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CHAPTER 1

Ahiṃsā: A Jaina Way of Spiritual Discipline*

The Jainas, undoubtedly adherents of one of the most ancient religious traditions in the modern world, are also one of the smallest communities, being only slightly larger than Zoroastrians. According to the latest government census, Jainas number less than six or seven million people, or less than one percent of the entire Indian population. Even though the size of the Jaina community never compared at any time in its history with that of its religious rivals, it remained a largely urban population because of the heavy concentration of its adherents in commerce and industry; thus the Jainas were able to wield influence over the ruling powers—whether Indian, Mughal or British—out of all proportion to their numbers.

Traditionally, the Jainas have been grouped together with other non-Brahmanical communities, such as the Buddhists, and share many common features with those heterodoxies.[1] The Jainas, like the Buddhists, are distinguished by their belief in the attainment of enlightenment by their founding teachers and the possibility of their followers attaining the same goal. This is achieved not through the grace of a Deity, however, but via one's own exertion and personal dedication to the path of spiritual purification. This path involves the mental practices of meditation and the physical practices of self-

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denial and austerities engaged in by mendicants of both Buddhist and Jaina communities. Both religions have a bicameral community of laypeople and mendicants, the former living the household life raising families, the latter renouncing the world in total dedication to the path of salvation. Despite their real differences with such theistic creeds as Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism, the atheistically oriented Jainas and Buddhists are unanimous with their Hindu brothers in upholding three pan-Indian doctrines: (1) the supremacy of a moral order (*karman*) (2) the concept of cyclical rebirth (*saṃsāra*) and (3) the innate capacity of human beings to escape that cycle (*mokṣa*).

Without going into too many details about the precise differences between Buddhism and Jainism, it may suffice to say at this juncture that the Jainas are distinguished from the Buddhists by their belief that each living being possesses an individual soul. This soul is characterized by consciousness, undergoes continuous changes between various grades of purity and impurity, ignorance and omniscience. The Jainas conceive that a soul takes up a new body after the death of its present body according to its volitional activities. This is accomplished by the soul drawing toward itself a subtle kind of matter (*karman*), which then envelopes it and defines for the soul the new kind of body it will receive. The volitional force driving the soul is what determines the state in which the soul finds itself. If the soul becomes subject to attachment and aversion, the soul becomes harmful (*hiṃsā*) to both itself and others; if instead it maintains detachment and compassion, the soul comes to be noninjurious (*ahiṃsā*) toward all beings. As a Sanskrit verse of the twelfth-century Jaina mendicant Amṛtacandra says:[2]

> aprādurbhāvaḥ khalu rāgādīnām bhavaty ahiṃseti/
> teṣām evotpattiḥ hiṃseti jināgamasya saṃkṣepaḥ//
>
> Assuredly the nonappearance of attachment and other [passions] is ahiṃsā, and their appearance is hiṃsā. This is a brief summary of the Jaina doctrine.

The Jainas thus define hiṃsā as something that is ultimately linked to one's personal mental state and involves injury

primarily to oneself. Ahiṃsā and the awareness of ahiṃsā becomes a constant concern for the individual, involving total mindfulness in mental, oral, and physical activities. The orientation of the Jaina discussion on ahiṃsā thus proceeds from the perspective of one's own soul and not so much from the standpoint of the protection of other beings or the welfare of humanity as a whole. Ahiṃsā therefore is a creed in its own right: identified with one's own spiritual impulses and informing all of one's activities, it may truly be called a way of personal discipline.

The social ramifications of what is fundamentally a personal salvific enterprise, however, is to be found in the basic organization of the Jaina community. When one speaks of a Jaina community—which, as I have mentioned, involves separate lay and mendicant orders—one is referring to a group of people who have consciously undertaken to lead a way of life in accordance with the basic tenet of non-violence by removing the volition toward attachment and aversion. Thus, to some extent, all members of the Jaina community, both lay and mendicant, may be said to practice non-violence. The outward expression of this practice is characterized by two explicit schemes of vows and restraints, called minor vows (*aṇuvrata*) and major vows (*mahāvrata*), which are applicable to laypeople and mendicants, respectively.[3] Historically, the mendicants of the Jaina community were governed by many of the same rules as those in the Buddhist and Brahmanical orders, though they were perhaps somewhat more austere in their observances. Jaina mendicants were particularly noted for their lifelong vow of refraining from taking food and water from sunset to sunrise as well as by the renunciation of all worldly possessions and all acts of violence in any form whatsoever toward both humans and animals. The ahiṃsā of Jaina mendicants was all but absolute since their mendicant laws demanded it; they had no social involvements that might entail the use of violence and they undertook no governmental or military obligations. The mendicants had no need of a livelihood as they could count on the voluntary support of the laypeople for their legitimate needs. It was therefore incumbent upon them to keep the precept of ahiṃsā in its totality. The mendicant was thus the embodiment of ahiṃsā and the exemplar of that ideal for the

layperson.

In this context of a social order the Jainas developed a whole set of laws regulating the application of the ideal of ahiṃsā in day-to-day life. A great many grades of non-violence were thus accepted within the lay order, allowing the diligent layperson to progress toward the state achieved by the mendicant. This was accomplished through a series of vows called aṇuvratas, which outlined the progressive course to the renunciation of all violence. On the one hand, this course gradually widened the scope of the application of ahiṃsā on the part of the layperson and, on the other, progressively restricted opportunities for violence.

The Jainas discuss in detail three ways in which violence could be expressed. As we noted earlier, true ahiṃsā means not only refraining from inflicting injury on others but also renouncing the very will toward attachment and aversion that initiates such violence. The Jainas therefore examined in minute detail the intentions that lay behind the ordinary activities that constituted the daily life of a householder: earning a livelihood, raising a family, and supporting the mendicants. Not to entertain even the thought of injury would be a tall order for one who must deal every day with a world that is prone to violence. A householder's activities, however, could be examined to see whether they were free from what the Jainas called *saṃkalpaja-hiṃsā* (harm intentionally planned and carried out), as, for example, that intention with which a hunter might stalk his prey. Such willful violence had to be renounced in order for one to be considered a Jaina, and the Jaina texts are replete with sermons rejecting all violence perpetrated for sport or in sacrifices, whether sacerdotal or familial.

Adopting a proper means of livelihood thus becomes extremely important for a conscientious Jaina, since the chosen occupation determines the degree to which violence can be restricted. The Jaina lawgivers have drawn up a long list of professions that were unsuitable for a Jaina layperson.[4] Certain Jaina texts forbade, for example, animal husbandry and trade in alcohol or animal byproducts, leaving only such professions as commerce, arts and crafts, and clerical and administrative occupations. In all these activities, some violence to the lowest forms of life was inevitable, but Jainas could engage in them if they

behaved with scrupulous honesty and utmost heedfulness. Injury done while engaged in such activities was considered *ārambhja-hiṃsā* (occupational violence), which could be minimized by choosing a profession like business that was reasonably free from causing harm, as indeed Jainas have traditionally done.

Given the Indian social structure, which reserved particular professions for specific castes, the Jainas, being predominantly members of the merchant community, were obliged to undertake commercial and industrial enterprises; military service, for example, was not generally expected of Jaina laymen, a fact that allowed them to observe their precept of ahiṃsā and follow it within the narrow sphere as laid down in their religious law. Larger questions facing modern society, such as national defence, weaponry of mass destruction, limiting populations of wild animals and insect-pests, the use of toxic chemicals, the morality of capital punishment, the use of animals in medical research, and other social concerns that perforce entail violence were beyond the pale of Jaina thought.[5] These were simply not vital issues for a tiny minority community that could rely on the surrounding society to legislate on these problems, and that was guarded by a caste structure that did not demand the direct participation of the merchant classes in any violent activities. Thus, the Jainas were able to continue down through the ages their practice of non-violence, this ideal influencing greater Hindu society in a very limited manner on the issues of animal welfare and vegetarianism.

For those of us, especially in the West, who are used to associating the practice of non-violence with such larger movements as anti-nuclear advocacy or civil rights, the Jaina preoccupation with eating vegetarian food and protecting domestic animals may seem rather trivial. But the privileged position accruing from being such a small minority appears to have given the Jaina community a unique niche in Indian society, so that it was able to concentrate all of its missionary zeal on reforming the dietary habits of other Indians. Here too, an argument similar to that used to justify non-violence in the first place was used to support vegetarianism: since meat cannot be procured without cruelty, partaking of the flesh of animals in fact harms oneself by creating a latent effect in the

mind of the meat-eater. The acceptability of dairy products, however, did not involve a conflict with the Jaina logic on this point, but was justified because milking a cow, goat or buffalo did not involve any harm to the animal itself.

In their belief in the inviolability of all life, the Jainas extended their dietary restrictions to various types of vegetable life as well. In their attempts to categorize those types of plants that could be consumed with relatively less harm, the Jainas developed a whole science of botany that was rather unique in Indian religious history.[6] For example, eating fruits and vegetables that contains a large number of seeds (*bahubīja*), such as figs or eggplants, was not favoured: this was in distinction to fruits that had only a single stone, like mangoes, or vegetables that do not contain individual seeds, such as grains, legumes, and leafy vegetables, which the Jainas did not limit. At the same time, however, the Jainas recognized that plants were the lowest form of life—since they possess only a single sense, that of touch—and belong to a different category altogether from higher animals. Hence, plants could be eaten, provided that they were harvested and prepared with care.

We should reiterate, however, that for the Jaina, vegetarianism meant not only being kind to animals, but also being kind to oneself. In addition to whatever health benefits might accrue from a vegetarian diet, the fact that a person has undertaken such a regime shows that his soul has not fallen prey to the lusts of the palate. By thus refraining from causing harm to animals or lower forms of life, the vegetarian is accruing merit (*puṇya*) and developing positive mental states that will ultimately be to his own personal benefit.

Most religions have advocated kindness in some form or other to animals, either because they also are created by god, as some theistic religions might maintain, or because they were the embodiments of the same spirit as are human beings, as the Vedāntins might explain. But this has neither deterred the adherents of some of these religions from sacrificing animals for ritual purposes nor prevented the advocates of other religions where sacrifice has fallen into disuse to rationalize animal slaughter as necessary in order to sustain the higher life of humans. Notwithstanding the practical difficulties for all people to procure strictly vegetarian food, the Jainas have

continued to argue that animal slaughter can never be tolerated under any circumstances. We may recall here the words of the Jina Mahāvīra:

> No being in the world is to be harmed by a spiritually inclined person, whether knowingly or unknowingly, for all beings desire to live and no being wishes to die. A true Jaina therefore, consciously refrains from harming any being, however small.[7]

The Jainas here share the pan-Indian belief that certain souls in their transmigration, that is from one birth to another, may be reborn as animals. For this reason, a being who today is an animal might once have been a human being or, by exercising moral powers, that same animal may be reborn in the future as a human being. In the course of transmigration, there is no spiritual progress possible during a lifetime spent in heaven or hell, states which the Jainas consider to be non-eternal but of long duration. Within the virtually infinite variety of animal life-forms, however, it is possible for a soul to progress from one animal rebirth to another until, through its developing moral force, it would be able to cut asunder its bonds to the animal realm and advance to a human existence. Jainas, thus, considered human existence to be the gravitational centre of the rebirth process and assumed that all other life forms had to be reborn in the human state in order to attain spiritual liberation. The Jainas seem to be unique in believing that all animals possessed of mind and the five sens— which would include all domestic animals as well as those wild animals that could be trained—were capable of such spiritual sensibilities and must therefore be allowed to naturally evolve toward their destinies without interruption by human violence.

A beautiful story about an elephant narrated in the Jaina scriptures illustrates the moral capacity ascribed to higher animals by the Jainas. This is the tale of an elephant who in his very next rebirth was born as Prince Megha and became an eminent Jaina monk under Mahāvīra.[8] This elephant was the leader of a large herd that was caught in a huge forest fire. All the animals of the forest ran from their haunts and gathered around a lake so that the entire area was jammed with beings,

both large and small. After standing there for quite some time, the elephant lifted his leg to scratch himself, and immediately a small hare ran to occupy the spot vacated by his raised foot. Rather than trampling the helpless animal, however, the elephant's mind was filled with great compassion for the plight of his fellow creature; indeed, his concern for the hare's welfare was so intense that he is said to have cut off forever his associations with future animal destinies. The elephant stood with one leg raised for more than three days until the fire abated and the hare was able to leave. By then, however, the elephant's whole leg had gone numb and, unable to set down his foot, he toppled over. While maintaining his purity of mind, he finally died and was reborn as prince Megha, son of King Śreṇika, the ruler of Magadha.

This story is a perfect example of the choice that an animal may make in undertaking a good or evil act. The elephant had the option of simply trampling the hare but refused to do so, preferring to act as would a morally inclined human. Thus, he deserved not only to be reborn as a human in his next life, but also to proceed along the path to salvation by becoming a monk. This story has helped to mold the Jaina attitude toward animals through the ages.

In this story, one must distinguish between what the Jainas consider a superstitious belief (*loka-mūḍhatā*) in the holiness of certain animals, such as the proverbial sacred cow of the Hindus, and a respect for all animals engendered through the Jaina insistence that all life is inviolable. Indeed, no animal is regarded as sacred by the Jainas, and yet all life is considered inviolate. Jaina monks and nuns disseminated the message of the inviolability of animal life with great zeal and lobbied many non-Jaina kings, including the Mughal king Akbar (1570-1605), to forbid the slaughter of animals, called *amāri* (non-killing), on certain holy days.[9] The Jainas rightly claimed that compassion toward one's fellow living beings was not possible without realizing the value of the self—the source of all religious wisdom—and thus contended that by bringing about such a change of heart in alien kings, they had truly imparted the teachings of the Jina; for as the Jainas say, "First knowledge, then compassion." Thus they proved the truth of their own maxim: "Thus does one remain in full control. How

can an ignorant person be compassionate when he cannot distinguish good from evil?"[10]

We have seen that the Jaina lawgivers defined the meaning of intentional hiṃsā with great care and expressly forbade it to all Jaina believers but gave Jaina laymen dispensation with regard to certain types of violence associated with their legitimate occupations (*ārambhaja-hiṃsā*). There remained, however, a certain grey area that could not be so explicitly characterized as either expressly evil or provisionally acceptable. This was the area known as the "just war," or violence in defence of one's property, honor, family, community, or nation. In this matter, the individual had to take into account not only the duties to himself but to society as a whole. The duty of a Jaina mendicant in this case was quite clear: he must not retaliate in any way and must be willing to lay down his own life in order to keep his vow of total non-violence. For a Jaina layman, however, appropriate conduct was not nearly so clear-cut. There were always situations in which violence would be a last resort in guarding the interests of himself and his community. Unfortunately for the Jaina laymen, little comfort was to be found in the Jaina law books on this question, which generally avoided the problem entirely. The Jainas did not presume to legislate on violence that might be perpetrated by a member of society at large. After all, as members of a small minority community, Jainas would have only rarely been called upon to respond to such questions about social violence and would have deferred to the dictates of the worldly standards (*lokācāra*) current in the surrounding community. The Jaina lawgivers of medieval times accorded with customary Hindu law in these matters. Somadeva (c. tenth century), for example, stipulated only that: "A king should strike down those enemies of his kingdom who appear on the battlefield bearing arms, but never those people who are downtrodden, weak, or who are friends."[11]

For a religion that expected so much from its followers in terms of keeping the vows of ahiṃsā, such perfunctory advice on the legitimacy of Jaina participation in warfare must be considered a serious oversight. Nevertheless, there are indications both in canonical scriptures, some portions of which may go back to 500 B.C., and in the much later narrative literature

that the Jaina lawgivers were concerned about this problem and recognized the contradictions inherent in the expression "just war".

One attempt to resolve this problem is indicated by the term *virodhi-hiṃsā*: that is, countering violence with violence. The Jainas allowed that such violence could be justified, albeit as a final resort, for a Jaina layman whose conscience demanded that he defend his rights or for one who was called upon to fight by his king. However, as the following narratives will show, the Jainas neither glorified the bravery involved in such violence nor held forth the prospect of birth in heaven to the protagonists, whether winner or loser.

The first story is the tale of Bāhubali,[12] who is placed by the Jainas at the beginning of the present time-cycle, which ushered in human civilization. During this golden age, Ṛṣabha, the first of the twenty-four supreme teachers of this age, had just appeared in the world and introduced both the secular laws legislating the conduct of society as well as the monastic laws governing the pursuit of salvation. When Ṛsabha renounced the world to become the first Jaina mendicant of this civilization, his eldest son, Bharata, claimed kingship over his entire domain. But the younger son, Bāhubali, claimed title to a share of the kingdom and refused to submit to the rule of his elder brother. Disregarding the law of ahiṃsā, he challenged his brother to face him and his army on the battlefield. Bharata recognized that his duty as king compelled him to force the submission of his insubordinate brother, and war seemed unavoidable. The king's advisors, alarmed at the prospect of mass carnage, proposed single combat between the two brothers as means of settling the dispute. The brothers agreed to the duel, but Bāhubali got the better of his elder brother and defeated him decisively in a wrestling match. At this point, one would have expected that Bāhubali would cap his triumph by proclaiming himself king. But the Jaina texts maintain instead that he was overcome by great remorse for having humiliated his brother and suddenly awakened to both the futility of sovereignty and the bonds of possessions, which had blinded him to the true nature of the soul. To the great astonishment of the spectators and the defeated king, Bāhubali discarded his royal insignia and, inspired by his sudden

spiritual impulse, renounced the world and declared himself a Jaina monk. The storytellers relate that Bāhubali stood steadfast in meditation at that very spot for so long that creepers grew over his body and anthills formed at his feet. Bāhubali thus became omniscient and continues to be revered by the Jaina community as the first man of this age to have attained emancipation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of birth and death; colossal images of him in meditational posture are worshipped to this day.

The Jainas drew several morals from this story that are relevant in guiding Jaina laymen in determining their proper duty when confronted by an adversary in battle. First, it was maintained that valor was preferable to cowardice: Bāhubali was right in standing up for his familial rights to a share of the domain, but Bharata was also correct in attempting to maintain the territorial integrity of his realm. The king's ministers were also right to reduce the necessary violence to an absolute minimum by proposing single combat between the two brothers rather than involving both armies in the dispute. But the Jainas ultimately maintained that the victory of Bāhubali would not have truly settled anything for, had he succeeded to kingship as he was entitled, a new cycle of violence would certainly have ensued on the part of the loyalists of the vanquished monarch. This would have proved the truth of the Jaina maxim that all possessions are evil, for true non-violence cannot be practiced either by an individual or by a society that craves possessions and must therefore fight to acquire, augment, and protect its wealth. Total non-violence is possible only when possessions are relinquished, as was so admirably demonstrated by Bāhubali's renunciation of the world after his victory. Thus again is upheld the Jaina belief that only the valiant and the self-denying can pursue non-violence to its fullest extent, not the cowardly or the covetous. For the layman who was unable to forsake all possessions but was nevertheless keen to minimize his hiṃsā, the Jainas introduced a precept called *parigraha-parimāṇa* (voluntarily setting a limit on one's possessions) and included it as the last of the five *aṇuvratas* (minor vows). A Jaina layman wishing to take this vow was asked by a mendicant to set specific limits on his possession of such temporal items as gold and silver, real estate, grain,

and furniture, and to vow not to acquire amounts in excess of this limit. He was further encouraged to lower these limits by a certain amount each year in emulation of the total non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*) of the mendicant. In demanding that an advocate of ahiṃsā should renounce all properties in excess of one's legitimate needs, the Jainas were showing great insight into the possibility of building a society that practiced minimal hiṃsā. It must still be said, however, that the Jainas lacked either the vision or the organization to translate this precept into a general social philosophy. It is much to the credit of Mahatma Gandhi, who was undoubtedly influenced by several devout Jainas,[13] that he espoused a philosophy founded upon ahiṃsā and aparigraha.

A second memorable story appears in the canonical *Bhagavatī-sūtra*, which purports to preserve the words of the last Jaina teacher Mahāvīra. There Mahāvīra is asked about a war between Koṇika, the Magadhan emperor contemporaneous with Mahāvīra, and a federation of eighteen independent kings that had reportedly left 840,000 men dead. Mahāvīra's disciple specifically wanted to know whether it was true that all those men would be reborn in heaven because they had perished on the battlefield. In answer to this question, Mahāvīra declared that only one man out of this large army was reborn in heaven, and only one reborn as a man; all the rest ended up either in hell or in the animal realms.

Contrary to the widely held belief that death on the battlefield is almost equal to holy martyrdom, the Jaina answer as put in the mouth of Mahāvīra shows extraordinary courage of their conviction that death accompanied by hatred and violence can never be salutary and must therefore lead to unwholesome rebirths. Mahāvīra's answer to this question is truly memorable and departs drastically from the traditional belief of the Hindus, as recorded in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, where Kṛṣṇa, the incarnation of the God Viṣṇu, tells Arjuna, who was hesitant to participate in the war, that death in battle leads to heaven:

hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ,
jitvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm/

tasmād uttiṣṭha Kaunteya,
yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ// (*BhG* ii.37)

(Slain, you will attain heaven,
Conquering you will enjoy the earth.
Therefore rise, O Arjuna,
Resolved to do battle.)

To return to our narrative, Mahāvīra then proceeds to tell the story of the two fortunate soldiers.[14] The man who ended up in heaven was a Jaina named Varuṇa, who had taken the aṇuvratas of the layman before he was drafted by his king and sent to the front. Prior to his departure, however, Varuṇa vowed that he would never be the first to strike anyone; he would always wait until he was struck first before attacking. Armed with bow and arrow, he took his chariot into battle and came face to face with his adversary. Varuṇa declared that he would not take the first shot and called on his opponent to shoot. Only after his opponent's arrow was already on its deadly flight did he let fly his own arrow. His enemy was killed instantly, but Varuṇa himself lay mortally wounded. Realizing that his death was imminent, Varuṇa took his chariot off the battlefield and sat on the ground. Holding his hands together in veneration to his teacher, Mahāvīra, he said:

> Salutations to Mahāvīra, wherever he may be, who administered to me the layman's precepts. Now the time has come for me to face my death. Making Jina Mahāvīra my witness, I undertake the total renunciation of all forms of violence, both gross and subtle. May I remain steadfast in maintaining absolute detachment from this body.[15]

Saying thus, he pulled out the arrow and, his mind at peace, died instantly and was reborn in heaven.

The second man, a friend of Varuṇa, was himself severely wounded in the battle. Even so, he followed after Varuṇa in order to help him in his resolve and witnessed his peaceful death. He died soon afterwards in the same fashion and was reborn as a human being.

Whatever the moral of this story, the Jainas are clear in their

belief that a wholesome rebirth is assured only to those who die a peaceful death and who renounce all hostility and violence.[16] Without achieving these qualities, no amount of valour on the battlefield guarantees even true temporal victory, let alone improvement in one's spiritual life.

In upholding this imperative that one may have full control over one's own destiny through arranging the conditions that prevail at one's death, the Jainas have even gone so far as to proclaim the legitimacy of abandoning one's own life in a controlled manner. This is technically known as *sallekhanā*, literally "thinning one's own body and passions," a ritualized form of death allowed only to monks, nuns, and under special circumstances to advanced laypersons. The act of sallekhanā is governed by several conditions, the most important of which are that it can be undertaken only by a public declaration, never in private, and that death may only be induced through the gradual withdrawal from taking all forms of food and water. As a further limitation on who may undertake this act, one is expressly forbidden from beginning such a fast until death is imminent, a judgement that is made by the teachers and colleagues of the dying person. Terminal illness or total disability that would prevent a mendicant from keeping the mendicant vows are, thus, the only situation where a request by a mendicant to begin sallekhanā would be permitted by the superiors.[17] The basic justification for sallekhanā is that a person who has conscientiously led a holy life has earned the right to die in peace in full possession of his faculties, without any attachment to worldly bonds, including his own body. When undertaking this ritual, the person first confesses his transgressions of the moral vows he had taken earlier. Thus, while remaining in full possession of his faculties, the individual allows his life to ebb away at its own natural pace, neither desiring to prolong his life artificially nor anticipating unduly his demise.

The image of Jainas throughout their long history has been associated with the doctrine of ahiṃsā, and the Jainas themselves have ardently adhered to the observance of the practice in their day-to-day life. The fact that even in contemporary society where material culture is all-pervasive, Jaina mendicants, who scrupulously adhere to their vows of non-violence

and non-possession, still number over 2000 monks and 5000 nuns—a large number indeed considering the very small size of the Jaina community—testifies to the continued dedication to the ideal of ahiṃsā. Without such total dedication, ahiṃsā itself would remain either a fond memory of a lost golden age or an unachievable future goal. Lay Jainas as well abjure all forms of intentional violence and reduce the necessary amount of violence associated with their occupations to the absolute minimum. This does not mean that the Jaina lay adherent is a total pacifist, however. A layperson, as we saw above, is given the option of countering an armed adversary in kind, with the reminder that it is proper for a Jaina not to be the first to strike. The combatant would also be asked to bear in mind the Jaina doctrine of *anekāntavāda* (multiple perspective), which allows the Jaina to recognize the validity of his adversary's point of view as well. By enabling him to recognize an area of common ground between himself and his opponent, a Jaina would therefore be able to avoid confrontation and try reconciliation, and resort to warfare only out of dire necessity. The Jainas thus appear to have outlined a path of non-violence that would allow the lay adherent to conduct his daily life with human dignity while permitting him to cope with the unavoidable reality of the world in which violence is all-pervasive.

The Jainas would be the first to admit in accordance with their own doctrine of *syādvāda* (qualified assertion) that other religions too might discuss some of these same issues. But what distinguishes the Jaina conception of non-violence from that found in other world religions is that it is a truly personal way of religious discipline. It forbids the taking of all life, however that might be justified or excused in other religions and warns that nothing short of hell or animal rebirth awaits those who kill or who die while entertaining thoughts of violence. This perspective, however, does allow the Jaina to sacrifice even his own life in order to guard and nurture his soul. In this way, the soul may remain unaffected by the injuries (hiṃsā) inflicted upon it by attachment and aversion and may meet its corporeal death in perfect peace with itself and the world. Indeed, the holy life is truly consummated when a Jaina dies reciting the words of the religion's most solemn prayer:

khāmemi savva-jīve, savvė jīve khamantu me/
metti me savva-bhūesu, veraṃ majjha na keṇavi//[18]
(I ask pardon of all creatures, may all of them pardon me.
May I have friendship with all beings and enmity with none.)

NOTES

1. Article 25 of the Constitution of India under Explanation II pertaining to Sub-clause (b) of Clause (2) says the following: "The reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina, or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly." While the Jainas accept this definition for legal purposes they are keen to point out that they are not Hindus in the traditional sense of those who follow Indian religions that trace their origins to the Vedas, e.g., various forms of Vaiṣṇavism. The Jainas reject the scriptural authority of the Vedas, Brāhmaṇas, and Upaniṣads, the *Mahābhārata* (including the *Bhagavad Gītā*) and *Rāmāyaṇa*, and the Dharmaśāstras. They deny the efficacy of sacrifice and refuse to accord any "divine" status to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, or the great *avatāras* depicted in the eighteen traditional Purāṇas. They also reject many Hindu *saṃskāras*, notably the *upanayana* (the sacred thread ceremony with the Gāyatrī Mantra) and *śrāddha* (offering food to the spirits of the dead). For further details, see P. S. Jaini: *The Jaina Path of Purification*, pp. 291 ff., University of California Press, 1979.
2. *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya* of Amṛtacandra Sūri, v. 44. Sanskrit Text and English tr. by Ajit Prasada, Lucknow, 1933.
3. For a detailed description of the Jaina vows, see P. S. Jaini: *The Jaina Path of Purification*, University of California Press, 1979, pp. 157-185.
4. For a list of occupations forbidden to a Jaina layman, see R. Williams: *Jaina Yoga: A Survey of the Mediaeval Śrāvakācāras*. London (Oxford University Press), 1963.
5. In this connection mention may be made of the historical presentation of *The Jaina Declaration on Nature* by Jaina delegates (Bhagavan Mahavira Memorial Samiti from India and the Institute of Jainology from London) in the presence of HRH Prince Philip at Buckingham Palace, London, on October 23, 1990. See also Padmanabh S. Jaini: "The Role of Economics and Development in Jainism." *World Faiths and Development: Papers from the World Bank—World Religions Meeting at Lambeth Palace*, London, February 1998. World Faiths Development Dialogue, 33-37 Stockmore St., Oxford, U.K. 1998. (Coordinator: Wendy Tyndale)
6. For a long list of plants and substances forbidden to a devout Jaina, see R. Williams: *Jaina Yoga: A Survey of the Mediaeval Śrāvakācāras*. London (Oxford University Press), 1963, pp. 110-116.
7. *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, iv, #11. English tr. by K. C. Lalwani, Delhi, 1973.
8. *Jñātādharmakathāḥ*, Ch. 1, #180-187. Prakrit text ed. by S. Bharilla, Pathardi, 1964.
9. V. A. Smith: "The Jain Teacher of Akbar," in *Essays Presented to Sir R.G. Bhandarkar*, pp. 265-276, Poona, 1917. For policies towards the Jainas in the post-Akbar period, see "Jahāṅgīr's Vow of Non-violence" by Ellison B. Findly, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 107, No. 2, 1987, pp. 245-256.
10. paḍhamaṃ nāṇaṃ tao dayā, evaṃ ciṭṭhai savvasaṃjae/*Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, iv.
11. *Yaśastilaka-campū*, ii, 97, Nirnayasagara Press, Bombay, 1903.
12. For accounts of Bāhubali and Bharata, see *Ādipurāṇa* of Jinasena, Ch. xxxvi, ed. by Pannalal Jain, Varanasi, 1963; *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra of Hemacandra*, I, iv-v, Tr: *The Lives of Sixty-three Illustrious Persons*, Vol. I, by Helen M. Johnson, Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1962.
13. See the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and a revered Jaina saint Śrīmad Rājacandra as given in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. XXXII, pp. 601-602, Delhi (Government of India: Publications Division), 1958-1976.
14. See *Bhagavatī-sūtra* (*Viyāhapaṇṇatti*), VII, 9 (#302 ff.). Summary by Jozef Deleu, Tempelhof (Rijksuniversity of Gent), 1970.
15. namo'tthu ṇaṃ samaṇassa bhagavao Mahāvīrassa...mama dhammāyariyassa vaṃdāmi ṇaṃ bhagavaṃ tatthagayaṃ ihagae, pāsau me se bhagavaṃ tatthagae jāva vaṃdai namaṃsai. evaṃ vayāsī—pubbiṃ pi ṇaṃ mae samaṇassa bhagavao Mahāvīrassa antie thūlae pāṇāivāe paccakkhāe jāvajjīvāe evaṃ jāva thūlae pariggahe paccakkhāe jāvajjīvāe, iyāṇi pi ṇaṃ tasseva arihaṃtassa bhagavao Mahāvīrassa aṃtiyaṃ savvaṃ pāṇāivāyaṃ paccakkhāmi jāvajjīvāe...caramehiṃ ūsāsanīsāsehiṃ vosirāmi tti kaṭṭu....samāhipaḍikkante āṇupuvvīe kālagae. *Bhagavaī* VII, 9, #302 ff. (*Suttāgame*, ed. by Pupphabhikkhū, Gudgaon-Delhi, 1953.)
16. Just as death on the battlefield, regardless of one's bravery, was not considered conducive to a birth in heaven, neither was the practice known as "suttee," or that of a widow burning herself. In this connection we may note a story of the beautiful Vasantasenā, wife of King Śabara-Mayaṅka. His rival king, Vardhana of Jayapura, desiring Vasantasenā, leads an army against Śabara-Mayaṅka, who dies in the ensuing battle. Vasantasenā, unable to bear the pang of separation, enters the fire (*jalaṇa-pavesa*). She is instantly reborn in the sixth hell called Tamaḥprabhā: kāuṃ jalaṇa-pavesaṃ Vasantaseṇā vi piyavirahaduhiyā/mariuṃ Tamapuḍhavīe uvavaṇṇā nārayatteṇa// *Śrī Caityavandana-bhāṣyaṃ* (by Devendrasūri together with a Vṛtti by Dharmakīrti), p. 240, Jinaśāsana Ārādhanā Trust, Bombay, 1988.
17. For further details on *sallekhanā*, see P.S. Jaini: *The Jaina Path of Purification*, pp. 227-233.
18. Quoted in R. Williams: *Jaina Yoga* (from *Pratikramaṇa-sūtra*, 49), p. 207, Oxford University Press, 1963.