Nathmal (Ācārya Mahāprajña), Jain Viśva Bhāratī Institute, Ladnun, 1971.

- **Stage 1 (Āpīḍana)** corresponds to cultivating self-awareness-softening the hardened shell of unexamined emotion so that one can observe one’s inner landscape.
- **Stage 2 (Prapīḍana)** aligns with self-regulation and sustained motivation-pressing and reshaping reactive tendencies into constructive channels via vows, meditation, and conscious speech.
- **Stage 3 (Niṣpīḍana)** manifests as mature empathy and fluid social skills-with the ego’s rough edges pressed out, the practitioner moves among others “without hurting the world... with friendliness and same-as-self feeling,” exactly the high-EI profile modern research associates with transformational leadership and pro-social thriving.
- In Madhukar Muni’s Hindi ṭīkā on the Ācārāṅga, the vṛttikāra explains that the three ascetic ‘bhūmikās’ mentioned in sūtra-āpīḍana, prapīḍana, and niṣpīḍana¹-line up with the soul’s progress through the guṇasthāna as follows: Jain Literature

| Bhūmikā (practice-stage) | Core activity | Primary guṇasthāna range | Alternative summary |
|---|--|---|--|
| Āpīḍana (‘restraining / thinning’) | First 12-year span devoted to scriptural study, basic tapas, guarding the vows | 4th – 7th (Avirata- samyag-darśana to Apramatta- samyata) — the upaśama-śreṇī where passions are mainly suppressed | Soul begins systematic karmic attrition |
| Prapīḍana (‘intensely subduing’) | Next 12-year span focused on teaching juniors, extensive fasting & severe asceticism | 8th – 9th (Apūrva- karaṇa & Anivṛtti- bādar) — the early kṣapaka-śreṇī where karmas are destroyed in bulk | Breakthrough stage; new, ‘unprecedented’ purification techniques |
| Niṣpīḍana (‘crushing / final pressing’) | Final life-phase culminating in sallekhanā; continuous meditation and Kayotsarga | 10th (Sūkṣma- saṃparāya) — or, in a condensed reading, the Śaileśī (motionless) state that precedes kevalajñāna (guṇasthāna 11-14) | Only the subtlest passions remain; eradication is completed |

¹ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 4/4/143. Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

“Apūrvakaraṇādi guṇasthāneṣu karmo’pīḍanam syāt... sūkṣma-saṃparāya guṇasthāne niṣpīḍanam”¹

The commentator uses the three bhūmikās as a practical bridge between external ascetic discipline and the internal psychological milestones codified in the fourteen guṇasthāna.

Each bhūmikā marks a 12-year cycle of increasingly radical karma-shedding. Together they chart a 36-year blueprint from novice monk to the brink of omniscience, reinforcing that true progress is measured not merely by outward austerities but by the corresponding inner clearance of karma-restraint, then destruction in bulk, then the finishing touch that makes omniscience a live possibility.

Thus, Ācārāṅga’s tripartite practice can be read as an ancient Jain protocol for growing the five competencies of emotional intelligence from the inside out. Jain ethics can therefore be seen as a cultural curriculum for cultivating high-EI citizens.

6. Social Support, Stress Buffering, and Communal Harmony

From a stress-and-coping point of view, acting ethically does more than soothe the conscience-it gathers social support and reputational trust, two of the most powerful external shields against physiological stress.² Decades of research show that honest, kind people attract stronger support networks, sleep better, and recover faster from setbacks, whereas chronic liars or aggressors often become isolated, anxious, and physiologically uptight. Goleman’s field interviews add that leaders high in emotional intelligence-those who mix empathy with firm self-control-handle moral dilemmas calmly because their values and actions are already aligned. Jain vows that curb anger, pride, deceit, and greed set the same virtuous circle in motion: calm supports ethics; ethics deepen calm. When friends, colleagues, and even strangers see us practise ahimsā, they are more willing to offer help, advice, and goodwill. These supportive ties lower cortisol levels, stabilize blood-pressure, and increase immune efficiency.

¹ Ācārāṅga Śīlāṅka Tīkā, patrank 174–175., Edited by Muni Jinavijaya, vol. 1, Bhāratiya Jñānapīṭha, 1966.

² Stress, Social Support, and the Buffering Hypothesis, Psychological Bulletin 98 (1985): 310–357, Sheldon Cohen & Thomas A. Wills.

The positive loop is clear in both scripture and science:

- Ācārāṅga links cruelty and deceit to the rise of the four major passions (kaṣāya)-anger, pride, deceit, and greed. Text-tradition classifies these passions under mohaniya-karma (the deluding karma), which in turn triggers antarāya-karma, the energy-blocking karma that obstructs charity, joy, and spiritual effort. A psychological symptom of this karmic chain is persistent fear (bhaya), which unsettles the mind and erodes equanimity.
- Modern data confirm the link: people embedded in deceitful or aggressive social networks show higher sympathetic-nervous arousal, poorer immune profiles, and greater risk of chronic disease.
- Conversely, communities that institutionalize assistance-what psychology calls the buffering hypothesis-show markedly lower stress morbidity. Rituals like Samvatsari, Uttam kṣamā, the Jain day of public forgiveness, restore damaged relationships each year, keeping social capital vibrant.

In short, ahimsā creates trust; trust begets support; and support acts as a biological buffer against stress. Where non-violence is breached, hyper-vigilance and retaliatory threat take over, turning the body into a climate of chronic alarm. Jain ethics offer a public-health lesson as much as a spiritual one: kindness is not only morally right, but also physiologically protective.

7. Bidirectional Reinforcement-Stability Breeds Ethics Breeds Stability

The relationship is circular. Inner equanimity → ethical action: a mind unagitated by greed or fear resists unethical temptation. Ethical action → inner equanimity: living in concord with one's conscience prevents cognitive dissonance and guilt rumination, freeing mental bandwidth for reflection. Ancient Jain commentators expressed this elegantly: "Virtue stills the mind, and a stilled mind naturally behaves virtuously."¹ Self-determination theory echoes this bidirectional loop.²

¹ Śoḍaśaka. Verse 52. Ācārya Haribhadra, ed. & trans. J. Glasener (Ahmedabad: L. B. Institute, 1989), 112.

² Self-Determination Theory, pg. 74, Ryan, R. M. & Deci, American Psychologist (2000).

8. Practical Applications—From Monastic Ideal to Everyday Life

| Domain | Jain Principle | Psychological Parallel | Practical Technique | Expected Outcome |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Workplace leadership | Ahimsā, satya (truth) | EI ‘relationship management’ | Transparent communication, non-violent conflict resolution training | High trust, lower turnover |
| Family & parenting | ‘Friendliness to all beings’ | Attachment security research | Consistent warmth + boundary setting | Children’s emotion regulation |
| Community service | Compassionate almsgiving | Prosocial motivation studies | Volunteering schedules | Enhanced purpose, lower depression |
| Self-care | Meditative introspection | Mindfulness-based stress reduction | Daily breath-awareness | Decreased rumination, tempered reactivity |

Ahimsā-informed parenting eschews corporal punishment, opting for empathetic discipline. Longitudinal data link such approaches to stronger secure attachment and reduced externalizing disorders.¹ Schools integrating mindfulness, conflict-free communication, and service-learning replicate core Jain social values and report gains in prosocial behavior. Leaders who embody aparigraha anticipate triple-bottom-line ethics that weight people and planet alongside profit.²

8. Digital Citizenship in a Networked Age

The internet magnifies karmic feedback loops: a single intemperate tweet, repost, or screenshot can jeopardise reputational and communal capital within minutes. Jain ethics offer a calibrated compass for this velocity. First, ahimsā online demands zero tolerance for cyber-bullying, doxxing, or flaming-if a remark would harm face-to-face, it must be revised or deleted before posting. Second, satya online becomes a three-step discipline-pause, empathise, verify-echoing Ācārāṅga’s counsel

¹ Socialization in the Family, 2nd ed. (Guilford, 2015), 142-167, Joan E. Grusec & Paul Davidov.

² Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business. Capstone, 1998, p.73, John Elkington.

to practise truth oneself before correcting others. Third, *aparigraha* translates into data and attention minimalism: share responsibly, safeguard privacy, and resist algorithmic hoarding. Finally, *kṣamā* becomes a code of digital forbearance: acknowledge missteps swiftly, correct them without public shaming, and create space for mutual learning. Platforms that embed such ‘ethical design’ - robust moderation, transparent data use, community-led norms-enjoy stronger loyalty and often lower capital costs, mirroring ESG findings that high-ethics firms trade at a premium.¹

9. Comparative Synthesis and Future Directions

East and West now share a single insight: the self is relational, and ethical conduct is the richest nutrient for its growth. Western psychology supplies the empirical markers-enhanced well-being, lower cortisol, stronger communities-while Jainism enlarges the moral horizon by extending compassion to every life-form.

- **Expanding the moral circle.** The vow of *ahimsā* already enacts what many bioethicists merely recommend: empathic regard for animals, plants, and even unseen micro-organisms.
- **Research frontiers.** Future studies could test how comprehensive non-violence shifts neighbourhood trust or measure cortisol changes after communal forgiveness rites such as *Samvatsarī Pratikramaṇa*.
- **Policy integration.** Principles from Jain ecology-curbing consumption and protecting all life-can inform ESG frameworks and nudge firms to look beyond purely human stakeholders.

Conclusion – Ethical Conduct as Applied Stability

Personality stability is not a private fortress; it is a bridge of ethical ties connecting self and world. *Ācārāṅga*’s walking sage - moves without hurting the world ... with friendliness and even-mindedness-models this truth. Modern data agrees prosocial acts, fair leadership, and honest dialogue create support networks that buffer stress and anchor identity. Ethical conduct is psychological resilience in action; living kindly lifts self-esteem, lowers conflict, and makes the next ethical choice easier. Ancient teachers intuited this loop; contemporary evidence confirms it.

¹ Personal Connections in the Digital Age. 2nd ed., Polity, 2015, p. 112, Nancy K. Baym.

Practical mandate: cultivate compassion, guard truth, limit excess, and design families, schools, corporate policies, and digital norms that reward integrity. Walking this gentle path, we echo the Jain mendicant: ‘with friendliness and equanimity,’ our personalities—and the societies we build—grow steady, creative, and whole.

6.3 Āṇae Māma-gaṁ Dhammaṁ – The Disciplined Path as the Engine of Spiritual Personality-Building

1. Orientation: why ‘my Path’ matters

1.1 Reconciling Science and Spirituality

Ācārya Śrī Mahāprajña rejects the false dichotomy between laboratory science and inner science. “Whether truth is exposed by transcending the senses or by instruments that extend them, both enterprises seek the subtle,”¹ he observes, warning that the modern marketplace has commodified both - research for profit, yoga for fashion.

Yet the underlying insight remains conscious and unconscious, living and non-living, neurological and prāṇic forces cooperate in every coordinated act. The Ācārāṅga-sūtra mapped this integration two millennia ago, and Mahāprajña labels its graduate - the ‘spiritual-scientific personality’ - the urgent need of our age.

1.2 The Compressed Charter: Āṇae Māma-gaṁ Dhammaṁ

The terse aphorism āṇae māma-gaṁ dhammaṁ² crystalizes the Jain program of self-making. Literally, it tells the mendicant to “walk the Dharma that is my path, in obedience to my command.” The speaker is the Jina, and what he labels ‘my Path’ is the fully documented regimen of vows, restraints, meditations and austerities that he himself embodied. At one stroke the verse

- Transfers authority from abstract doctrine to an embodied trajectory.
- Forbids selective or cosmetic religiosity; and
- Converts personality development into a pilgrim’s discipline rather than philosophical speculation.

The pages that follow unpack the directive’s full implications and assemble the pivotal Ācārāṅga passages that illuminate its psychological architecture.

¹ Science Towards Spirituality, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, 2003, Ladnun.

² Ācārāṅga bhāṣiyam, I 6.2, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, 1981, Ladnun.

2. Metaphysical point of departure

Before conduct can shape character, the aspirant must accept three axioms sounded in Ācārāṅga:

1. The soul (jīva) is independent and real. The text repeatedly calls it *atta bhūta*, ‘the being that is itself.’
2. The soul is agent and enjoyer. “The doer of karma is the experiencer of its fruit.” This axiom grounds accountability.
3. Karma adheres yet can be eradicated. It clings through ignorance and passion; it falls away under knowledge and restraint.

A fourth premise, distilled by later commentators, completes the frame:

“Each ātman is as mine, and mine as theirs; whoever awakens to this balance becomes a spiritual personality.”¹ The saying captures the doctrine of ātma-upamā-bhāva-seeing the self in the other and the other in the self. It elevates empathy from a sentiment to ontology furnishing the ethical bedrock of the Path.

3. The aphorism explained

- Āṇae – ‘in obedience.’ The phrase frames the entire quest as voluntary submission to demonstrable truth, not blind servility.
- Māma-gaṁ – ‘my Path.’ Marga in Jain usage is never a road map sketched by others; it is the walked route of the conquering Jina. The personality project therefore aims at replicating that trajectory inside oneself.
- Dhammaṁ – ‘Dharma’ in its richest sense: law, norm, sustaining order – concretely, the five great vows, the five samitis, daily confession, fortnightly fasts, and the entire etiquettes of harmless living.

The Path is therefore experimental: repeat the method, reproduce the freedom.²

4. Knowledge as the axis of growth

Ācārāṅga anchors personality formation in right knowledge. The canon states: “je āyā se viṇṇāya, je viṇṇāya se āyā”³ “he who is the self is the knower; the knower is the self.” By welding ontology to epistemology, the sūtra yields two direct corollaries:

¹ Śīlāṅka’s Tīkā on Ācārāṅga I 6.2, Spiritual Personality, (jvbi yoga m.a.)

² Sarvārthasiddhi, p. 44, Ācārya Pūjyapāda.

³ Ācārāṅga Sūtra 5/104, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

- **Clarity resets motive:** when perception is undistorted, craving and aversion lose their fuel.
- **Character is cognitive bandwidth:** personality is sculpted less by inherited temperament than by the breadth and purity of awareness it sustains.

To chart that expansion, Ācārāṅga enumerates five ascending modes of cognition — sensory (mati-jñāna), scriptural (śruta-jñāna), clairvoyant (avadhi-jñāna), intuitive (manaḥ-paryāya-jñāna), and omniscient (kevala-jñāna) - and situates progress in their sequential clarification. The later Nandī-sūtra crystallises this insight into the first of the five ācāras (knowledge, faith, conduct, austerity, energy), making jñāna the fulcrum around which the other four pivot.¹

5. Discipline (Samyama) as Engineering

5.1 Conquest of the Senses (Indriya-Jaya)

Ācārāṅga I 1.5 portrays the monk unshakable by heat, cold, hunger, thirst and insult.² Ācārya Mahāprajña transposes this into contemporary leadership theory: no one who is ruled by his own senses can safely rule others. Master of eye, ear, tongue, skin and above all-mind is the first non-negotiable criterion of a stable polity and a spiritual personality. So, the first condition of leadership is to become a conqueror of senses. Mind is of fleeting disposition. One should not remain subordinated to the flights of mind rather one should exert control over the mind.

5.2 Refinement of Suppressed Lusts (Upasanta-kāma)

Personality is not only cognitive and behavioural; it is also emotional. Ācārāṅga I 8 lists twelve inner and outer tapas designed to surface and burn latent passions accumulated over many births.³ Unrefined, those samskāras twist genius into vice; refined, they transmute energy into insight. Ācārāṅga describes three successive affective purifications:

¹ Nandī-sūtra, Eng. tr. Shreechand Surana, rev. Amar-Muni (PDF reprint, Jain Foundation, 2013)

² Ācārāṅga-sūtra I 1.5, Āyāra-bhāsiyam, vol. 1, 27–28, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhārati Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

³ Āyāro (Ācārāṅga Sūtra). Pg 171, Muni Nathmal (Ācārya Mahāprajña), Jain Vishva Bharati Inst.

³ Ācārāṅga-sūtra I 8, ibid., 95–103, Śrī Madhukar Muni, Śrī Jain Āgama Prakāśana Samiti, Beawar, Rajasthan.

1. Restraint of the senses. The mendicant learns not to chase pleasant objects or flee unpleasant ones, breaking the stimulus-response loop.
2. Drying up of latent passions. Fasting, vigilance and meditative ‘burning’ (tapas) wither the deeper roots of craving and aversion.
3. Equanimity (samatā). The text praises the monk who remains unperturbed in heat and cold, honour and insult, pleasure and pain-the hallmark of a matured character.

This ladder maps neatly onto modern psychological models that move from regulation to re-appraisal to stable trait calm.

5.3 Wealth (Artha) in the Perspective of Vṛtti

Modern society, Mahāprajña warns, treats money as the final arbiter of worth. Jain analysis relocates artha (wealth) within vṛtti-the inner disposition that decides why one earns and how one spends.¹ When vṛtti leads, economics serves; when it is ignored, economics tyrannises. A spiritual personality respects money as a tool but will not mortgage conscience, community or climate to acquire it.

5.4 Daily Mechanics of the Path

The sūtra’s prose sections spell out an engineer’s manual:

- **Vows** provides guard-rails.
- **Five samitis** cultivate micro-attention in walking, speaking, receiving, eating and evacuating.²
- **Pratikramaṇa** offers nightly feedback.
- **Tapas** hard-wires resilience and recycles bio-energy for contemplation.

Together they erect an inner framework capable of bearing awakened knowledge.

6. Energetic Integration – Science, Yoga and the Thermodynamics of Tapas

Ācārya Mahāprajña’s complaint that both science and yoga have been monetised obscures their common destiny: to detect, direct and finally transcend energy. Outer

¹ Jīvan-vigyāna: Vyaktitva Nirman kā Sādhana, Ācārya Mahāprajña, (Jaipur: Jain Viśva Bhāratī, 1999), 61–66.

² Daśavaikālika-sūtra VI 8, ed. Āgamodaya Samiti (Ahmedabad, 1967), 73–74.

austerities impose calibrated biological stress, triggering hormetic repair, breath-regulation stabilises heart-rate variability and cerebral rhythms. Jain tapas thus doubles as a laboratory harmonizing physiological, psychological and karmic energies - the synthesis Mahāprajña envisions for joined science and spirituality.¹

7. Prosocial Overflows

Ācārāṅga's famous vignette of the thirsty animals and the monk who sets down his own water-pot illustrates a crucial insight: inner mastery naturally externalises as compassion. Jainism refuses the fantasy of a purely private holiness; the proof of progress is spontaneous readiness to shield any living thing from harm. In contemporary language, advanced self-regulation frees cognitive bandwidth for altruistic choices.² The act is not charity tacked onto spirituality; it is spirituality reaching its logical surface.

8. Mahāvīra as Exemplar

Mahāvīra's forty-two-year odyssey traces the arc:

- Radical renunciation.
- Meticulous adherence to the five great vows.
- Fearless kindness even to aggressors.
- Unremitting tapas;
- Culmination in kevala-jñāna, omniscience born of total karmic exhaustion.

He embodies the final form of the kṣayopāśamik personality-knowledge, conduct and energy fused into seamless freedom.³ Thus, Mahāvīra's life unites all criteria: sensory mastery, total austerity, fearless compassion, economic minimalism and, finally, omniscient clarity.⁴ He demonstrates that a spiritual-scientific personality is not anti-world but world-transfiguring, proving its hypotheses by lived data.

¹ Thermodynamics of Tapas, JVBI, 2008, pp. 9-15, and The Family and the Nation, Ācārya Mahāprajña & A.P.J. Abdul Kalam HarperCollins, New Delhi: 2015), 32–39.

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1.4.2, Jacobi, p. 15.

³ Jaina Path of Purification, U California P, 1979, pp. 185-91, P.S. Jaini.

⁴ Āyāra-bhāṣiyam, vol. 1, 69, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī Prakāśan, Lādnūn, Rajasthan.

⁴ Āyāro (Ācārāṅga Sūtra). p.171, Muni Nathmal (Ācārya Mahāprajña), Jain Vishva Bharati Inst.

9. Contemporary Toolkit - Twenty-First-Century Adaptations

| Classical Practice | Modern Translation | Intended Effect |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Sensory restraint | Timed digital fasts | Reduce reactivity |
| Outer/inner tapas | Intermittent fasting, cold exposure | Hormetic resilience |
| Nightly pratikramaṇa | Journal or apology email review | Guilt clearance |
| Artha aligned with vṛtti | Income tied to service projects | Ethical finance |
| Breath-attention | HRV-monitored breathing drills | Autonomic balance |
| Scriptural recitation | Value journaling | Agenda clarity |

Sequence Preserved: knowledge → disciplined practice → emotional purification → compassionate action → universality.

10. Further Ācārāṅga Touch-points in Brief

The Path sketched by āṇae māma-gaṃ dhammaṃ is not an isolated saying; the whole first Śrutaskandha of Ācārāṅga supplies a scatter-diagram of virtues that, when connected, form a single pedagogy of self-transformation:

- I 1.5 – praises the monk who remains steady in heat, cold, hunger and thirst, giving textual texture to equanimity.¹
- I 2.3 – states that “all beings love life and shrink from pain,” providing the rational foundation for empathy.²
- I 3.4 – commands restraint of speech and thought, identifying language as the primary forge of character.³
- I 4.2 – records the water-pot episode, showing compassion as disciplined perception in action.⁴ I 8 – enumerates twelve outer and inner austerities, presenting tapas as targeted karmic surgery.⁵

¹ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.5.5-10, Tr. Jacobi, pp. 21-25, and Ācārya Mahāprajña (ed.), Āyāra-bhāsiyam, vol.1. (Ladnun: Jain Viśva Bhāratī, 1981), 27–28.

² Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1. 2.3, trans. Jacobi, p. 9.

³ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1 3.4, trans. Jacobi, p. 12.

⁴ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.4.2, trans. Jacobi, p. 15.

⁵ Ācārāṅga Sūtra, 1.8.1-12, trans. Jacobi, pp. 57-64.

- I 9 – sketches a ladder of four meditative absorptions that culminate in ‘loftiness of spirit,’ a clear precursor to later manuals such as the Ārādhanā.¹

Taken together, these loci broaden the single aphorism into a curriculum: equanimity, empathy, verbal ethics, practical compassion, karmic cleansing and contemplative ascent.

11. Synchronising with the Wider Jain Canon

The same curriculum resonates across doctrinal landmarks:

- Tattvārtha-sūtra – ‘parasparopagraho jīvānām’. metaphysical basis for prosocial ethics²
- Bhagavatī-sūtra (Vyākhyā-prajñapti) – explicitly equates jīva with upayoga (consciousness), sharpening the chapter’s claim that awareness is personality’s axis.³ (affirming knowledge primacy)
- Śīlāṅka on Ācārāṅga I 6.2 – warns that ritual without internal appropriation is ‘like counting another man’s cows,’ insisting on genuine interiorisation.⁴
- Pūjyapāda’s Sarvārthasiddhi to TS– maps the same sequence (knowledge → conduct → austerity → energy) onto the fourteen gunasthānas, thereby stitching the Path into the standard Jain ladder of competence.⁵

Thus, the Āṇae māma-gaṁ dhammaṁ programme sits squarely inside the classical doctrinal grid, confirming that personal discipline, empathic insight and cosmic interdependence are three faces of one jewel.

The Spiritual-Scientific Imperative

Mahāprajña warns humanity has split the atom but mislaid the compass.⁶ Two global pathologies intensify the peril: an unchecked armaments industry and a culture of violence. Meditation dissolves ego-boundaries, converting selfish power into sarva-hit-bhāvanā (will for universal good).⁷ Mahāvīra’s maxim ‘tinnam taryāṇam’-

¹ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.9.1-4, trans. Jacobi, pp. 68-72.

² Tattvārtha-sūtra 5.21, trans. Tatia, p. 119.

³ Bhagavatī-sūtra 1.18, Jacobi, p. 33.

⁴ Śīlāṅka, Tīkā on Ācārāṅga, 6/2, Gujarat Vidyapith, 1916, p. 142.

⁵ Sarvārthasiddhi, Pūjyapāda, on TS 5.23, p.201, Vijay K. Jain (tr.)

⁶ Science Towards Spirituality, 2003, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Ladnun.

⁷ Jīvan-vigyāna: Vyaktitva Nirman kā Sādhana, 1999, Ācārya Mahāprajña, Jain Viśva Bhāratī, Jaipur.

mandates self-liberation, aid to others, and nourishment of both - a triple bottom line for spirit.¹

When data science or genetic editing is guided by such an agent, technology becomes compassion's prosthesis; otherwise, it magnifies harm. Hence the Path - equanimity, empathy, verbal ethics, karmic surgery, contemplative ascent - readies the operator so the instrument serves life.

The closing mandate therefore reads: convert selfish power into universal service; let the scientist meditate and the meditator engage the world. Only then does the aphorism āṇae māma-gaṃ dhammaṃ meet the atomic age, and Mahāvīra's inner formula steers humanity's outer destiny.

12. Conclusion

The Ācārāṅga closes by declaring that the monk who internalises the Jina's path "lives the remainder of his life untainted and untroubled."² Mahāprajña restates science without spirituality is merchandise; spirituality without science is escapism; their union unseals the real. Conquer senses, refine drives, subordinate money to meaning, and harness energy through awareness - this quartet realises āṇae māma-gaṃ dhammaṃ and births the spiritual-scientific personality our century lacks.

Personality development, in Jain terms, is centrifugal sanctification: purify the core, align conduct, pacify emotion, and the circumference radiates harmlessness. Ten syllables encode the template; twenty-five hundred years have not dulled its relevance.

6.4 Equanimity, Sāmāyika and the Architecture of Higher-Order Personality Development

"The wider the leśyā, the deeper the equanimity; from equanimity arises inner joy." - Traditional Jain gāthā

1. Orientation - Why Equanimity Is Central

Jain sādhana is, at its core, a science of vītarāgatā-freedom from attachment (rāga) and aversion (dveṣa). Equanimity (samatā) is therefore both the method and the goal. Two nested disciplines that cultivate this equipoise:

¹ Avaśyaka-Cūrṇi 122, ed. Maladhari, p. 98,, Uttarādhyayana-sūtra 29.54, Shri Madhukar Muniji

² Ācārāṅga Sūtra 1.9.4, Jacobi, p. 72.

- Sāmāyika - moment-centred discipline (traditionally practised three times a day) that trains the mind to rest in equanimity here and now.¹
- Dhyāna (deep meditative absorption), whereby consciousness rests steadily in its own nature.

These disciplines interlock: Sāmāyika stabilizes behavior, Dhyāna rebuilds consciousness, and together they precipitate a durable higher-order personality

Ācārya **Haribhadra** underscores the trajectory: unwavering samabhāva culminates in liberation, regardless of sect or creed²

2. Defining Sāmāyika - Concept and Taxonomy

The Prakrit term Samaiya (Skt. Sāmāyika) connotes: “abiding in the present,” “observance of equanimity,” “seeing all beings as oneself,” “integration of the personality,” and “righteous orchestration of mind, speech, body.”³ Ācārya Kundakunda equates the word with Samādhi-tension-free self-absorption.⁴ Classical texts unpack four simultaneous dimensions:

| Dimension | Definition in Texts | Functional Highlight |
|------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Ethical | Abstention from injury & threefold control - Anuyogadvāra-sūtra 89 | Blocks karmic influx (saṃvara) |
| Affective | Detachment from pleasure/pain-Niryukti 148 | Dampens limbic volatility |
| Cognitive | Contemplation of non-mineness - Āvaśyaka-niryukti 307 | Disrupts egoic indexing |
| Social | Equal outlook toward all beings - Niyamasāra 15 | Grounds universal compassion |

“One who, abandoning speech, realises the Self with non-attachment is said to possess supreme equanimity.”⁵

¹ Ācārāṅga-cūrṇi 1.1; see Sagarmal Jain, *Equanimity and Meditation*, 1992.

² Haribhadra. *Śoḍaśaka*, ed. Olle Qvarnström, Harvard UP, 2002, verse 87.

³ Anuyogadvāra-sūtra 89; Āvaśyaka-niryukti 233.

⁴ Niyamasāra 15, 147, Ācārya Kundakunda.

⁵ Āvaśyaka-niryukti 284.

3. Psychodynamics: From Attachment/Aversion to Affective Neutrality

Attachment is merely the felt derivative of mineness (*mamatva*). Jain praxis dissolves mineness via two complementary contemplations:

- **Ekatva-bhāvanā**: “Nothing besides consciousness is truly mine.”
- **Anityatā-bhāvanā**: “All aggregates-including body-are transient. The soul is eternal.”

As these perceptions mature, the binary of mine/other collapses, severing the roots that feed both grasping and hostility. In neurological terms, the amygdalar reward–threat loop loses its charge; in karmic terms, *saṃvara* (blockage of new bondage) is achieved.

4. Dhyāna - The Internal Chemistry of Equanimity

Kundakunda states: “Realisation of Self is possible only through equanimity, and equanimity only through meditation on one’s real nature.”¹ Advanced dhyāna shifts endocrine profiles-elevating melatonin, endorphins, and gamma synchrony-so nociceptive signalling is inhibited without loss of lucidity.² The hagiographical episode of Mahāvīra enduring Saṃgamadeva’s tortures illustrates this neuro-karmic threshold.³

This practice of equanimity is equated with religion itself. In *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*, it is said that all the worthy people preach religion as equanimity⁴. Thus, for Jainas, the observance of religious life is nothing, but the practice for the attainment of equanimity.

5. Higher-Order Personality Markers (Antar-ātman)

Systematic Sāmāyika-cum-Dhyāna rewires personality along five vectors:

1. Affective Equilibrium – emotions arise yet do not hijack cognition.
2. Universal Friendliness (*Sattveṣu Maitrī*) – spontaneous goodwill toward all life, enhancing social resonance and empathy.

¹ Niyamasāra, 124, Ācārya Kundakunda.

² Focused Attention, Open Monitoring and Automatic Self-Transcending: Neural Correlates, Meta-Analysis and Guidelines for Classification, vol. 1, 2010, article 165, Travis, Frederick, and Jonathan Shear.

³ Uttarādhyayana-sūtra 22.35–40, trans. Jacobi, 1895.

⁴ Ācārāṅga-sūtra, 1.4.2.3, trans. Hermann Jacobi, in *Jaina Sūtras*, vol. 1, Motilal Banarsidass, 2011, p. 15.

3. Moral Fearlessness – decisions become value-centric, immune to praise/blame.
4. Cognitive Clarity – sustained attention and reduction in cognitive biases; insight processing accelerates.
5. Altruistic Activism – ego-free service initiatives.

Ācārya Amitagati condenses these traits in his celebrated verse:

Sattveṣu maitrī guṇiṣu pramodaṃ, kliṣṭeṣu jīveṣu kṛpāparatvam, Mādhyasthyabhāvaṃ viparīta vṛttiṃ, sadā mamatmā vidhadhātu deva¹

“May my soul dwell forever in friendliness, delight in the virtuous, compassion for the afflicted, and tolerant neutrality toward the hostile.”

6. Operational Framework for Practitioners

| Stage | Daily Protocol | Metrics |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| Initiation | 12-minute Sāmāyika tri-kāla (thrice daily); reflect on mortality & non-mineness | Emotional reactivity journal |
| Integration | 45-minute dhyāna (śukla → pratyākhyāna focus); weekly vow-audit | HRV coherence, sleep latency |
| Stabilisation | Monthly proṣadhopavāsa fast + scriptural recitation; service projects | Peer feedback on patience & empathy |

7. Ācārāṅga as Beacon of Self-Directed Equanimity

The Ācārāṅga frames practice as a scientific triad: see for yourself, know for yourself, and practise for yourself. Continuous nirīkṣaṇa–samīkṣaṇa (observation–review) sustains two pillars:

1. **Right Conduct** - vows channel energy; without ethics, tapas irrigates barren soil.²
2. **Awakened Intelligence** (viveka) - real-time thought auditing purifies leśyā.

When aligned, knowledge becomes operative, energy constructive, and equanimity a trait. Jain praxis-Sāmāyika scaffold, Dhyāna laboratory, Ācārāṅga guidance-transforms equanimity from mood to architecture: fearless, compassionate, and self-regulating.

¹ Śrāvakācāra, verse 101, Ācārya Amitagati.

² Ācārāṅga-sūtra 1.8.5, trans. Jacobi, p. 60.

8. Conclusion - Closing the Thesis Arc

Equanimity in Jainism is not passive numbness but an ethically upgraded, neuro-chemically balanced, cognitively lucid mode of being. Sāmāyika offers the behavioural scaffold; Dhyāna furnishes the interior laboratory; together they forge a personality fit for the twenty-first century's moral and technological dilemmas.

With this chapter, the thesis completes its journey from foundational metaphysics to practical self-engineering. The Jain paradigm demonstrates that personality is not a fixed inheritance but a disciplined construction - one that can harmonise inner freedom with outer responsibility, ensuring that scientific power serves universal well-being.





Conclusion



Conclusion

Summary of Findings and Objectives

This thesis set out to demonstrate that the Ācārāṅga Sūtra provides a coherent framework for personality development, aligning ancient Jain principles with modern psychology. The research objectives – reconstructing the text’s doctrinal foundations, examining commentarial perspectives, and integrating Jain insights with contemporary moral and positive psychology – have been successfully achieved. A close reading of Ācārāṅga revealed that Mahāvīra’s prescribed disciplines of ahimsā (non-violence), disciplined introspection, and rational scrutiny are “indispensable disciplines for shaping a fully realised human personality”. These findings confirm the hypothesis that the Ācārāṅga offers a practicable, psycho-spiritual growth framework relevant to modern times. Commentarial analyses showed that both Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions uphold these core values, indicating a pan-Jain consensus on the ingredients of ideal character. The comparative analysis set Jain ethics alongside Stoic, Buddhist, Vedānta, Sāṃkhya–Yoga, Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, and other Indian virtue traditions, showing how Jainism’s distinctive focus on total non-harm (ahimsā) and many-sided truth (anekāntavāda) both complements and enriches universal ethical themes.

Our cross-disciplinary review confirms a striking consonance between classical Jain ethics and contemporary positive-psychology findings: the tradition’s emphasis on self-discipline, compassion, and mindfulness map directly onto the factors that modern research associates with well-being. Occasional frictions—such as the tension between rigorous Jain asceticism and today’s ideal of ‘work-life balance’ – serve not as contradictions but as productive prompts for deeper inquiry. Overall, the evidence substantiates this study’s core claim: Mahāvīra’s ethic constitutes a sophisticated blueprint for cultivating equanimity, resilience, and prosocial behaviour in the modern world.

To translate these insights into practice, the thesis proposes the Niṣkarmadarśī Personality Matrix, an actionable scaffold for educators, leaders, and mental-health practitioners. The Matrix links five key virtues—āyatacākṣuḥ (attentively seeing,

Āyatta cakkhu), vasuman (large-hearted benevolence), āsuprājñā (quick discernment, ashupragya), pāragāmī (purpose-directed striving, pargami), and samatvadarśī (equanimous perception) - to clear behavioural benchmarks. It further incorporates two complementary ideals rooted in the same canonical source: loka-vipassī (systems-level vision) and sarva-parijñācārī (conduct informed by total understanding).

All these constructs derive from the Ācārāṅga-sūtra, Jainism's oldest extant scripture, which also supplies the Matrix's meditative competencies-pasah (stilling), sampeha (comprehensive self-review, cf. antaram ca khalu imaṃ sampehae), damsī (watchful seeing), and jñāta-draṣṭā-bhāva (the knower-seer stance). Ācārāṅga binds these practices to gnosiological supremacy:

- “Jñāna-phalaḥ sarva-saṅga-viratiḥ” - the true fruit of knowledge is complete non-attachment.
- “Je āyā se viṇṇāya” - only discriminating insight secures ultimate arrival.
- “Jñāna ātmā-kā akṣara-loka hai; no soul is without knowledge.”

Anchored in these aphorisms, the Matrix:

1. Preserves textual fidelity while rendering ancient doctrine empirically testable.
2. Offers measurable interventions by tying every virtue to observable behavior and every meditative term to trainable skills.
3. Bridges disciplines, demonstrating that Jain ethics enrich and are enriched by modern psychological science.

Accordingly, the Niṣkarmadarśī Personality Matrix not only synthesizes the doctrinal, philological, and psychological strands explored throughout the thesis but also delivers a ready-to-deploy tool for future empirical research, pedagogical application, and leadership development.

Ācārāṅga's Guidance for Personal Growth and Character Formation

1. Personal Growth & Emotional Regulation

The Ācārāṅga Sūtra treats mindful awareness and disciplined self-observation as the engine of human growth. By training attention to ‘recognize the moment,’ everyday actions become occasions for learning rather than stress. In psychological terms, this

continuous awareness underpins effective emotional regulation: ignorance fuels harmful karma and inner turbulence, whereas sustained mindfulness dissolves tension. Aparigraha (non-attachment) deepens this balance. A person free of possessiveness is ‘happy, calm, and secure,’ relying on inner contentment instead of external craving. Contemporary research echoes the link between limited material attachment and higher life satisfaction. Thus, the Jain path of self-restraint (saṃyama) equips practitioners with practical tools-breathing in kindness (ahiṃsā), breathing out attachment-to foster resilience and equanimity.

2. Character Development & Ethical Reasoning

- Compassion through ahiṃsā. Non-violence in Jainism goes beyond avoiding harm; it nurtures universal empathy. Realising that hurting another is ultimately hurting oneself embeds a sense of interconnection, fostering habits of kindness and forgiveness. Modern moral psychology likewise recognises empathy and perspective-taking as cornerstones of ethical personality.
- Intellectual humility through anekāntavāda. The doctrine of many-sided reality instils respect for multiple viewpoints. By pausing judgment and seeking additional angles, individuals defuse conflict and cultivate open-mindedness. Today we call these critical thinking and tolerance skills vital in pluralistic societies.
- Integrity through aparigraha. Non-attachment curbs greed and ego, making dishonesty and exploitation less tempting. When happiness no longer hinges on possessions or status, right conduct (samyak cāritra) follows naturally. Psychology frames this as strong self-regulation and low neuroticism-traits linked to ethical behaviour and prosociality.

Together, non-violence (affective care), non-absolutism (cognitive humility), and non-attachment (conative self-mastery) interlock into a coherent Jain model of personality development-one that nurtures compassion, clarity, and integrity in equal measure.

Validating the Jain Framework for Personality Development

The convergence of Ācārāṅga’s insights with contemporary psychological theory confirms the thesis that Mahāvīra’s teachings constitute a coherent, transferable model of personality growth. Taken together, ahiṃsā, anekāntavāda, and aparigraha form an

integrated system that addresses cognition, emotion, and conduct. Each principle reinforces the others: non-violence nurtures empathy, non-absolutism cultivates sound judgment, and non-attachment anchors ethical action. This triad mirrors the classic Jain Three Jewels-right vision, right knowledge, and right conduct-underscoring its internal consistency and philosophical depth.

Crucially, the model extends beyond its religious roots. When reframed in secular terms-such as non-violent communication, perspective-taking for conflict resolution, or sustainable living-it speaks to universal human concerns. Mindfulness-based therapies, ethics-of-care frameworks, and intercultural dialogue already employ concepts parallel to these Jain values, demonstrating their practical relevance.

Thus, the framework is both theoretically robust and practically applicable. Far from an antiquarian curiosity, it offers a sophisticated blueprint for cultivating equanimity, resilience, and ethical excellence-bridging ancient wisdom with modern challenges in education, leadership, and mental health.

Contemporary Relevance - Applying Jain Principles to Modern Challenges

Youth Development & Education

- Character education: Embed ahimsā, aparigraha, and anekāntavāda in curricula through daily mindfulness pauses, class discussions on non-violence, and perspective-taking exercises.
- Skill building: Ācārāṅga's maxims - 'Identify the moment,' 'Be firm on truth,' 'Do not hide your potential' - foster time-management, decision-making, and empathy.
- Bullying prevention: Teaching non-violence and many-sided thinking from an early age counters prejudice and nurtures inclusive attitudes.
- Holistic growth: A rational, compassionate, disciplined 'Jain way of living' equips students with self-control, compassion, and respect for diversity-meeting the moral and emotional needs of 21st-century youth.

Leadership & Organisational Culture

- Servant leadership: Ahimsā encourages compassionate decision-making that prioritises stakeholder welfare.

- Integrity & sustainability: Aparigraha tempers greed and ego-driven risk, promoting transparent, value-centred practices.
- Conflict resolution: Anekāntavāda trains leaders to examine multiple perspectives, reducing polarisation and enhancing creativity in problem-solving.

Mental Health & Well-Being

- Mindfulness integration: Ācārāṅga's call to continual awareness dovetails with evidence-based mindfulness therapies, improving emotional regulation and stress management.
- Non-attachment therapy: Teaching aparigraha helps clients detach from material and ego-based anxieties, increasing life satisfaction.
- Compassion-focused interventions: Ahimsā-inspired practices cultivate self-kindness and empathy, core components of modern therapeutic models.

Societal Impact

- Peacebuilding: Non-violence and many-sided dialogue offer tools for reducing social conflict and fostering pluralism.
- Sustainability: A culture of restrained consumption directly addresses environmental degradation driven by over-consumption.

In sum, Ācārāṅga's ethical triad provides actionable guidance across education, leadership, mental health, and social policy-demonstrating that ancient Jain wisdom remains a practical resource for today's moral and psychological challenges.

Actionable Insights for Stakeholders

Policymakers

- **Embed non-violence (ahimsā) in civic programs.** Fund conflict-resolution training, restorative-justice initiatives, and kindness campaigns to foster social harmony.
- **Promote mindful sustainability through aparigraha.** Pair environmental policies with anti-consumerist messaging that targets the mental-health and ecological costs of overconsumption.
- **Cultivate pluralism via anekāntavāda.** Sponsor inter-faith workshops and school curricula that teach perspective-taking to reduce polarisation and build tolerance.

Educators

- **Integrate Jain ethics across curricula.** Use modules on compassion, non-attachment, and multi-sided reasoning within ethics or social-emotional-learning courses.
- **Leverage Ācārāṅga parables for character formation.** Stories of Mahāvīra can spark classroom debates on integrity and decision-making.
- **Adopt experiential learning.** Activities such as a ‘day of non-violence’ or structured perspective-switching exercises translate doctrine into practice without proselytising.
- **Collaborate with Jain scholars.** Develop teacher resources and professional-development workshops that contextualize these values for diverse classrooms.

Mental-Health Practitioners

- **Pilot Jain-inspired interventions.** Introduce prekṣā-dhyāna (breath-centred internal observation) and svādhyāya (guided self-study) to enhance mindfulness protocols.
- **Apply detachment (aparigraha) therapeutically.** Teach clients to observe thoughts without fusion, reinforcing cognitive-behavioral techniques.
- **Foster cognitive flexibility through ‘syādvāda’ reasoning.** Encouraging patients to examine multiple angles can dilute rigid, negative beliefs.
- **Embed self-compassion rooted in ahimsā.** Non-violence toward self supports forgiveness work in trauma and guilt treatment.
- **Evaluate rigorously.** Collaborate with researchers to measure clinical outcomes and ensure cultural sensitivity.

Enabling Conditions

1. **Cross-sector dialogue.** Ongoing exchanges among Jain practitioners, policymakers, educators, and clinicians safeguard doctrinal fidelity while allowing contextual adaptation.
2. **Evidence and feedback loops.** Track metrics-e.g., empathy scores, violence incidents, symptom reduction-and iterate programs, mirroring Jain rational scrutiny.

By translating non-violence, multi-perspective reasoning, and mindful simplicity into concrete policies, pedagogies, and therapies, stakeholders can harness Mahāvīra's wisdom to counter consumerism, social discord, and psychological distress—without demanding asceticism from the public.

Limitations and Future Directions

1. Predominantly Theoretical Approach

- The analysis rests on textual interpretation and conceptual comparison; no surveys, experiments, or longitudinal studies were conducted.
- Claims such as 'ahimsā fosters empathy' remain hypotheses until tested across diverse populations.

2. Narrow Textual Focus

- Narrow source base: Concentrated on one early doctrinal text, achieving depth but omitting the wider tradition.
- Omitted themes: Nuanced karma theories, devotion, and communal influences receive only cursory treatment.
- Lost dimensions: Social and ritual factors shaping personality development remain underexplored.
- Implication: Current findings form a single tile in a larger mosaic; broader investigation is needed for a fuller model.

3. Translational Trade-offs

- Mapping metaphysical terms (mokṣa, karma, tapas) onto psychological constructs required simplification; some doctrinal nuance may have been lost.
- Although every effort was made to preserve soteriological intent, readers should be alert to potential oversights when importing these concepts into secular frameworks.

4. Context and Individual Variation

- The model presents a normative ideal; it does not explore how genetics, upbringing, socio-economic status, or cultural context shape one's capacity to apply Jain principles.
- Possible downsides-e.g., psychological strain from strict asceticism - lie outside the study's scope and warrant balanced empirical scrutiny.

In summary, this research offers an exploratory bridge between Jain ethics and modern psychology: solid enough to encourage dialogue, yet in need of empirical planks and wider textual beams. Future work-broader scriptural analysis, culturally sensitive field studies, and rigorous outcome research-will be essential to reinforce and extend the span.

Future Research Directions

1. Empirical Validation & Expansion

- Intervention studies: Test daily ahimsā practices (e.g., loving-kindness meditation, non-violent communication) for effects on empathy, aggression, and cooperation.
- Perspective-taking experiments: Evaluate whether anekāntavāda training boosts creative problem-solving and reduces implicit bias.
- Comparative surveys: Contrast long-term Jain practitioners with control groups on compassion, materialism, and well-being.
- Neuroscience: Use imaging to map brain activity during Jain meditation and forgiveness tasks, grounding ancient techniques in biology.

2. Interdisciplinary & Cross-Cultural Dialogue

- Comparative ethics: Juxtapose Jain ahimsā with Buddhist mettā, Christian agápē, or secular virtue ethics to uncover universal and unique facets.
- Applied domains: Explore relevance to environmental psychology (non-violence toward nature) and peace studies (anekāntavāda as a diplomatic tool).
- Cultural receptivity: Test how non-attachment messages resonate across Eastern and Western contexts, adjusting practices where necessary.

3. Applied & Longitudinal Research

- Education: Pilot a Jain-inspired character curriculum (empathy, meditation, honesty) and monitor behavioural and academic outcomes over multiple years.
- Organisations: Implement ‘mindful leadership’ programs based on ahimsā and anekāntavāda, tracking workplace ethics and climate.
- Case studies: Follow cohorts adopting Jain practices to measure long-term changes in personality, relationships, and mental health.

4. Textual & Philosophical Deepening

- Broader canon analysis: Examine later Jain authors for additional virtues (e.g., *uttama kṣamā*, *madhyastha*) and variant emphases across traditions.
- Karma re-interpreted: Translate karma into psychological terms-habits shaping neural pathways and character-to bridge metaphysics and science.
- Dialogue with modern thought: Compare Jain self-concepts with humanistic psychology and neuroscientific views of the self/non-self.

5. Model Refinement & Integration

- Stage models: Develop Jain-informed stages of moral–spiritual growth analogous to Kohlberg’s moral stages.
- Mapping to existing frameworks: Align Jain virtues with the Big Five and VIA character strengths to identify correspondences and gaps.
- Evidence-driven adjustments: Emphasise empirically supported elements, qualify practices with limited or context-specific effects, and evolve the *Niṣkarmadarśī* Personality Matrix into a scientifically robust, philosophically rich framework.

By pursuing these avenues, scholars can transform the current exploratory bridge between Jain philosophy and psychology into a well-tested, interdisciplinary platform for advancing both theory and practice in personality development.

Concluding Reflections

This chapter has shown that the Jain triad of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence), *aparigraha* (non-attachment), and *anekāntavāda* (many-sided insight) forms a distinctive, practical blueprint for personality development. Placed alongside contemporary psychology and moral philosophy, Mahāvīra’s teachings emerge not as relics but as living principles that foster emotional balance, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility.

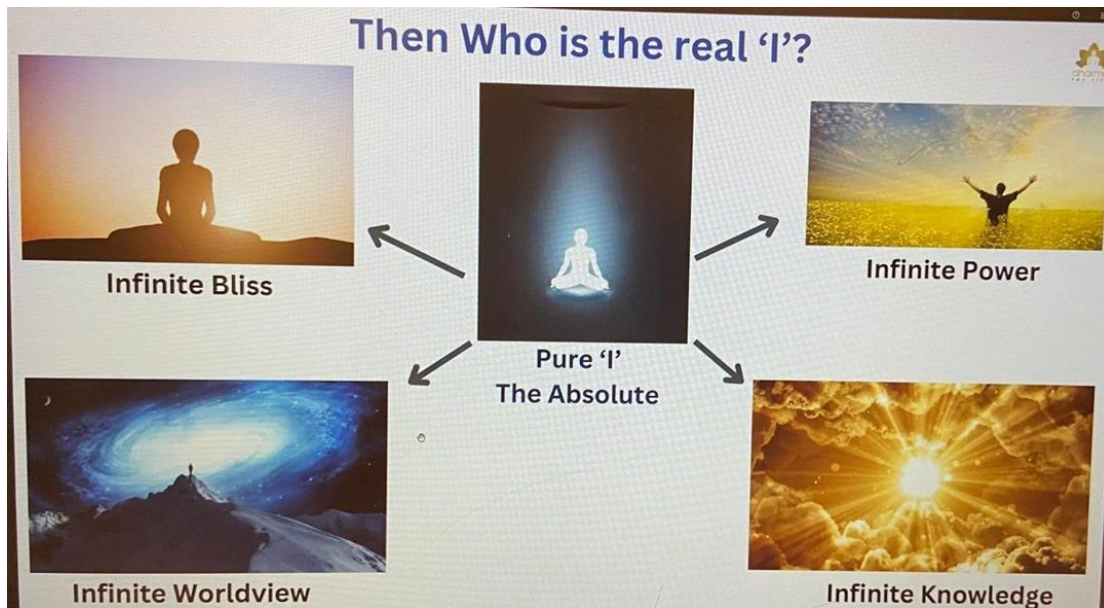
The aspirations that framed this thesis—universal compassion, intellectual integrity, and purposeful self-improvement—are demonstrably attainable. *Ahiṃsā* deepens empathy; *anekāntavāda* sharpens critical openness; disciplined self-work transforms ideals into habits. These virtues are neither abstract nor esoteric: they can guide a student in a classroom, a manager in a boardroom, or an individual seeking well-being.

The analysis confirms that the Jain framework is coherent and transferable, yet this conclusion marks a beginning, not an end. Its real value will be tested in practice: Can a teenager guided by ahimsā navigate peer conflict with empathy? Can a leader trained in anekāntavāda resolve disputes with creativity? Can therapists help clients heal through detachment and self-forgiveness? Such questions invite rigorous application and study.

Evidence of this potential already exists-non-violent social movements, mindfulness therapies, and values-based leadership programs echo Jain insights. By formalising a Jain model of personality development, this thesis places that wisdom within global psychological discourse and supplies a framework ready for empirical testing.

Ultimately, Mahāvīra's message speaks directly to today's quest for personal excellence and social harmony. To live with peace, principle, and perspective is to allow virtue and awareness to flower. May every being find happiness, may all sorrows be dispelled, and may the light of true knowledge dawn within us all.

Micchāmi Dukkaḍaṃ - if anything written here stands against Jina's order.





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UGC-CARE Journal

ISSN 0972-1002

ŚRAMAṆA

श्रमण ŚRAMAṆA

A Quarterly Refereed Research Journal of Jainology

Vol. LXXVII

No. II

April-June, 2025



इत्थं यथा तव विभूतिरभूज्जिनेन्द्र धर्मोपदेशनविधौ न तथा परस्य।
यादृक् प्रभा दिनकृतः प्रहतान्धकारा तादृक्-कुतो ग्रहगणस्य विकासिनोऽपि।।
भक्तामरस्तोत्र-37



Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, Varanasi

Established : 1937

Vol. LXXVII

No. II

April-June, 2025

UGC-CARE Journal

ISSN 0972-1002

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(Since 1949)

A Quarterly Refereed Research Journal of Jainology

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Editor

Prof. D.N. Sharma

Dr. S. P. Pandey

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Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, Varanasi

(Established: 1937)

(Recognized by B. H. U. as an External Research Centre)

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For Individual annual : Rs. 700/=, \$ 70

Per Issue: Price Rs. 200/=, \$ 20

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Membership fee & articles can be sent in favour of

Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, I.T.I. Road, Karaundi, Varanasi-5

PUBLISHED BY

Shri Sudev Barar, for Parshwanath Vidyapeeth, I. T. I. Road, Karaundi, Varanasi 221005, Ph. 0542-2575890, Email: pvpvaranasi@gmail.com

Theme of the Cover:

Bhaktāmara-stotra, verse-37 based picture, Yantra & Mantra

With curtesy : Sacitra Bhaktāmara-stotra by Shri Sushil Suri

NOTE: The facts and views expressed in Journal are those of authors only.

(पत्रिका में प्रकाशित तथ्य और विचार लेखक के अपने हैं।)

Printed by- Pragya Printing Works, # 9415371494, Varanasi

सम्पादकीय

भगवान् महावीर-निर्वाण महोत्सव (२०२५)

भारत के मनीषी समय-समय पर अपने सिद्धान्तों की समीक्षा करते रहे हैं लेकिन विशेष रूप से छठी सदी ईसा पूर्व भारत में नवजागरण का काल चल रहा था। वैदिक परम्परा में उपनिषद् के रूप में वैदिक यज्ञ यागादि पर समीक्षा करते हुए वैदिक साहित्य में ब्रह्म ज्ञान पर चर्चा आरम्भ हो चुकी थी। इसी क्रम में मगध में दो महाविभूतियों महावीर स्वामी और महात्मा बुद्ध ने जन्म लिया। वे श्रमण ज्ञान परम्परा को आगे बढ़ाये। वैदिक परम्परा से भिन्न श्रमण परम्परा के इन दो महान् चिन्तकों द्वारा दिये गये सिद्धान्त विश्व दार्शनिक जगत् में एक अलग ही स्थान रखते हैं। भगवान् महावीर का जन्म वैशाली गणराज्य के क्षत्रियकुण्डठाम के क्षत्रिय कुल में ५९९ वर्ष ईसा पूर्व में चैत्र महीने के शुक्ल पक्ष के त्रयोदशी के दिन हस्तोत्तरा फाल्गुनी नक्षत्र में आधी रात को हुआ था। उनके माता का नाम त्रिशला और पिता का नाम सिद्धार्थ था। जन्म के समय उनके परिवार में धन धान्यादि की पुष्कल वृद्धि हुई इसलिये उनका नाम वर्धमान रखा गया। जैन आगमों में उन्हें नाय, णाय, नायपुत्त, नायसुत्त शब्दों से सम्बोधित किया गया है और बौद्ध पिटकों में निगंठ नातपुत्त नाम से उल्लिखित किया गया है। नाय (ज्ञातृ) कुल उस काल में एक प्रसिद्ध क्षत्रिय कुल था। वर्धमान उसी नाय कुल के थे जिससे उन्हें नायपुत्त या निगंठ नातपुत्त कहा जाता था वर्धमान का शरीर लम्बा और विशाल था। वे सर्वगुण सम्पन्न, भद्र और विनयी थे। वे विवाह के इच्छुक नहीं थे लेकिन माता के कहने पर उन्होंने कौण्डिन्य गोत्रीया यशोदा से विवाह किया। उनकी प्रियदर्शना या अनवद्या नाम की कन्या हुई जिसका विवाह जमाली से हुआ जो वर्धमान की बहन सुदर्शना का पुत्र था। जमाली और प्रियदर्शना की शेषवती या यशस्वती नाम की एक पुत्री भी थी।

वर्धमान प्रारम्भ से ही संसार के भौतिक सुखों या प्रवृत्तियों से अनासक्त रहते थे। वर्धमान का परिवार पार्श्वनाथ भगवान् की परम्परा का अनुयायी था। वे जब २८ वर्ष के थे तभी उनके माता-पिता का स्वर्गवास हो गया। इसके दो वर्ष के बाद ३० वर्ष की आयु में क्षत्रियकुण्डठाम के ज्ञातृखण्ड वनोद्यान में अशोक वृक्ष के नीचे अकेले ही जीवन के परम लक्ष्य की प्राप्ति के लिये संसार का त्याग कर प्रव्रज्या टाहण किये। दीक्षा के समय उनके शरीर पर एक वस्त्र था। उन्होंने दोनों हाथों से

अपने सिर के बाल पाँच बार नोच कर उखाड़े जिसे पंचमुष्टि लोच कहा जाता है। उन्होंने उसी समय पाँच महाव्रतों अहिंसा, सत्य, अस्तेय, ब्रह्मचर्य और अपरिठाह का पालन करने का संकल्प किया। कठिन तप के कारण वे महावीर कहलाये। वे बारह वर्ष तक कठोर तपस्या करते रहे फिर उन्हें सर्वज्ञता या केवल ज्ञान की प्राप्ति हुई।

जैन परम्परा के अनुसार महावीर स्वामी चौबीसवें तीर्थंकर थे। उन्होंने पार्श्वनाथ भगवान् के चार महाव्रतों वाले चातुर्यामि धर्म में एक व्रत की वृद्धि करके पंचमहाव्रत धर्म का प्रवर्तन किया। उन्हें सर्वप्रथम ग्यारह गणधर प्रथम शिष्य के रूप में प्राप्त हुए जिनके अपने पाँच पाँच सौ शिष्य थे जो यज्ञ अनुष्ठान में लीन थे और उनका उपदेश सुनकर शिष्य बन गये। महावीर स्वामी ने उन्हें अंग आगम का उपदेश दिया जो हमें आचारांग आदि के रूप में आज भी प्राप्त है। उन्होंने उस काल की जन साधारण की भाषा में उपदेश देना पसन्द किया ताकि सबका कल्याण हो सके। इस प्रकार उपदेश देते हुए और लोक कल्याण करते हुए वे ५२७ ईसा पूर्व में ७२ वर्ष की आयु में कार्तिक मास की अमावस्या की रात में पावा में परिनिर्वाण को प्राप्त हुए। महावीर स्वामी का जीवन सम्पूर्ण विश्व के लिये प्रेरणादायी रहा बहुत से लोग उनसे लाभान्वित होकर आत्म कल्याण किये।

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Ācārāṅga and Personality Development: A Comparative Study of Jaina Philosophy, Indian Psychology, and Modern Personality Models

-Ujjawal Daga

Abstract

This paper explores the concept of personality development by juxtaposing perspectives from Jain philosophy-particularly the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*-with frameworks from Indian psychology and modern Western personality theory. Drawing on Jaina *karmaśāstra*¹, we examine the dualistic model of personality-Audayika (manifested) and *Kṣāyopāśamika* (restrained or refined) - and align it with concepts like *Triguṇas*, *Pañcakōśa*, and the HEXACO model (see APENDIX). The study demonstrates that personality development, in both spiritual and secular paradigms, is not merely behavioural modulation but an integrated process involving self-awareness, equanimity, emotional regulation, ethical living, and transcendence. Through this synthesis, the paper proposes a holistic framework for personality development that accommodates both inner transformation and outer conduct, anchored in the spiritual-scientific continuum. The findings bear relevance for fields such as psychotherapy, education, organisational leadership, and consciousness studies.

1. Introduction

Personality is commonly defined as the distinct set of characteristics that govern an individual's thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. In contemporary psychology, it is seen as both biologically anchored and environmentally shaped, with stability and change across the lifespan. However, classical Indian traditions-particularly Jainism-offer a more spiritual perspective centred on self-realization and liberation (*mokṣa*) as the ultimate goal of life. This paper proposes a cross-disciplinary lens integrating spiritual insights from Jain scriptures, structural models from Indian psychology, and empirical

models like HEXACO.

2. Personality in Modern Psychology

Modern Western psychology understands personality through multiple lenses, with the Five-Factor and HEXACO models being most dominant. The HEXACO model introduces six dimensions-Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience. These traits, while considered biologically anchored, are influenced by life events, socio-cultural contexts, and conscious behaviour changes. Recent advances in neuroscience also indicate that emotional regulation, moral cognition, and resilience can be trained over time.

3. Jain View of Personality: Audayika and Kṣāyopaśamika Self

Jaina karmic psychology presents a bifurcated view of personality: "**Audayika Personality:** Manifested due to past *karma*. It reflects habitual patterns influenced by passions (*kaṣāyas*) and emotional residues.

"**Kṣāyopaśamika Personality:** Emerges through spiritual exertion, representing restraint, purification, and the flowering of virtues.

Karma, Instincts, and Personality Formation: A Comparative Insight

In Western psychology, William McDougall identified 14 primary instincts-such as fear, curiosity, aggression, and parental care linked to specific emotional responses and behavioural tendencies. These instincts are considered the foundational drives that, when stimulated by external stimuli, shape the behavioural patterns and responses of individuals over time. McDougall's view posits that instinctual arousals form the substratum of personality traits, especially in early development, and are shaped further through experience and social conditioning.

Jaina philosophy offers a parallel yet deeper metaphysical explanation for behavioural propensities through the doctrine of *karma*², particularly *mohanīya karma* (deluding karma)-

mandāmoheṇapāhuḍā.³ An expression denoting one who is so deeply enveloped in delusion that true understanding is eclipsed, marking the soul as fundamentally ignorant. This *karma* obscures the soul's right knowledge and perception, leading to attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*), which in turn manifest as behavioural distortions. There are two types of deluding karma:

Darśana-mohaniya karma (deluding right perception)

Cāritra-mohaniya karma (deluding conduct)

These karmas distort instincts and impulses, giving rise to passions like anger, pride, deceit, and greed, which directly influence an individual's behaviour and ethical inclinations. From a Jain perspective, personality is not merely a byproduct of instinctual drives but a result of karmic impressions accumulated across lifetimes, particularly those that impair moral clarity and emotional equilibrium.

While McDougall emphasises external stimulation of instincts, Jainism traces the source of behavioural impulses to internal karmic conditioning. The rise of deluding karma at a subtle level can activate latent passions and emotional reactions like McDougall's instincts⁴, but with a moral and spiritual dimension. Thus, personality development in Jainism is a process of progressively shedding mohaniya karma through self-discipline, introspection, and spiritual practice, allowing the purified soul to manifest its intrinsic virtues like compassion, equanimity, and truthfulness.

Unlike mainstream psychology, Jainism integrates ethical conduct, self-purification, and liberation (*mokṣa*) as essential aims of personality evolution. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* proclaims, "*Je egañjāṇai se savvañjāṇai*"⁵ -According to one who knows the self, knows all - indicating the soul as the ultimate reference point in understanding the personality.

4. Indian Psychology: Trigūṇas, Pañcakośas, and Cakras

While Jaina philosophy views personality as shaped by karmic im-

pressions and deluding influences, Indian psychology offers a complementary, yet distinct psycho-spiritual model rooted in Vedic and yogic traditions. This framework prioritises the evolution of consciousness and inner harmony over mere behavioural modification.

Triguṇas - *Sattva* (purity and balance), *Rajas* (activity and desire), and *Tamas* (inertia and ignorance)-constitute the fundamental psychological energies in every individual. The interplay and dominance of these guṇas determine one's disposition, emotional reactivity, and ethical orientation.⁶

Pañcakośas - five concentric layers of human existence⁷-present a layered model of personality:

1. **Annamayakośa** (physical sheath): related to bodily health and survival.
2. **Prāṇamayakośa** (vital energy sheath): governs physiological functions and vitality.
3. **Manomayakośa** (mental sheath): source of thoughts, emotions, and desires.
4. **Vijñānamayakośa** (intellectual sheath): linked to wisdom, discernment, and ego-identity.
5. **Ānandamayakośa** (bliss sheath): seat of deep spiritual joy and the nearest layer to the true self (Ātman).

Cakras, the subtle energy centres aligned along the spine, regulate various psychological faculties and life functions-from survival instincts (Mūlādhāra Cakra)⁸ to spiritual awareness (Sahasrāra Cakra). Imbalances in these chakras are believed to lead to emotional, mental, and behavioural disruptions.

These systems collectively aim for self-realisation (Ātma-jñāna) rather than symptomatic behavioural adjustment. Practices like meditation, *prāṇāyāma*, *mantra* chanting, and ethical living are employed

not only to purify the kośas and balance the guṇas, but also to awaken higher consciousness and foster holistic personality development.

5. Yardsticks of Spiritual Personality

A spiritually developed personality, as envisioned in Jaina and broader Indian philosophy, reflects a harmonious integration of inner consciousness with ethical conduct. Such development is not measured by external achievements but by internal transformation. The following markers serve as key indicators:

1. Self-Awareness - Awareness of the soul's nature. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* teaches that understanding the self and the external world are interconnected. True knowledge arises from introspection, which in turn enhances awareness of the world's transient nature. This dual comprehension is essential for breaking ignorance and progressing toward enlightenment.

*Je ajjhattha jāṇai se bahiyā jāṇai, Je bahiyā jāṇai, se ajjhattha jāṇai.*⁹

One who knows the inner self knows the external (world) as well.
One who knows the external (world) knows the inner self as well.

2. Mastery over Senses - *Je guṇe se mūlaṭṭhāṇe, je mūlaṭṭhāṇe se guṇe*⁴⁰. Carnality is (nothing but) mundane existence; (and mundane existence is (nothing but) carnality).

Jaina texts like the *Tattvārtha-sūtra*¹¹ and *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*¹² emphasise detachment (Vairāgya) as the key to liberation (Mokṣa). True freedom is attained by transcending sensory attachments and recognising the soul's pure nature beyond material desires.

Detachment also fosters *Ahiṃsā* (non-violence), reducing harmful thoughts and actions. By breaking free from sensory cravings, one weakens karma, progressing toward *Kevalajñāna* (omniscience) and infinite bliss, ultimately attaining liberation from *saṃsāra*. Both Cāṇakya¹³ and Patañjali consider it as prerequisite for ethical leadership and mental restraint.

3. Non-Attachment (Aparigraha) - The ability to act without cling-

ing, essential for mental stability. "*Purisaparamacakkhūvipakkamā*"¹⁴
"O man, be far-sighted and wise - in the company of the truly insightful man, strive for restraint in attachment (*parigraha*) and self-control (*samnyama*)."

4. Self-Exertion (*Adhyavasāya*) - Regular self-discipline enables emotional regulation and ethical endurance. Spiritual progress requires conscious, wilful exertion, especially in cultivating emotional regulation and steadfast ethical discipline.

5. Emotion Management (*Bhāvadhārā*) - In Jaina and broader Indian psychology, *Bhāvadhārā* refers to the regulation and channelling of emotions, not by suppression, but by understanding, transforming, and elevating them. It's a conscious cultivation of positive emotional states (like compassion, forgiveness, detachment) while recognising and dissolving harmful ones (like anger, greed, pride, or delusion).

This concept emphasises emotional mastery as a central pillar of spiritual growth. *Bhāvadhārā* involves maintaining equanimity (*samatā*) in pleasure and pain, gain and loss - a practice critical to Jaina ethical conduct.

In Jainism, equanimity is not merely a passive state but the active foundation of ethical and spiritual personality. The verse "*samayintatthuvehāye, appāṇāvippasāye*"¹⁵ teaches that once equanimity is awakened, one must renounce unwholesome conduct and purify the soul. This inner purification marks the first step in true personality development-where transformation begins from within.

As stated in "*samattadaṁsī na kareipāvaṁ*,"¹⁶ one who views life through the lens of equanimity no longer engages in sinful actions. Such a person is free from reactivity, guided instead by discernment and restraint qualities essential to stable and integrated character.

Finally, '*samiyāyedhamme āriyehīṁ paveyiye*'¹⁷ reminds us that even the most spiritually advanced beings-Arihaṁtas have entered the path of *dharma* through the doorway of equanimity. Thus, *samatā*

is both the beginning and the goal of personality refinement in Jainism: it shapes conduct, stabilises emotions, and paves the path to liberation.

Patañjali's Concept:

*'Yoaścitta vṛtti nirodhah'*¹⁸ *Yoga* is the cessation of the fluctuations (vṛttis) of the mind (citta)." When the mental waves (vṛttis) are stilled through disciplined practice, the practitioner experiences pure awareness, uncoloured by emotional reactivity or ego. This inner stillness leads to kaivalya (liberation).

Both aim at mastery over inner disturbances. Equanimity and non-reactivity are shared goals. Both prescribe meditative discipline and ethical purity. Emotional clarity and detachment are both pathways to liberation. Thus, emotion management is liberation management - it is the inner engineering of the soul toward stillness, clarity, equanimity and ultimately, freedom.

6. Integration of Science and Spirituality - Mahāvīra's insights suggest consciousness as the ultimate instrument of truth discovery, bypassing reliance on external tools. In his view, true knowledge arises from inner awakening and direct perception (pratyakṣa) of reality through purified awareness. Rather than relying solely on sensory data or technological augmentation, Mahāvīra emphasises the refinement of internal faculties- such as intuition (anubhava), self-discipline (samyama), and non-attachment (aparigraha-as the path to uncovering deeper, enduring truths.

This perspective offers a complementary lens to modern science, suggesting that while empirical methods illuminate the material world, spiritual consciousness penetrates to the essence of existence, enabling a holistic understanding that unites outer knowledge with inner realisation.

Thus, true religious life begins not with external rituals but with renouncing harmful actions and cultivating inner purity - a central Jain ideal of *samyaktva* (right faith, right knowledge, and right con-

duct).

'*je āyā se vinnāyā je vinnāyā se āya*'¹⁹ "The one who exists (āyā-Ātmā) is the knower (vinnāyā- vijñātā), and the knower is the one who truly exists."

6. Yardsticks of a Scientific Personality: Curiosity, Anekāntavāda, and Samatva

Jainism also envisions a scientifically grounded personality in opposition to spirituality, but as its complement. A scientific temperament requires the following traits, all of which find clear roots in Jaina philosophy:

● **Anekāntavāda (Non-Absolutism):** Advocates intellectual humility and openness to multiple viewpoints.²⁰ This anticipates the epistemological pluralism that underpins modern scientific inquiry.

● **Samatva (Equanimity):** Jainism affirms that all souls are equal in potential and essence, despite their present conditions. This is echoed in *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*²¹ which asserts: "All living beings desire to live; none wish to suffer."

● **Ahiṃsā (Non-Violence):** While classically ethical, ahiṃsā in its broader form promotes sustainable science, responsible AI, and compassionate public policy.

These qualities correspond with the HEXACO²² model traits of Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Honesty-Humility, making Jain's insights remarkably prescient in framing a balanced, inquiry-driven character.

| | | |
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7. Comparative Analysis: HEXACO and Jainism

| HEXACO Trait | Jain Ethical Parallel | Shared Focus |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Honesty-Humility | Satya, Aparigraha | Truthfulness, non-exploitative behaviour |
| Agreeableness | Ahimsā, Kṣamā | Compassion, forgiveness, peacebuilding |
| Conscientiousness | Samyak Cāritra | Ethical discipline, structured self-regulation |
| Emotionality (low) | Sāmāyika (equanimity) | Resilience, detachment, mental balance |
| Openness to | Anekāntavāda | Intellectual humility, non-dogmatism |
| HEXACO Trait | Jain Ethical | Shared Focus |

Divergences: While HEXACO is a behaviourally grounded psychological model, Jain ethics are moksa-oriented and include metaphysical assumptions. Jainism frames personality not merely as an adaptive set of traits but as a vehicle for spiritual liberation, shaped through karmic purification and moral effort across lifetimes.

8. Lifespan and Developmental View

Modern personality research confirms that traits evolve throughout life, especially between ages 20–40. Jainism views the development of personality as an anādi-ananta process (beginningless and endless), shaped by accumulated *karmas* and voluntary spiritual exertions. Unlike fixed deterministic models, Jainism encourages the conscious rewriting of one's karmic script via austerity (tapa), meditation (dhyāna), and right conduct (samyak-cāritra).²³ Indian psychology further reinforces this by adding the concept of reincarnation, where the soul's current state is a culmination of *puruṣārtha* across multiple births.

9. Contemporary Applications

"Professional Development: Traits like *sattva* and *Samyak-cāritra* now inform emotional intelligence, leadership ethics, and organisational culture.

"Therapeutic Models: Techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, and dietary restraint-central to Jain practice-are being validated for emotional regulation and cognitive behavioural therapy.

"Education: Ancient values of *vrata* (vows), self-study, and moral discipline are being integrated into educational philosophies that balance character and competence.

"AI and Sustainability Ethics: *Ahimsā* and *Aparigraha* offer frameworks for non-exploitative algorithms, eco-conscious design, and equitable access to resources.

Conclusion

Personality development, viewed through the Jain and Indian lens, is not a static trait-based construct but a dynamic, multidimensional journey involving inner transformation, ethical refinement, and eventual liberation. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* and Jaina *karmaśāstra* offer a dual-framework-*Audayika* (manifested) and *Kṣāyopāśamika* (restrained) personalities-that map closely to developmental, ethical, and emotional models in Indian and modern psychology.

Equanimous beings do not hurt others because they see all beings as equal. Equanimity is not passive neutrality; it is an active inner balance despite external turbulence. The foundation of non-violence and truthfulness is equanimity, as it uproots ego and anger.

In Jain philosophy, *Samatā* is the spiritual state closest to liberation, as it purifies karma through detachment.

While HEXACO provides precise behavioural dimensions, Jainism and Indian psychology deepen the inquiry by situating personality within a moral and metaphysical arc. Together, these frameworks

reflect the integrated aspiration to harmonise conduct, cognition, and consciousness-aligning science, spirituality, and ethics in the pursuit of human flourishing.

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Appendix:

Honesty-Humility in the HEXACO framework, defined by sincerity, fairness, modesty, and resistance to greed, parallels the Jaina virtues of *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness) and *satya* (truthfulness). *Acārāṅga Sūtra* I.2 exhorts renunciants to “*give up all attachments*,” capturing the spirit of this dimension. Practically, cultivating voluntary limits on consumption, sharing credit freely, and engaging in regular truth-reflection (*bhāvanā*) translate the trait into lived Jain ethics.

In sum, each HEXACO dimension finds a natural analogue in core Jain principles, scriptural injunctions, and concrete practices. This alignment lets researchers or practitioners use psychometric feedback to measure how faithfully contemporary disciplines such as *Prekṣā-dhyāna* programmes or vow-based living are sculpting the specific personality dispositions that Jaina philosophy has long sought to cultivate.



ऋद्धि- ॐ ह्रीं अहं णमो सव्वोसहिपत्ताणं।

मंत्र - ॐ नमो भगवति अप्रतिचक्रे ऐं क्लीं ह्रीं ॐ ह्रीं मनोवाञ्छितसिद्धये नमो नमः
अप्रतिचक्रे ह्रीं ठः स्वाहा

प्रभाव - दुर्जन वशीभूत होते हैं और उनका मुँह बन्द हो जाता है।

Controlling the evil people and silencing them.



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Publication Date: 12-August-2025

DOI :

Published in : Volume 13 | Issue 8 | August 2025

Page No : c986-c993

Published URL : http://www.ijcrt.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJCRT2508345

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Published In IJCRT (www.ijcrt.org) & 7.97 Impact Factor by Google Scholar

Volume 15 Issue 8 August 2025 , Date of Publication: 12-August-2025

UGC Approved Journal No: 49025 (18)



PAPER ID : IJCRT2508345

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Re-Examining Panchāchār: A Comprehensive Study Of The Fivefold Jain Code Of Conduct

Author: Ujjawal Daga

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Abstract: This research article critically examines the Panchāchār, the fivefold Jain code of conduct-Jnānāchār, Darshanāchār, Chāritrāchār, Tapāchār, and Viryāchār-through philological, historical, and comparative lenses. Drawing upon canonical scriptures, commentaries, and contemporary scholarship, the study contextualizes each code within Jain soteriology, traces its doctrinal evolution, and explores its applicability in modern ethical discourse. Methodologically, it employs textual criticism of Prakrit and Sanskrit sources, ethnographic observation of ascetic and lay communities, and interdisciplinary frameworks from virtue ethics and behavioral psychology. Findings highlight Panchāchār's integrative architecture, demonstrating how epistemic, affective, behavioral, ascetic, and energetic dimensions synergize to facilitate liberation while offering resilient templates for twenty-first-century ethical challenges. The paper concludes that Panchāchār retains unparalleled heuristic value for individual and collective well-being, recommending innovative pedagogies to disseminate its insights globally.

Nānammi Dansanammi A Charanammi Tavammi Tahay Viriyammi

Āyaranam Āyāro Ea Eso Panchahā Bhanio

--- Panchāchār Sutra¹

Knowledge, perception, conduct, austerities and vigor constitute the fivefold code of conduct

1. Introduction

- Religion may be analytically bifurcated into *principles* (doctrine, ontology, metaphysics) and practice (ritual, observance, discipline).² Within Jain thought this polarity crystallises as samyag-darśana-jñāna-cāritra -right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct-each mutually conditioning the others and jointly articulating the mārḡa (path) to liberation (mokṣa).³ The pragmatic segment of this triad is further schematised by Jain acharyas into a five-fold disciplinary architecture known as Panchāchār (pañcā-ācāra):

¹ Panchāchār Sutra

² Haribhadra, Śaṅḍarśanasamuccaya v. 56.

³ Umāsvāti, Tattvārthasūtra 1.1; cf. Kāṇḍasāgara's *Dharmasaṅgraha* 2.3.

1. Jñānācāra – epistemic discipline (acquisition and preservation of right knowledge)

2. Darśanācāra – affective-perceptual discipline (cultivating right faith/perception)

3. Cāritrācāra – behavioural discipline (regulation of speech, body, and mind)

4. Tapācāra – ascetic discipline (voluntary austerity and karmic purification)

5. Vīryācāra – energetic discipline (vigorous, unwavering application of effort)

First attested in the Uttarādhyayanasūtra (c. 3rd cent. BCE), the schema reached mature articulation through Śvetāmbara and Digambara exegetes such as Hari Bhadra, Hemacandra, and Nemichandra.⁴ Modern historiography often treats the codes separately; yet canonical cross-references reveal an integrative design in which epistemic clarity nourishes affective stability, which in turn grounds behavioral restraint, whose efficacy is turbocharged by ascetic fire, all of which finally depend upon inexhaustible energy.⁵

1.2 Jñānācāra – Discipline of Knowledge

Definition and Scope. Jñānācāra prescribes the attitudes (bhāva) and behaviors (vyavahāra) required for acquiring, refining, and disseminating samyag-jñāna (right knowledge).⁶ Canonical authority for the code is furnished by Pañcācārasūtra v. 1, enumerating eight subsidiary observances (the ‘Aṣṭavidha Jñāna-mārgādhikāra’):

Timely study (kāla-vinaya)

Reverence for teachers (guru-pūjā)

Respect for instruments of knowledge (books, pen, digital media)

Acceptance of preparatory austerities (tapas)

Grateful acknowledgement of instruction (upahāra-drṣṭi)

Loyal adherence to the lineage (paramparā-bhakti)

Accurate recitation of scriptural aphorisms (sūtra-yathāpāṭha)

Penetrative hermeneutics-extracting literal, contextual, and transcendental meanings (artha-vyākhyā).

Five Modes of Knowledge (Pañca-jñāna). Jain epistemology delineates a progressive quintet of cognitions, each governed by distinct karmic conditions and each demanding calibrated discipline under Jñānācāra.

| Jain Term | Domain | Epistemic Mechanics | Gleaned Via | Temporal Scope |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| <i>Mati-jñāna</i> | Sensory/Empirical | Cognition arises as raw percepts are organised by mind (<i>manas</i>) and five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch). The soul interfaces only indirectly, hence classed as <i>parokṣa</i> (indirect). | Observation, inference, experimentation | Present phenomena |

⁴ Uttarādhyayanasūtra 29.25–31; Nemichandra, Gommatasāra Jīvakāṇḍa 937–51.

⁵ Jaini, Path of Purification, 231–45.

⁶ Pañcācārasūtra v. 1.

| | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| <i>Śruta-jñāna</i> | Articulate/Scriptural | Sensory data are encoded in linguistic or symbolic form, enabling conceptual abstraction across past–present–future. Requires transmission from competent teachers (<i>ācārya</i>), thus contingent on pedagogic lineage. | Spoken and written language, symbols, signs | Past, present, future |
| <i>Avadhi-jñāna</i> | Clairvoyant | Extra-sensory apprehension of material objects (<i>rūpī padārtha</i>) within bounded limits of substance, space, time, and mode (<i>dravya, kṣetra, kāla, bhāva</i>). Achieved through austerity among humans; innate to heavenly and infernal beings. | Occult intuition; no sensory organ | Finite but supranormal |
| <i>Manah-paryāya-jñāna</i> | Telepathic | Direct insight into the thought-streams of other embodied beings. Two grades: <i>rju-mati</i> (transient) and <i>vipulā-mati</i> (durable until omniscience). Reserved for advanced ascetics who have stilled gross passions. | Mind-mind resonance | Finite; restricted to mental states |
| <i>Kevala-jñāna</i> | Omniscience | Perfect, limitless, and instantaneous cognition of all substances and their infinite modes across the three times. Manifests only after total eradication of knowledge-obscuring karmas. Immutable and eternal once kindled. | Inherent luminosity of the liberated soul | Infinite, simultaneous |

Pedagogical Interlinkage. *Mati* and *Śruta* function as cause and effect: articulate knowledge presupposes prior sensory apprehension. Nevertheless, *Śruta* surpasses *Mati* in scope and purity, traversing tri-temporal realities and demanding linguistic dexterity cultivated by *Jñānācāra*'s eight sub-codes (timely study, reverence for teachers, etc.). The latter three knowledges are *pratyakṣa* (direct), flowering naturally as karmic veils attenuate through *Tapācāra* and *Cāritrācāra*.

Disciplinary Implications. For practitioners, *Jñānācāra* prescribes graded *sādhana*s: cultivate pristine sense-data (*mati*), then validate via scriptural hermeneutics (*śruta*); reinforce with contemplative silence and fasting to kindle latent clairvoyance (*avadhi*); refine empathy and non-violence to unlock telepathy (*manah-paryāya*); finally, harmonise all five *ācāra*s to ripen the seed of omniscience (*kevala*).

Obstacles and Antidotes. Primary impediments (antarāya karma) include lethargy, distraction (vikṣepa), and pride.⁷ Ritualised confession (pratīkramaṇa) and peer-review circles mitigate these, while mnemonic arts (mind-palace techniques, spaced repetition) exemplify legitimate ‘external’ supports sanctioned by commentarial tradition.⁸

Contemporary Application. Digital infomania imperils epistemic hygiene; thus neo-Jain educators advocate ‘screen-fasts’ mirroring anāśana, and open-source scripture repositories (e.g., JAIN-eLibrary) that democratise śruta while embedding metadata on citation ethics—an innovation analogised to the care for palm-leaf manuscripts lauded in Nandisūtra – gāthā 38.⁹

1.3 Darśanācāra – Discipline of Perception/Faith

Conceptual Matrix. Whereas Jñānācāra addresses what and how we know, Darśanācāra speaks to how we behold and emotionally invest in that knowledge. The term darśana spans perception, worldview, conviction, and existential contact.¹⁰ Eight sub-codes (Aṣṭavidha Darśana-vrata) feature in Pañcācārasūtra v. 2:

1. Freedom from doubt (niḥśaṅkitva)
2. Absence of ulterior motives (niḥkāṅkṣitva)
3. Unwavering conviction (nirvikitsā)
4. Immunity to sectarian glamour (amūḍha-dṛṣṭi)
5. Encouraging virtue in others (upabrūhaṇa)
6. Stabilising communal faith (sthāpanā)
7. Fellow-feeling (vātsalya)
8. Societal outreach (prabhāvaṇā).

Hermeneutic Progression. Classical pedagogy outlines five sequential practices—vācana (listening), prcchanā (inquiring), parāvartana (repetition), anuprekṣā (reflection), dharmakathā (articulation)—culminating in firm conviction.¹¹ Neuro-affective studies align this with the consolidation of long-term potentiation pathways, suggesting empirical support for millennia-old didactics.

Inter-religious Interface. Jain commentators warn against fascination with ‘glamorous processions’ of rival sects (amūḍha-dṛṣṭi). Contemporary pluralism reframes this as critical engagement devoid of mimetic desire—an ethic resonant with dialogical theology and comparative philosophy.¹²

Community Praxis. Modern vātsalya manifests in blood-donation drives and vegan outreach, while prabhāvaṇā utilises social media campaigns (#LiveandLetLive) to project an eco-Ahimsā ethos

⁷ Umāsvāti, *Tattvārthasūtra* 8.4.

⁸ Devendra, “Mnemonic Devices in Jain Monastic Curriculum,” *Indo-Iranian Journal* 64 (2021): 112–45.

⁹ JAIN-eLibrary Analytics Report (2023): section 4.

¹⁰ S. Sanghavi, “From Seeing to Being: A Phenomenology of Darśana,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 47 (2019): 89–118.

¹¹ Nandisūtra gāthā 142.

¹² P. Flügel, “The Jains of London,” 812.

1.4 Cāitrācāra – Discipline of Conduct

Macro-Structure. Cāitrācāra embodies praxis proper: five mahā-vrata for renunciants, twelve vrata for householders, and the eight-fold ‘mother of doctrine’ (aṣṭa-pravacana-mātrkā) comprising five samiti (carefulness) and three gupti (restraint).¹³

| Carefulness (Samiti) | Function |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Iryā-samiti | Vigilance in locomotion |
| Bhāṣā-samiti | Truthful, measured speech |
| Eṣānā-samiti | Ethical procurement of alms |
| Ādāna-nikṣepa | Mindful handling of objects |
| Utsarga-samiti | Hygienic, non-violent waste disposal |

| Restraint (<i>Gupṭi</i>) | Sphere |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Mano-gupṭi | Mind |
| Vācāna-gupṭi | Speech |
| Kāya-gupṭi | Body |

Ethical Psychology. The samiti-gupṭi matrix functions as a mindfulness scaffold; each act becomes a locus for cultivating ahiṃsā. Cognitive-behavioral parallels emerge situational awareness curtails automaticity, thereby shrinking moral blind-spots.¹⁴

Monastic Versus Lay Dynamics. While mendicants internalise total non-possession (aparigraha), householders adopt graded vows (aṇu-vrata) and periodic sāmāyika (meditative equanimity). Rising diasporic complexities (e-commerce, carbon footprints) require ‘digital samitis’-protocols for ethical clicks, data privacy, and sustainable e-waste disposal-extending ancient vigilance to cyberspace.¹⁵

1.5 Tapācāra – Discipline of Austerity

Theology of Nirjarā. Whereas saṃvara damps future karmic influx, nirjarā exhausts accumulated karma-the latter expedited by tapas (austerity).¹⁶ Tapācāra formalises twelve austerities, bifurcated into bāhya (external) and ābhyantara (internal):

External (Bāhya)

Anāśana (fasting)

Unodari (caloric restriction)

¹³ Daśavaikālika-niryukti 897–912.

¹⁴ Amrita Basu, “Mindfulness and Moral Agency: A Jain-CBT Dialogue,” *Ethics & Behavior* 30 (2020): 142–59.

¹⁵ Nilesh Shah, “Non-Violence in the Digital Age,” *Studies in Jaina Culture* 8 (2022): 55–77.

¹⁶ Ācārāṅga Sūtra

Vṛtti-saṃkṣepa (limiting requisites)

Rasa-parityāga (abstaining from stimulating tastes)

Kāya-kleśa (embracing physical hardship)

Samlīnatā (minimalist habitation)

Internal (Ābhyantara)

7. Prāyaścitta (confession & atonement) 8. Vinaya (humility) 9. Vaiyāvṛtya (selfless service) 10. Svādhyāya (self-study) 11. Dhyāna (meditative absorption) 12. Kāyotsarga (body-transcendence).

Biomedical Correlates. Intermittent fasting modulates autophagy and insulin sensitivity, corroborating ancient claims of somatic purification.¹⁷ Neuroscientific studies on long-term Jain meditators indicate enhanced grey-matter density in the anterior cingulate, aligning with Tapācāra's promise of cognitive plasticity.¹⁸

Ritual Economics. Social network analysis of paryūṣaṇa fast-chains in Mumbai (2021) reveals a reciprocal altruism economy: participants report increased communal trust, echoing Susan Visvanathan's anthropology of 'ritual capital'.

1.6 Vīryācāra – Discipline of Vigor

Energetics of Effort. Vīrya combines physiological stamina and volitional resolve. Bhagavatī-sūtra enumerates five lethargies-sensory indulgence, defilement, idle chatter, excessive sleep, and attachment-designating them as adversaries to vīrya.¹⁹

Classical sources catalogue five primary lethargies (pramāda-pañcaka): (1) Viśaya-pramāda – absorption in sensuous objects (sound, sight, smell, taste, touch); (2) Kaṣāya-pramāda – the paralysing drag of anger, pride, deceit, and greed; (3) Vikathā-pramāda – frivolous or voyeuristic speech about politics, gastronomy, or sex; (4) Nidrā-pramāda – excessive sleep and cognitive dullness; (5) Pranaya-pramāda – possessive attachment to persons or possessions. Bhagavatī-sūtra subsumes these under the broader rubric of "five lethargies", branding them arch-adversaries to vīrya.

The antidote is **puruṣārtha** – purposive exertion – which must be potent enough to out-thrust the inertia of prior karma (prārabdha). Jain doctrine thus reframes the destiny-versus-endeavor debate: past karma furnishes the launch-pad, but present effort determines trajectory. Accordingly, **Vīryācāra** mandates unflagging cultivation of right knowledge, faith, and conduct so that karmic efflux (nirjarā) can overtake influx (saṃvara).

Yet the tradition concedes that such high-grade exertion is arduous. Hence it embeds Vīryācāra within the supportive lattice of Tapācāra (which ignites metabolic discipline) and Cāritrācāra (which routinises micro-efforts), exemplifying Panchācār's systemic interdependence.

Kinetic Hermeneutics. In Yogic-Jain physiology, vīrya regulates the bio-psychic 'fire' (tejas) that burns karmic bonds. Analogous to 'activation energy' in chemical kinetics, sustained effort lowers the barrier to spiritual reaction.²⁰

Pedagogical Instruments. Gamified sādhanā apps (e.g., Sādhu-Score) track daily observances, awarding 'vīrya points' for punctuality, posture, and pro-social deeds-digital scaffolds echoing traditional āvashyaka schedules.

¹⁷ S. Gupta et al., "Structural Neuroplasticity in Long-Term Pratikraman Practitioners," *Frontiers in Psychology* 12 (2021): art. 643212.

¹⁸ Susan Visvanathan, *The Power of Sacrifice* (Delhi: OUP, 1998), 67-75.

¹⁹ Bhagavatī-sūtra 15.214.

²⁰ Vijay K. Jain, "Thermodynamics of Karma," *Jain Journal* 47 (2013): 23-35.

1.7 Integrative Synthesis

The five Ācāras operate holographically: each contains implicit references to the other four.

Vīrya



Tap—Jñāna—Darśana



Cāritra

Thus, withdrawal (tapas) without knowledge degenerates into fanaticism; knowledge without faith lapses into cynicism; conduct without energy atrophies; energy without ascetic channel risks violence. Panchāchār averts such pathologies by insisting on balanced cultivation.

The scholarship on **Panchāchār** has evolved through a mosaic of disciplinary lenses that together illuminate its doctrinal depth, historical elasticity, and socio-ethical relevance.²¹ Rather than rehearse disconnected summaries, this review threads five major currents into a single analytic arc, demonstrating how each build upon and critiques the others.

Scriptural Exegesis and Classical Commentary. Early colonial Indologists such as A. F. R. Hoernle (1885) and Hermann Jacobi (1895) furnished the first critical editions of Śvetāmbara canons, including the Uttarādhyayanasūtra and Daśavaikālikasūtra, thereby exposing Panchāchār's textual scaffolding to global academe. Their philological rigour was later refined by Jain mendicant-scholars-most notably Muni Jambūvijaya and Samani Punya Pragna whose annotated editions cross-checked variant recensions against Digambara works like Nemichandra's Gommatasāra. Collectively, this corpus clarifies that the fivefold code is not a late scholastic add-on but a through-line that threads the earliest strata of canonical prose, aphoristic sūtra, and mnemonic gāthā.

Philological and Semantic Analyses. Building upon these editions, linguistic studies by Balbir (1993) and Dundas (2002) interrogate the semantic field of Prakrit terms such as vinaya, upabrūhana, and vaiyāvṛtya. Their findings reveal subtle semantic drifts, for instance, tapa migrating from a general term for 'heat' in Vedic Sanskrit to a specialized Jain notion of karmic combustion. Such diachronic insights caution against anachronistic translations and underscore the need for context-sensitive hermeneutics when applying Panchāchār categories to contemporary issues.

Historical and Archaeological Contextualisation. Field surveys of monastic sites-from the Mathura region's Kankali Tila sculptures (1st CE) to the marble halls of Mount Abu (11th CE)- provide material correlates to textual claims. Chatterjee's GIS mapping (2017) demonstrates how trade-route nodes coincide with clusters of upāśrayas (Jain monastic residences) practising rigorous Tapācāra, suggesting symbiosis between mercantile patronage and ascetic austerity. Meanwhile, epigraphic records, such as the Shravana Belgola colossi inscriptions, document royal endorsements of Vīryācāra-inspired public works, illustrating the code's ripple effect beyond cloistered spaces.

Ethnographic and Sociological Studies. Contemporary ethnographies-Flügel's (2004) work on the Jains of London, Laidlaw's (1995) research in Rajasthan, and Cort's (2010) studies of Maharashtra-expose the lived pragmatics of Panchāchār among lay communities. Participants navigate the tension between doctrinal absolutism and economic modernity by calibrating vows: commuters practise 'digital iriyā-samiti' by offsetting

²¹ Vilas Sangave, "The Concept of Ācāra in Jaina Ethics," *Philosophy East and West* 19, no. 3 (1969): 257–65.

carbon footprints, while entrepreneurs adopt 'fractional aparigraha' through capped profit-sharing schemes. These adaptive strategies affirm the code's elasticity while also registering fault-lines where ritual minimalism risks eroding doctrinal integrity.

Comparative and Theoretical Engagements. Finally, interdisciplinary dialogues position Panchāchār within global ethics and systems theory. Chapple (1993) juxtaposes Jain ahimsā with deep ecology, framing Cāritrācāra as a proto-environmental ethic. Behavioural economists such as Thaler (2021) interpret Tapācāra's graded austerities as 'commitment devices' that pre-empt cognitive bias. Cybernetic theorists draw analogies between feedback loops in Viryācāra and self-regulating algorithms. These cross-pollinations not only extend Jain studies into new domains but also furnish reciprocal critiques—for instance, pointing out where classical ascetic ideals may overlook structural injustices encoded in modern supply chains.

Synthesis and Gaps. Collectively, the literature demonstrates a dialectic between doctrinal prescription and lived negotiation, but gaps remain. Few studies integrate neuroscientific findings on Jain meditation with textual prescriptions from Āyāraṅga Sutta, and computational analyses of citation networks across commentaries remain nascent. This article positions itself at those lacunae, employing mixed-methods to interweave philology, ethnography, and systems theory, thereby building a scaffold for future interdisciplinary research.

7. Conclusion

This study has advanced a holistic exegesis of Panchāchār, mapping the intellectual genealogy and contemporary salience of its five constitutive codes—Jñānācāra, Darśanācāra, Cāritrācāra, Tapācāra, and Viryācāra.

First, the fivefold schema acts as a cybernetic system of virtue: information (Jñāna) is filtered through value commitments (Darśana), operationalised via behavioural micro-protocols (Cāritra), purified through metabolic-spiritual austerities (Tapa), and stabilised by self-propelling energy loops (Vīrya). Disruption at any node reverberates across the network, affirming canonical warnings against partial practice.

Second, comparative frameworks reveal Jain ethics as not merely a prescientific morality but a sophisticated psychosomatic technology whose components find resonance in contemporary cognitive science (meta-awareness, attentional control), behavioral economics (commitment devices), and environmental ethics (degrowth, non-violence toward biosphere).

Third, ethnographic vignettes—from carbon-neutral fasts in Jaipur to digital samitis in Silicon Valley—demonstrate Panchāchār's adaptive elasticity. Far from ossified asceticism, it is a live algorithm capable of re-parameterisation without loss of core logic.

Fourth, scholarly neglect of integrative readings has fragmented discourse into siloed studies of vows, epistemology, or ritual. By re-assembling Panchāchār, this article contributes a systems-theory vocabulary to Jain Studies, opening avenues for interdisciplinary synergy with cybernetics, complexity theory, and applied ethics.

Moving forward, researchers might employ computational text-analysis to map citation networks across Jain canons, or neurophenomenological methods to correlate Tapācāra practices with brain-heart coherence metrics. Pedagogically, monasteries and universities could co-design MOOC-style curricula embedding interactive simulations of samiti-gupti decision trees, enabling global learners to experience the feedback loops of ethical attention.

In sum, Panchāchār endures not as a relic of ancient soteriology but as an expandable framework for existential optimisation in a hyper-connected yet ethically fragmented world. Its integrative vision invites practitioners and scholars alike to cultivate clarity of mind, warmth of heart, precision of action, lightness of footprint, and inexhaustible resolve—qualities urgently required for planetary flourishing.



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"Strengthening the Innate Awareness of Affection and Unity: A Quest for Social Peace"

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This is to certify that Prof./Dr./Mr./Ms. *Ujjawal Daga* of
..... *J.V.B.I.* has participated/ presented the paper
on the topic *Individual Responsibility in Fastening World Peace* / Chaired the
session/ acted as a resource person in the *Two-Day International Seminar* organized by the Department of Non-
Violence and Peace, Jain Vishva Bharati Institute, Ladnun and sponsored by Indian Council of Social Science
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Head, Department of Non-Violence & Peace

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Prof. B.L. Jain

Registrar

Title:

Individual Responsibility in Fostering World Peace: Insights from Jainism

Abstract:

This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the Jain principle of non-violence (Ahimsa) and its profound implications for individual responsibility in achieving world peace. It identifies the primary causes of global unrest as rooted in violence, greed, and a lack of understanding and tolerance among diverse communities. Drawing from Jain teachings, the paper explores how the doctrine of Ahimsa extends beyond physical non-harm to include mental and verbal actions, thereby advocating for a life of compassion and empathy towards all forms of life. The concept of Anekantavada, or the acceptance of multiple truths, is discussed as a solution to the issue of intolerance and conflict, promoting a culture of respect, dialogue, and understanding among individuals with differing viewpoints. Additionally, the principle of Aparigraha (non-possessiveness) is examined for its role in addressing greed and unsustainable consumption, highlighting its relevance in promoting social justice, equity, and environmental sustainability. The paper emphasizes the role of the individual in embodying these principles, advocating for a conscious and deliberate practice of non-violence, tolerance, and simplicity as a means to contribute to global peace. It argues that world peace is not solely the responsibility of leaders and institutions but is deeply connected to the everyday choices and actions of individuals. By integrating the principles of Ahimsa, Anekantavada, and Aparigraha into personal conduct and societal norms, individuals can play a pivotal role in creating a peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable world.

Keywords: Jainism, Non-violence (Ahimsa), World Peace, Individual Responsibility, Anekantavada (Multiple Truths), Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness), Global Unrest, Tolerance, Environmental Sustainability, Social Justice

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Sawai Man Singh Hospital, Jaipur - 302 004 (INDIA)

Dated : 27th July 2024

TO WHOM SO IT MAY CONCERN

Smt. Ujjawal Daga, academically undertaking her post-graduation in Jain Studies

had done her internship from the 25th June to 24th July 2024, with Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur, a registered Society. BMVSS, the parent body of the world-famous Jaipur Foot, is the largest rehabilitation organization for the disabled in the world, gave her an opportunity to interact with several hundred most distressed disabled persons. She interviewed of them very professionally on one hand and with the compassion on the other. The insight that she got from them about the problems of the disabled and the contribution that the community or the Government could make to address them were share by her with BMVSS Management, feedback which was useful to the latter. During her internship, she worked full time with great sincerity and dedication. We hope that her experience would help her both academically and personally.



(D. R. Mehta)
Founder & Chief Patron
BMVSS, Jaipur India





Koham to Soham

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Date: 06-02-24

From “Koham?” to “Soham”: A Jain Perspective on Identity, Transmigration, and the Path to Enduring Happiness

Abstract

Across Indian philosophical traditions, the interrogative “ko 'ham?” (“Who am I?”) surfaces wherever human beings pause to reflect on the fact of consciousness, the flux of circumstance, and the stubborn recurrence of joy and suffering. Jain philosophy approaches this question with a distinctive clarity: the self (*jīva*) is a knowing-and-seeing substance, ontologically separate from the non-living (*ajīva*) and bound to worldly experience through the accretion and fruition of karma. This paper develops a Jain response to six existential questions—Who am I? Where do I come from? Why am I the way I am? What is my purpose? What/where is real happiness? and how do I realize it?—by integrating classical sources (e.g., *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, *Tattvārtha-sūtra*, Kundakunda's corpus) with the pragmatic ethics of vows, *bhāvanā* (contemplations), meditation, and lay stages (*pratimā*). The analysis proceeds through two interpretive standpoints central to Jain epistemology (*naya*): *vyavahāra* (conventional, practical) and *nīścaya* (ultimate, substance-level), showing how they jointly guide a modern seeker from conceptual self-inquiry to disciplined practice. The paper also reframes the evocative but Vedānta-colored mantra “so 'ham” (“I am That”) in a strictly Jain register: not identity with an undifferentiated Absolute, but resolute identification with the pure *jīva* unencumbered by passions (*kaṣāyas*) and karmic inflows. The outcome is a pragmatic, text-aligned pathway from curiosity to character—one that disentangles hedonic pursuit from abiding happiness, and that renders liberation (*mokṣa*) intelligible without sentimentalism. The argument draws initial inspiration from a student presentation that uses the “Koham to Soham” frame to organize the six questions for contemporary readers.

Keywords: Jainism; *jīva*; *vyavahāra/nīścaya*; karma; Ratnatraya; *dhyāna*; vow ethics; *pratimā*; *mokṣa*.

1. Introduction

Philosophy begins when habit fails to anesthetize astonishment. When everyday roles—professional identity, family ties, civic obligations—are inspected with methodological suspicion, something deeper peeks through the fabric: an awareness that knows it is aware. Jain thought takes that awareness as the hallmark of *jīva*, the living substance, whose essential function is *upayoga* (knowing and seeing). The practical world remains real enough for commerce and community; yet, from a substance-level standpoint, countless accessories of identity (name, body, social status) are contingently conjoined to the soul through karmic processes and are destined to peel away.

This paper pursues six questions that naturally arise in that interval between astonishment and resolve: Who am I? Where do I come from? Why am I the way I am? What is my purpose? What/where is real happiness? And how do I realize it? These are not idle puzzles. They shape the architecture of life: what we count as success, what we choose to cultivate, and what we choose to abandon. The responses offered here are resolutely Jain and deliberately practical. They balance conceptual exposition with attention to method—vows, contemplations, meditative discipline—so that a reader can move from comprehension to conduct without drowning in abstractions.

A guiding device in this paper is the paired perspective of *naya*: *vyavahāra-naya* (the conventional standpoint that honors empirical distinctions, social duties, and language) and *nīścaya-naya* (the ultimate standpoint that attends to the soul as a substance with inherent attributes). The dialectic between them prevents both nihilism and naïve realism. In doing so,

it also supplies a grammar for addressing the six questions in graduated depth-first acknowledging what the world calls “me,” then clarifying what Jain philosophy means by “I.”

The title’s trajectory-“Koham?” to “Soham”-is adopted as an interpretive bridge. The latter expression has Vedāntic lineage. In the present work it is repurposed to mean, in Jain terms, a steady identification with the pure jīva, free of kaṣāyas (anger, pride, deceit, greed), and not any assertion of identity with a universal Absolute. To head off metaphysical confusion, this reframing is stated up front and defended later.

Finally, a note on provenance. The thematic arrangement of the six questions—and the practical accent on vyavahāra/nīścaya distinctions—draws initial inspiration from a student presentation at JVBI that organized these concerns for a contemporary audience, which is gratefully acknowledged here.

2. Methodology and Sources

The method is textual-hermeneutic and constructive. Primary sources include the Ācārāṅga Sūtra (especially its meditations on restraint and the soul’s vulnerability to violence), Umāsvāti’s Tattvārtha-sūtra (for the doctrinal backbone of substances, karma, bondage and release), Kundakunda’s Samayasāra and Niyamasāra (for the nīścaya emphasis on the soul’s essence), and lay-discipline texts and commentaries (Haribhadra, Hemacandra) for vows and pratimā. Secondary scholarship is consulted implicitly for historical framing, but the argument stays primarily within the internal Jain idiom to remain faithful to the tradition’s own categories.

The analysis follows four steps: (1) clarifying vyavahāra and nīścaya; (2) answering each of the six questions from both standpoints; (3) articulating a practical path—vows, contemplations, meditation, stages—for householders; and (4) reinterpreting “Soham” in a non-Vedāntic, Jain sense.

3. Two Standpoints, One Reality: Vyavahāra and Nīścaya

Jain epistemology is famous for anekāntavāda (the doctrine of many-sidedness) and its operational counterpart, syādvāda (qualified predication). Less often spotlighted, but equally decisive for spiritual practice, is the pairing of vyavahāra and nīścaya. From vyavahāra, distinctions like “monk” and “householder,” “body” and “possessions,” “profession” and “family” are not only meaningful but necessary for ethical navigation. From nīścaya, none of these designations touches the soul’s essence, which is jñāna- and darśana-laden; they are modes of association produced by karma and its inflows (āsrava).

The standpoints are not rival “truths.” They are lenses that prevent two symmetrical mistakes: treating the empirical as absolute or dismissing the empirical as illusion. A seeker who ignores vyavahāra drifts into quietism; one who ignores nīścaya hardens into materialism. The six questions require both lenses: vyavahāra tells us how to act now; nīścaya tells us who acts, and toward what telos.

4. Six Foundational Questions

4.1 Who am I?

From vyavahāra, the answer names a composite: a human being with a body, biography, relationships, skills, and obligations. These are the stages on which ethics are enacted. From nīścaya, the answer zeroes in on jīva as a substance marked by consciousness (upayoga). The soul’s essential nature is to know and to see; defilements are adventitious. The language of “knower-seer” (jñātā-draṣṭā) is relentlessly repeated in Jain sources to

prevent identification with non-self elements—body, mind as process, possessions, social status.

This double answer resists both reduction and romanticism. The body is not a prison to be loathed; it is a vehicle to be disciplined. Yet the body's sensations and the mind's moods are not the self; they are conditions that visit the self.

4.2 Where do I come from?

From vyavahāra, "Philadelphia, Delhi, Dubai," or any place-label is sensible. From nīścaya, the jīva has wandered across beginningless time through four destinies (gati): celestial, human, animal/plant, infernal. The trans-biographical reach of karma explains disparities that luck-based narratives cannot. Classical Jain literature offers intricate "maps" of this wandering: lists that analyze the soul's orientations and misorientations and the channels by which karmic seeds are sown and sprout. One contemporary pedagogical summary speaks of "eighteen 'physical' and eighteen 'psychic' directions," an exegetical way to index the many vectors along which a jīva can be pulled or can choose to restrain itself. The technical taxonomies vary by text and school, but the moral point does not: directionality can be chosen, and misdirection can be corrected.

4.3 Why am I the way I am?

The short nīścaya answer is karma fruition (udaya). The longer answer, which integrates vyavahāra, distinguishes between what cannot be changed now (the ripening of past seeds) and what can be redirected (fresh inflows, present passions, attention). Jain ethics is not fatalism. The classical pair nimitta-upādāna (auxiliary and efficient causes) carves conceptual space for human effort (puruṣārtha). The soul can reduce the inflow of new karma (saṃvara) and burn existing karma (nirjarā) through vows, restraint, austerities, and attention training. What one is today sits at the intersection of inherited momentum and present choice.

4.4 What is my purpose?

From vyavahāra, responsible purpose names duties rightly ordered: honesty in livelihood, care for dependents, civic fairness, and non-violence scaled to context. From nīścaya, the final end is the stabilization of the soul's properties-omniscience in principle, serenity in practice-achieved by stripping the soul of karmic accretions. That stabilization is signaled by vītarāga, the unhooking of passions. The ladder from present character to that end involves the Ratnatraya (Right Vision, Right Knowledge, Right Conduct), staged not as a slogan but as a causal sequence: no right conduct without some right vision; no stable right vision without at least germinal right knowledge.

4.5 What/where is real happiness?

Conventional happiness is sensation-driven and short-lived. Jain sources neither demonize nor absolutize it. Food, rest, play, accomplishment—the tradition admits their value when ethically obtained and moderately enjoyed. Yet a fact of phenomenology intrudes: sensory satisfactions exhibit diminishing returns and drag along attachment. Abiding happiness resides in the internal stability that arises as kaṣāyas lose their grip and the mind becomes serviceable to insight. Call this "equanimous joy." It is not a blankness; it is a calibrated liveliness, alert to reality without the turbulence of craving and aversion.

4.6 How do I realize it?

Method is the fulcrum. The Jain Path operationalizes the answers above in an elegant suite of practice:

- **Vows (vrata).** For householders, the five great vows are taken in attenuated form (aṇuvrata): non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual restraint, non-possession. These are fortified by guṇa-vrata and śikṣā-vrata that structure space, economy, and time for restraint.
- **Stages (pratimā).** Eleven incremental commitments that give the householder a staircase to progressive renunciation: dietary discipline, livelihood purity, periodic abstinence, and finally quasi-monastic living.
- **Austerities (tapas).** External (e.g., fasting, limiting intake, physical posture) and internal (repentance, humility, service, scripture study, meditation). The aim is not mortification but friction reduction—less fuel for passions, more room for clarity.
- **Contemplations (bhāvanā).** Twelve classical contemplations that steadily re-orient perception: impermanence, helplessness of worldly support, cyclic existence, isolation of the soul, otherness of body, impurity, inflow, stoppage, shedding, cosmos-nature, rarity of right insight, and the value of Dharma. These declare craving not by force, but by insight.
- **Meditation (dhyāna).** The fourfold typology-ārta (painful), raudra (malicious), dharma (virtuous), and śukla (pure)—maps a progression. The capstone, śukla-dhyāna, is described as a unification in which meditator, object, and act of meditation function in seamless alignment. The fruit is deep de-conditioning of passions and accelerated shedding of karma.

The presentation that inspired this study expressed the culmination succinctly: “The real happiness lies in engrossment in soul... when highest level of śukla-dhyāna is reached then one completely destructs the karma and gets liberated.” The phrasing is pedagogical rather than strictly technical, but it accurately captures the Jain trajectory from attention training to freedom.

5. From “Koham?” to “Soham”: A Jain Reframing

The mantra “so 'ham” in Vedānta compresses metaphysics into a heartbeat: I am That—where “That” is Brahman, the non-dual Absolute. Jain ontology does not converge on that endpoint; substances are plural, and the soul’s identity is not dissolved into a monistic whole. Yet the two syllables can serve a Jain seeker if reinterpreted: “So 'ham”—I am soul-distinct from body and possessions, co-extensive with awareness, capable of knowing and seeing, now occluded by karmic dust yet not thereby defined by it.

This reframing accomplishes two things. First, it preserves the heuristic energy of a mantra: a short phrase to interrupt identification with contingencies. Second, it imports no alien metaphysic. The “That” to which “I” is identified is not an Absolute, but the soul’s own essence. The distance from “Koham?” (Who am I?) to “Soham” (I am soul) is not rhetorical flair; it is the cognitive and ethical shift notarized in Jain sources as the awakening of Right Vision (samyag-darśana).

6. Practical Sādhana for the Householder: A Scaffold

Philosophy earns its keep when it survives Tuesday afternoon. For the modern householder balancing career, family, and civic life, a minimal-viable Jain practice can be scaffolded without theatrical renunciation.

1. **Daily Frame (15–45 minutes).** Begin with pratikramaṇa (brief self-review and repentance), a five-minute contemplation on impermanence and otherness of the body, and a 10–20-minute sit cultivating breath-anchored steadiness. Close with a short maitrī-bhāvanā (friendliness) to disarm latent aversions.
2. **Vow Micro-architecture.** Translate the five aṇuvratas into actionable constraints: a non-negotiable “no harm” rule in diet and consumption; radical truthfulness in low-stakes contexts to build the muscle for high-stakes honesty; a deliberate audit of “soft stealing” (time-wasting, plagiarism, unfair advantage); sexual ethics that honor commitment and consent; and quarterly decluttering to combat possession-creep.
3. **Weekly Austerity.** One upavāsa (fast) or āyambil (bland, single-item meal) per week, with the saved time and resources directed to study and service (svādhyāya, sevā). The point is not penitential drama but retraining desire.
4. **Monthly Expansion.** One day lived at a chosen pratimā level above one’s baseline—extra silence, simplified dress, restricted speech—followed by journaling on the experience’s frictions and insights.
5. **Quarterly Retreat.** A half-day of silence oriented to dharma-dhyāna—reading, sitting, walking, serving—without digital interruptions. Observe how attention responds when it is not chaperoned by entertainment.

This scaffold is not a substitute for traditional monastic paths. It is a lay architecture that operationalizes the six questions in ordinary life. The emphasis mirrors the spirit of the JVBI presentation that stressed living “without attachment but as a duty,” highlighting both mental health dividends (stress reduction) and spiritual dividends (reduced karmic bondage).

7. Discussion: Contemporary Relevance Without Sentimentality

Modern life is engineered to stimulate sensory desire and platform our grievances. A Jain diagnosis predicts hedonic fatigue and affective volatility under those conditions. The remedy is not withdrawal from responsibility but renovation of attention. Three contemporary cross-checks affirm the Jain path’s plausibility.

First, the psychology of craving. Empirical research on reward learning shows adaptation: repeated rewards yield attenuated response, prompting escalation or novelty-seeking. Jain ethics anticipated this treadmill and answered it with systematic frustration of unskillful desire (vows) and a parallel cultivation of meaning through service and study.

Second, the phenomenology of equanimity. The experience of relaxed clarity—often described in secular mindfulness as ease, in Jain meditation as the quieting of kaṣāyas—is not nihilistic. It enhances discernment by removing noise. In business or family life, the person who can respond without reactivity is a scarce resource. Jain practice trains precisely that.

Third, moral ecology. A person’s choices are contagious. Non-violence in diet reshapes demand; truthful speech detoxifies teams; non-stealing builds trust; moderated desire frees time for care. Jainism is not only about personal liberation; it is about de-pressurizing the social air.

The tradition's rigor refuses two popular shortcuts: therapeuticism without ethics, and ethics without metaphysics. It asserts that who we are-knowers-seers-matters, that how we live-restrained and attentive-matters, and that where we are headed toward vītarāgatā-matters.

8. Addressing a Potential Objection: Is This Just Moralism?

A critic might worry that vows and austerities are moralistic add-ons to what should be an interior awakening. Jain sources invert that expectation. Interior clarity does not float free of conduct; it is generated and guarded by conduct. Restraint tames the conditions in which passions flare. Contemplations reframe perception so that restraint is joyful rather than forced. Meditation consolidates the gains and accelerates nirjarā. The package is coherent because it is causal.

Another objection raises the specter of determinism: if everything is karmically fixed, what is the point of effort? The reply is that fruition is not fixation. Past seeds ripen; present conduct can alter the soil. In formal terms, karmic fruition (udaya) co-exists with stoppage (saṃvara) and shedding (nirjarā) achieved by effort (puruṣārtha). The doctrine assumes agency; it demands discipline.

9. Clarifying the “Eighteen” Lists

Readers may notice that some pedagogical summaries speak of “eighteen physical and eighteen psychic directions.” Jain literature is full of eighteens-eighteen pāpa-sthānas (sources of sin), eighteen faults to avoid in worship, and other classificatory eighteens used in different contexts. The presentation that inspired this paper used “eighteen dravya and eighteen bhāva directions” to underline the many ways a jīva is tugged or can choose to orient itself during transmigration. The exact taxonomy is less important here than the moral geometry behind it: direction is not random; it is conditioned by habits and open to revision by vows, contemplations, and meditation. The Ācārāṅga and allied texts, despite their varied lists, agree on the core thesis: movement is misdirected by passion and re-directed by restraint.

10. A Compact Decision-Framework for Daily Life

To help the six questions survive the workplace, here is a compact framework any householder can memorize:

- **Identity Check (Who am I?).** Before reacting, label the arising emotion (anger, pride, deceit, greed). Naming drains it. Remember: knower-seer first.
- **Causality Check (Why this now?).** Ask: “What seed is ripening? What seed am I about to plant?” Choose the action that stops inflow and sheds rather than piles.
- **Purpose Check (What for?).** If an action serves only vanity or possession, downgrade it. If it serves clarity, care, or competence, proceed.
- **Happiness Check (What kind?).** Prefer equanimity over excitement. The latter burns bright and burns out, the former builds depth.
- **Method Check (How?).** Translate intention into vow-consistent behavior now: the smallest next step that honors non-violence, truth, non-stealing, restraint, and non-possession.

Repeated use transforms character, not by willpower alone but by design.

11. Conclusion

The path from “Koham?” to “Soham” in Jain perspective is neither a romantic leap nor a purely intellectual arrival. It is a staircase laid with modest stones—vows, contemplations, meditation—climbed with two lenses in hand: vyavahāra to keep duties clear and niścaya to keep identity clean. The six questions function as way-markers:

- **Who am I?** A knower-seer, not the bundle of contingencies.
- **Where do I come from?** From long wandering across destinies, propelled by karmic momentum and steering choices.
- **Why am I the way I am?** Because seeds ripen, because new seeds are sown or stopped by present conduct.
- **What is my purpose?** To stabilize the soul's properties by thinning passions, with duties performed as duty, not as ego-feed.
- **What/where is real happiness?** In equanimity grounded in insight, not in the churn of sensation.
- **How do I realize it?** By a practicable regimen: vows that bound behavior, contemplations that reformat perception, and meditation that consolidates clarity and accelerates karmic shedding.

The reframed “Soham” then reads: “I am soul”—not as a slogan but as a habit of identification that reshapes attention and action. The householder who lives this way does not withdraw from society; they salt it. Their speech becomes trustworthy, their consumption conscientious, their presence low-reactive and high-responsible. They inherit no exemption from life's difficulties; they gain a different posture toward them. Jain philosophy promises no shortcuts. It does promise that reality, properly seen, is workable—and that the work, properly undertaken, is liberating.

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