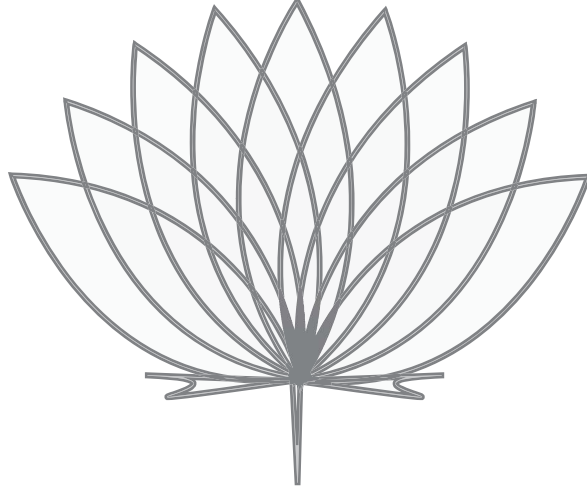


JAINA VIDYA

PART - 1



Jain Vishva Bharati

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Lesson-1 Namaskār Mahāmantra

Original text

Namo Arihantāṇam

Namo Siddhāṇam

Namo Āyariyāṇam

Namo Uvajjhāyāṇam

Namo Loë Savva Sāhūṇam

Eso Pañca Namokkāro,

Savva Pāvapaṇāsaṇo.

Maṅgalāṇam Ca Savvesiṃ,

Paḍhamam Havai Maṅgalaṃ.

English translation

I bow to the Arihants (Enlightened Beings).

I bow to the Siddhas (Liberated Souls).

I bow to the Ācāryass (Spiritual Leaders).

I bow to the Upādhyāyas (Preceptors).

I bow to all the Sadhus (Saints) in the universe.

This five-fold salutation mantra,

Destroys all sins.

And among all auspicious things,

Is the foremost auspicious thing.

Explanation

The Namaskar Mahamantra is not just a specific mantra in the series of mantras; it is the *Mahamantra* (Great Mantra). Its description is found in Agamas such as *Bhagwati* and *Aavassayam*. Bhagwan Mahāvīra defined five categories of the Supreme Soul:

1. **Arihant:** Propagators of the religious order.
2. **Siddha:** Liberated souls.
3. **Ācārya:** Managers/Administrators of the religious order.
4. **Upādhyāya:** Carriers of religious knowledge.
5. **Sādhū:** Practitioners of religion.

Among these, four categories are held by humans and one category consists of liberated souls. Here, the first place is given to a human (Arihant) and the second to a liberated soul (Siddha). A liberated soul is not the cause/instrument of human liberation; the Arihants are the cause of that liberation. Therefore, they received the first position in the Namaskar Mahamantra.

Jain religion and philosophy do not recognize the worship of specific individuals. It is a worshiper of virtues. It acknowledges and worships the qualifications and merits of every individual. The direct evidence of this is the Namaskar Mahamantra and Maṅgala Path, in which no specific individual's name is mentioned.

The Namaskar Mahamantra is worshipped equally across all sects of Jainism. This is a testament to its antiquity. While explaining the Namaskar Mahamantra, the creators of the scriptures stated:

**Eso pañca namokkāro, savva pāvapaṇāsaṇo.
Maṅgalāṇam ca savvesiṃ, paḍhamam havai maṅgalam.**

This Mahamantra is the destroyer of all sins and the foremost among all auspicious things.

It is the Mahamantra for the remembrance of auspiciousness. The feelings of well-being (*Maṅgala Bhavana*) and friendship (*Maitri Bhavana*) are great achievements of life. That an individual remains healthy, happy, blissful, and continues to progress—these noble sentiments are indicators of life's auspiciousness.

This Mahamantra has been used as the initial invocation (*Adi Maṅgala*) in numerous scriptures and texts. Over a period of approximately 1,500 years, vast literature was created based on this Mahamantra. Many poems were composed in its praise. Numerous other mantras were developed with the help of this Mahamantra. One mantra associated with the Namaskar Mahamantra is 'Arham'. Another mantra is 'A Si Ā U Sā', which was a very favorite mantra of JayĀcāryas. This is a five-lettered mantra derived from the first letters of the five positions (A, Si, Ā, U, Sā). Another mantra formed from the Namaskar Mahamantra is 'Om'. While explaining the derivation of the word 'Om', Jain Ācāryas wrote that it is formed from the initial letters of Arihant, Ashariri (The Siddha (liberated souls) do not have any body and are called ashariri), Ācāryas, Upādhyāya, and Muni.

The ‘A’ of Arihant + the ‘A’ of Ashariri = Ā; the ‘Ā’ of Ācāryas + Ā = Ā; the ‘U’ of Upādhyāya + Ā = O; and the ‘M’ of Muni + O = Om (ॐ).

In this way, the worship of the Namaskar Mahamantra has been performed in different forms for different purposes. This Mahamantra possesses infinite power. It is the Mahamantra of self-awakening and the awakening of energy. It contains five lines and thirty-five letters. There are 7 letters in the first line, 5 in the second, 7 in the third, 7 in the fourth, and 9 in the fifth line. The subtle sound waves of its every letter create an aura of peace.

The depth of the ocean of scriptures (*Śruta-sāgar*) is hidden within this Mahamantra. It is said that the Namaskār Mahāmantra is the essence of the fourteen *Pūrvas* (ancient scriptures). All the verbal uniqueness and the entire wealth of knowledge of the world are contained within the fourteen *Purvas*. Therefore, it is not just a mantra, but a Mahāmantra.

The worship of the Namaskār Mahāmantra is a great spiritual practice. The worship of these five supreme beings (*Pañca Paramesthi*)—Arihant, Siddha, Ācāryas, Upādhyāya and Sādhū—is the worship of the Soul; that is, the worship of Knowledge, Perception, Bliss, and Power. From a spiritual perspective, there is no practice, worship, or auspiciousness in this world beyond these four. The right worship of the Namaskar Mahamantra is the formula for a noble life. Through it, one experiences unobstructed happiness and peace.

Each Verse of Namaskār Mahāmantra

In the Namaskār Mahāmantra, we bow to the Arihants, we bow to the Siddhas, we bow to the Ācāryas who are the great carriers of the spiritual journey, we bow to the Upādhyāyas who churn the entire ocean of scriptures, and we bow to the spiritual practitioners present throughout the entire universe. This is a very sacred phrasing of veneration and bowing.

‘Namo’

From the perspective of Mantra Science, ‘Namo’ is the seed of purification (*Śodhana Bēja*). It purifies or removes the impulses or passions that arise. It assists in the purification of those tendencies.

1. ‘Namo Arahaṇtāṇam’

This is a seven-lettered mantra verse. In this verse, salutation is offered to the **Arihants** because they are our ideals and the supreme authority in the field

of spirituality. Jain philosophy defines a criterion for authority: one whose attachment, aversion, and ignorance are destroyed is an authoritative being. Arihants are *Vītarāga* (detached), omniscient, and all-perceiving. Their principles are irrefutable; therefore, they are our role models.

Benefit: The mantra of the Arihant awakens our internal powers; through it, the dormant powers of knowledge are awakened.

2. ‘Namo Siddhāṇam’

The second verse of the Namaskār Mahāmantra is ‘Namo Siddhāṇam’. In Jain philosophy, the name for a supreme being is **Siddha**. One definition of supreme being is a being who is capable of doing everything. The supreme being of Jain philosophy is different from this. He is not the creator or sustainer of the universe, but merely the Knower and Seer. All three worlds become subjects of His knowledge. He is neither the writer of anyone’s fate nor a judge who delivers justice or injustice. He is impartial (*Samadarshi*). All souls that, through their spiritual practice, become free from the body and get established in their pure form to reach salvation (*Moksa*), are God. In this view, Supreme beings in Jain philosophy is not one, but many—infinite. The names such as God (*Ishwar*), Supreme Soul (*Paramātmā*), and Supreme Lord (*Parameshwar*) are called ‘Siddha’ in Jain philosophy.

Describing the nature of a Siddha, it is said: One who is free from birth and death, devoid of suffering and poverty, endowed with infinite knowledge, infinite perception, infinite power, and infinite bliss—the ageless, immortal, and formless soul—is a Siddha. Both Arihant and Siddha are Supreme Souls; one is embodied and the other is disembodied.

Benefit: The mantra of the Siddha is powerful. It bestows attainment (*Siddhi*) and strength. It awakens our internal vision.

3. ‘Namo Āyariyāṇam’

My reverence to the **Ācārya**, the savior of the ship of life. This is a very beautiful tone of veneration. A very significant point is made: that you are the one who steers my life-boat. You are the one who takes it across this ocean of worldly existence. Without a skilled navigator, it is not easy to cross the ocean of problems; an individual might drown midway. Therefore, the position of the Ācārya is very important. Their responsibility is highly specialized.

Being steadfast in conduct (*Ācāra*) themselves and instilling that steadfastness in others is their dual responsibility. This is not mandatory for a regular monk (*Muni*). While it is mandatory for a monk to personally follow right conduct, ensuring others follow it is not his mandatory duty. Ācāryas are very vigilant regarding their responsibilities. They are the directors themselves and they make others directors. They facilitate the right study of the scriptures (*Sutras*) and their meanings. Ācāryas are ascetics themselves and they inspire the *Saṅgha* (community) toward penance. Penance does not mean only fasting; service, humility, self-study, and meditation are also means of penance.

Ācāryas possess unwavering loyalty toward the *Jina-shāsan* (the Jain order). They maintain the faith and ideology of thousands and millions of people. While it is certainly difficult to keep the thoughts of others stable, it has been a specialty of the Terāpanth religious order that its Ācāryas have kept the tradition of “one conduct and one thought” prestigious. Ācāryas are representatives of the Tīrthāṅkara, endowed with thirty-six virtues. ‘Namo Āyariyāṇam’ is the reverence to this powerful position.

Benefit: Through the worship of this mantra verse, our tendencies become calm, purity increases, and the mind becomes holy and untainted.

4. ‘Namo Uvajjhāyāṇam’

It is said in the Gita, “*Adhyātma Vidyā Vidyānām*”—among all sciences, the science of spirituality is supreme. In the Jain tradition, **Upādhyāyas** are great carriers of spiritual knowledge. They keep the tradition of knowledge flourishing. They are skilled in studying and teaching. Hundreds upon hundreds of scriptures are preserved in their sharp memory.

In the Jain tradition, there have been two positions: Ācārya and Upādhyāya. Sometimes both positions are held by a single person, and sometimes the responsibilities are held by different individuals. In the tradition of the Terāpanth religious order, the Ācārya himself performs the duties of the Upādhyāya.

Benefit: Through the worship of this mantra verse, the passions (*Kashāyas*) are calmed. Upon the birth of equanimity and concentration, this mantra assists us in self-realization.

5. ‘Namo Loë Savvasāhūṇam’

In this verse, salutations are offered to all the **Sādhus** (monks/saints) present in the entire universe. Describing what a Sadhu should be like, it is stated:

- One who is *Anagār* (homeless)—one who has no house—is a Sādhu.
- One who is *Nirgranth* (unfettered)—one who has no knots or attachments—is a Sādhu.
- One who is a *Yati*—a person who does not live at the level of the senses, but lives a life of detachment and restraint—is a Sādhu.
- One who is a *Muni*—one who is self-aware and knowledgeable—is a Sādhu.
- One who is *Sādhanāshēl* (disciplined)—one who disciplines their mind, speech, and body—is a Sadhu.
- One who is a *Sramaṇa*—one who is an ascetic, hardworking, and industrious—is a Sādhu.

Benefit: Through the worship of this mantra verse, the influence of alien/negative elements is neutralized and the development of tolerance occurs.

FABLE

There was a king in the city of Śrāvastī. He ordered his royal officials to build a seven-story palace. Following the king’s command, the officials constructed a beautiful, well-adorned building and said, “O King! The beautiful, well-structured, and decorated palace is ready, but as soon as it is completed, it collapses.” The king called the *Ashta Naimittik* (astrologers/fortune-tellers) and regretfully explained the whole situation. An astrologer quickly calculated and said, “O King! If you perform a sacrifice (*yagya*) of a man possessing thirty-two auspicious marks, this task will be accomplished.” The king made a proclamation in the city: anyone who gives their son for the sacrifice will receive gold equal to the son’s weight.

A woman named Bhadra, driven by greed, surrendered her youngest son among eight to the king. Seeing Bhadra’s son—who was endowed with all virtues, handsome, humble, wise, and physically perfect—the king was very pleased. The king gave Bhadra a great deal of wealth. Seeing Amar Kumar’s

pale face, the Queen anxiously said, “Son! Do not be afraid, keep patience. In times of trouble, even one’s own kin turn into strangers; in this dire situation, abandon sorrowful thoughts (*Ārtta-dhyāna*) and chant the Mahamantra.”

Amar Kumar said, “Mother! I know the Mahamantra. I have practiced it under my Guru.” Remembering the Mahāmantra, Amar Kumar entered the fire. Immediately, the fire turned into water. The news of the mantra’s power spread throughout the city. Bhadra found out and reached there as well. Seeing the influence of the mantra, the king was very pleased. The king lifted Amar Kumar in his arms and requested, “Son! Stay in my house as my son.” With gentle words and folded hands, Amar Kumar humbly said, “O King! Religion (*Dharma*) is the root of all happiness. The lamp of knowledge has been lit in my heart, by the power of which I am alive. Now, I will seek refuge in that alone.”

Parameṣṭhī Vandanā

Vandanā Ananda pulakita, vinaya nata ho main karun
Eka laya ho ek rasa ho, Bhāva tanmayatā varun

Namo Arihantāṇam

Sahaja nija āloka se bhāsita svayaṁ sambuddha haiṁ.
Dharma Tīrthankara Shubhankar, vītarāga vishuddha haiṁ.
Gati pratiṣṭhā trāṇadātā, āvagaṇa se mukta haiṁ.
Dev arhan divya yogaja atīśayan se yukta haiṁ.

Namo Siddhāṇam

Bandhanen ki shrinkhalā se, mukta śakti śrola haiṁ.
Sahaja nirmala ātmakya meṁ satata otaprota haiṁ.
Dagdhakara bhava bīja aṅkura, aruja aja avikāra haiṁ.
Siddha paramātmā parama, īśvara apunara-vatāra haiṁ.

Namo Āyariyāṇam

Amalatama ācāra dhārā meṁ svayaṁ niṣṇāta haiṁ.
dipa sama śata dipa dīpana ke lie prakhyāta haiṁ.
Dharma śāsana ke dhurandhara dhīra dharmācārya haiṁ.

Prathama pada ke pravasa pratinidhi pragati mem anivārya haiṃ.

Namo Uvajjhāyāṇam

Dvādaśāṅgī ke pravakta gyāna garima puñja haiṃ.

Sāadhanā ke śānta upavana mem susamya nikuñja haiṃ.

Sūtra ke svādhyāya mem samlagna rahate haiṃ sadā.

Upādhyāya mahāna śrutadhara, dharma śāsana sam-padā.

Namo loe savva sāhūṇam haiṃ

Sadā lābha alābha mein, sukha-duḥkha mem madhyastha haiṃ.

śāntimaya, vairāgyamaya, ānandamaya ātmastha haiṃ.

Vāsanā se virata ākṛti sahaja parama prasanna haiṃ.

Sāadhanā dhana sādhu antarbhāva mem āsanna haiṃ.

Do You Know?

We should chant the Namaskar Mahamantra not for material pleasures or for the desire of pride, prestige, hospitality, honor, and fame, but to purify the soul and remove the filth of *Karma*.

The chanting of the Namaskar Mahamantra, when done with care and complete absorption, destroys the *Karmas* of millions of births.



Lesson-2 Vandana Pāṭha (Lesson of Salutation)

Original Text

*Tikkhutto āyāhiṇam payāhiṇam karemi vandāmi namaṃsāmi
sakkāremi sammāṇemi kallāṇam maṅgalam devayaṃ ceiyaṃ pajjuvāsāmi
matthaena vandāmi.*

Word Meanings

Tikkhutto:	Three times
Āyāhiṇam:	From right to left
Payāhiṇam:	Circumambulation (Pradakshina)
Karemi:	I do / I perform
Vandāmi:	I offer salutations
Namaṃsāmi:	I bow to you
Sakkāremi:	I offer hospitality/honor.
Sammāṇemi:	I respect you.
Kallāṇam:	You are the bringer of well-being.
Maṅgalam:	You are auspicious.
Devayaṃ:	(O) Divine Being!
Ceyyaṃ:	(You are) Chaitya—embodiment of knowledge
Pajjuvāsāmi:	I worship/serve you
Matthaena:	With my head (bowed)
Vandāmi:	I offer salutations.

Method of Veneration (Vandan-Vidhi)

While performing the veneration, stand with both hands joined and begin from the right side (mentally reciting the text '*Tikkhutto āyāhiṇaṃ payāhiṇaṃ karemi*'), rotating three times in circumambulation. (This involves standing and rotating the joined hands from the navel to the forehead three times.) After that, sit in the reverential posture and clearly recite the entire text from '*Vandāmi Namaṃsāmi*' to '*Pajjuvāsāmi*'. Then, while reciting '*Matthaṇa Vandāmi*', inhale and, while exhaling, bow your head to the ground. In this manner revere, one should revere by rising and sitting three times. Following this, stand up and say, "*Vande Guruvaṃ!*" (I bow to the Great Guru), and if addressing a Monk or Nun, say, "*Matthaṇa Vandāmi!*" Joining your hands, submit the request: "*Is there comfort and well-being in your Tanu-Ratna?*" (Tanu means body; Ratna refers to the Three Jewels—Knowledge, Perception, and Conduct).

Guru veneration Method

This is the method for bowing in reverence to the Guru. One should be humble while bowing to the Guru. Humility is the opposite of ego. Through humility, attention is drawn to the virtues of the Guru, and the desire to follow them becomes strong. Humility is a great virtue; it is related to the mind, speech, and body. Therefore, the vandan-sutra mandates the simplification of all three.

Rotating both joined hands three times from the right side is the humility of the body.

"O Gurudev! I salute you, bow to you, offer hospitality to you, and respect you"—this is verbal humility.

"O Gurudev! You are the bringer of well-being; you are the means of spiritual credit. You are auspicious"—this is mental humility.

Ganadhar Gautam asked the Lord: "Bhante! What does a soul gain by performing *Vandanā* (veneration)?" The Lord replied: "Gautam! Through *Vandanā*, a soul destroys the karmas that lead to birth in a lower status/family. It acquires karmas that lead to birth in a higher status/family. One attains unobstructed good fortune and the favorable sentiment of the masses, such that people honor one's commands. That is, from a theoretical perspective, two tasks are accomplished: the destruction of *Nīca Gotra* (lower status

karma), which is *Nirjarā* (shedding of karmas), and the binding of *Ucca Gotra* (higher status karma), which is the binding of *Puṇya* (merit). The primary fruit of *Vandanā* is *Nirjarā*, and the incidental fruit is the binding of *Puṇya*. From this, the principle emerges that wherever there is a virtuous activity, there is *Nirjarā*. There is not a single virtuous activity that results only in the binding of *Puṇya* without *Nirjarā*. The binding of *Puṇya* is a concomitant effect of *Nirjarā*.”

The question arises: Who is worthy of veneration? The author of *Aavashyak Niryukti* has stated that monks who are endowed with the five great vows (*Panch Mahāvratas*) are worthy of salutation. One who is non-restrained is not worthy of veneration.

Six achievements of *Vandana* have been described: 1. Practice of humility/discipline. 2. Development of modesty and destruction of ego. 3. Worship of elders/preceptors. 4. Obedience to the commands of the Tīrthaṅkara. 5. Practice of the scriptural religion (*Shruta Dharma*). 6. Attainment of liberation (*Mokṣa*). By following this, a seeker makes their life humble and ideal.

FABLE

Angabhān, a domestic servant of the city merchant Vishwavāhan in Mathura, was very hardworking. He remained engaged in work from morning to evening. One morning, an ascetic monk, Vidyācāraṇ, arrived at the merchant’s house for *Gocarī* (alms). All the family members were unsuitable to give alms because they were in contact with vegetation or unboiled (*Sacit*) water. At that time, the monk accepted alms from the hands of the servant Angabhān. Having found the opportunity to give alms, Angabhān’s entire body blossomed with joy. The monk sat in a corner of the house and performed *Pāraṇā* (breaking the fast). Angabhān repeatedly approached the monk, requesting him to take more alms.

The monk said, “I need nothing. What do you do here?” Angabhān described the household chores he was responsible for. The monk said, “Everyday *darśana* (pious visit) of the monks will lead to your well-being.” Angabhān took this vow: “If there are monks in the city, I will not consume food or water without their *darśana* daily.”

Now, Angabhān began visiting all the monks daily. It was natural for this to cause some delay in the merchant’s work. The merchant began to

think: “What is the duty of servants? They should be concerned with their work. If they get involved in religion, who will do the work?”

The merchant told Angabhān this and warned him: “If there is a delay in our work, we will be forced to hire someone else in your place.”

Angabhān: “Sethji! I will not delay the tasks assigned to me, but I will always visit the monks.”

Seth: “I am only concerned with my work. I will see how long you can maintain this.” Poor Angabhān was in a bit of a dilemma, yet even when there was extra work at home, he would wake up early at four or five in the morning to go for the *Darśana*.

Once, there was a festival at the house. It was necessary to work day and night. He went to sleep at midnight and had to return to work at 3:00 AM. Angabhān woke up at 2:30 AM. He walked with fast strides to visit the monks, but while returning after the *Darśana*, the city police arrested him.

In the morning, Angabhān was presented before the King. Looking at him, the King thought, “Is this man a thief? It doesn’t seem so; his face reflects purity.”

The King asked, “What did you steal? Tell the truth.”

Angabhān narrated his story and said, “I am the servant of Merchant Vishwavāhan. There was a lot of work at the mansion, so I set out early to visit the monks. I was returning after the *darśana* when these policemen caught me. Apart from this, I have done nothing.”

When the King summoned Merchant Vishwavāhan and questioned him, the merchant said, “O King! He is my servant. He is deeply devoted to religion. He doesn’t even start my work without seeing the monks.” The King released him. As soon as he returned to the mansion, the merchant fired him from the job. Now, Angabhān began to do freelance work. He started making his living from the income earned through that. He remained firm in his vow of seeing the saints and never allowed a lapse. He spent his entire life in this manner.

When Angabhān died, there was no one to perform the last rites for his body. Royal officials came and began taking his body to the cremation ground. At that moment, the *Yakṣa* (deities) showered flowers upon his body. They

began praising him while chanting “Hail Angabhan!” Hearing and seeing all this, the people were greatly amazed. The King, the city provost, Merchant Vishwavahan, the Commander- in-chief, other distinguished people, and thousands of elite citizens now joined his funeral procession.

The deities mentioned the merit (*Punya*) bound by the act of *darśana* of the monks and said, “Due to the binding of *Ucca Gotra* (high-status karma), after his life as a celestial being, Angabhān will become a *Cakravartīm* (Universal Monarch) named Jayabhadra in the *Mahāvideha* region. From his birth, deities will serve him. When he goes on a conquest, that journey will become like a journey of goodwill. Thirty- two thousand kings will be under his command. A single empire will be established over the entire earth.”

After enjoying the status of a *Cakravartīm*, the soul of Angabhān will accept monkhood. After taking the vows of restraint, he will immerse himself in intense penance and pure meditation. It was through *darśana* of the monks that his high-status karma was bound, and through that merit, he will attain the status of a deity and a *Cakravartīm*. He will become respected by the world and universally accepted.

“Life becomes well-cultured through the *darśana* of the monks and good company. In reality, the *darśana* of a monk is an indicator of good fortune.”

Do You Know?

- By performing *Vandana*, high-status karma (*Ucca Gotra*) is bound and low-status karma (*Neeca Gotra*) is destroyed.
- Feelings of ego diminish and feelings of humility are strengthened.
- When the head is bowed, energy ascends through the path of the *Suṣhumnā* (spinal channel).
- During salutation, the activation of the **adrenal gland** develops tolerance, and the activation of the **thyroid gland** develops concentration.

Points to Remember

1. During outdoor travels (*Bahirvihār*), it is appropriate for laypeople (*Śrāvaks*) to perform the three-fold *Tikkhutto* salutation to the **lead ascetic** of the group in the morning, evening, and as needed in between. It is generally not necessary to perform the *Tikkhutto* salutation to other ascetics. Within

the *Gurukul* (main stay), it is not required to use the *Tikkhutto* text for any monk or nun other than the **Ācārya, Yuvācārya, and Sādhvi Pramukhā**.

2. The phrase “**Is there comfort and well-being in your Tanu-Ratna?**” should generally be used during the collective morning and evening *Tikkhutto* salutations for monks and nuns. When visiting an ascetic individually, saying “Are you in comfort and well-being?” is sufficient.

3. When ascetics arrive to deliver a lecture or conduct a class, it is a mark of etiquette and humility for laypeople to stand and greet them with folded hands (*Baddhānjali*), depending on health and suitability. Note that if a senior ascetic is already seated and a junior arrives, laypeople are not expected to stand.

4. In training camps (*Shivir*) or classes, if monks or nuns come to provide instruction, the three- fold *Tikkhutto* is not expected. Sitting in the salutation posture and bowing with the five body parts (*Panchang Pranati*) is sufficient. If sitting is difficult, a standing salutation with folded hands and a bowed head is enough.

5. Except for the **Ācārya, Yuvācārya, and Sādhvipramukhā**, the word “**Vande**” (e.g., *Vande Munivaram*) should not be used for any other ascetic; “**Mattheṇa Vandāmi**” may be said instead.

6. It is appropriate to say “**Vande**” upon the arrival of the **Ācārya**. The same may be done for the **Yuvācārya**, but not in a manner that is audible to the **Ācārya**. Similarly, in the nuns’ quarters, this may be done for the **Sādhvipramukhā**. However, in the presence of the **Ācārya**, saying “Vande” loudly for the **Sādhvipramukha** is not expected.

7. For monks and nuns belonging to a **different tradition** (*Samācārī*), laypeople are not expected to perform the sit-and-stand *Tikkhutto* or touch their feet. It is appropriate to sit on one’s knees, perform the *Panchang Pranati* with folded hands, and say “Mattheṇa Vandāmi.”

8. When **Samaṇis** or **Upāsaks** enter a lecture, laypeople in the state of *Sāmāyik* or *Pauṣadh* should not stand or use formal salutation words. In that state, saying “Jai Jinendra” while seated is sufficient. If not in the state of *Sāmāyik* or *Pauṣadh*, there is no objection to standing in their honor, and they may be greeted with the “Vandāmi Namamsāmi” text.



Lesson-3 Sāmāyik

Original Text

Karemi bhante! sāmāyaṃ sāvajjajogaṃ paccakkhāmi jāva niyamaṃ (muḥuttaṃ egaṃ) pajjuvāsāmi duvihaṃ tiviheṇaṃ na karemi na kāravemi maṇasā vayasā kāyasā tassa bhante! paḍikkamāmi nindāmi garihāmi appāṇaṃ vosirāmi.

Word Meanings

Karemi:	I perform/undertake.
Bhante!:	O Lord!
Sāmāyaṃ:	Sāmāyik (state of equanimity).
Sāvajjaṃjogaṃ:	Sinful activities/associations.
Paccakkhāmi:	I renounce.
Jāva niyamaṃ:	For the duration of the vow (one <i>muḥurat</i> / 48 minutes).
Pajjuvāsāmi:	I shall observe/stay in service of.
Duvihaṃ:	In two ways (doing and getting done).
Tiviheṇāṃ:	In three modes (thought, word, and deed).
Na karemi:	I will not do.
Na kāravemi:	I will not cause to be done.
Maṇasā:	By mind.
Vayasā:	By speech.
Kāyasā:	By body.
Tassa bhante!:	From those (sins), O Lord!
Paḍikkamāmi:	I retreat/repent.

Nindāmi:	I censure (self-criticism).
Garihāmi:	I reproach (in the presence of a Guru).
Appāṇam:	The soul/self.
Vosirāmi:	I detach from (sinful) tendencies.

Translation (Meaning)

O Lord! I undertake the vow of Sāmāyik. I renounce all sinful activities for the duration of the vow (one *muhurat*). In two ways (doing and causing to be done) and by three modes (mind, speech, and body), I shall neither perform nor cause others to perform any sinful act. O Lord! I retreat from my past sins; I censure them, I reproach them in your presence, and I detach my soul from all sinful tendencies.

The Sāmāyik Vow

O Lord! I accept the vow of Sāmāyik in the form of equanimity and renounce all sinful activities. For one *Muhurat* (48 minutes), I renounce sinful acts through two *Karans* and three *Yogas* (I will not do, I will not cause to be done; through mind, speech, and body). O Lord! I also retreat from past sins. I censure them, I reproach them, and I distance myself from them.

Explanation

Sāmāyik

The word *Sāmāyik* is well-known in the Jain world. Generally, there is a strong desire among religious men and women to perform Sāmāyik. It is a major part of the daily routine. Many householders begin their day with Sāmāyik. In reality, Sāmāyik is highly suitable for practice; it purifies one's life tendencies and provides an experience of a disciplined life. It offers extraordinary inspiration for the soul to become pure, simple, and elevated.

What is Sāmāyik?

Jain laymen and laywomen perform Sāmāyik daily and inspire their children to do the same. The question is—what is this Sāmāyik? What is it called? While accepting Sāmāyik, a householder says: *Karemi bhante sāmāyāṃ sāvajjāṃ jogāṃ paccakkhāmi*. The renunciation of *Savaya Yoga* (sinful activities) is called Sāmāyik. *Sāvadya Yoga* is partiality/imbalance, and its renunciation is Sāmāyik or equanimity (*Samata*).

The definition of *Sāvadya Yoga* is very clear. The eighteen sins are *Sāvadya*. These eighteen sins can be divided into four categories:

First Category: Violence (*Prānātipāta*), Falsehood (*Mṛiṣāvāda*), Stealing (*Adattādāna*), Sexual misconduct (*Mai thuna*), and Possessiveness (*Parigraha*).

Second Category: Anger (*Krodha*), Pride (*Māna*), Deceit (*Māyā*), Greed (*Lobha*), Attachment (*Rāga*), and Aversion (*Dweśa*).

Third Category: Quarrel (*Kalaha*), False accusation (*Abhyākhyān*), Slander (*Paiśunya*), Gossip (*Par-parivāda*), and Liking-Disliking (*Rati-Arati*).

Fourth Category: Deceitful falsehood (*Māyā-mṛiṣā*) and the thorn of wrong belief (*Mithyādarśana Śalya*).

All eighteen sins are included in these four categories.

Let us consider—what does one who performs Sāmāyik give up? They give up the five *Āśravas* (influx of karma) like violence, etc. They give up anger, pride, deceit, greed, attachment, and aversion. If this meaning is kept in mind, a clear picture will emerge during Sāmāyik: “What am I doing? I am practicing to pacify anger. I am practicing to calm ego. I am practicing to eliminate deceit and greed... I am practicing to free myself from ‘thorns’ (*Śalya*).” The name of this beautiful formula of spiritual practice is Sāmāyik. One who does not taste the flavor of Sāmāyik (equanimity) does not remain happy. Sāmāyik is an unprecedented means to make the mind joyful. The Lord said that equanimity is the greatest happiness and partiality is suffering. So that a householder is not deprived of the worship of equanimity, Bhagwan Mahāvira prescribed the ninth vow of Sāmāyik among the twelve vows of a householder. While performing Sāmāyik, a householder becomes disciplined like a monk. The monk’s discipline is complete, whereas the householder’s discipline... is partial. Yet, according to the principle of “*Samudravattadāgaḥ*” (a pond is like the ocean), the vow of Sāmāyik makes the householder comparable to a monk.

Sāmāyik is a Spiritual Practice

What should one do after accepting Sāmāyik? This is essential to know. During Sāmāyik, a householder should ask the Guru about the meanings of

the *Āgamas* (scriptures) and contemplate them. One should reflect on the twelve core reflections, such as Impermanence (*Anitya*) and Solitariness (*Ekatva*). One should remember the conduct of great personalities so that the goal of Sāmāyik remains steady. During Sāmāyik, one can perform virtuous (*Nirvadya*) activities like self-study (*Svādhyāya*), chanting (*Jap/Mala*), meditation, reciting religious hymns, and listening to discourses. Vices such as laziness, gossip (*Vikatha*), and sleep should be avoided.

Control over mental, vocal, and physical activities is necessary in Sāmāyik. Walking without looking or sitting improperly are physical faults. Speaking harsh words, speaking without thinking, using violent or quarrelsome language, gossiping, or giving orders to others are vocal faults. Harboring anger, desiring fame, or being arrogant are mental faults.

The summary of it all is that after accepting Sāmāyik, one must remain diligent in its observance. Merely passing the time or following a custom should not be the objective.

Why Indifference Toward Sāmāyik?

Many people hesitate to perform Sāmāyik due to the doubt: “What should I do? My mind does not remain steady, so what is the benefit of just doing Sāmāyik?”

Regarding this, it is necessary to understand that Sāmāyik is a practice—a means, not the end. For a spiritual seeker, complete self-development (Liberation) is the end goal. If the goal is correct, one need not panic if there is a slip in the practice. To abandon the practice out of fear of making a mistake is a grave error. If merchants stopped trading for fear of loss, or farmers stopped sowing seeds for fear of crop failure, could they sustain their lives?

It is not right for a spiritual seeker to reject the entire practice out of fear of a few errors. On the contrary, one should keep striving to overcome those errors. Suppose the mind does not remain steady during Sāmāyik; though the full benefit was not achieved, the effort was not entirely useless.

In Sāmāyik, sinful tendencies of the body, speech, and mind are renounced. A mental fault does not break the Sāmāyik, though it does tarnish it. Moreover, the body and speech remain under control and do not engage in sinful business—this is no small achievement.

A wise person does not abandon partial benefits just because full benefits are not attainable. Indeed, a seeker's goal should not be to indulge in mental faults during Sāmāyik. If a fault occurs, one should perform penance (*Prāyaścitta*) for purification, but should not stop performing Sāmāyik on that pretext. By continuing the practice, one will eventually conquer the mind, and the door to complete purity will open.

...and if by chance someone's mind is never fully conquered in their lifetime, even then, the person who keeps their body and speech away from sinful acts and remains engaged in the practice of mental victory is never at a loss.

Conclusion

The maxim of equanimity is the maxim of spirituality. In the practice of Sāmāyik, it is essential to focus on these points:

The pronunciation should be pure.

The meaning of the Sāmāyik text should be known.

There should be deep reflection (*Anuprekṣā*): “Which formulas of equanimity am I practicing? Which sinful activities (*Sāvadya Yoga*) am I abandoning, and which virtuous activities (*Nirvadya Yoga*) am I striving to attain?”

If this awareness of reflection is linked with Sāmāyik, all other vows will be fulfilled naturally. If asked what the religion of Bhagwān Mahāvira is in a single word, the answer would be **Sāmāyik**. Practicing such a significant ritual is the primary necessity. Adopt it to make your life meaningful and successful.

Sāmāyik Criticism (Atonement) Text

Naunven Sāmāyik Vrat mein jo koi aticāra doṣa lagā ho to main uski ālocnā kartā hoon/kartī hoon.

1. Man kī sāvadya pravritti kī ho.
2. Vachan kī sāvadya pravritti kī ho.
3. Sharīra kī sāvadya pravritti kī ho.
4. Sāmāyik ke niyamon ka pūrā pālan na kiya ho.
5. Avadhi se pehle sāmāyik ko pūra kiya ho.

“Tassa Micchāmi Dukkaḍam.” (Inse lage mere pāpa mithyā ho, niṣphal ho.)

The Sāmāyik vow is the ninth among the twelve venerable vows of a householder. The duration of Sāmāyik is one *Muhurat* (48 minutes). If any minor slip occurs during this period—whether due to negligence, mistake, or intentionally—the “**Sāmāyik Criticism Text**” is the penance for it. It is necessary to conclude the Sāmāyik with this, or it is essential to recite the Sāmāyik Criticism Text mindfully after the duration of Sāmāyik is over. Furthermore, if serious faults occurred during Sāmāyik, one should seek penance from the ascetics.

Shri Mishrimalji Surana

Performing two Sāmāyiks while in the headstand (*Śirśāsana*) was a very common thing for Mishrimalji. He also practiced Sāmāyik in the *Supta Garbhāsana* posture. In 1981, during the Delhi *Cāturmās*, he came for darśana. He was staying in the cottages built for travelers. One day, before sunrise, he was performing Sāmāyik in his cottage. He was meditating in a standing position during the Sāmāyik. Meanwhile, a rat-like creature arrived and bit his leg. It started bleeding. Mishrimalji remained standing in meditation. The creature bit him repeatedly. An area of about one square foot was affected, yet his concentration was not broken. Only a person in whose mind the vibrations of equanimity are active can remain unshaken in such a situation.

Shri Mohanlalji Khated

Mohanlalji Khated had deep faith in the practice of Sāmāyik. He performed Sāmāyik every day. He would not even take a sip of water without completing one Sāmāyik. While traveling long distances across the country, train journeys would sometimes take two days. During those times, he would either fast or get off at a station to perform Sāmāyik on the platform, catching the next train to reach his destination. In this way, he endured such hardships for many years to fulfill his resolve.

FABLE

Bhagwan Mahāvīra was in the city of Rājāgrha. Emperor Shrenik came to pay his respects. With great humility, he asked the Lord for a way to avoid going to hell. The Lord suggested a few remedies, but they were not feasible for the Emperor. Shrenik’s unsettled mind sought another solution. The Lord

said, “O King! If you can obtain the fruit of just one Sāmāyik from Pūniyā Śrāvak, your destiny in hell can be averted.” Hearing this, Shrenik’s heart filled with joy.

Early the next morning, Shrenik reached the house of Pūniyā Śrāvak. Seeing the King suddenly in his courtyard, Pūniyā was happy, but also fearful. He could not understand the reason for the King’s visit. Pūniyā was not a wealthy man; he earned his livelihood by making and selling cotton wicks (*Pūniyā*). With folded hands, he asked, “Mahārāj! You have graced my hut and made it holy. Tell me, how may I serve you?”

Shrenik said, “Śrāvakji! I want nothing else; I only need one of your Sāmāyiks.”

Hearing such a novel request, Pūniyā began to think. Shrenik added, “Do not worry. I will not take your Sāmāyik for free. Take as much money as you desire for it.” Pūniyā replied, “Everything I have belongs to you, and it would be my great fortune to be of use to you. But O King! Every material object has a price. Sāmāyik is an element of the soul, a spiritual ritual; can its value be paid for with any material object?”

Shrenik was ready to take, and Pūniyā was ready to give, but the problem of its “price” remained. Finally, both reached the Lord. Shrenik asked Bhagwān the value of a Sāmāyik. The Lord said, “O King! The value of the mere brokerage of one Sāmāyik is greater than the entire wealth of your kingdom. Now you decide for yourself what the value of one Sāmāyik might be.”

Shrenik was stunned by the Lord’s statement. Finally, he understood that Sāmāyik is such an exalted practice of equanimity that every material value is insignificant before it. Sighing, he said, “Bhante! Should I accept that hell is my destiny?” The Lord accepted this truth.

This incident proves that in the context of the practice of Sāmāyik, the status held by Pūniyā was greater than even that of Emperor Shrenik.

Do You Know?

The practice of Sāmāyik develops mental balance.

The practice of Sāmāyik establishes harmony between the mind, speech, and body.

The practice of Sāmāyik is an initiative for the development of positive (*Vidhayak*) emotions.

Points to Remember

1. In Sāmāyik, sinful activities (*Savadya Yoga*) are renounced through two *Karans* and three *Yogas* for a duration of one *Muhurat* (48 minutes).
2. Any number of Sāmāyiks can be taken at once, and the vow for a second or third Sāmāyik can be taken before the first one ends, provided the total duration (two *Muhurats*, three *Muhurats*, etc.) is completed.
3. The vow for *Paushadh* can be taken during Sāmāyik. If the vow for *Samvar* is taken, it should be counted only after the completion of the Sāmāyik.
4. Sāmāyik should not be performed in moving or stationary vehicles such as airplanes, trains, boats, ships, cars, or buses.
5. Sāmāyik should not be performed while an oxygen pipe is attached. In such cases, *Samvar* can be practiced with specific exemptions (*Agar*).
6. Sāmāyik and *Paushadh* should not be performed on carpets or rugs spread in marquees (*Pandals*), even if they are taped down, because gaps may remain in between.
7. It is not required to remove jewelry during Sāmāyik; however, wearing a *Mukhvastrika* (mouth- cloth) is desirable. For men, it is not necessary to remove current clothing for Sāmāyik. Using a shawl (*Chadar*) is appropriate according to convenience.
8. It is better to have an *Aasan* (a mat made of cloth) for Sāmāyik, but if one is not available, it can be performed sitting on the floor. A standard chair or wooden plank (*Patt*) can also be used. The use of sofas should be avoided.
9. There is no objection to using synthetic cotton or sponge in Sāmāyik, provided no violence (*Himsa*) is involved. Bedding made of cotton more than ten years old is not considered to contain living seeds (*Sachit*).

10. Unnecessary movement should be avoided during Sāmāyik. If essential movement is required, it should not be done during the day without looking, or at night without using a *Pramarjani* (whisk) to clear the path.
11. Generally, Sāmāyik should be performed only after attending to bodily calls (toilets). However, if the need arises during Sāmāyik, it should not be suppressed. If a toilet is used, penance (*Prayashchitta*) must be accepted.
12. There is no objection to wearing slippers or shoes to go to the toilet during *Paushadh* or Sāmāyik. One should ensure they are free of living beings. No separate penance is required for this; it is included in the penance for the act of urination or defecation. Slippers should not be used for going to lecture halls, etc.
13. Sinful talk (*Savadya*)—such as social, worldly, family, or professional discussions—should not be engaged in during Sāmāyik, nor should newspapers or school textbooks be read.
14. During Sāmāyik, one should not chant on a rosary (Mala) for worldly deities (such as Padmavati, Saraswati, Bhairunji, Ghantakarna Mahāvīra, etc.). There is no objection to using a watch with a light during Sāmāyik.
15. One should not perform Asanas or Pranayama for physical health during Sāmāyik, nor should one sleep during the session.
16. Religious writing that is linked to financial contracts is not allowed during Sāmāyik—for example, a salaried employee of an organization creating question papers for Jain Vidya/Agamas or checking examination copies.
17. Mementos, literature, or any other items should not be given or accepted as gifts during Sāmāyik.
18. Taking oaths for organizations, accepting official responsibilities, or signing files is not permitted during Sāmāyik.
19. One should generally abstain from using mobile phones during Sāmāyik. However, there is no objection to using a phone solely to check the time in the context of the Sāmāyik duration, or using it

briefly as a remote if a discourse by the Ācārya or other ascetics is being broadcast on TV. Except for these two specific uses, looking at, listening to, or talking on a mobile phone during Sāmāyik should be considered forbidden.

20. Individual *Khamata-Khamana* (seeking forgiveness) with the Saman category or other laypeople should not be performed during Sāmāyik or Pauṣadha.
21. It is not mandatory to perform *Chauvisatthava* (stuti of 24 Tīrthankaras) before or after the Sāmāyik vow. There is no objection if it is done as a form of self-study (*Svādhyāya*).



Lesson-4 Maṅgalaa Pāṭha (Auspicious Recitation)

Original Text

Cattāri maṅgalaṃ: Arihantā maṅgalaṃ, siddhā maṅgalaṃ, sāhū maṅgalaṃ, kevalipannatto dhammo maṅgalaṃ.

Cattāri loguttamā: Arihantā loguttamā, siddhā loguttamā, sāhū loguttamā, kevalipannatto dhammo loguttamo.

Cattāri saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi: Arihante saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi, siddhe saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi, sāhū saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi, kevali pannataṃ dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi.

Word Meanings

Cattāri maṅgalaṃ:	There are four auspicious things.
Arihantā maṅgalaṃ:	The Arihants are auspicious.
Siddhā maṅgalaṃ:	The Siddhas are auspicious.
Sāhū maṅgalaṃ:	The Sadhus (saints) are auspicious.
Kevalipannatto dhammo maṅgalaṃ:	The religion propounded by the Omniscient is auspicious.
Cattāri loguttamā:	There are four supreme things in the universe:
Arihantā loguttamā:	The Arihants are supreme in the universe.
Siddhā loguttamā:	The Siddhas are supreme in the universe.

Sāhū loguttamā:	The Sadhus are supreme in the universe.
Kevalipannatto dhammo loguttamo:	The religion propounded by the Omniscient is supreme in the universe.
Cattāri saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi:	I seek refuge in these four:
Arihante saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi:	I seek refuge in the Arihants.
Siddhe saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi:	I seek refuge in the Siddhas.
Sāhū saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi:	I seek refuge in the Sadhus.
Kevali pannataṃ dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ pavajjāmi:	I seek refuge in the religion propounded by the Omniscient.

Explanation

Maṅgala (Auspicious) means to destroy obstacles. The cause of obstacles is the fruit of *Karma*. Due to the rise of *Karma*, hurdles arise in achieving desired success. The remembrance, worship, and pure conduct of pure souls destroy the accumulation of *Karma*; therefore, they are auspicious.

There are two types of Maṅgala: Dravya Maṅgala and Bhava Maṅgala. Maṅgala devoid of virtues is called *Dravya Maṅgala*. This is not truly auspicious but merely conventional—for example, substances like curd, jaggery, durva grass, and vermilion are considered auspicious in worldly views. *Bhāva Maṅgala* refers to Maṅgala with virtues. This is auspicious in the ultimate sense.

Why are Arihanta, Siddha, Sādhu, and the religion propounded by the Omniscient are considered auspicious? This is clear: Arihants are disciplined and free from the four destructive (*Ghāti*) karmas; Siddhas are free from all karmas; and Sādhus are protectors of the six classes of living beings and are disciplined. Their worship or remembrance leads to the destruction of karma; hence, they are auspicious.

Dharma (Religion) is in the form of *Samvara* (restraint) or *Nirjarā* (shedding of karma). Through *Samvara*, the influx of karma is stopped, and through *Nirjarā*, the soul becomes bright; therefore, Dharma is auspicious. All these bring about well-being, are supreme in the universe, and their refuge is worthy of acceptance.

In the Jain tradition, refuge in these four—Arihanta, Siddha, Sādhu, and Dharma—is accepted.

Arihanta means seeking refuge in detachment; Siddha means seeking refuge in the liberated soul; Sādhu means seeking refuge in spiritual practice; and Dharma means seeking refuge in Truth. Truly, only these four are refuges; nothing else can provide ultimate shelter. This does not involve the refuge of a son, nor the refuge of wealth and splendor, nor the refuge of a father or a husband. In this, only those who possess nothing have become the refuge. In one word, it can be said: it is the refuge of non-possession (*Akiñcanya*). This is a truth—those who possess too much cannot provide (spiritual) refuge. When adverse circumstances arise, everyone turns away. At that time, only those who are non-possessors, who have nothing material, can become the refuge.

FABLE

Āmrapali was a courtesan. She was the personification of beauty. To win her over, the kings, emperors, feudal lords, and merchants of Vaishali were all eager. Once, an enlightened saint arrived there. He was asked to visit Āmrapali. The saint replied, “Not now; I will surely go when there is a need.” Time passed, and old age began to descend upon Āmrapali’s body. Her beauty faded. She fell ill. No one would come near her; everyone had cast her aside. While wandering, that saint returned to the city and learned of Āmrapali’s condition. He went to her. Āmrapali said, “O Great Monk! You have come very late. Had you come then, you would have been enchanted by my beauty. Today, the situation is not the same.” The saint said, “Lady! That would have been the wrong time for me to come to you. This is the right time, because when no one else is there, it is the saints and monks who are the refuge. Today, you need me; you need Dharma.” In such a state, only the Arihants are the refuge, only the Siddhas are the refuge, only the Sadhus are the refuge, and only the Dharma is the refuge. When all other assumed refuges become insignificant, this Quartet of Refuges provides protection and becomes the shelter. These refuge-formulas are symbols of power.

Do You Know?

This Maṅgala Path is very powerful in itself. Listening to it from ascetics at the start of a journey or any new task—or chanting it oneself if they are not present—proves to be auspicious.

Jain Vidhya Bhag - 1

This Maṅgala Pāṭha has been used for well-wishing and the removal of obstacles.

The description of the Maṅgala Paṭha is found in the *Āvassayam* (Āvaśyaka Sutra).



Lesson-5 Samyaktva Dīkśā: Deva, Guru, Dharma Samyaktva Dīkśā (Initiation into Right Faith)

I accept Bhagwan Mahāvīra as my Adorable Deity (Ārādhya Deva).

I accept Param Pūjya Ācārya Śrī Mahāśramaṇaji as my Guru.

I accept Jain Śwetāmbar Terāpanth as my only Dharma.

I dedicate my faith to Deva, Guru, and Dharma for my entire life.

I will not consume eggs, meat, fish, or alcohol.

I will not commit suicide out of impulse, nor will I kill any other human being.

I will recite the Namaskār Mahāmantra at least twenty-one times every day, except in special circumstances.

I renounce these four for my entire life.

Samyaktva (Right Faith)

Samyaktva holds a vital position in Jain philosophy. Four paths to liberation (Mokśa) are described, and Samyaktva is the very first. Indeed, it must be so, for until a definite goal is established, we can achieve nothing.

Samyaktva is the steady goal or the focal point of the Jain perspective. With its support, the seeker (Mumukshu) moves forward on the path of self-realization. It is an irrefutable rule: if a person does not have faith in the conduct they intend to follow for self-liberation, they cannot succeed in that direction.

The correct goal of a seeker and their faith in Truth is Samyaktva. The goal of a spiritual seeker is self-liberation. If one lacks faith in the soul

and liberation, why would they practice spiritual discipline? Therefore, first, there must be realistic faith in elements like the soul; thereafter, there must be right faith in the means of liberation, which we call Dharma. Not all humans can reach the reality of these elements on their own. Thus, it is essential to have faith in the pure saints who serve as guides.

In short, having true faith in Deva (God/Enlightened Being), Guru (Preceptor), and Dharma (Religion) is essential, and that is Samyaktva. We must trust the Deva because they are the guides on our path of self-realization. Since they do not remain physically present forever, we must trust their followers and the pure saints who explain their principles—our Gurus. Since Dharma is the means of self-liberation and faith in it is natural.

Samyaktva is the root of Right Knowledge (Samyak gyāna) and Right Conduct (Samyak Cāritra). It is the first floor of spiritual practice. Knowledge of the Nine Tattvas (Jīva, Ajīva, Puṇya, Pāp, Āśrava, Saṃvara, Nirjarā, Bandh, and Mokśa) is necessary for the purification of Samyaktva.

Deva (The Divine)

The presiding authority of the order is called Deva. Our Dev are the Arihant-Tīrthankaras, specifically Lord Mahāvīra Swāmi. The path of spirituality does not teach us to worship worldly deities. Rather, it teaches us to adore those who are “shining in their own nature” (*Divyanti Swarupe Devah*), whose souls are lit with the flame of pure conduct. Those who are omniscient, who know all substances exactly as they are through Kevala gyāna, who have destroyed flaws like attachment and aversion, who are worshipped in the three worlds, and who are realists (meaning they preach exactly the true nature of substances)—those supreme humans are Deva, Arihanta, Paramēśwara, and the originators of the True Religion.

Question: Why should we choose only a Vītarāga (detached) being as our adorable ideal? Why not others?

Answer: If our ideal is not Vītarāga but is instead someone filled with attachment (*Sarāgi*), their teachings will also be tainted by attachment and aversion. Such a being can never show us the path to detachment. Therefore, it is said: make that being your adorable ideal who is Vītarāga.

Lord Mahāvira is a detached (*Vītarāga*) being; his memory serves as an inspiration for our departure toward the path of detachment. Therefore, we have accepted him as our adorable ideal.

Guru (The Preceptor)

Every individual desires the removal of life's obstacles, craves auspiciousness, and seeks well-being. In the face of negativity encountered at every step, one seeks guidance and wishes to destroy their ignorance. For this, a Guru is necessary.

In life, there is one Guru whose position is paramount. They are the ones who allow us to experience Truth. Their guidance provides height to our personality. Their proximity erases our dilemmas. Their priceless words provide us with life-giving vitality. Their path-finding becomes the mantra for our soul's upliftment. But all this happens only when we have unwavering faith in the Guru and when our surrender to them is complete.

We also use the word 'Deva' with Guru—such as 'Gurudeva'. This is not an exaggeration, as the Guru's position is even higher than that of a worldly deity. In the *Namaskār Mahāmantra*, we call the Guru *Parameṣṭhi* or *Paramātmā* (Supreme Soul). Is a "deity" more important than the Supreme Soul? Furthermore, when an Ācārya is called "Bhagwān" or "Venerable Parameśwar" similar to a Tīrthankara, many Jains may fall into confusion. However, if thought about seriously, there is nothing to doubt. During the acceptance of Sāmāyik, the Guru is addressed as 'Bhante', which means 'Bhagwān'. Additionally, Ācāryas are described as "*Ajñā jñā saṅkāsā*"—not Jinās themselves, but like the Jinās. Therefore, addressing the Ācārya as 'Gurudeva' is entirely appropriate. Currently, our Guru is Ācārya Śrī Mahāśramaṇaji.

Dharma (Religion)

Dharma is the purification of one's soul; Dharma is the natural state of the soul; Dharma is the pure condition of the soul. These manifest in the form of Non-violence (*Ahiṃsā*), Restraint (*Samyama*), and Penance (*Tapā*). Therefore, these are the means of Dharma: "*Atmasuddhi sādhanam dharmah*"—that which is the means of self-purification is Dharma. Bhagwān Mahāvira said, "*Dhammo suddhassa citṭhai*"—Dharma resides in a pure soul. Dharma dwells in a holy and pure heart. Where there is purity of mind,

speech, and thoughts, Dharma resides there. Conversely, where attachment and aversion are dominant, there is no Dharma or liberation; instead, worldliness and bondage prevail. Therefore, conduct that is beyond attachment and aversion (the path of *Vītarāgatā*) is the practice of Dharma. Chanting, penance, self-study, and Sāmāyik are processes for developing this detached state; hence, their constant practice is necessary.

Question: If Dharma is a state of detachment, the pure state of the soul, and a flame of purity, then what is the importance of a sect (*Sampradāya*)? Why is Dharma tied to a sect?

Answer: If light could exist without a vessel, fruit without a skin, or knowledge without a language, then Dharma could be free from a sect. But in this world, that does not happen. If Dharma is the flame of the lamp, the sect is its vessel. If Dharma is the essence of the fruit, the sect is its peel. If Dharma is consciousness, the sect is the language that expresses it. Thus, despite being different, they are interconnected. Both have their own significance.

Do You Know?

Purity of Conduct: If conduct is pure, the sect becomes a bridge to cross the ocean of the world.

Terāpanth: The Jain Śwetāmbar Terāpanth is a well-organized and disciplined religious order that helps practitioners stay on the path of Deva, Guru, and Dharma.

This triad of Deva, Guru, and Dharma is a single path that remains forever enshrined in the heart of a *Śrāvaka* (lay follower).

1. **Deva:** Those who propound detachment (*Veetrakta*).
2. **Guru:** Those who guide the way to detachment.
3. **Dharma:** The actual conduct of detachment.

Acceptable Rules (Niyam)

To ensure that the values of Jainism continue to strengthen within a layperson, four specific rules are integrated with the *Samyaktva Dīkṣā*:

1. I dedicate my faith to Deva, Guru, and Dharma for my entire life.

Out of worldly expectations, a *Śrāvaka* might worship local deities, but he does not accept them as his supreme ideals (*Ārādhya*). He does not consider them the cause of his spiritual upliftment. Therefore, there is no objection to such social practices, as the supreme ideal of a *Śrāvaka* will always be the detached (*Vītarāga*) Lord.

A *Śrāvaka* possesses unwavering faith and special devotion toward Deva, Guru, and Dharma. He is particularly vigilant about his worship of them. Even in the face of the most difficult life calamities, he does not change them like one changes a house or clothes.

2. I will not consume eggs, meat, fish, or alcohol.

3. I will not commit suicide out of impulse, nor will I kill any other human being.

A Jain *Śrāvaka* lives his life by making the teachings of the *Jina* his ideal. Śramaṇa Bhagwān Mahāvīra categorized meat-eating and the killing of five-sensed beings as grave sins and cited them as causes for rebirth in hell. The Lord also listed alcohol as a harmful vice. Therefore, a Jain *Śrāvaka* strictly avoids these. A wise and prudent individual seeks guidance from elders/Gurus during moments of suicidal ideation to purify their thoughts and engage in special spiritual practice. After all, even King Shrenik, a prominent devotee of Bhagwān Mahāvīra, ended up in hell because of the act of suicide.

4. I will recite the Namaskār Mahāmantra at least twenty-one times every day, except in special circumstances.

It is said of a Jain *Śrāvaka* that one who holds the Namaskār Mahāmantra is a Jain. If one does not even know the Mahāmantra, what kind of Jain is he? Therefore, as Jains, we must recite the Namaskār Mahāmantra at least twenty-one times daily.

“I renounce these four for my entire life.”

From a philosophical perspective, renunciation (*Tyāga*) holds immense significance. Renunciation is *Samvara* (stoppage of karma), *Samvara* is Dharma, and Dharma is the path to *Mokṣa* (liberation). Renunciation brings awareness toward religion and develops the consciousness of sacrifice. It is said that the **Fifth Gunasthāna** (*fifth in the fourteen stages of spiritual*

development) is only attained when life is linked with renunciation. Without renunciation, a *Śrāvaka* cannot achieve even the fifth stage of spiritual progress.

Do You Know?

The commitment to these rules serves as a shield, protecting the soul from the heavy influx of negative karmas.

Daily recitation of the Mahāmantra acts as a spiritual “recharge” for the mind.

Therefore, practicing the renunciation of the four points mentioned above is the true practice of *Śrāvakatva* (laymanship) and the foundation of being a Jain.

FABLE

In the city of Champa, there lived a wealthy and prosperous merchant. His son’s name was Arhannak. Arhannak was a profound scholar of reality and a devout *Śrāvaka*. He was a knower of *Jīva* and *Ajīva* (soul and non-soul) and possessed firm *Samyaktva* (right faith). His faith in Deva, Guru, and Dharma was unwavering.

Once, for the purpose of trade, he was traveling by sea in a ship. As the ship reached the middle of the ocean, a terrible storm suddenly erupted. The storm was caused by the anger of a deity who held wrong beliefs (*Mithyātvi Deva*). While it was natural for the other passengers to be terrified, Arhannak remained unshaken. Realizing it was a divine affliction (*Devakrita Upasarga*), he sat in a corner of the ship, took a vow of fasting with exemptions (*Sagari Anśana*), and immersed himself in religious meditation.

The deity assumed the form of a hideous demon. Laughing loudly in his fierce form, he addressed Arhannak: “O wretched one! Abandon your vows and rules, or else I will kill you and destroy all your wealth along with you!” Even after being threatened two or three times, Arhannak remained motionless. Finally, he replied: “O Beloved of the Gods! To kill me or to sink me is in your hands, but to abandon my religion is not. Religion is not a garment that I can just take off and set aside. Religion is the nature of the soul; it is inseparable from me. How then can I leave it?”

Hearing this, the deity became even more furious. He lifted the massive ship into the air and said, “Now I shall hurl this ship into the ocean. Speak,

what do you say now?” But not a single hair on Arhannak’s body shook with fear or weakness; he remained deep in meditation. The other passengers began to tremble and cried out piteously, “We will all leave our religion! Just give us refuge and do not sink the ship!” They also tried to persuade Arhannak: “Arhannak! Why are you so stubborn? If we stay alive, we can continue to practice religion later. For now, just say that you have abandoned it.”

But Arhannak remained motionless and absorbed in meditation. When the deity perceived Arhannak’s fortitude through his divine knowledge, he was stunned. Accepting defeat, he safely brought the ship to its destination. Praising Arhannak, the deity apologized for his offense. Thinking that a divine encounter should not go in vain, the deity gifted Arhannak two pairs of divine earrings and departed. Everyone watched this scene with eyes full of wonder.

Moral: No power in the world can shake a person who remains firm in their religion.



Lesson-6 Jain Dharma

In India, two cultures associated with religion or philosophy are very ancient:

1. Śramaṇa Culture
2. Vedic Culture

The Śramaṇa culture is the carrier of both Jainism and Buddhism. The word ‘Śramaṇa’ is used in three senses: *Śram* (toil/effort), *Sam* (equanimity), and *Upaśam* (pacification).

Religion and Name

A great soul who conquers attachment and aversion is called a ‘Jina’. Devotees who have faith in the Jina are called ‘Jains’—just as devotees of Shiva and Vishnu are called Shaivas and Vaishnavas. The religion propounded by the Lord Jineśhwar is known as Jainism. Similarly, the religion propounded by Buddha is Buddhism, and the teachings of Christ are known as Christianity.

The Originators of the Religion

In Jain history, there is a tradition of twenty-four Tīrthankaras. One meaning of *Tīrthankara* is “Sermon” or “Divine Voice.” Another meaning is the one who establishes the fourfold order (*Cīaturvidha Dharmatīrtha*) consisting of monks (*Sādhu*), nuns (*Sādhvī*), laymen (*Śrāvaka*), and laywomen (*Śrāvikā*). According to this definition, every Tīrthankara establishes the religious order; they are not the disciples or successors of another Tīrthankara. They are *Ādikaras* (self-originators). From Lord Rṣabha to Lord Mahāvīra, every Tīrthankara established the religious order. The

current religious dispensation (*Dharmaśasana*) we follow was established by Lord Mahāvīra. Tīrthankaras are also called *Bhagwān*, *Jina*, *Arihanta*, and *Devādhīva*.

Are Jains Hindus or Not?

Jain is not a caste; it is a religion, a philosophy, and a system of thought. The Indian populace gave birth to many religions, two of which are primary: Śramaṇa and Vedic. Śramaṇa religion operates on the basis of human-centric effort and philosophy (*Pauruṣeya*), while the Vedic religion is based on the unauthored Vedas (*Apauruṣeya*). If the question is whether Jains are Vedic or not, or vice versa, the answer is simple: Jains are not Vedic, and Vedics are not Jains. They follow two different ideologies.

However, both are Hindus. Hindu is a nationality/cultural identity, whereas Jain and Vedic are philosophies. In the era of Bhagwan Mahāvīra, followers of different religions lived together in the same family. A husband might be Vedic while the wife was Jain, or vice versa. This acceptance of religion did not create conflict in their family life. People even changed their religious affiliations—a Jain might become Buddhist, or a Vedic might become Jain. This was not a change of caste but a change of thought. Indian society provided full freedom for such intellectual transitions.

Bhagwān Rṣabha

Before Lord Rṣabha, there was the Yaugalika Era (the era of twins/couples). In that era, there were Kalpavṛkṣas (wish-fulfilling trees) to fulfill human needs. These trees were capable of providing food, light, housing, clothing, and ornaments.

Slowly, as time passed, the era changed and the Kalpavṛkṣas began to diminish. The natural resources provided by nature started to decrease, and humans began to face food shortages. In that state of scarcity, mutual conflicts and fights began to arise...

They became frightened by these situations, gathered together, and approached Lord Rṣabha, saying, “Please pay attention to our problems. Our difficulties are becoming more complex day by day. Many people are starting to claim ownership over the trees. When we try to reason with them, they get ready to fight. Crises are increasing everywhere, and now we are facing a shortage of food. Please guide us on what to do in such a situation.”

Lord Ṛṣabha heard their plea and gave them the concept of the centralization of power. The couples said, “You are the most capable among us; therefore, you should become our King.” Lord Ṛṣabha guided them and established the political system (*Rājyatantra*). In his governance, Lord Ṛṣabha paid special attention to protecting the virtuous, disciplining the wicked, and providing for the maintenance of dependents.

To solve their contemporary problems, Lord Ṛṣabha taught them various arts and sciences, known as Asi (the art of weaponry/defense), Masi (the art of writing/record-keeping), and Kṛṣi (agriculture). Lord Ṛṣabha also taught them the use of fire. Consequently, they began cooking grain for food and became skilled in various inventions using fire. Lord Ṛṣabha spent most of his life establishing these contemporary systems; eventually, he took initiation (*Dīkṣā*), handed over the kingdom to his sons, and established the religious system (*Dharmatantra*). From Lord Ṛṣabha, people heard the teachings of the Eternal Religion and realized the Truth, moving toward finding lasting solutions to their problems through Truth.

This was the beginning of a new era. Following this, over thousands and thousands of years, Tīrthankaras appeared one by one, creating new spiritual awakenings through the teachings of the Eternal Religion. In this manner, the eras of twenty-two Jain Tīrthankaras passed.

Historical Links

Rāmāyana: In Jain history, the events of the Rāmāyana are considered to have occurred between the 20th and 21st Tīrthankaras. The description of Lord Rāma attaining liberation (*Mokṣa*) is available in Jain scriptures.

Kṛṣṇa: The family relationship of Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the 22nd Tīrthankara, Ariṣṭanemi (Lord Neminath), is described in the Jain Agamas.

Lord Pārśva

The 23rd Tīrthankara of Jainism, Lord Pārśva, was a historical figure. His religious era began 250 years before Lord Mahāvīra. His tradition remained unbroken until the time of Lord Mahāvīra. In fact, Lord Mahāvīra’s parents were followers of Lord Pārśva.

Lord Pārśva is credited with making the practice of Non-violence (*Ahiṃsā*) and Truth society-wide. He bound Non-violence with three other rules: Truth (*Satya*), Non-stealing (*Asteya*), and Non-possessiveness

(*Aparigrah*). Because of this, Non-violence—which was previously limited only to the conduct of sages and monks and had no place in the behavior of common people—became social and practical. Lord Pārśva became very popular through the elevation of the non-violent tradition. We learn of this through the title ‘Purisādānīya’ (The People’s Favorite). Lord Mahāvīra used this title with great respect for Lord Parshva.

Lord Mahāvīra

After Lord Pārśva came the era of Lord Mahāvīra. His era was one of excessive rituals and ceremonies. The impact of the destruction caused by the Mahābhārata had not yet faded from the public mind. People were wandering in search of protection. Many philosophers were leading them toward seeking refuge in a Supreme God, while the Śramaṇa tradition was opposing this. Since there was no powerful leader after the nirvāṇa of Lord Pārśva, their voice was not attracting public attention. Lord Mahāvīra made that voice powerful once again.

Lord Mahāvīra said: “O Man! You alone are your own protector. Where are you searching for refuge outside?” This voice of self-reliance (*Ātmakarṭṛtva*) once again ignited the flame of spiritual effort in the Indian psyche.

The Śramaṇa tradition did not accept the concept of a “Creator God.” At that time, many philosophers were supporting violence in the name of religion by instilling fear of hell. They promoted social evils like animal sacrifice, the slave trade, and casteism. Their grip on the common people was strong, and few dared to speak out for fear of social boycott.

In that era, Lord Mahāvīra’s birth brought a subtle and profound exposition of Ahimsā (Non-violence). His teachings were a sharp strike against false rituals. When asked, “Bhante! What is the eternal religion?” the Lord replied:

“Do not kill any being, do not cause them distress, do not torment them, and do not snatch away their freedom—this is the Eternal Religion (*Śāśavata Dharma*).”

The Various Sects of Jains

Lord Mahāvīra’s teachings were originally consistent and universally accepted. For centuries, the Jain order remained unified. However, a division

eventually occurred based on the practice of wearing clothes (*Saceltā*) or remaining nude (*Aceltā*).

The Major Divisions

Śvetāmbar and Digambar: This primary split happened roughly 609 years after Mahāvīra's Nirvana (according to Śvetāmbar tradition) or 606 years after (according to Digambar tradition).

Mūrti-Pūjaka and Sthānakavāsi: In the 9th century (V.N. 850), the *Caityavās* (temple- dwelling/idol-worshipping) tradition was established. Parallely, the *Suvihita Mārgi* (non-idol worshippers) also existed.

The Rise of Loṅkāśah: In the 16th century of the Vikram Era, Loṅkāśah opposed idol worship and emphasized strictness in conduct. This led to the *Loṅkāgaccha*, later known as the Sthānakavāsi sect due to their preference for staying in *Sthānakas* (halls) rather than temples.

The Origin of Terāpanth

In Vikram Samvat 1817, the newest sect of the Jain order, Terāpanth, emerged. The pioneer was Ācārya Bhikṣu. He was initially initiated under Ācārya Raghunāthaji in the Sthānakavāsi sect. After eight years of intensive study of the *Āgamas*, he gained new insights into Mahāvīra's philosophy of Ahimsā. He initiated a revolution of thought and conduct, resulting in the Terāpanth order we see today.

Digambar Sects

The Digambar tradition also saw various groups like the Mūla Saṅgha, Yāpanīya Saṅgha, Dravida Saṅgha, Kasha Saṅgha, and Mathur Saṅgha. Currently, it includes sects like Bīspanth and Tāraṇapanth.

Jain Scriptures

Jain literature is a vast ocean of wisdom. Lord Mahāvīra's teachings were originally compiled by his chief disciples, the *Ganadharas*, in the form of *Āgamas*.

The Āgamas: These are the primary scriptures. While there are variations in the number of *Āgamas* accepted by different sects (Śvetāmbārs generally accept 45 or 32, while Digambars believe the original *Āgamas* were lost and rely on texts like *Ṣatkhandāgama* and *Kaśāyapāhuda*).

Language: Most ancient Jain scriptures are written in Prākṛta (Ardhamāgadhi), the language of the common people of that time, making the philosophy accessible to all.

Jain literature is divided into two parts: Āgamic and Non-Āgamic. The most ancient part of the literature is called the *Agamas*. The all-knowing and all-seeing Lord (Tīrthankara) perceived himself and the entire universe. He expounded the Truth as a great preacher, and his words became the Āgamas. His chief disciples, Gautam and the other ten *Ganadharas*, composed those teachings into the form of *Sutras* (verses).

The Agamas are further divided into two sections: Sutrāgama and Arthagama. The scattered teachings of the Lord are called *Arthāgama*, and the verse compositions based on those teachings are called *Sutrāgama*.

The language of the Jain Āgamas is Ardhamāgadhi. According to the literature, Tīrthankaras preach in Ardhamāgadhi. It was considered the divine language of that time, and those who used it were called *Bhāṣārya*. It is a form of Prakrit spoken in a part of Magadha, which is why it is called “Half-Magadhi” (*Ardha-Māgadhi*).

Jain Culture

Mukhavastrīkā (The Mouth-Cloth)

In Jain culture, the *Mukhavastrīkā* is used. Monks and nuns do not speak with an open mouth. This yields three results:

Non-violence (Ahimsā): It is a monk’s vow. The Mukhavastrīkā is useful in avoiding violence toward air-bodied beings (*Vāyukāyik Jīva*) while speaking.

Restraint of Speech: It is a symbol of vocal discipline. It reminds the seeker to avoid unnecessary talk.

Hygiene: It ensures that saliva does not spray out while preaching or conversing.

Keeping these three points in mind, laypeople (*Śrāvakas*) should also use a Mukhavastrīkā or a cloth over their mouth during *Sāmāyik*, while conversing with ascetics, or during religious discussions to maintain mindfulness and care.

Tahat (The Word of Acceptance)

When laypeople talk to each other, they use words like “Yes” or “Ji.” Some people use these same words when talking to an Ācārya or monks/nuns. While these words are not wrong, they do not reflect the specific culture. In Jain culture, during conversations with the Ācārya or ascetics, the word “Tahatt” (meaning “So be it” or “As you say”) is used instead of “Yes.”

Jain Sanskar Vidhi (Rites of Passage)

In events like birth, marriage, and death, or in celebrations like birthdays and Diwali, Jain culture emphasizes restraint (*Samyam*) and the avoidance of unnecessary violence. This is the unique identity of Jain culture. From this perspective, the “Jain Sanskār Vidhi” holds great importance. It focuses on three main pillars: Faith, Restraint, and Non-violence. By making these principles our ideal, we can give importance to our culture even in social and religious traditions.

The Use of “Jai Jinendra”

Faith is abstract; the medium to give it a form is a person’s behavior. Behavior relates to the group. What does a person do? What do they say? How do they do it? These questions are linked to collective lifestyle.

When a person meets an acquaintance, introduces themselves to a stranger, participates in a seminar, or joins a festival, there are certain rules of initial etiquette. Similarly, there are set formats for correspondence. Through these, one can identify a person’s centers of faith.

A Jain *Śrāvaka* (lay follower) considers the *Vītarāga* (the Detached One) as their adorable ideal. To become a *Vītarāga* is their ultimate goal. For a constant reminder of this goal, it is essential that the name of the *Vītarāga* stays on their lips. The words ‘Jina’ or ‘Jinendra’ are also used for the *Vītarāga*. From the perspective of keeping the goal in sight, “**Jai Jinendra**” is a symbolic phrase. By chanting the victory of the Jinendra (the Detached One), an individual strengthens their faith and also signals that they believe in Jain culture. Therefore, the use of the sentence “Jai Jinendra” is significant in correspondence and social etiquette.

Symbols of Jain Identity

One of the many factors that influence a person’s mind is the home environment. If there is a prayer room in the house, if sentences indicating

culture are inscribed, and if pictures of Tīrthankaras and Ācāryas are present, every visitor realizes without being told that the house belongs to a Jain. Along with this, by being alert to write “Jain” in the census columns and using the Jain Symbol and the Jain Flag during festivals and special programs, we can better represent Jain culture.

Jain Festivals

Festivals are symbols of past historical events. The four main festivals of Jains are:

1. Akśaya Tritīyā
2. Mahāparva Paryuṣaṇa / Dasalakṣaṇa Parv
3. Mahāvīr Jayanti
4. Dīpāvali

1. Akśaya Tritīyā (Ākhā Tīja)

This is an ancient historical festival of the Jains. On this day, the first Tīrthankara of Jainism, Bhagwān Ṛṣabhadeva (Ādinath), broke his fast after a rigorous penance of one year and forty days. When Lord Ṛṣabha deva moved from the era of worldly affairs (*Karmyug*) to the era of spirituality (*Dharmyug*), he took the vow of monkhood. At that time, people knew nothing about the conduct or dietary rules of monks. Jain monks do not cook for themselves, do not ask others to cook for them, and do not accept food specifically prepared for them. They use the method of alms-gathering (*Bhiksha*) for food and water.

The Lord went from house to house for alms. People were ignorant of the alms-giving procedure. As soon as the Lord reached a house, some wanted to gift him an elephant, some a horse, some clothes, and others jewelry. But the Lord had renounced all these things. He moved forward without accepting anything. People became discouraged; who would think of offering a common thing like bread/roti to their Supreme Father? In this manner, an entire year passed. Until then, the Lord had received neither food to eat nor water to drink. He continued his wandering (*Vihar*) with a detached spirit.

During his travels, the Lord arrived in the capital city of Hastinapur (near present-day Delhi). In the grand palace there, Śreyāns Kumar (the

great-grandson of Lord R̥ṣabha and grandson of Emperor Bahubali) was sitting at the palace balcony. That night, he had seen a divine dream in which he was anointing Mount Meru with nectar with his own hands. While sitting by the window and thinking about this wonderful dream, his eyes suddenly fell upon Lord R̥ṣabha.

As Lord R̥ṣabha passed near the palace, Prince Śreyāns could not recognize his great-grandfather at first. However, due to a close connection with the Lord in previous births, an inner affection awakened within him the moment he saw Him. His mind became filled with contemplation. While gazing at the Lord, he attained Jati-Smriti Gyana (knowledge of his past life). He immediately ran barefoot toward the Lord's feet, bowed down, and requested Him to accept alms at the royal palace.

Until that day after lord's initiation, the Lord had not accepted any food or water. Accepting the prince's humble request, the Lord entered the palace. A large crowd followed, eager to understand the mystery of the Lord's wandering from house to house. It was the day of Vaiśākha Śuklā Tṛtīyā, considered auspicious for initiating agricultural activities. On this day, the King would receive many gifts related to agriculture. Pots filled with Ikśurasa (sugarcane juice) had arrived at Prince Śreyāns' palace as gifts. Realizing the juice was *Prasuk* and *Eṣaṇīya* (pure and acceptable for a monk), the Prince prepared to offer the donation with his own hands. Since the Lord did not carry a vessel, He joined His hands into a seamless cup (*Aṃjali*), held them to His mouth, and broke His year-long penance (*Varṣitapa*). The Prince's heart overflowed with joy; his dream had come true, and the significance of that day increased manifold.

That day of Vaiśākha Śuklā Tṛtīyā is still famous worldwide as Akśaya Tṛtīyā. In memory of that event, many Jain followers today perform the *Varṣitapa* penance (fasting on alternate days for a year) and celebrate it with great enthusiasm.

2. Mahāparva Paryūṣaṇa / Dasalakṣaṇa Parva

Paryūṣaṇa is the greatest festival of the Jain order. The entire Jain community practices this great festival with deep faith. It is celebrated from the 12th or 13th day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada to the 4th or 5th day of the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada. On the final day, the Bhagawatī

Samvatsari is worshipped. Samvatsarī is the core day of Paryūṣaṇa, which is why it is called the “King of Festivals.” The remaining seven days were designated by ancient teachers to increase its significance and prepare for special spiritual practices. Hence, it is also called the Aṣṭāṇhika Parva (an eight-day festival).

Paryūṣaṇa signifies the annual day of reckoning. On this day, fasting, performing the Samvatsarī Pratikramaṇa (ritual of confession), seeking forgiveness, and special spiritual worship are mandatory. In a way, Samvatsarī is a “great bath” of the soul through the exchange of forgiveness from the heart. Without this purification, a seeker’s right faith, a layman’s vows, and even a monk’s conduct can be compromised. For the Jain community, this is akin to a spiritual Mahākumbha.

In the Digambar tradition, this festival is celebrated from the 5th to the 14th day of the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada. Every day, one of the ten virtues (like Forgiveness, Humility, etc.) is specially practiced. Therefore, it is called the “Dasa Lakṣaṇa Parva.”

3. Mahāvīr Jayantī

The name of Bhagwān Mahāvīra is taken with great respect among the world’s great personalities. He was the twenty-fourth Tīrthankara of Jainism. About 2,500 years ago, on the 13th day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra (Caitra Śuklā Trayodaśī), the Lord was born to Queen Triśalā, the wife of King Siddhartha. With the Lord’s birth, the kingdom experienced a tremendous increase in prosperity. Progress manifested in every field.

Therefore, the Lord’s birth name was kept as Vardhamān (progressive). Later, during his period of intense spiritual practice, he endured numerous life-threatening hardships with heroic fortitude, which is why he became known as ‘Mahāvīra’ (The Great Hero). Every year on Caitra Śuklā 13, Jains gather to celebrate Mahāvīr Jayantī with immense enthusiasm and joy. On this day, many state governments and the Central Government declare a public holiday.

4. Dīpawali

Dīpawali is associated with the Nirvāṇa (liberation) of Bhagwan Mahāvīra. The Lord attained Nirvāṇa on the moonless night of Kārtika (*Kārtika Amāvasyā*). At that time, celestial beings and kings lit lamps to mark the

event, a tradition followed today by lighting lamps. While other stories regarding the origin of Dīpawali exist as folklore, the connection this festival has with Jains is historically grounded. Ancient Jain texts explicitly state that Bhagwān Mahāvīra attained Nirvāṇa during the transition between the night of Kārtika Kṛṣṇā Chaturdaśī and the dawn of Amāvasyā. On this occasion, Indra and other deities decorated the rows of lamps (*Dīpmālikā*). Even the Purāṇas acknowledge that the festival of Dīpawali is celebrated in memory of Bhagwān Mahāvīra's Nirvāṇa. This remains the oldest evidence regarding the origin of Dīpawali.

Fundamental Principles of Jainism

1. **Non-Creationism:** There is no specific God who created the universe; this world is eternal and infinite (*Anādi-Ananta*).
2. **Equality:** In the practice of religion, there is no discrimination based on caste, creed, or gender.
3. **Self-Responsibility:** The soul itself is the doer of its own happiness and sorrow. It binds its own karmas and reaps the fruits; no external God intervenes in this process.
4. **Potential for Divinity:** Through spiritual practice, every soul has the potential to become a Supreme Soul (*Paramatma*).
5. **Reincarnation:** Jainism believes in past lives and rebirth. It believes in the existence of the soul across three periods of time (past, present, future), making it a 'Theist' (*Āstika*) philosophy in the sense of believing in the soul's existence.
6. **Ahiṃsā (Non-violence):** Non-violence is the root of religion. There is a strict prohibition of aggressive policies, alcohol, meat, and hunting.
7. **Search for Truth:** Jainism is a religion of exploring and explaining Truth; it is free from empty rituals and superstitious beliefs.
8. **Discipline and Renunciation:** It is a religion centered on sacrifice, restraint, and non-violence, emphasizing self-discipline, self-effort, and non-possessiveness (*Aparigraha*).
9. **Anekāntavāda:** Jain philosophy views any object or truth from multiple perspectives. It accepts facts through a relative lens (*Syādvāda*).



Lesson-7 Śramana Bhagwān Mahāvīra

The name of Bhagwān Mahāvīra is taken with great respect among the great personalities of the world. He was the twenty-fourth Tīrthankara of Jainism.

Birth

About two and a half thousand years ago, in the Republic of Vaiśali (Bihar, India), there was a grand city named ‘Kśatrīya Kundagrām’. Queen Triśalā, the wife of King Siddhārtha, the ruler of that city, saw 14 Great Dreams in the last part of the night.

Her heart filled with joy upon seeing these dreams. She was amazed because she had never seen such significant dreams before. She went to King Siddhārtha and told him about the dreams. Siddhārtha was struck with joy and wonder.

Siddhārtha invited the dream interpreters. After studying the dreams, they said, “Mahārāja! The Queen will give birth to a son. These dreams indicate that he will be a Dharma-Cakravartī (a spiritual sovereign).” The King rewarded the interpreters and bid them farewell.

From the moment the Lord’s soul resided in Queen Triśalā’s womb, there was an unprecedented increase in wealth and grain in the kingdom. The entire region was overwhelmed with joy. In this joyful atmosphere, the Lord was born in the middle of the night on Caitra Suklā Trayodaśī.

Celebrations in the City

King Siddhārtha celebrated for ten days with an open heart. There was no limit to the joy and enthusiasm of the subjects. The decoration of Kśatrīya Kundagrām rivaled that of the celestial city, Indrapuri. Taxes for the citizens

were waived, and prisoners were released from their bonds. On the day of the naming ceremony, a feast was organized for family and friends. All the family members blessed the newborn child upon seeing him. During the discussion about the name, King Siddhārtha said, “Since there was an unprecedented increase in wealth and grain during his time in the womb, the child should be named Vardhamān (The progressive One).” Everyone began calling the child by this name. Later, other names for the Lord also became popular, such as Mahāvīra, Śramaṇa, Gyataputra, Videha, Vaiśālīka, Sanmati, Kāśyapa, and Devārya.

Childhood Play

Kumar Vardhamān began playing in the palace gardens. Once, he was playing the ‘Aamalaki’ game with his peers. At that time, Saudharmendra (the King of Gods) praised the child Vardhamān’s intellectual skill and courage in his assembly, saying, “Neither humans, nor animals, nor even divine powers can match his courage.”

One deity felt this was an exaggeration. He descended to the place where the boys were playing to defeat child Vardhaman. At that time, Vardhaman was climbing a tree with his friends. The deity took the form of a terrifying cobra, coiled around a branch of that tree, and began to hiss. The children cried out in fear, “Help! Help!! A poisonous snake is on the tree.” Vardhaman moved forward, caught the snake, and mindfully threw it seven levels away. The deity realized he could not deceive him; he bowed to the child and returned to the heavens.

In the School

When Vardhamān turned eight years old, King Siddhārtha took him to school. Śakrendra was greatly surprised that the King was taking the Lord—who already possessed Triple Knowledge (*Mati, Shrut, and Avadhi Jnana*)—to a school to be taught. He wondered what the teacher could possibly teach? But they were unaware. Indra (Śakra) himself visited, the school teacher was seated on a table. Young Vardhamān was made to sit down.

The teacher was about to begin his instructions when Indra, disguised as an elderly Brahmin, asked such complex grammatical questions that the teacher was left bewildered. When the child Vardhaman effortlessly answered all of them, the teacher (*Kalācāryas*) was astonished and stepped down from

his seat to sit below. Indra then revealed his true form and introduced Vardhaman. The wisdom shared by him on that day became famous as the ‘Aindra Vyakarana’ (Indra’s Grammar).

Marriage

As Vardhamān entered youth, Siddhārtha began preparations for his marriage. The task of persuading Vardhamān was given to his young friends, leading to long debates about the merits and demerits of worldly life. Eventually, Queen Triśalā intervened, saying, “It may not be your wish to marry, but it is mine. Keeping this in mind, you must marry.”

Observing the state of his *Bhogāvali Karma* (karma that must be experienced), Vardhamān remained silent out of respect for his mother’s request. Taking this silence as consent, the Queen announced the marriage.

King Siddhārtha arranged the marriage of Vardhamān with Yaśodā, the daughter of King Samaravīra of Basantapura, with great pomp. Vardhamān lived his life with a sense of detachment (*Anāsakti*) even while fulfilling his royal duties. They had a daughter named Priyadarśanā, who was later married to Prince Jamali.

Note: In the Digambar tradition, it is believed that Vardhamān never married and remained a lifelong celibate (*Bāla Brahmachārī*).

Initiation (Dīkṣā)

Mahāvīra’s parents, Siddhārtha and Triśalā, were followers of the Śramaṇa tradition of Lord Pārśva. Mahāvīra was detached from the beginning, but out of profound love for his parents, he did not express his desire for initiation. While still in the womb, he had resolved not to take initiation as long as his parents were alive.

When Mahāvīra was twenty-eight years old, his parents, sensing the end of their lifespan, accepted the vow of *Anśana* (fasting unto death) and attained *Samādhimarāṇa*. After their passing, Mahāvīra approached his elder brother, Nandivardhana, and said, “Brother! Please grant me permission for initiation.”

Nandivardhana replied: “Brother! What are you saying? I have not yet overcome the grief of losing our parents, and now you speak of leaving home. Do not speak of going until our hearts have found peace.”

Mahāvīra said: “I do not wish to disobey your command, but please fix a duration for my continued stay in the household.”

Nandivardhana replied: “At least for two years.”

Two Years of Preparation

Mahāvīra remained in the household for two more years. During this period, he lived the life of an ascetic despite being in the palace. He did not eat at night, drank only boiled (acita) water, slept on the floor, and observed strict celibacy. Even for washing his body, he used only acitta water. He frequently performed two-day fasts (*Bele-Bele*). After one year, the nine *Lokāntika* Gods collectively approached him, bowed, and requested: “Lord! Now, for the welfare of all beings, please accept initiation (*Diksha*) and establish the religious order (*Dharma Tīrtha*).”

The Great Charity (Varṣidāna)

Mahāvīra then began his *Varṣidāna* (year-long charity). With the assistance of celestial beings, he donated 10.8 million gold coins every day during the first quarter of the day. In total, over the year, he donated 3.88 billion gold coins. Following the charity, his uncle Supārśva and brother Nandivardhana began preparations for the initiation festival.

Mahāvīra bathed, applied sandalwood paste, and wore beautiful garments and ornaments. He sat in a grand, divinely crafted palanquin (*Sukhpālīka*). Hundreds of gods and humans joined together to carry it. The palanquin was placed under an Ashoka tree in the *gyāta Khaṇḍa* forest. There, Mahāvīra descended, discarded all his clothes and jewelry, and performed *Pañca-Muṣṭī Loca* (plucking his hair out in five handfuls) while facing East. This occurred during the third quarter of the tenth day of the dark fortnight of the month of *Mārgaśīrṣa*. Indra collected the hair in a golden tray and immersed them in the Ocean of Milk.

The Vow of Initiation

In the presence of a vast assembly of gods and humans, Mahāvīra chanted “*Namo Siddhāṇam*” and took a solemn vow: “*Savvaṃ me akaraṇijjaṃ pāvaṃ kammaṃ*”—from now on, all sinful actions are forbidden for me. With this, he accepted the *Sāmāyik Caritra* (equanimous conduct). Immediately after initiation, he took a special resolve: “Until I attain *Kevala*

gyāna (omniscience), I shall remain detached from my body; I will endure every suffering (*Upasarga*) caused by gods, humans, or animals with perfect equanimity.”

A Spiritual Practice of Extreme Hardships

The period of Lord Mahāvīra’s spiritual practice was filled with severe trials and obstacles. Ancient teachers believe that the karmas of the other twenty-three Tīrthankaras were on one side, and Lord Mahāvīra’s were on the other—Mahāvīra had more to shed. Consequently, his Spiritual practice was exceptionally painful and intense.

The Robe: After initiation, Mahāvīra kept nothing except a divine cloth (*Dev-Duśya*). This cloth remained on his shoulder for about thirteen months, after which it fell off, and he became completely *Acela* (without clothes).

Physical Endurance: Attracted by the fragrant ointments applied during his initiation, bees and insects swarmed his body for four months, pecking at his flesh and drinking his blood. Yet, Mahāvīra did not utter a single cry of pain.

Living Conditions: During his journey, he stayed in deserted huts, ruins, cremation grounds, or under sheds. In the biting cold of winter, while others sought warmth, Mahāvīra stood in the open with a bare body, never wishing for protection.

Social and Natural Trials: Besides weather, he faced bites from mosquitoes and attacks from poisonous snakes or sharp-beaked birds like vultures. Sometimes, people mistook him for a thief or a spy, beating and insulting him. He endured terrifying, life-threatening divine trials with absolute calmness.

Victory over Sleep: During his entire period of spiritual practice, Mahāvīra almost never slept. Whenever sleep overpowered him, he would stand up or walk around to drive it away. While traveling, he never looked sideways or behind and never spoke to anyone on the way. He remained mostly in deep penance.

Whatever stale food he received, he accepted with total detachment. When illness arose, He did not consume medicine. Even if a particle of dust fell into his eye, he did not desire to remove it. He never scratched his body.

In this way, though living in a body, he became *videha* (free from bodily attachment), remaining alert and conscious every second, purifying his soul through meditation and *kāyotsarga* (bodily abandonment).

Attainment of Omniscience (Kevalya-Prāpti)

After wandering for twelve years and six and a half months, the Lord arrived outside the village of Jambhiya. There, on the banks of the Rjubālukā River, in the field of a householder named Śyāmaka, the Lord entered deep meditation under a Shāla tree.

With a two-day fast (Bele), in the Godohika posture (cow-milking posture), on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Vaiśakha, during the final quarter of the day in the Uttara Phalguni constellation, the Lord ascended the Kśapaka Śreṇi (ladder of annihilation). In the second stage of pure meditation (Śukla Dhyāna), with pure thoughts and determination, He completely uprooted the Mohanīya (delusory) Karma in the 12th spiritual stage (Guṇasthāna). He then destroyed the remaining three destructive (Ghāti) Karmas—Gyānavaraṇīya (knowledge-obscuring), Darśanāvaraṇīya (perception-obscuring), and Aṃtārāya (obstructing)—attaining Kevala gyāna (Omniscience) and Kevala Darśanaa (Omniperception) in the 13th Guṇasthana. The Lord began to perceive all material and non-material substances through His divine knowledge.

The period of his spiritual practice (Chadmastha Kāla) lasted 12 years, 6 months, and 15 days. His penance during this time was as follows:

Type of Fast	Frequency	Type of Fast	Frequency
6-Month Fast	1	6-Month Fast (minus 5 days)	1
4-Month Fast	9	3-Month Fast	2
2.5-Month Fast	2	2-Month Fast	6
1.5-Month Fast	2	1-Month Fast	12
15-Day Fast	72	Bhadra Pratima (2 days)	1
Mahabhadra Pratima (4 days)	1	Sarvatobhadra Pratima (10 days)	1
3-Day Fast (Telā)	12	2-Day Fast (Bela)	929

The Lord took initiation with a Bela (2-day fast), so one additional fast is added to the count. His total penance amounted to 11 years, 6 months, and 25 days (4,166 days). The total duration of days on which He took food (Pāraṇa) was only 11 months and 19 days (346 days). All of the Lord's fasts were Cauvihāra (without water). Some also believe He performed 4-day fasts (Colā) and other variations.

The First Sermon (Pratham Deśnā)

After becoming a Kevali, sixty-four Indras and countless deities celebrated the Lord's Omniscience Festival (Kevala Mahotsava). The gods created a Samavasaraṇa (a divine preaching hall). In this first assembly, only celestial beings were present. The Lord delivered a sermon, but the fourfold order (Caturvidha Saṅgha) could not be established. While the gods praised the Lord's speech, they could not take the vows of monks (Mahāvratā) or laypeople (Aṇuvratā) because celestial beings lack the eligibility for such initiation.

Since the sermon took place in a forest by the R̥jubālukā River, no humans could attend. Usually, a Tīrthankara's sermon never goes in vain, and the Saṅgha is established during the very first discourse. Because Lord Mahāvīra's first sermon was "unsuccessful" (in terms of initiation), it is considered one of the Ten Wonders (Āścarya) of this era. Some teachers believe a few people were present, but none were able to take vows.

Initiation of the Ganadharas

Moving from the village of Jambhiyā, Lord Mahāvīra arrived at Madhyama Pāva. There, a wealthy Brahmin named Somil had organized a massive *Yagya* (ritual sacrifice), attended by many high-ranking scholars. Among them were eleven great pundits who had arrived with their vast families of disciples.

In Madhyama Pāva, the celestial beings created a Samavasaraṇa (divine preaching hall). Crowds of men and women from the city began to arrive, and groups of gods and goddesses descended from the sky. Seeing this, the pundits were delighted, saying, "Look, these deities are coming to offer oblations in our Yagya." However, after a few moments, they became suspicious when the gods flew past the sacrificial canopy. Upon

investigation, they learned that the deities were heading to the assembly of the Omniscient Mahāvīra.

The pundits took this as an insult. The eldest pundit, Indrabhūti Gautama, thought, “It seems Mahāvīra is a hypocrite or an illusionist who is misleading the people. He won’t be able to stand before me in a debate. I will not rest until I defeat him.” With this resolve, Indrabhūti Gautama arrived at the Lord’s Samavasaraṇa with his five hundred disciples.

Gautama was stunned the moment he saw the Lord. When the Lord approached and addressed him by name, saying “Gautama,” he was shocked. He initially thought, “My fame as a scholar is widespread; who doesn’t know me?”

However, Gautama had harbored a deep doubt for years which he had never revealed to anyone. Addressing that very secret doubt, the Lord said, “Gautama! You have a doubt in your mind regarding the existence of the Soul (Atma).” Indrabhūti Gautama was startled and realized that this being was truly omniscient. The Lord then proved the existence of the soul in detail. Indrabhūti’s doubt was dispelled, and he accepted initiation (*Dīkṣā*) and discipleship under the Lord along with his five hundred followers.

The Eleven Gaṇadharas: Disciples and Doubts

The following table details the eleven pundits who became the chief disciples (Gaṇadharas), the number of their followers, and the specific philosophical doubts the Lord resolved for them:

S No.	Ganadhara	Number of Disciples	Specific Philosophical Doubt
1	Indrabhūti	500	Existence of the Soul (<i>Ātmā</i>)
2	Agnibhūti	500	Monism (<i>Puruṣadvaita</i>)
3	Vayubhūti	500	Soul-Body Identity (<i>Tajjīva-Tacchariravāda</i>)
4	Vyakta	500	Material world as an illusion (<i>Brahmamaya Jagat</i>)
5	Sudharmā	500	Reincarnation/Next life (<i>Janmāntar</i>)
6	Mandita	350	Bondage and worldly nature of the soul
7	Mauryaputra	350	Existence of Deities and the Celestial realm
8	Akampita	300	Existence of Hell and Hellish beings

9	Acalbhrata	300	Merit and Demerit (<i>Punya-Pāp</i>)
10	Metārya	300	Rebirth (<i>Punarjanma</i>)
11	Prabhās	300	Liberation (<i>Mukti/Mokṣa</i>)

Establishment of the Tīrtha In the *Samavasaraṇa* of Madhyama Pava, a total of 4,411 Brahmins, including the eleven great pundits, accepted monkhood. The Lord bestowed upon these eleven pundits the knowledge of the Tripadi (the three-fold path: *Uppannei* - emergence, *Vigamei* - disappearance, and *Dhuvei* - persistence). Through this Tripadi, they gained knowledge of the Twelve Angās (*Dvādaśāṅgi*), including the fourteen *Purvās*, and became known as the Gaṇadharas.

Princess Chandanabālā and others became nuns (*Sādhvis*). Individuals like Śankha and Śataka accepted the path of a layman (*Śrāvaka*), while others like Sulasā accepted the path of a laywoman (*Śrāvikā*). This occurred on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight of Vaiśakha (Vaiśakha Śuklā Ekādashi). By establishing this four-fold order, Lord Mahāvīra became a *Bhāva Tīrthankara*.

The Final Sermon

In his state of omniscience (*Kevali*), the Lord wandered for twenty-nine years, six months, and fifteen days. Millions received guidance and a philosophy of life from him.

On the night of Kārtika Kṛṣṇa Trayodaśī, the Lord began his final fast (*Anśana*) and delivered his last sermon. He provided numerous teachings to the four-fold order and the devotees present. On the final day, the evening of Kārtika Kṛṣṇa Amāvasyā, the Lord sent his chief disciple, Indrabhūti Gautama, to a scholar named Deva Sharma to resolve some philosophical matters. Following the Lord's command, Gautama Swāmi went there and engaged in a profound discussion.

During his two-day fast, the Lord delivered 55 chapters regarding the fruits of virtuous actions (*Puṇya-phal, vipāk-sutra*) and 55 chapters regarding the fruits of sinful actions (*Pāpa-phala*). Amidst various question-and-answer sessions, he then delivered 36 chapters, which are preserved today as the Uttarādhyayana Sūtra. The Lord's final discourse lasted for 16 *Praharas* (approximately 48 hours).

Core Principles of Mahāvīra

Upon attaining omniscience, Lord Mahāvīra struck a powerful blow against the rigid traditions of the time. He fundamentally refuted the prevailing false beliefs. His primary principles are as follows:

Opposition to Casteism

Despite being born into a noble lineage, he declared casteism to be non-philosophical. His clear proclamation was: “A person is not high or low by birth. Only actions (Karma) are the measure of a person’s status.” He included the so-called “Shudras” (the oppressed classes) in his religious order. While this seemed strange to many at the time, the Lord stated clearly: “To consider someone low by birth is a form of violence (Ahimsā).” This revolutionary declaration brought a wave of hope to millions of oppressed and marginalized people. In the Lord’s assembly, everyone sat together without discrimination to hear his sermons.

***Dhammo Suddhassa Cijjhāi* (Religion stays with the Pure)**

When asked, “Who can accept the religion you propound?” the Lord replied, “Every individual can accept the eternal religion I describe. There are no bonds. Caste, class, or external symbols are irrelevant to religion. To make this eternal religion stay within oneself, purity of heart is essential. Religion does not reside in an impure heart. Sanctity is mandatory for the stability of religion.”

Opposition to Animal Sacrifice

Mahāvīra raised his voice against the massive acts of violence committed in the name of *Yagyās* (sacrificial rituals). He termed the prevalent belief of earning religious merit by sacrificing innocent, mute animals as *Mithyātva* (falsehood). He stated clearly: “Violence is a sin. Trying to practice religion through violence is like attempting to clean a blood-stained cloth with more blood. Religion can only be earned by refraining from violence.”

Equal Rights for Women

Lord Mahāvīra initiated women into his *Saṅgha* (order) on an equal footing with men. He provided them with all the formulas for self-development. In his view, “male” and “female” are merely bodily markers; the soul is simply the soul. The gender of a person makes no difference to

their spiritual potential. He believed that depriving women of religion was a grave crime and a spiritual obstruction. This modern thinking of Mahāvīra sparked a new revolution, as contemporary organizations like the Buddhist, Vedic, and Sankhya schools generally did not favor initiating women at that time. Granting equal rights to women in the field of spiritual practice is a great contribution of Lord Mahāvīra.

Awakening in the Language of the People

Lord Mahāvīra always delivered his sermons in the language of the masses. The people of Magadha and its surrounding areas spoke Ardhamāgadhi. By speaking the language of the common people, he truly became one with them. The original Jain *Āgamas* (scriptures) are available in Ardhamāgadhi to this day.

Opposition to Slavery

Lord Mahāvīra placed great emphasis on individual freedom. He declared the practice of slavery to be against religion. Buying a person as a slave or keeping them as a servant is a form of violence. He taught that the freedom of every individual is a sign of a healthy society. “In my Saṅgha, everyone will be equal,” he proclaimed. “No one is a slave. Serving one another will be done with the spirit of *Nirjarā* (shedding of karmas), not under pressure. Slavery is a blot on collective life.”

Aparigrah (Non-possessiveness)

The teaching of *Aparigrah* is a monumental gift from Mahāvīra. He declared the hoarding of wealth to be the root of all evils. Labeling wealth as an obstacle to religious progress, he made its total renunciation mandatory for monks. For laypeople (*Śrāvakas*), he emphasized the necessity of putting a limit on possessions.

The lay followers of Lord Mahāvīra would often renounce more wealth than they kept. No *Śrāvaka* hoarded more than their predetermined limit; at the end of each year, they would give away any excess to bring their possessions back to their chosen limit. His teaching was that hoarding creates problems, and a religious person can progress in spirituality only as much as they remain “light” and unburdened by possessions.

Anekānt (Multi-faceted Reality)

Mahāvīra's philosophy of Anekāntavāda is the foundation of intellectual non-violence. It teaches that truth is multi-dimensional and that no single human perspective can claim to be the absolute truth. By accepting the relative viewpoints of others, one can resolve conflicts and reach a deeper understanding of reality.

The entire world acknowledges Lord Mahāvīra's extremely subtle perspective on Ahimsā (Non-violence). In his view, beyond physical violence, vocal and mental bitterness are also forms of violence. Making such a refined level of Ahimsā a subject of daily practice was a matter of wonder for other contemporary philosophers.

To develop intellectual non-violence, he propounded the theory of Syādvāda (Anekāntavāda). He believed that holding onto a one-sided view of an object is dogmatism (*Āgrah*) and a distortion of truth. Accepting only one attribute of an infinite-property object while denying others is an incompleteness in itself. To attain reality is to explain everything from a relative perspective (*Apekṣā*).

For example, saying a pot “exists” as a pot is a perception of its existence (*Astitva*). Denying the pot as being a cloth is a perception of its non-existence (*Nāstitva*). The inclusion of these two seemingly contradictory attributes—existence and non-existence—within the same object is called Syādvāda. Once Syādvāda is accepted, extremist dogmatism naturally ends, leaving no room for intellectual conflict.

The Lord's Family (The Saṅgha)

The following statistics represent the vast spiritual family of Lord Mahāvīra during his time:

Category	Count
Gaṇadharas (Chief Disciples)	11
Keval-Gyāni (Omniscient Beings)	700
Manah-Paryav-Gyāni (Mind-readers)	500
Avadhi-Gyani (Clairvoyants)	1,300

Vaikriya Labdhi-dhāri (Possessors of Transformative powers)	700
Caturdaś Pūrvi (Masters of the 14 Purvas)	300
Carcavādi (Master Debaters)	400
Sādhus (Monks)	14,000
Sādhvis (Nuns)	36,000
Śrāvakas (Laymen)	1,59,000
Śrāvikās (Laywomen)	3,18,000

The Five Auspicious Events (Panch Kalyanaka)

These five events mark the most sacred milestones in the life of a Tīrthankara.

Event	Date (Tithi)	Location	Nakshatra (Constellation)
Cyavana (Conception)	Āśāḍha Śukla 6	Pranat Devaloka (Descent)	Uttara Phālguni
Janma (Birth)	Caitra Śuklā 13	Kśatrīya Kunda	Uttarā Phālguni
Dīkṣā (Initiation)	Mārgśīrṣa Krishna 10	Kśatrīya Kunda	Uttarā Phālguni
Keval-Gyāna (Omniscience)	Vaiśakha Shukla 10	Banks of Rijubālukā River, Jambhiyā Village	Uttarā Phālguni
Nirvaṇa (Liberation)	Kārtika Kṛṣṇa 15	Pāvāpuri	Swāti



Lesson-8 Terāpanth

Terāpanth is the newest sect of the Jain order. It is renowned for its unique principles of one conduct, one thought, uniform discipline, and a single leadership.

The Founder: Ācārya Bhikṣu

The pioneer of this sect was Ācāryas Bhikṣu. He was initiated under Ācārya Raghunāthji in the Sthānakvāsi sect in V.S. 1808. For eight years, he remained with his guru, displaying extraordinary intelligence. During this time, he conducted an intensive study of the Jain *Agamas*.

As he studied the scriptures, he found a “new light.” His faith in Lord Mahāvīra and his words was profound. The non-violence (*Ahiṃsa*) philosophy of Mahāvīra touched his heart deeply. He discussed his findings with many Ācāryas and monks, but his mind remained unsatisfied. To find a new direction, he departed from the sect on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Caitra in **V.S. 1817** in the city of Bagri.

His departure caused a massive stir in the Jain community. Carrying the light of his thoughts to the masses, he moved from the Mārwar region to Mewār. On the full moon day of the bright fortnight of Āṣāḍha in V.S. 1817, in a small, dark room (known as Aṇḍheri Orī) in Kelwa, he reaffirmed his vow of monkhood. At that very moment, the foundation of the Terāpanth Religious Order was laid.

Philosophy and Revolution

In philosophical terms, the origin of Terāpanth is the origin of the development of Ahiṃsa. While some believe Terāpanth was merely a revolution in conduct (*Ācāra Krāntī*), it was fundamentally a Revolution of Thought (*Vicāra Krāntī*).

Ācārya Bhikṣu provided a new perspective on ideological contexts and initiated a renaissance in conduct. His explanations of Non-violence (*Ahiṃsa*), Charity (*Dāna*), and Compassion (*Dayā*) were a new departure. He clearly defined the boundary between:

Laukika Dharma: Worldly/Social duties.

Lokottara Dharma: Transcendent/Spiritual religion.

Analyzing duty and religion, he said:

“Every religious act can fall within the boundary of duty, but every duty cannot be considered religion.”

He knew that without a mature foundation of thought, conduct could not be sustained. To provide ideological firmness, he authored several texts and presented his beliefs systematically.

The Test of Truth: Restraint

Ācārya Bhikṣu was the soul of the Terāpanth order. Despite being the supreme leader, he never forced his thoughts on others. Instead, he provided “touchstones” (*Kasaūṭis*) to understand the truth. The greatest touchstone he offered was Saṃyam (Restraint).

He tested himself against this standard and drew a clear line between worldly and spiritual paths. He proclaimed:

“Wherever there is restraint, vows, renunciation, and non-violence, there is Lokottara Dharma (Spiritual Religion). Religion cannot coexist with lack of restraint, lack of vows, indulgence, and violence.”

“There is no connection with it.” This concept was starkly different from the prevailing definitions of religion at that time. It disrupted the vested interests of many, leading to intense opposition against Ācārya Bhikṣu. However, in that hostile environment, he remained steadfast and true to the virtue of forgiveness.

The Naming of Terāpanth

This incident took place in Jodhpur. One day, a few lay followers (*Śrāvaka*) who had faith in Ācārya Bhikṣu’s thoughts gathered at a shop in the market to perform *Sāmāyik* (a meditative ritual). Coincidentally, Fatehmalji Singhi, a Jain Śrāvaka and the then Prime Minister (*Dīwāna*) of Jodhpur state,

arrived in the market. He asked the followers why they were performing *Sāmāyik* in the middle of a marketplace.

Among the followers was Gerulālji Vyās. He narrated the entire story of Ācārya Bhikṣu's departure from the previous sect. After listening carefully, the Dīwāna asked, "How many monks are currently supporting this ideology?"

The followers replied, "Thirteen."

He then asked, "And how many followers in Jodhpur are currently following them?" The Śrāvakas said, "We are also thirteen, and all of us are present here."

A poet from the *Sevag* community was with Singhi Ji at that time. Finding the identical number of monks and lay followers, he instantly composed and recited a couplet:

Sādha sādha ro gilo kare, te āpa āpro manta. Sunjyo re śehara rā logām, e Terāpanthi *tanta*.

(Monks collaborate with monks, each holding their own view. Listen, people of the city, this is the essence of 'Terāpanth'.)

Initially, opponents seized the name "Terāpanthi." Using the small number as a basis, they started teasing Bhikṣu Swāmi's followers by calling them "Terāpanthis." They spread the name far and wide as a form of protest. When news of this naming reached Bhikṣu Swāmi, he listened with a detached mind. He saw a profound meaning in the word "Terāpanthi" uttered by the poet.

For him, the word became a path. He immediately left his seat, sat in a posture of reverence, bowed to the Lord, and said with folded hands:

"O Lord! This is Terā (Your) Panth (Path). We are merely travelers walking on this path. Therefore, we are Terāpanthi."

While the poet's basis for the name was the number thirteen, Bhikṣu Swāmi provided a numerical interpretation as well: "Where the five Great Vows (*Mahāvratas*), the five Regulations (*Samitis*), and the three Restraints (*Guptis*)—these thirteen rules—are observed, that is Terāpanth." After giving this meaning, he accepted "Terāpanth" as the symbolic name for the religious order.

The Vital Elements of the Terāpanth Organization

Creating an organization is one thing, but making it powerful is another. Without strength, organizations form and then dissolve. Before establishing the order, Ācārya Bhikṣu contemplated it from various perspectives. After forming it, he studied it deeply for fifteen years. He thought about future possibilities, addressed potential problems, and drafted a **Constitution**. To make the organization strong and long-lasting, Ācārya Bhikṣu focused on five specific pillars:

To ensure the longevity and strength of the order, Ācārya Bhikṣu identified five vital pillars. These principles remain the bedrock of the Terāpanth sect today:

1. The Five Vital Pillars of **Organization**

2. **Śraddhā (Faith)**: Faith, devotion, and belief are synonymous here. This involves unwavering faith in the ultimate goal, the means to achieve that goal, faith in oneself, faith in one's colleagues, and faith in the leadership.

3. **Unnat Ācāra (Refined Conduct)**: A monk's greatest wealth is their conduct. Only by strictly following the prescribed code of conduct can purity be maintained. To wear a monk's robes without following the conduct is a mockery and a deception.

4. **Vyavasthā (Order/System)**: No organization, whether religious or social, can function without a system. Chaos shakes the very roots of a group. A strong administrative system is essential for justice, equal distribution of resources, and peaceful coexistence.

5. **Anuśāsan (Discipline)**: Discipline is a tool for training, not for suppression. True discipline should not create an inferiority complex in some and ego in others. Inferiority leads to frustration, while ego leads to unrestrained behavior. Terāpanth's style of discipline carefully avoids both extremes.

Ek Netritva (Single Leadership): The previous four elements can only flourish under a single leader. Without one leader, where would faith rest? Who would define the boundaries of conduct? Who would manage the system or instill discipline? The concept of a single Ācārya's leadership is Ācārya Bhikṣu's fundamental contribution to the Jain order.

Fundamental Maryadas (Constitutional Boundaries)

Ācārya Bhikṣu was a seeker of truth. While his primary goal was spiritual practice, the obstacles he faced forced him to carve out a new path—Terāpanth. He did not set out to create a new sect, but once the organization formed, he focused on making it robust.

In V.S. 1832, he wrote the first formal document of rules (*Likhat*). Over time, several such documents were written. The final and most significant “Maryādā Patra” (Charter of Rules) was written on Saturday, Māgh Śuklā Saptamī, V.S. 1859. This document serves as the Constitution of the Terāpanth Order.

While the structure was set by Bhikṣu Swami, the fourth Ācārya, Śrī Jayācārya, worked extensively to give these rules a practical form through various *Hājariś* (attendance and conduct codes).

1. The Fundamental Rules are as follows:
2. Unified Command: All monks (*Sādhus*) and nuns (*Sādhvis*) must remain under the command and authority of a single Ācārya.
3. Regulated Movement: All travels (*Vihār*) and four-month monsoon retreats (*Caturmāsa*) must be conducted only with the permission and order of the Ācārya.
4. Individual Discipleship: Monks and nuns shall not create their own personal disciples. All initiated individuals belong solely to the *Sangha* (Order).
5. Criteria for Initiation: The Ācārya shall initiate only those individuals who are truly worthy. If someone proves to be unworthy after initiation, they must be removed from the order.

Succession: When the Ācārya appoints a successor (whether a fellow monk or a disciple), all monks and nuns shall accept that decision with a joyful heart.

Śrāvaka Niṣṭhā Patra (Code of Conduct for Lay Followers)

1. “I am a lay follower (*Śrāvaka/Śrāvikā*) of the Jain Shwetambar Terāpanth Order. I take pride in this. I consider this path to be the greatest support for my personal growth and for solving life’s problems. Therefore, to fulfill my responsibilities and strengthen my faith, I accept these resolutions:”

2. I shall remain dedicated to the *Maryādās* (boundaries) set by Ācārya Bhikṣu, the Terāpantha Order, and the current *Śāsanpatī* (Supreme Head).

3. I shall remain constantly vigilant for the integrity of the order. I will not encourage any factionalism or “groupism.”

4. I shall not provide shelter or patronage to any person who has been expelled from the Śwetāmbara Terāpantha Order (known as a *Ṭālokara*).

5. I shall not support any activity that goes against the command of the Ācārya.

If I notice a flaw in any monk or nun, I will inform the Ācārya or a suitable authority directly without spreading rumors elsewhere.

6. I shall endeavor to perform *Sāmāyik* (meditation) every Saturday between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM.

I shall mindfully follow the four rules of *Samyaktva Dīkṣā* (Right Faith).

The Lineage of Terāpanth Ācāryas

The Terāpantha order is unique because of its unbroken chain of single leadership. Here is the list of Ācāryas and the duration of their reign:

No.	Ācārya	Reign (Years)	Period (Vikram Saṃvat)
1	Ācārya Bhikṣu (Founder)	44	1817 - 1860
2	Ācārya Bhāramalaji	18	1860 - 1878
3	Ācārya Raichandaji (Rishirai)	30	1878 - 1908
4	Ācārya Jītmalaji (JayĀcāryas)	30	1908 - 1938
5	Ācārya Maghrājaji	11	1938 - 1949
6	Ācārya Māṇakalalaji	5	1949 - 1954
7	Ācārya Dālchandaji	12	1954 - 1966
8	Ācārya Kālurāmaji	27	1966 - 1993
9	Ācārya Tulasi (Aṇuvrat Anusāstā)	57	1993 - 2050

10	Ācārya Mahāpragya (Prekṣā Meditation)	17	2050 - 2067
11	Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa	Current	2067 - Present

Festivals of Terāpantha

The Terāpantha community has its own set of festivals that hold a distinctive and significant place in their tradition. Every year, four major festivals are celebrated: Maryādā Mahotsava, Terāpantha Sthāpanā divasa, Caramotsava, and Paṭṭotsava.

Maryādā Mahotsava

Maryādā Mahotsava is the symbol of unity, organization, discipline, and the constitutional boundaries (*Maryādā*) of the Terāpantha order. It is the hub of the sect's legislative, organizational, and cultural activities.

Origin: It was formally initiated in V.S. 1921 on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of Māgha (Māgha Śuklā Saptamī) in Balotra.

Significance: It was started to commemorate the creation of the organization's constitution; hence its primary name is 'Maryādā Mahotsava'. Since it is celebrated in the month of Māgha, it is also called 'Māgha Mahotsava'.

Ācārya Bhikṣu created various regulations (*Maryādās*) at different times for the smooth management of the order. He drafted the final set of regulations on Māgha Śuklā Saptami, V.S. 1859. That specific date was chosen permanently for the festival. For many years, these rules were simply read whenever monks gathered, but the credit for transforming it into a grand festival goes to the fourth Ācārya, Śrī Jayācāryas.

On this day, the constitutional rules are recited, and vows are reaffirmed. Hundreds of monks and nuns stand in rows according to their seniority and repeat the vows in unison—a truly captivating sight. Most monks and nuns travel to the location designated by the Ācārya for this occasion. The Ācārya reviews the past year, provides internal guidance, and issues directions for future programs. Collective brainstorming sessions are held on both internal and public aspects of the order, new decisions are made, and the upcoming

monsoon retreats (*Caturmās*) for the monks and nuns are usually announced at this time.

Terāpantha Sthāpanā divas Day (Terāpanth Foundation Day)

This is celebrated on Āṣāḍha Śuklā Pūrṇimā (the full moon day of Āṣāḍha).

Historical Context: In V.S. 1817, in a small village called **Kelwā** in Mewār, there was a temple of Tīrthankara Chandraprabhu Swāmi. In a small, dark room adjacent to it known as ‘Andheri Orī’, Ācārya Bhikṣu accepted his spiritual initiation (*Bhāva-Dīkṣā*) at approximately 7:30 PM.

Celebration: That day is celebrated as the Foundation Day. On this occasion, the first pioneer, Ācārya Bhikṣu, is remembered, and the historical circumstances of the beginning of Terāpantha are analyzed. This day is considered the “Day One” of Terāpantha history.

Charamotsava

This festival is celebrated on Bhādrapada Śuklā Trayodaśī.

Significance: It marks the day the pioneer of Terāpantha, Ācārya Bhikṣu, completed his monkhood (passed away).

Observance: On this occasion, the fourfold order (*Chaturvidha Sangha*) gathers to pay their heartfelt tribute and homage at the feet of Ācārya Bhikṣu, reflecting on his life and sacrifices.

Ācārya Bhikṣu passed away on Bhādrapada Śuklā Trayodashī, V.S. 1860. This day was formally transformed into a grand festival in V.S. 1914 by the fourth Ācārya, Śrī Jayācārya, who organized the first special event in Bīdāsar. Since then, it has been celebrated annually as Bhikṣu Charamotsava.

Pattotsav

This festival is celebrated on the specific date when the **current Ācārya** of the order ascended to the ‘Ācārya post’ (Position). On this day, monks, nuns, and lay followers express their devotion and reverence for the current leader through songs, poems, and speeches.

Origin: Śrī Jayācārya initiated this tradition by granting permission for the first Pattotsav celebration in Indore on Māgha Pūrṇimā, V.S. 1911.

Present Day: Currently, the Pattotsav of Ācārya Śrī Mahāśramaṇaji is celebrated on

Vaiśākha Śuklā Daśamī.

Sangha gāna (The Anthem of the Order)

All major federal functions of Terāpantha (Pattotsava, Yuvācārya Appointment Day, Foundation Day, Vikāsa Mahotsava, and Carmotsava) conclude with the Sangha gāna. During its recital, everyone present—monks, nuns, and lay followers—stands in a state of physical stillness (*Kayotsarga*), fully immersed in the prayer.

Terāpantha Anthem

*Jaya-Jaya Dharmasangha Avicala Ho.
Sangha Sangha-Pati Prema Atala Ho.*

*Hama Sabakā Saubhāgya khilā Hai,
Prabhu Yaha Terāpantha Milā Hai.
Ek Suguru ke Anuśāsana mein,
Ekācāra Vicāra Vimala Ho..*

*Dṛḍhatara sundara Sangha-Saṅghaṭhana
Kṣīra-Nīra Sā Yaha Ekīpana.
Hai Akṣuṇṇa Sangha-Maryādā,
Vinaya aura vātsalya acala ho.*

*Sangha Sampadū Baḍhtī Jāe,
Pragati Śikhara Para Caḍhtī Jāe.
Bhaikṣava Śāsana Nandanavana kī,
Saurabha se surabhita Bhutala Ho.*

*‘Tulasi’ Jaya ho Sadā vijaya ho,
Sangha Catuṣṭaya bala Akṣaya ho.
Śraddhā-Bhakti Bahe Nasa-Nasa Mein,
Paga-Paga Para Pratipala Mangala Ho.*

Core Principles of Terāpantha

The Terāpantha sect is built on rigorous logical and spiritual foundations established by Ācārya Bhikṣu:

1. **Distinct Nature of Religion:** There is no mixture of religion (*Dharma*) and non-religion (*Adharma*). The actions (deeds) leading to both are entirely different.
2. **Purity of Means:** One cannot achieve a noble goal (*Sādhya*) through impure or immoral means (*Sādhana*).
3. **Universal Path to Salvation:** The path to liberation (*Mokṣa Dharma*) is the same for both the householder (*Gṛhastha*) and the monk (*Sādhu*).
4. **Laukika (worldly/secular) and Lokottara (spiritual/transcendental) religions are not the same;** a person with right vision (*Samyak-dṛṣṭi*) considers them distinct.
5. **The pure actions of an individual with false belief (*Mithyātvi*) constitute a partial worship of the path to liberation.**
6. **Ahiṃsā (non-violence) and Dayā (compassion) are absolutely identical.** There is no religion in violence.
7. **Killing smaller beings for the sake of larger beings is not a virtuous act (*Puṇya*).** “Necessary violence” (survival-based) is not non-violence.
8. **Religion lies in renunciation (*Tyāga*), not in indulgence (*Bhoga*).**
9. **Religion exists within the commands of the Vītarāga (the detached Lord), not outside of them.** Religion lies in restraint (*Samyam*), not in lack of restraint.
10. **Religion lies in a change of heart, not in the use of force.**
11. **Religion is priceless; it cannot be obtained through monetary value.**
12. **To wish for an unrestrained person (*Asamyati*) to live is attachment (*Rāga*); to wish for them to die is aversion (*Dveṣa*); and to wish for them to cross the ocean of worldly existence is the religion of the Vītarāga Lord.**



Lesson-9 Ācārya Bhikṣu

Ācārya Bhikṣu was the pioneering founder of the Terāpantha religious order. He was a founder of a new era, a visionary, a singer of the soul's music, and a great researcher of truth. Truth was the essence of his life. While churning the Āgamas (scriptures), the truth he discovered was not hindered by sectarian delusions, the temptation of comfort, or the attraction of status and honor. He fearlessly expressed his realization of truth to the world. His universal declaration of non-violence gave birth to a new revolution in the religious world.

Birth and Early Life

Ācārya Bhikṣu was born on Āṣāḍh Śuklā Trayodashī, V.S. 1783, in Kantāliya (Mārwar). His father's name was Balluji and his mother's name was Deepam Bāī. He belonged to the Oswal community and the Sanlecā clan. His birth name was Bhīkhaṇa.

From the very beginning, he possessed extraordinary talent. Following the traditions of that time, he was married at a young age. Despite being bound by married life, his heart was saturated with the feeling of detachment (Vairāgya). Religiousness was ingrained in every vein of his being. His wife also shared his religious views. Eventually, both husband and wife prepared to take initiation (Dīkṣā), but destiny perhaps did not intend it so. His wife passed away a few years later.

The Path to Initiation

Bhīkhaṇaji prepared to take initiation alone, but his mother did not grant permission. When Ācārya Raghunāthajī, the then head of the Sthānakvāsi sect, tried to persuade her, she said:

“Mahārāja! How can I permit him to take initiation? When he was in my womb, I dreamt of a Lion. According to that dream, he is destined to grow up and become the King of a nation, possessing the bravery of a lion.”

Ācārya Raghunāthajī replied: “Mother! That is a wonderful sign. A king is worshipped only in one country, but by becoming a monk”

“Your son will be revered by the whole world and will roar like a lion.” Upon hearing this explanation from Ācārya Raghunāthajī, his mother joyfully gave her permission for his initiation.

On the twelfth day of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa, V.S. 1808, Bhīkhaṇajī accepted initiation from Ācārya Raghunāthajī. Muni Bhīkhaṇajī possessed a sharp vision and a keen, receptive intellect. Penetrating the depths of spiritual elements was natural for him. Within a few years, he became a profound scholar of the Jain scriptures.

The Spark of Revolution

Around V.S. 1815, a revolutionary feeling arose in Muni Bhīkhaṇajī’s mind regarding the laxity in the conduct and thoughts of the monk community. He presented his revolutionary ideas to Ācārya Raghunāthajī. Discussions continued for two years, but when no satisfactory conclusion was reached, he separated from him in Bagaḍi (Mārṇāar) on the ninth day of the bright fortnight of Chaitra, V.S. 1817, along with a few other monks.

His religious revolution faced intense opposition. Since Ācārya Raghunāthajī held great influence at that time, people non-cooperated with Bhīkhaṇajī. They refused to give him a place to stay. As he left the village, a fierce dust storm broke out. It was a situation of “a tiger on one side and a cliff on the other”—no place in the village behind, and the storm blocking the path ahead. Consequently, he set up camp in the Chataris (cenotaphs) of Jaita Singha in the cremation ground outside the village. Those cenotaphs still stand today.

The Iron Man of Truth

Following his expulsion from the fold, mountains of opposition seemed to crash down upon Ācārya Bhikṣu. But he was an “Iron Man”; he had not learned to bow before opposition. He was a great worshiper of truth and was ready to sacrifice his life for it. His own words, “Ātmā rā kārāja sārasyaṃ,

mar pūra desyam” (I will accomplish the task of the soul, even if I have to give up my life completely), signify his profound dedication to the truth.

He possessed great will-power and incomparable courage. Based on the conduct and thoughts described in the Jain Āgamas, he wanted to establish pure monkhood in life. On the full moon day of Āṣāḍha, V.S. 1817, in Kelawā (Mewār), he and his companions accepted initiation according to the scriptures. This was the first day of the establishment of Terāpantha. On this day, a well-organized community of monks was initiated under the leadership of Ācārya Bhikṣu, and that community became famous as Terāpantha.

Struggle and Consolidation

The fifteen-year period from V.S. 1817 to V.S. 1832 was a time of great struggle for Ācārya Bhikṣu. It is said that for five years, he rarely received enough food to fill his stomach, and sometimes none at all. During this period of intense hardship, Ācārya Bhikṣu engaged in rigorous spiritual practice, penance, deep study of the scriptures, and contemplation of the future framework of the community.

In V.S. 1832, Ācārya Bhikṣu declared his prominent disciple, Bhāramalājī, as his successor. At that same time, he formulated the federal regulations (*Maryādās*). He wrote the first charter of regulations (*Maryādā Patra*) on the seventh day of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīrṣa that year. Subsequently, he continued to strengthen the community by creating new regulations from time to time. He wrote the final charter on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of Māgha, V.S. 1859.

By centering the power of the community in a single Ācārya, he laid the foundation of a strong organization. This abolished the tradition of individual monks making their own disciples. He also entrusted the responsibility of nominating the future Ācārya to the current presiding Ācārya. If the Terāpantha religious order is disciplined, regulated, and well-organized today, the credit goes to these regulations created by Ācārya Bhikṣu.

Original Philosophy

Ācārya Bhikṣu established new values based on his original thinking. His concept of Ahimṣa (Non- violence) was universal. From his perspective,

the violence of smaller beings for the sake of larger ones, or the killing of one-sensed beings (*Ekendriya*) to protect five-sensed beings (*Pancendriya*), was not in accordance with the scriptures.

He also maintained a distinct boundary between the roles of spirituality (*Ādhyātma*) and worldly conduct (*Vyavahāra*). He never attempted to weigh the two on the same scale in any context. In his view, merging worldly behavior and spirituality everywhere is as unusable and harmful as mixing ghee with tobacco.

Regarding charity (*Dāna*) and compassion (*Dayā*), Ācārya Bhikṣu presented a new way of thinking to the Jain community by drawing a clear line between the worldly (*Laukika*) and the transcendental (*Lokottara*). At that time, social prestige was measured by charity and compassion; beliefs about attaining heaven and earning merit were also tied to these acts. Ācārya Bhikṣu revealed a fundamental truth by defining worldly charity and compassion as social duties and mutual cooperation rather than spiritual liberation. His view on Means and Ends was crystal clear: he believed a pure goal can only be achieved through pure means. He famously said:

“Just as a blood-stained cloth can never be cleaned with blood, a practice centered on violence can never lead to the sacred goal of spirituality.”

A Great Litterateur and Poet

Besides being a skilled legalist of religious law, Ācārya Bhikṣu was a natural poet and a great man of letters. He enriched Jain literature by composing approximately 38,000 verses in the Rajasthani language. The primary themes of his writings were the exposition of pure conduct, the analysis of elemental philosophy (*Tattva-Darśana*), and the formulation of the fundamental regulations of the religious order. His works also include ancient tales of renunciation. The use of rhythm, alliteration, and metaphors in his verses continues to enchant readers. Modern scholars, after studying his literature, often compare his intellectual depth to that of philosophers like Hegel and Kant.

Final Journey

Ācārya Bhikṣu lived his entire life as a guiding light. Every page of his life is filled with glorious sagas of spiritual effort (*Puruṣārtha*). During his reign, 49 monks and 56 nuns were initiated. On the thirteenth day of

the bright fortnight of Bhādrapada, V.S. 1860, he attained *Samādhi Maraṇa* (peaceful death in meditation) after a fast of seven *Prahars* (approx. 21 hours) in Siriyārī (Marwar). He was 77 years old at the time.

Inspiring Anecdotes of Ācārya Bhikṣu

1. Milk in Exchange for Grass

Once, monks went to seek alms in the village of Kapharla. A Jat woman had “Dhowan” (water used to wash flour/grain) in her house. Despite the monks requesting it, she refused to give it. The monks returned with empty vessels and told Ācārya Bhikṣu, “There is plenty of water, but it is not available.”

Ācārya Bhikṣu: “Why? Does that sister not want to give it?”

Monk: “What she wants to give is not acceptable for us (*Agrahya*), and what is acceptable, she does not want to give.”

Bhikṣu: “What is her objection to giving the Dhowan?”

Monks: “She says, ‘A person receives exactly what they give. If I give flour-wash water, I will receive the same in my next life, and I won’t be able to drink it. Here is clean water (fresh well water), take this instead.’”

Ācārya Bhikṣu stood up and went to her house with the monks. When he asked for the Dhowan, the sister gave the same answer she had given before.

Bhikṣu: “Sister, do you have a cow at home?”

Woman: “Yes, Mahārāja, I do.”

Bhikṣu: “What do you feed her?”

Woman: “Fodder and grass.”

Bhikṣu: “And what does she give you in return?”

Woman: “Milk.”

Bhikṣu: “Then, sister, where is it true that ‘one receives exactly what one gives’? You give grass, but you get milk, don’t you?”

She could no longer argue with this logic. She picked up the vessel and poured all the water into the monks’ bowls.

2. “One who looks at your face goes to Hell”

While Bhīkhaṇajī Swami was traveling to Desurī, he met several people from Ghāṇerāo. They asked, “Who are you?”

Ācārya Bhikṣu replied, “I am Bhīkhana.” “Oh! What a disaster!” they exclaimed.

Ācārya Bhikṣu asked, “Why? What happened?”

They said, “Anyone who looks at your face goes to hell!”

Ācārya Bhikṣu calmly replied, “And I suppose anyone who looks at *your* face goes to heaven, right?” They nodded in agreement.

Ācārya Bhikṣu said, “Then it’s perfect; it worked out well for me. I will surely get heaven because I have looked at your face. As for you, you handle your own destiny.”

3. Why are you so popular?

A man once asked Ācārya Bhikṣu, “Mahārāja, why are you so popular among the people?”

He replied with an analogy: “There was a devoted wife whose husband was abroad. For many days, she had no news of him. One day, a messenger suddenly arrived with a message from her husband. Hearing it, she felt immense joy, and that messenger became the center of her attraction. We are the messengers of God (the Tīrthankaras). People are devotees of God and are eager to hear His message. We go from village to village sharing that divine word. This is the reason for the people’s attraction toward us.”

4. A Single Punch

In Udaipur, a man arrived and challenged, “Ask me any question regarding the fundamental elements (*Tattva-Carcā*).”

Ācārya Bhikṣu initially didn’t ask anything, but the man kept insisting.

Finally, Swāmi Jī asked, “Are you *Samanaska* (with a mind) or *Amanaska* (without a mind)?” The man replied, “Samanaska.”

Ācārya Jī asked, “How so?”

Confused, the man said, “No, no, I am Amanaska.” Ācārya Jī asked, “By what logic?”

The man stammered, “No, I am neither.”

Ācārya Jī asked, “In what way? Explain the logic.” The man then said, “No, I am both.”

When asked again, “By what logic?”, the man became so enraged by the constant demand for “logic” that he punched Ācārya Jī in the chest and stormed away.

Later, when people asked the monk who was with Swāmi Jī why they didn’t react, it was explained that a true monk remains equanimous in the face of both praise and physical hurt. Ācārya Bhikṣu’s endurance of the punch was a practical demonstration of his philosophy that religion lies in a change of heart, not in the use of force.



Lesson-10 Ācārya Mahāśramana

Ācārya Śrī Mahāśramaṇa, a great bearer of the Indian sage tradition, is the eleventh supreme head in the lineage of single leadership of the Terāpantha religious order. He is among those great saint- thinkers who have not only explained the philosophy of the soul but have also lived it. He is a high- level seeker who has always kept the values of monkhood flourishing. In his presence, every individual experiences immense peace and satisfaction. His calm and solemn countenance is a symbol of constant self-absorption. Even in crowded and noisy environments, his concentration remains undisturbed.

He is a rare combination of brilliance and forgiveness, spiritual practice (*Sādhana*) and administration (*Śāsana*), and adherence to principles combined with ideological generosity.

Birth

He was born on May 13, 1962 (V.S. 2019, Vaiśākha Śuklā Navamī), a Sunday, in Sardārsahara, a prominent region in Rajasthan. His birth name was Mohan. Mohan's father was Śrī Jhumarmalajī Dugar, and his mother was Nemadevi. Mohan was the seventh among six brothers and two sisters.

At the young age of seven, his father passed away. His mother, Nemādevi, played the roles of both parents with great skill. She was a wise, sensible, tactful, and religious woman. In the affectionate environment provided by his mother and elder brother, Sujānmaljī Dugar, Mohan's religious and spiritual growth began to flourish.

Initiation (Dīkṣā)

On May 5, 1974 (V.S. 2031, Vaiśākha Śuklā 14), with the permission of the ninth supreme head of Terāpantha, Ācārya Śrī Tulasī, Mohan accepted

initiation at the age of 12 in Sardārśahara from Muni Śrī Sumeramalājī (Ladnun/Mantri Muni). After being initiated, his journey began as Muni Mudit Kumar.

Interest in Studies

Within just 40 days of his initiation, Muni Mudit Kumar memorized the **Daśavaikālika Sūtra** along with its meaning. Out of these forty days, fourteen days were non-study days (*Asvādhayāyī*) due to thunderstorms. Soon, he memorized numerous texts in Hindi, Sanskrit, and Prakrit. He achieved proficiency in several languages, including Hindi, Sanskrit, Prakrit, Mārwarī, and English.

A Courageous Decision

Muni Mudit Kumar continued to progress steadily under the guidance of the Ācārya. In 1979, an incident occurred while he was staying in Aśoka Vihāra, Delhi, with Muni Śrī Rūpchandjī. At that time, Yuvācārya Śrī Mahāpragya was staying at Aṇuvrat Bhawan, Delhi.

One afternoon, Muni Rūpchandjī said to Muni Mudit Kumar:

“I am going to split from this Saṅgha (Order). Think for yourself where you want to stay. Do you want to come with us or stay here (in the Saṅgha)?”

Muni Mudit Kumar was part of a small group of three members. This was a testing moment for his loyalty and faith. Despite the personal bond with his group, his dedication to the Terāpantha Order and its constitutional boundaries (*Maryada*) was paramount. He made the courageous and firm decision to remain within the fold of the Saṅgha, showing his deep-rooted commitment to the principles established by Ācārya Bhikṣu.

In that moment of crisis, young Muni Mudit Kumār displayed exemplary loyalty to the order, immediately stating, “I will remain in the Saṅgha.”

Muni Rūpchandajī handed him over to the monks of the order and departed. When the monks brought him before Yuvācārya Mahapragya, the Yuvācārya remarked, “I already had full faith in this.” A message also arrived from Gurudev Tulasī, who was traveling in Punjab: “I am deeply moved by the devotion to the order shown by Muni Mudit Kumar. Let proper arrangements be made for his studies and spiritual practice.”

Steps of Progress

The loyalty and integrity shown by Muni Mudit Kumar built a profound sense of trust in Ācārya Tulasī and Yuvācārya Mahāpragya. On February 16, 1986, Gurudev Tulsi appointed him as a close associate to Yuvācārya Mahapragya.

His rise within the administrative and spiritual hierarchy was swift:

Sājhapati: On May 13, 1986, he was given this responsibility.

Mahāśramaṇa: On September 9, 1989, Gurudev Tulsi created a new rank in the order and appointed him as the Mahaśramaṇa. This made him the highest authority in the Sangha after the YuvĀcārya.

A Unique Gift

On January 10, 1991, after completing a rigorous solo journey through the Siwānci-Mālāni region, Mahāśramaṇa Mudita Kumāra returned to the assembly. Ācārya Tulasī stood up, embraced him warmly, and held him to his chest—a sight that captivated the thousands in attendance.

During his discourse, Ācārya Tulasī cautioned against the rising culture of comfort (*Suvidhāvāda*). He gave Mahāśramaṇa a unique “gift”:

“If anyone says that Mudit Muni is becoming comfort-seeking, or if I notice any such tendency, as an atonement (*Prāyashcita*), you will have to perform meditation standing up for three hours at a time.”

Mahāśramaṇajī accepted this condition with folded hands. To this day, he has lived with such discipline that he has never had to perform that atonement.

Elevation to Yuvācārya

In Terāpantha, the Ācārya nominates his own successor. Ācārya Mahāpragya drafted the nomination for his successor twice:

First Letter: Written on November 10, 1996, at Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, in the presence of Gurudeva Tulasī.

Second Letter: Written on September 10, 1997, at Gaṅgāsāhar (Bikaner), after the passing of Ācārya Tulasī.

Final Succession and Present Leadership

The public announcement of this nomination eventually took place, leading to his current role.

Position	Date of Appointment	Location
Yuvācārya	September 10, 1997	Gaṅgāśhahara
Ācārya	May 9, 2010	Sardārśhahara

Today, as the 11th Ācārya, his leadership is characterized by the Ahimsa Yātra—a massive journey on foot across India and neighboring countries like Nepal and Bhutan to promote harmony, morality, and a de-addicted society.

On September 14, 1997 (V.S. 2054, Bhādrapada Śukla Dwādaśī), in Gaṅgāśhahara (Bikaner), Ācārya Śrī Mahāpragya formally appointed Mahāśramaṇa Muni Mudita Kumāra as his successor to the position of Yuvācārya. At that moment, the title “Mahāśramaṇa,” originally given by Gurudev Tulasi as a rank, was integrated into his name. Over time, observing his immense endurance and hard work, Ācārya Mahāpragya often addressed him as “Mahātapasvi Mahāśramaṇa” (The Great Penitent Ascetic).

Accession to the Ācārya Post

Yuvācārya Mahāśramaṇa accompanied Ācārya Mahāpragya on a seven-year Ahimsa Yātrā (March for Non-violence). For 13 years, he served as the “inseparable body” of Ācārya Mahāpragya, playing a pivotal role in managing the multidimensional affairs of the Terāpantha order.

Following the *Mahāprayāṇa* (passing away) of Ācārya Mahāpragya on May 9, 2010, he ascended to the eleventh position in the glorious lineage of Terāpantha Ācāryas.

His formal Pattotsava (coronation ceremony) took place on May 23, 2010, in his birthplace, Sardārśhahara, at the grand premises of Gandhi Vidya Mandir, amidst a massive gathering of devotees. After completing his first *Chaturmāsa* as an Ācārya in Sardārśhahara, he embarked on a unique pilgrimage.

He defined “Tīrthas” (holy places) not just as ancient temples, but as the service centers where elderly or ailing monks and nuns reside.

The Great Ahimsa Yātrā

On November 9, 2014, Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa launched the Ahimsa Yātrā from the Red Fort in Delhi. With a three-fold mission of Harmony (Sadbhavanā), Morality (Naitikatā), and De-addiction (Naśā- mukti), he embarked on a monumental journey on foot.

Distance: Over 18,000 kilometers on foot.

Reach: 20 States of India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Impact: From the President’s House to the huts of the poor, people of all castes, religions, and regions were touched by his message.

Despite harrowing roads, dust storms, freezing winds, scorching heat, hailstorms, earthquakes, and even the global pandemic, he continued his march. The journey successfully concluded on March 27, 2022, in Delhi, having united millions in the thread of world peace.

Conferment of the ‘Yugapradhāna’ Title

On January 30, 2022, at Jain Vishva Bharati (Ladnun), during the *Amrit Mahotsav* (75th anniversary) of her initiation, Sādhvī Pramukhā Kanakaprabhājī, on behalf of the entire four-fold order, requested Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa to accept the title of Yugapradhāna (Leader of the Era).

The Ācārya, moved by the collective request of the Saṅgha, accepted the honor. This title stands as a testament to his tireless efforts toward the upliftment of humanity, the Jain faith, and the Terāpantha order. The formal celebration of this title took place in Sardārśahara on May 10, 2022, coinciding with his 60th birthday (Śaṣṭhipūrti).

Key Attributes of Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa

Simplicity: Despite his high spiritual and administrative rank, he remains easily accessible and profoundly humble.

Discipline: He continues the legacy of Ācārya Bhikṣu by ensuring strict adherence to the

Maryādās (rules) of the order.

Visionary: He has modernized the reach of Jainism through humanitarian missions and de-addiction drives.

This concluding section of Lesson 10 highlights the monumental “Yugapradhāna” ceremony and provides a list of historic milestones achieved during Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa’s leadership.

The ceremony on May 10, 2022, was particularly significant as it marked the final day of his first “Yug” (12-year cycle) as Ācārya. Thousands from around the world witnessed the seven-phase program. Representing the four-

fold order, Mukhya Muni Śrī Mahāvīra Kumārajī read the official citation of the *Yugapradhāna* title and presented it to the Ācārya amidst thousands of gothering.

Historical Facts of Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa's Erā

1. **Redefining Pilgrimage:** He declared the service centers of the Terāpantha order (where elderly or ill monks/nuns reside) as **Tīrthas** (holy pilgrimage sites) and made them his first destination after becoming Ācārya.
2. **Spiritual Capital:** He officially declared **Ladnun** as the “Capital” of the Terāpantha Order.
3. **Intellectual Governance:** He nominated members to the **Bahuśruta Pariṣada** (Council of Learned Scholars).
4. **Review Council:** He established the **Samīkṣā Pariṣada** (Review Council).
5. **Welfare Council:** He formed the **Kalyāṇa Pariṣada** (Welfare Council).
6. **Personal Milestone:** Celebrated the **Ācārya Mahāśramaṇa Amrit Mahotsava** year.
7. **Legacy Celebration:** Celebrated the birth centenary year of **Ācārya Tulasi**.
8. **Philosophical Legacy:** Celebrated the birth centenary year of **Ācārya Mahāpragya**.
9. **Bhāramala Centenary:** Celebrated the 200th death anniversary (*Mahāprayāṇa*) of **Ācārya Bhāramalajī** (the 2nd Ācārya).
10. **Mass Initiation:** Conducted a historic mass ceremony by giving **43 initiations** (*Dīkṣās*) at a single time.
11. **Ahiṃsa Yātrā Launch:** Launched the grand “Ahiṃsa Yātrā” (March for Non-violence) from the vicinity of the **Red Fort in Delhi**.
12. **High-Profile Support:** The Vice President of Nepal, **Parmanand Jha**, walked alongside the Ācārya on foot in Delhi.

13. **Nepal Retreat:** Conducted the **first-ever monsoon retreat** (*Chaturmāsa*) in Nepal within the Terāpantha Ācārya tradition.
14. **Bhutān Entry:** Became the **first Jain Ācārya** to enter the Kingdom of Bhutan.
15. **Interfaith Residence:** Became the first spiritual leader of another sect to reside in a **Buddhist Gompa** (monastery) in Bhutan.
16. **Buddhist Welcome:** He was welcomed and honored by Buddhist Lamas with the chanting of **10,000 Buddhist mantras**.
17. **Geographical Reach:** Touched **23 states** of India during his foot travels.
18. **Military Pledges:** The **armies of three nations** (India, Nepal, and Bangladesh) accepted the vows of the Ahimsā Yātrā.
19. **State Guest Status:** He was honored as a **State Guest** by 19 different Indian states.
20. **Extensive Travel:** Conducted a continuous **seven-year journey** through the Northeast (Pūrvāñcala) and South (Dakṣiṇāñcala) regions of India simultaneously.
21. **Vast Foot Journey:** Has completed a total of more than **51,000 kilometers** on foot.
22. **New Leadership Rank:** Created the new official post of **Mukhya Muni** (Chief Monk).
23. **New Female Leadership Rank:** Created the new official post of **Sādhvīvaryā** (Chief Nun).
24. **Jain Unity:** Signed a historic **25-year ascent** with the *Śramaṇa Saṅgha* to ensure a unified date for the festival of **Samvatsari**.
25. **Educational Curriculum:** Launched the **Mahāpragya Śrut-ārādhana** study course.
26. **Spiritual Initiative:** Started the **Sumaṅgala Sāadhanā** project.
27. **Global Meditation:** Initiated the practice of collective **Sāmāyik** (meditation) every Saturday between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM.
28. **Social Transformation:** More than **10 million (1 crore) people** have accepted the pledge to be addiction-free under his guidance.

- 29. Postal Honor:** The **Government of Nepal** issued a postage stamp dedicated to the Ahimsā Yātrā.
- 30. Interfaith Dialogue:** He represented Jainism at the conference of over **100 religious leaders** organized by the Dalai Lama in Delhi, sharing the stage and delivering the keynote address.
- 31. Honoring the Lead Nun:** Celebrated the *Amrit Mahotsava* of **Sādhvī Pramukhā Kanakaprabhājī**.
- 32. Maternal Honor:** Honored Sādhvī Pramukhā Kanakaprabhājī with the title of “**Śāśana Mātā**” (Mother of the Order).
- 33. Endurance Milestone:** Performed a record *Vihāra* (travel on foot) of **47 kilometers in a single day**.