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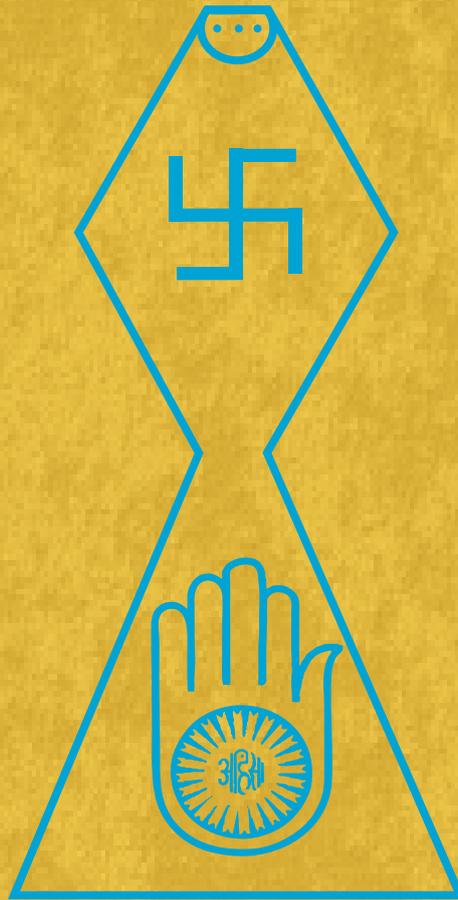
# ISJS - TRANSACTIONS

A Quarterly Refereed Online Research Journal on Jainism

VOL. 4

No. 3

July - September, 2020



**International School for Jain Studies**

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## From the Chief Editor's Desk

Pandemic Covid-19 continues to haunt the world with more than 36.4 million confirmed afflicted cases including 1.05 million deaths reported to the WHO as on October 8, 2020. These figures also include 6.9 million Indian cases of infection and 106,490 deaths. And all these figures have been rising continuously. There is also the possibility that the Virus might stay with us just as many other viruses of the past do. Even otherwise, the Virus has already proved to be a life-style-changer in many ways. And therefore, we must continue to explore all the possible ways and means to deal with the pandemic. In this context the Jain philosophy and religion offer a wide variety of ideas as the articles contained in this issue confirm.

As in the previous issue of the *ISJS-Transactions*, this issue also consists of six articles. The first one “*Corona pandemic in the perspective of Non-violence*” by Prof. Rajmal Jain specifically argues that meat consumption is positively correlated with the Corona virus mortality. Taking a sample of 120 countries and dividing it into two groups based on the definition:  $M_c$  (Meat consumption)  $\geq 30$  kg/capita/year as high and  $<30$  kg/capita/year as low consumption country, he derives the spectrum of COVID-2019 mortality normalized over the population as a function of meat consumption  $M_c$ . He concludes that mortality is 2-4 orders of magnitude higher in the high meat-eating countries ( $M_c \geq 30$ kg) relative to those low consumption ( $M_c < 30$ kg) countries. Further, Prof Jain reports no mortality in 11 low meat consumption countries in contrast to only 3 cases of high meat consumption countries, and discusses the results in the perspectives of non-violence and “*karmvāda*” based on the infrasonic wave generation during killing of billions of animals annually, which take “revenge” in due course of time.

The article “*COVID-19 and Spiritual Technologies: Turn ‘Bane’ to ‘Boon’*” written by Dr. Pratap Sanchetee & Er. Prashant Sanchetee suggests that this crisis has given us the opportunities to find new goals, new solutions and new meaning to our existence on the earth, and argues that principles of Jainism are quite relevant and have inbuilt mechanism to deal with such a crisis. Spiritual technologies, which include *dhyāna* (meditation), mental remodeling, dietary practices, sleep hygiene and enhancing body immunity, can play a major role in our fight against this crisis.

Unlike the previous one, Ms. Alba Rodriguez’s article, “*Human Crisis and COVID-19: How can Yoga Philosophy help?*” suggests *yoga* as a way out to deal with the pandemic crisis. According to the author, Indic Yoga literature works have shown numerous examples of human beings who find themselves in difficult situations and have offered transformative ways to surpass them. The two major texts in the Yoga tradition, namely the *Bhagavad Gītā* and the *Yoga Vāsishṭha* are contextualized and analyzed in order to gain understanding of their most important messages regarding a human crisis.

Dr. Shugan C. Jain in his article “*Minimizing a Pandemic’s Impact*” points out to the fact that Bhagavāna Mahāvīr’s life and teachings are highly relevant and applicable to the problems caused by the current pandemic situation. Dr. Jain maintains that detachment, non-violence, self-restraint and strenuous penance were on the top of Lord Mahāvīra’s teachings, and therefore by properly following his doctrines and way of life would help us in enhancing our immunity and endurance and in minimizing the afflictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The paper “*Pandemic and Akartāvāda*” by Ms. Pragya Jain and Mr. Sayyam Jain discusses how the current pandemic has caused an uncontrollable psycho-social mayhem and how a concept of Jain philosophy, namely Akartāvāda, if properly followed, can bring unlimited peace of mind with it. The principle of Akartāvāda (non-doership) states that all happenings are pre-determined and are bound to happen, and they are also inherently bound to undergo the process of sequential modification (*Kramabaddha Paryāya*). Accepting these principles and remaining *sahaja* (indifferent), according to the authors, is the key to survive any pandemic. The principle of Akartāvāda releases the burden from one’s soldiers of “doing” anything.

Dr. Subhas Garai’s article “*Practical Jainism and Pandemic*” argues that Jainism is one of the most practical religions and philosophies of the world, and then goes on to discuss the relevance and practicality of the religious and the philosophical doctrines of Jainism, the Jain lifestyle, code of conduct, socio-ethical principles, values and virtues in the context of this pandemic crisis.

All the articles reviewed here clearly emphasize the relevance and application of Jainism in the context of the current pandemic. I am thankful to all the authors for contributing their scholarly papers to this issue. I am also thankful to Dr. Shugan C. Jain, President ISJS, for his continuous support and guidance. Thanks are also due to Dr. Shrinetra Pandey, editor of the journal, for rendering his editorial skills, and Mr. Sushil Jana for his technical support and putting it on our website. The readers and contributors are welcome to send their valuable suggestions.

October 09<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Prakash C. Jain**

## CONTENT

From the Chief Editor's Desk

1	Corona Pandemic in the Perspective of Non-violence	Prof. Rajmal Jain	1-14
2	COVID-19 and Spiritual Technologies: Turn 'Bane' to 'Boon'	Prof. Pratap Sanchetee Mr. Prashant Sanchetee	15-24
3	Human Crisis and COVID-19: How Can Yoga Philosophy Help?	Ms. Alba Rodriguez	25-33
4	Minimizing a Pandemic's Impact	Dr. Shugan C Jain	34-40
5	Pandemic and Akartāvāda	Ms. Pragya Jain Mr. Sayyam Jain	41-47
6	Practical Jainism & Pandemic	Dr. Subhas Garai	48-54



# Corona Pandemic in the Perspective of Non-violence

Rajmal Jain\*

## 1. Introduction

The whole world is in the situation of dread, fear and dilemma since the beginning of the present year 2020 in general due to various global issues and conflicts and in particular due to COVID-19. The corona virus disease (COVID) started from Wuhan, China and now it has spread over in more than 210 countries by 05 June 2020. More than 7.6 million cases and 0.4 million COVID related deaths have been confirmed over the globe. There are many ideologies and philosophies considering scientific and technological developments, socio-economic and socio-political conflicts about the onset and spread of corona virus. However, leaders of the world or individual countries are not seriously concerned over the basic roots or cause of the spread of this virus inspires of such large number of deaths, which have destroyed the socio-economic structure of almost all victimized countries. On the contrary, common folk all over the globe is in dilemma thinking that this world was talking last year that we will establish human beings on the moon and mars but currently this same world is finding very difficult to save human beings on the earth itself. In the last century, on one hand we have seen nuclear holocaust and as a consequence mass killing of human and animals, while, on the other hand, we experienced vast progress of science and technology. This scientific progress, however, was without control of **spiritual power**. Science has removed so many hurdles in our day-to-day life. But at the same time, it has made our life fearful and miserable. The modern period is an age of space and nuclear power. The scientific and technological inventions have attempted to control the nature and brought it to the services of human beings. But yet, the man, society and nation are not satisfied with the gains they achieved rather it developed greed among them and they want “**more**”. The greed, in fact, has created a conflict between men, societies and the nations. These conflicts may be observed as many kinds of global issues such as “poverty, socio-economic imbalance, unemployment, health and hazards, earthquakes and volcanos, climate change” etc.<sup>1</sup>

The present global pandemic condition due to spread of *Corona Virus* everywhere is also an outcome of the greed. This virus has locked people inside their houses almost in all countries of the world. For the first time present generation has seen such fear and panic looking at the data of COVID-19 patients and deaths. There is not sufficient place in crematorium and graveyard to burn or burial the dead bodies in many countries. This has pushed the whole physical and materialistic world to spiritual world. Now, people realise that the consequence of the requiring “**more**” is transformed into a “**cry for good health and peace**” all over the world. Just stay for a

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minute and give deep thinking to address this important question “**why and how it happened**”? Certainly, you will conclude that the materialistic achievements and the technological know-how in the race of “**more**” could not achieve the peace for men and societies. On the other hand, in the wake and need of “**more**”, we have also destroyed the nature. Almost all components of our environment *viz.* soil, water, air, fire, and cosmos, which comprise our geosphere and biosphere, are wrecked by us to satisfy our lust for food and other physical show case items. Man has become so much ruthless that in order to satisfy his ego, passion and lustiness he has not only destroyed trees, plants and largely forests but also killed small (one sense) to big (2-5 sense) animals that are surviving on the earth, flying in the air and living inside the oceans.

Our experience teaches us that the present pandemic situation is not caused by pressure of external circumstances rather it is caused by selfishness, bigotry, passion, intolerance, and hatred in man for man throughout the world. It is not the first time that such pandemic incidence has occurred in the world rather more than 20 such epidemic events have been observed since Indus Valley civilisation (3300 BCE to 1300 BCE)<sup>2</sup>, which have killed more than a billion people on the earth. But neither had we learned lessons from them, nor we respected the laws of nature. The nature governs the life on the earth as per its laws of biocycle and energy conservation, which, on the contrary, we broke down in the lust of our non-vegetarian food, selfishness, passion and ego.

Conflicting moral standards produce social, economic and political maladjustments and cause unrest, violence and war within the nation as well as with other nations. It is, therefore, necessary to moralise socio-political life, which in the complexity of modern life counts so much with us. In this context practicing non-violence (*ahimsā*) and non-possession (*aparigraha*) is most ideal path, shown by Jainism towards world peace in such a conflicting condition.

The other factor of major violence is killing of large number of animals and various species of organisms in the world for the lust of food. In this context, many people in the world misleadingly eat non-veg foods considering health benefits as they are excellent source of the high quality protein, healthy fat, vitamins and minerals including all the essential amino acids which body requires for important functioning. If it is so, then the non-vegetarian people should have not been died in large number over the globe due to COVID-19. In fact, it is either their misunderstanding or lustiness for food because vegetarian diet provides better and suitable proteins relative to animal sources. Eating a variety of vegetables, grains, legumes, nuts and seeds will supply all the amino acids you need to fulfill the protein requirements for good health. A diverse selection of plant foods eaten everyday will supply your body with all the essential amino acids it needs to make sufficient protein — no special food combinations required. Therefore, the world must stop killing lives and eating non-veg foods in excuse of proteins. In fact, stopping non-veg foods will protect our bio-sphere cycle and hence the nature.

The cult of non-violence or universal love to all living beings is the foundation of the Jain's sacred life leading to the goal of liberation and self-realisation called *mokṣa*.<sup>3</sup> According to Jain tradition, Tīrthāṅkara Rṣabha was the first to preach *ahiṃsā-dharma* to the people at the beginning of the present era. Mahāvīra, 24<sup>th</sup> *tīrthāṅkara*, led the revival movement for the spread of cult of Ahimsa during 600-500 BC. He taught that *ahiṃsā paramo dharmah* (अहिंसा परमो धर्मः), which literally means: non-violence is the highest moral virtue, which was very frequently mentioned earlier in Mahābhārata, one of the epics of Hinduism.

It is widely known and established that we have exploited the Earth to the maximum, polluted, ruined its ecosphere, and similarly, in particular, we have been brutally killing many species co-dwelling on earth. It is estimated that these species are killed in billions for food by men, many of which have become extinct in the past 50 years. Now it is being asked all over the world whether COVID-19 is revenge by geosphere or biosphere. To address this question, we study in this paper the killing of various species (animals) for food in terms of meat eaten per capita per year in 120 different countries over the globe in the perspectives of mortality due to corona virus. However, in this paper we do not probe corona pandemic as a consequence of exploitation to our mother Earth to satisfy our greed, ego, passion etc.

## 2. Sources of Data

a) We use the data for deaths/ mortality due to corona virus from the World Health Organization (WHO) site, namely Statista at URL:

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1093256/novel-coronavirus-2019ncov-deaths-worldwide-by-country/>

The data is updated every day on this site. However, we have considered data of mortality until 16 September 2020.

b) We employ the data for animal meat consumption per capita for the countries listed in Table I and II are obtained from Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations. The data was prepared in 2002 but in view of many discrepancies it was refined and improved in 2009. More recently, in 2019, this data was retrieved and was made available by FAO/UN<sup>a</sup> and also uploaded at Wikipedia:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_meat\\_consumption](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_meat_consumption)

c) Data for population for the countries considered for the current investigation has been taken from the UNO worldometers. For example, the URL for population of Bangladesh is:

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/bangladesh-population/>

## 3. Research

### 3.1 Methodology:

We normalize data of meat consumption over per capita per year. Similarly, deaths due to corona virus are normalized over population and derived mortality

rate as deaths per capita. We propose a proxy index,  $M_c$ , for meat consumption and based on it we define a given country is high or low meat eater as follows.

For  $M_c \geq 30$  kg per capita per year the country is high meat eater and if  $M_c < 30$  kg per capita per year then it is low meat eater. We consider 60 countries in each category in order to satisfy the equid-partition requirement for statistical analysis. We present in Table I and II the list of high and low meat eater countries respectively, along with data of corona deaths. We derive brief statistics of high and low meat eater countries from these tables. The most important and conclusive spectrum of corona virus deaths as a function of meat consumption has been obtained from the data.

### 3.2 Analysis and Results:

Currently it appears that the whole world has been trapped and enveloped by the corona virus. All over the world, so far more than 7.6 million corona virus cases and about 4 lakhs deaths have been confirmed up to 05 June 2020. Shown in Figure 1 are the locations of the confirmed cases of COVID-2019 on the global map as represented by WHO, which is a dreadful and fearful scenario referring that corona is truly a pandemic. Histogram plots of corona virus spread as a function of time over the globe and in India are shown in Figure 2a and 2b respectively. It may be noted from these histograms that COVID-19 spread became as outburst in the world from 12 March 2020, however, from 4 April 2020, by and large, the spread has been homogeneous. On the contrary, in India, the spread has been observed as exponential growth from 5 April 2020. The exponential growth is always dangerous, and it is very much likely that the COVID cases in India will reach to more than one million by July-August 2020, and related deaths may exceed to 50,000.

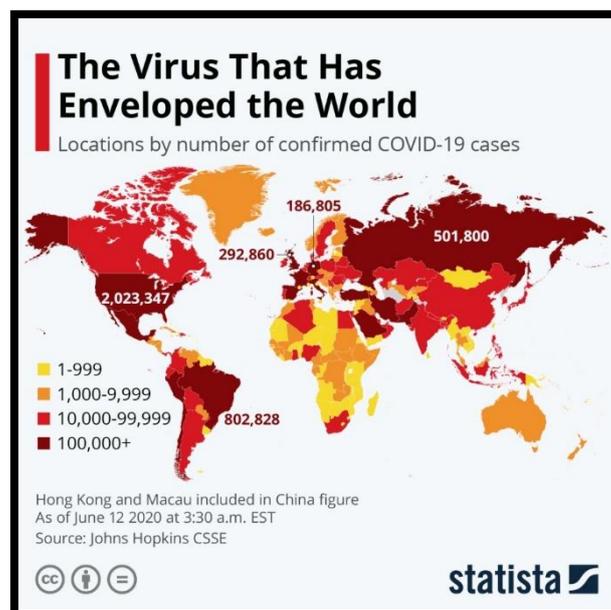


Figure 1: Locations by numbers of COVID-19 confirmed cases over the globe.  
The figure has been taken from Statista of WHO.

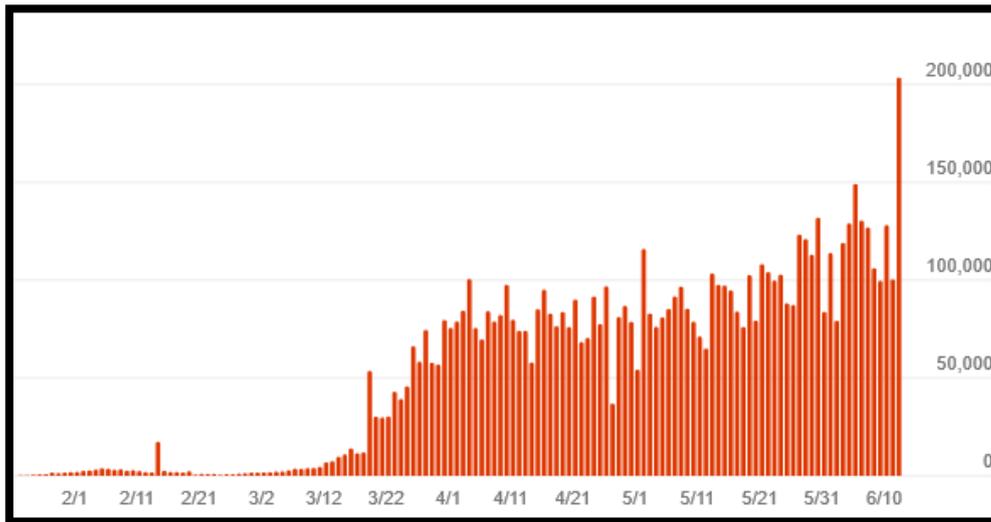


Figure 2a: Histogram representation of worldwide spread of confirmed cases of COVID-19. It may be noted that corona virus outbreak started in first week of March and then slowly homogeneous growth has been observed.

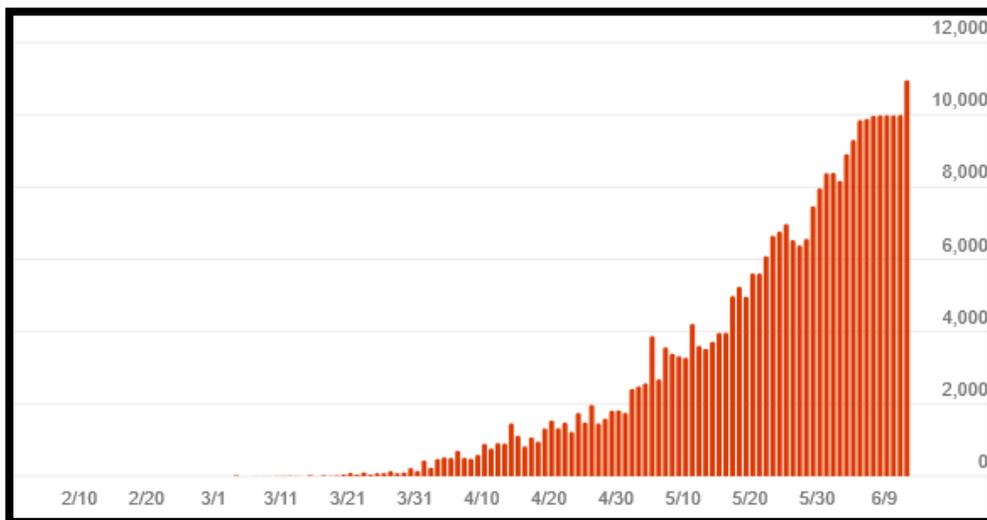


Figure 2b: Histogram representation of COVID-2019 spread over India. It may be noted that the corona virus spread began as an exponential outbreak in first week of April 2020.

**Table I: Highest Meat Eater Countries ( $M_c \geq 30$  kg)**

S. No	Country	Meat/capita/Year (kg) <sup>a</sup> ( $M_c$ )	COVID-19 Deaths	Population	Death/capita
1	USA	120	110210	329,227,746	3.348E-4
2	Kuwait	119.2	244	4,265,264	5.72063E-5
3	Australia	111.5	102	25480639	4.00304E-6
4	Bahamans	109.5	11	392,898	2.7997E-5
5	Luxemburg	107.9	1	625,086	1.59977E-6
6	New Zeland	106.4	22	17,131,938	1.28415E-6
7	Austria	102	672	9003088	7.4641E-5
8	France	101.9	29065	65,273,511	4.4528E-4

9	Bermuda	101.7	9	71178	1.26443E-4
10	Argentina	98.3	608	45,164,434	1.3462E-5
11	Spain	97.0	27133	46,753,492	5.80341E-4
12	Denmark	95.2	586	5,790,721	1.01196E-4
13	Canada	94.3	7637	37,669,351	2.02738E-4
14	Netherlands	91.0	6005	17,131,938	3.50515E-4
15	Italy	90.7	33689	60,468,053	5.57137E-4
16	Slovenia	88.3	109	2,078,917	5.24311E-5
17	Portugal	93.4	1465	10,198,769	1.43645E-4
18	UK	84.2	39904	67,857,854	5.88053E-4
19	Israel	96.0	291	8,640,768	3.36776E-5
20	Brazil	85.3	34072	212,442,762	1.60382E-4
21	Mexico	63.8	12545	128,829,434	9.73768E-5
22	Belgium	76.9	9566	11,585,939	8.20477E-4
23	Germany	88.1	8736	83,760,156	1.04297E-4
24	Iran	36.3	8134	83,780,399	9.70871E-5
25	Russia	69.2	5528	145,929,507	3.78813E-5
26	Cuba	49.4	4634	11,327,536	4.09091E-4
27	Sweden	80.2	4562	10,084,298	4.52386E-4
28	Equador	56.4	3486	17,620,485	1.97838E-4
29	Switzerland	74.7	1921	8,649,901	2.22083E-4
30	China	58.2	4634	1,438,934,400	3.22044E-6
31	Colombia	46.5	1087	50,841,482	2.13802E-5
32	Mongolia	82.1	1	3,273,961	3.05440E-7
33	Iceland	86.2	10	341,097	2.93171E-5
34	Hungary	76	542	9,662,256	5.60945E-5
35	Greece	74.8	180	10,426,116	1.72643E-5
36	French Polynesia	101.9	1	280,793	3.56134E-6
37	Czech Repub.	83.4	828	10,707,718	7.73274E-5
38	Dominican Republic	53.7	538	10,820,039	4.97225E-5
39	Cyprus	78.1	18	1,206,776	1.49157E-5
40	Croatia	66.3	104	4,106,773	2.53224E-5
46	Bulgaria	53	160	6,951,664	2.30160E-5
41	Belarus	78.4	276	9,449,636	2.920747E-5
42	Barbados	74.5	7	287,352	2.436036E-5
43	Antigua and Barbuda	84.3	3	97,866	3.06541E-5
44	Costa Rica	51.1	10	5,090,858	1.96430E-6
45	Ireland	87.9	1664	4,933,560	3.37282E-4
46	Chile	74.1	1356	19,103,852	7.09804E-5
47	Romania	64.7	1308	19,246,341	6.79609E-5
48	Poland	76.9	1127	37,851,327	2.97743E-5
49	Philippines	33.6	987	109,471,641	9.01603E-6
50	Japan	45.9	903	126,503,264	7.13815E-6
51	South Africa	58.6	848	59,250,820	1.43120E-5
52	Ukraine	48.5	762	43,751,560	1.74165E-5
53	Israel	96.0	291	8,640,768	3.36776E-5

54	UAE	73.8	273	9,881,188	2.76282E-5
55	Colombia	46.5	1087	50,841,482	2.13802E-5
56	Singapore	84.0	24	5,846,897	4.10474E-6
57	Jamaica	59.1	10	2,960,223	3.37812E-6
58	Uruguay	55.3	23	3,472,856	6.62279E-6
59	South Korea	54.1	273	51,265,321	5.32523E-6
60	Norway	66	258	5,418,299	4.76164E-5

**Table II: Least Meat Eater Countries ( $M_c < 30$  kg)**

S. No	Country	Meat/capita/year Kg <sup>a</sup> ( $M_c$ )	Deaths	Population	Death/capita
1	Egypt	25.6	1126	102,167,945	1.10217E-5
2	Bangladesh	4	811	164,564,713	4.92815E-6
3	Ethiopia	8.5	19	114,685,261	1.65670E-7
4	Burundi	5.2	1	11,848,359	8.43998E-8
5	Sri Lanka	6.3	11	21,405,720	5.13381E-7
6	Rwanda	6.5	2	13,190,200	1.51527E-7
7	India	4.4	6367	1,378,900,337	4.61744E-6
8	Nigeria	8.8	323	205,682,185	1.57038E-6
9	Tanzania	9.6	21	59,433,655	3.53335E-7
10	Nepal	9.9	11	29,094,730	3.78075E-7
11	Liberia	10.4	30	5006000	5.99280E-6
12	Togo	11.7	13	8,262,563	1.57336E-6
13	Sierra Leone	7.3	47	7,963,305	5.90207E-6
14	Sudan	19.1	333	43,766,839	7.60850E-6
15	Tajikistan	14.7	48	9,516,984	5.04361E-6
16	Zambia	12.3	7	18,341,163	3.81655E-7
17	Yemen	17.9	103	29,742,981	3.46300E-6
18	Zimbabwe	21.3	4	14,846,545	2.69422E-7
19	Uganda	11	1	45,614,034	2.19230E-8
20	Thailand	25.8	58	69,787,831	8.31090E-7
21	Syria	22.8	6	17,500,658	3.42844E-7
22	Senegal	15.8	45	16,707,665	2.69337E-6
23	Sao Tome and Principe	16.5	12	218,820	5.48395E-5
24	North Korea	13.4	1	25,770,563	3.88039E-8
25	Solomon Islands	11.9	1	685,425	1.45895E-6
26	Namibia	28.3	1	2,534,060	3.94623E-7
27	Mozambique	7.8	2	31,182,649	6.41382E-8
28	Moldova	26.8	317	4,034,590	7.85705E-5
29	Mali	22.2	85	20,130,082	4.22254E-6
30	Maldives	21.6	7	539,834	1.29669E-5
31	Malawi	8.3	4	19,028,491	2.10211E-7
32	Madagascar	14.7	7	27,634,723	2.53304E-7
33	Lesotho	18.3	1	2,141,023	4.67066E-7
34	Laos	21.3	1	7,275,560	1.37446E-7
35	Kenya	16.7	79	53,680,055	1.47168E-6

36	Haiti	15.6	50	11,369,778	4.39762E-6
37	Guinea	8.6	1	13,102,388	7.63219E-8
38	Guinea-Bissau	16.2	12	1,964,249	6.10920E-6
39	Guatemala	28.8	252	17,915,568	1.40659E-5
40	Guadeloupe	13.6	14	400,124	3.49891E-5
41	Ghana	13.9	44	31,025,162	1.41820E-6
42	The Gambia	8.1	1	2,410,835	4.14790E-7
43	French Guiana	14.6	1	298,026	3.35541E-6
44	Eritrea	7.7	1	3,541,919	2.82333E-7
45	El Salvador	28.3	55	6,481,751	8.48536E-6
46	Djibouti	23.7	28	985,616	2.84086E-5
47	Congo	13.4	22	5,506,837	3.99503E-6
48	Comoros	13.4	2	867,979	2.30420E-6
49	Chad	13	69	16,364,523	4.21643E-6
50	Côte d'Ivoire	13.3	1	26,323,384	3.79890E-8
51	Cameroon	12.7	212	26,495,721	8.00129E-6
52	Cambodia	16.6	1	16,704,067	5.98656E-8
53	Burkina Faso	14.8	53	20,807,094	2.54721E-6
54	Benin	20.9	4	12,095,391	3.30704E-7
55	Algeria	19.7	707	43,789,601	1.61453E-5
56	Angola	22.4	4	32,785,106	1.22007E-7
57	Pakistan	14.7	1838	220,544,600	8.33391E-6
58	Peru	20.8	5031	32,846,860	1.53165E-4
59	Turkey	25.3	4630	84,269,726	5.49426E-5
60	Indonesia	11.6	1770	272,821,145	6.48777E-6

#### 4. Brief Statistics

It is very interesting to note from Table I and II that USA is highest meat eating country @ 120 kg/capita/year and total deaths are also higher in this country so far @  $3.35 \times 10^{-4}$ /capita (*cf.* Table I) until 05 June 2020. On the other hand, the lowest meat is eaten in Bangladesh and next in India @ 4 and 4.4 kg/capita/year respectively, where, the deaths took place until 05 June 2020 @  $4.9 \times 10^{-6}$  and  $4.6 \times 10^{-6}$ /capita respectively, almost two orders less than USA.

We found total 3 and 11 countries without any report of death due to COVID-2019 in the case of  $M_c \geq 30$  kg and  $M_c < 30$  kg, respectively. This reveals, at the first instance, that low meat eater countries have about 4 times less mortality relative to high meat eater countries. However, in both tables I and II, we have shown the death number as **1** (yellow highlight) in such countries to avoid failure of statistics reaching to infinity while normalizing over the population. Further, we found mean of meat consumption/capita/year in high and low meat-eating countries as:  $78.07 \pm 21.03$  kg and  $15.31 \pm 6.54$  kg, respectively. Similarly, the mean of mortality rate per capita in both high and low meat-eating countries is measured as  $1.21 \times 10^{-4} \pm 1.8 \times 10^{-4}$  per capita and  $9.59 \times 10^{-6} \pm 2.38 \times 10^{-6}$  per capita.

## 5. Fraction

The ratio of mean of meat consumption of high to low meat-eating countries is  $\sim 5.1$  and similarly of the mortality rate is  $\sim 126.2$ . This fraction reveals that high meat consuming countries as on average eat about 5.1 times meat higher relative to low meat consuming countries, but their mortality rate is 126.2 times higher relative to low meat consuming countries. This is a great message by animals being killed by humans for their food in the light of disturbing the ecosystem that we discuss in the next section.

## 6. The Spectrum

In view of above results we are motivated to explore the influence of meat eating on the mortality rate. The meat consumption in a country suggests significant killing of various species/animals either directly in that country or in the country from where it has been imported, which is primarily an indication of disturbing the balance in the ecosystem. Therefore, it has been widely established in all religions and sects that killing of life of any form is a cruelty and serious violence in context to laws of nature, which maintain the balance in the ecosystem.

In this view, we derive the mortality rate as a function of the meat consumption. Shown in Figure 3 is the plot of mortality rate (deaths per capita) for each country of 120 countries dataset as a function of  $M_c$  (meat eaten per capita per year) to deduce the influence of meat consumption on the death in a given country. The green and red dots in Figure 3 refer to low ( $M_c < 30$  kg/capita/year) and high ( $M_c \geq 30$  kg/capita/year) meat consumption countries, respectively. Data on the spectrum has been plotted on log-log scale to observe the influence in orders of magnitude. The best fit to the data (black line) is derived employing least square fit method and it reveals correlation coefficient  $R \sim 0.74$ , which is significantly higher to validate the results. Therefore, we may conclude from the spectrum that low meat eater countries have 2-4 orders low mortality rate relative to those of high meat eater countries. However, few data points (such as blue dots) are scattered and fall away from the fit line suggest us that in addition to meat consumption, perhaps, there are some more parameters which also need to be examined for future investigation. According to Jainism, these parameters may be passion, greed, ego, jealousy, sexuality *etc.*, which in totality form the components of possession (*parigraha*) and are the root cause of violence through physical, mental and oral system. The spectrum, therefore, advocates in a big way that we should adopt and practice principles of Jainism *viz.* non-violence (*ahimsā*) and non-possession (*aparigraha*).

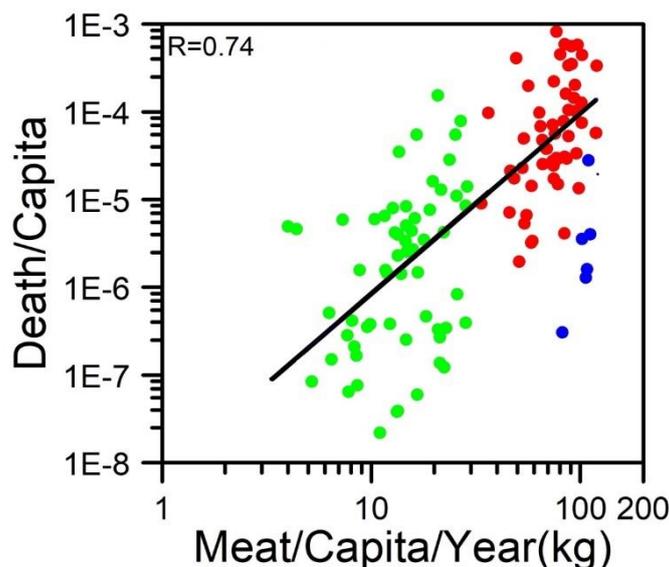


Figure 3: Spectrum of mortality rate due to COVID-2019 as a function of meat consumption in 120 countries of the world.

The equation obtained by linear fit is:

$$\text{Log}_{10}Y = 2.05\text{Log}_{10}X + \text{Log}_{10}(-8.29) \quad (1)$$

This equation indicates that for  $M_c \leq 1$  kg/capita/year, the mortality rate is almost insignificant. However, such cases are generally applicable to vegetarian community *viz.* Jains because they eat meat unknowingly from 1-2 sense lives through vegetables, fruits and plant food *etc.* Therefore, it is widely communicated that mortality rate, in vegetarian community in general and Jains in particular, is insignificant or extremely low in India.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusions

Each year more than 58 billion farm animals and countless aquatic animals are unnecessarily killed for human consumption. Eating animals has largely been justified on the grounds of human health, but thankfully these myths have now been discredited with many mainstream healthcare professionals claiming ***animal products actually do us more harm than good***. However, health is not the only reason to stop slaughtering animals for food. The animals that we exploit to put food on our tables are forced to bear the brunt of our eating habits every single day in factory, farms, and smallholdings. Edgar's Mission Farm Sanctuary says, one of my all-time favorite farm animal sanctuaries, "If we could live happy and healthy lives without harming others...why wouldn't we?"<sup>4</sup> However, the fundamental principles of Jainism do not allow harming, exploiting and injuring any life from 1-5 senses. In fact, harming them physically is not only restricted but criticizing them by words (acoustic) as well as thinking to harm them by thoughts are also restricted. Further, beyond to any act for killing or harming, in Jainism it is directed that we should take care of all animals if they are hurt, injured or not able to take care of themselves, and help them to survive. These principles were told by Mahāvīra in a popular way *viz.* "Live,

**let others live and help the victims to live”**, which he derived from the laws of nature. It is scientifically proven and accepted that killing animals unbalances the ecosystem. One of the animal’s function in an ecosystem is to recycle nutrients and carbon. When we kill the animals large or small, from the elephant all the way down to the insect, we hamper the function of the ecosystem and limit its capability to moderate climate. At the same time, we are degrading ecosystem function, we are also burning fossil fuels that need to be cycled back into the long-term carbon cycle! Therefore, *ahimsā* (non-violence) is the only solution to save humanity as well as the environment/nature.

The achievement of the Indian freedom under the able guidance of Mahatma Gandhi is a practical demonstration of the cult of non-violence. The invention of Atom Bomb and Hydrogen Bomb can never be relied on as a solution to the present-day conflicts of ideologies between the big powers of the world. Mahatma Gandhi stated his belief that “*Ahimsa is in Hinduism, it is in Christianity as well as in Islam*”.<sup>5</sup> Gandhi believed that the doctrine of *Ahimsā* was the greatest contribution that India had made to world culture. He himself understood the principle of *ahimsā* in a scientific way and expressed that, “*No religion of the world has explained the principle of Ahimsa so deeply and scientifically as is discussed with its applicability in every day human life in Jainism*”<sup>6</sup>. However, in spite of widely known and accepted the benefit of *ahimsa* by all religions and philosophies, the truth is that there are only ~16% vegetarian people in the world.<sup>7</sup> The large sections of the world population (>84%) are non-vegetarian and believe in killing animals for lust of their food. It is really a matter of surprise that all religions viz. Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism have faith in non-violence but do not support to practicing in daily life. There is no need to teach non-violence to Jain community rather it is utmost necessary to motivate non-Jains to consider and practice non-violence in daily life to save the biosphere and humanity.

The historic experience teaches us that the present pandemic situation over the globe has not been created by pressure of external circumstances rather it is caused by selfishness, bigotry, passion, intolerance, and hatred in man for man throughout the world. It is not the first time that such pandemic incidence has occurred in the world rather more than 20 such epidemic events have been observed since Indus Valley civilisation (3300 BCE to 1300 BCE), which have killed more than a billion people on the earth.<sup>8</sup> But neither had we learned lessons from them, nor we respected the laws of nature. The nature governs the life on the earth as per its laws of biocycle and energy conservation, which, on the contrary, we broke down in the lust of our selfishness, passion and ego. The corona pandemic also has created dreadful environment around the globe and the human being is highly worried about future. On the other hand, when we take a note about the present 21<sup>st</sup> century then we realize that the onset of this century was with many natural disasters/ calamities and epidemic events worldwide viz. >30 volcanos; >14 earthquakes killing 6.5 lakhs people; >90 Tsunamis and >120 floods; and > 10 epidemic diseases. It should be further noted that in remaining 80 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the world has to face many more as well as very strong epidemics and disasters including,

perhaps, global cooling for more than fifty years that may be starting in the middle of the century.<sup>9</sup>

Therefore, it is extremely important to explore the root cause of the disasters, calamities and pandemics that we are currently facing and expected to face in near future. However, it is awful to find how short sighted is the thinking of our rulers, scientists and social scientists except a few. It is lamentable to see their insensitivity to the warning by Mother Nature, which has been sounding over years through global warming, climate change induced calamities and pandemics to deter man from devastating the Nature. More than the past three hundred years of human activity on Mother Earth in the name of scientific progress, economic development and enjoyment of sensual pleasures have irreparably damaged the normal order in Nature. Therefore when we start searching out the basic causations of the present global pandemic, it is to be examined in the context of a series of past pandemics and ecological tragedies humanity has been subjected to primarily on account of their way of life and life vision contrary to the laws of Mother Nature and Cosmic order.

Several scientists have warned us that the present COVID-19 pandemic is only a tip of the iceberg. Our present lifestyle and life vision grounded on the unsustainable premises of modern western civilization, which have contributed to social disharmony, violence, greed, unhealthy competition, indifference towards morality and ethical values, international relations based on parochial national interests and conflicts. These are all pointers to the possible eruption of calamities of varied nature in the near future.<sup>10</sup> We have been mistaking the abnormal way of life of humanity that breeds violence, greed, hatred, wars and destruction of Nature to normal. The dharma (religious) centric mode of thinking which sought to guide humanity in harmony with one's own intrinsic nature, fellow beings, and cosmic order has been replaced by the *New Normal* established by the value free life style and perception of modern western civilization. Modern industrialism and the increasing consumerist culture of modern man, on the one hand, and fast depletion of natural resources and biodiversity, on the other hand, are the two sides of the same coin of modern development paradigm. The wild and unhealthy consumption habits and social ethos of modern man have been killing various animals, several grounds, aquatic and aero- based species and even eliminating the wild creatures by making them vulnerable to ill health and pandemics.

Attempts to use the behavior of wild and domestic animals, disturbed by some sensory input, to predict the occurrence of an earthquake, have a long history.<sup>11</sup> Garstang and Kelley<sup>12</sup> demonstrated with evidence that animals are capable of hearing a wide range of sounds, with frequencies ranging from ultra- to infrasound (kHz-Hz) and from biotic to abiotic sources. The sounds dealt with in their study are abiotic sounds not commonly considered within the biological acoustic literature.<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, it is now widely known that the human body can generate mechanical vibrations at very low frequencies, so-called infrasonic waves. Such low-frequency vibrations are produced by physiological processes—heartbeats, respiratory movements, blood flow in vessels, and other

processes. Different organs of the human body produce different resonance frequencies. The heart resonance frequency is ~ 1 Hz. The brain has a resonance frequency of ~ 10 Hz, and blood circulation about 0.05 to 0.3 Hz.<sup>14</sup>

The scientists discovered that the observed vibrations are connected with the cardiovascular system, which has its own proper movements occurring simultaneously with the work of the heart. Three types of infrasonic vibrations were registered. Waves of the first type are connected with the heartbeat; the second with the human respiratory rhythm; *the third, called Traube-Hering waves, with states of emotional tension*. Thus, it could be possible to judge the human emotional state via the amplitude frequency response of these waves. Similarly, animals also generate infrasonic waves of varied frequencies between 0.01 to 10 Hz, and the third vibration is largely sensitive to emotional tension. Therefore, the animals when they undergo to slaughter process, first they cry (normal sound frequency above >20 Hz) and after sometime (few seconds) they cry from the heart, whole physical body i.e., respiratory system as well as through blood vessels, which sounds at very low frequency in the range of 0.01-10 Hz. These infrasonic sound waves are rather more related to hurt of their heart, emotional tension and extremely bad feelings about their murder for no offense. These emotional tension waves, which move in the whole  $4\pi$  space in the diameter of 30 meters to 3000 km depending upon the frequency and amplitude, carry groan/curse/blight for those who kill them and eat their meat. Such infrasonic waves cannot be seen but can be recorded these days employing infrasonic detectors.<sup>15</sup>

We interpret our spectrum results (*cf.* Figure 3) in the perspective of infrasonic wave energy deposited in the ecosphere as a consequence of killing of large number of animals by man every day. Obviously, high-power deposition from emotional tension infrasonic waves took place in high meat-eating countries and thereby according to *karmavāda*, the high mortality rate has also been observed in these countries.<sup>16</sup> So, we may interpret that current corona pandemic is revenge by animals and all other species killed by humans.

Thus, we may conclude that the environment as well as the animals and the lost species are taking revenge of the cruelty done by human beings for their lust of food, selfishness, passion and possession etc. The corona virus (COVID-19) is just a global warning to humans to stop killing of animals and different species and practice the *ahimsā* (non-violence) as well as *aparigraha* (non-possession) whole heartedly.

We strongly believe that it was a failure of modern world to shun away spirituality and religion from public domain and mainstream of social life. Spirituality and religion have the potential to nurture and nourish virtues and positive values in man. A spirituality that addresses the practical concerns of modern man and promotes a way of life in harmony with the order in Nature and feeling of oneness in society beyond race, religions, caste and creed is relevant today. Our ability to refashion the social, economic, cultural and administrative structures in a way that contributes to social harmony, global harmony and harmony with *laws of Nature and Cosmic order* will determine human sustainability on

the planet. Therefore, this is an unprecedented opportunity and possibility to ponder collectively over how we can slowly channelize our economic, social, political and cultural behavior and activities in harmony with the laws of Mother Nature, fellow beings and cosmic order. This opportunity is to be cleverly crafted to enable us to realize and rectify mistakes in our present way of life and perception and to restore the real new normal of human life. It is true that we need extraordinary determination and collective will to change the inherited lifestyle and belief systems. Therefore, utmost requirement is to *Nexus* between human predicament and way of life for which, however, we humans have to reveal universal love and compassion with each and every life, small or big. Thus, we have to change our lifestyle convolving “*ahimsā and aparigraha*” so as to save our Mother Earth.

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# COVID-19 and Spiritual Technologies: Turn ‘Bane’ to ‘Boon’

Pratap Sanchetee\* & Prashant Sanchetee<sup>+</sup>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Pandemic like COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) is rare in one’s life. This crisis has spread over the globe in a very short period and entire humanity is connected with one issue only i.e. COVID-19. Presently we are in midst of a battle against this deadly illness. We have sailed through many pandemics such as polio, plague, smallpox and influenza etc., in the past and no doubt that we will win over this crisis also. However, our belief is often shattered with bombardment of negativism prevailing all around. In spite of our capacity of multiple technological miracles e.g. in vitro fertilization (IVF), artificial intelligence (AI), genetic engineering etc., we are helpless against this microscopic coronavirus. Is it a nature’s teaching to us to behave more sensibly and improve our lifestyles? This is a big question and call for a serious introspection by all humankind.

COVID-19 is not only biological epidemic but also a great socioeconomic challenge and stress to humanity. We all wish for an end to this pandemic so that return to regular way of working is possible. However, there is an infinite uncertainty before our wish is fulfilled. Our styles of working and values have changed dramatically in last few months. The values for love and life have occupied forefront overshadowing materialistic parameters such as money, industrial production, social recognition etc. Our dependences on external environment are receding and we are forced to look into solutions to our inner strength and think about novel solutions. As we will see later in the article, principles and practices of Jainism are strong enough to face such a crisis.

We, as a true member of *homo-sapien* (Latin ‘wise man’) have to give our best and are also aware that ‘*best comes during stress*’. We need to deal it on all fronts i.e. physically, financially, socially, emotionally and spiritually. While physical social, and economic measures have been amply sensitized us through media and government agencies; mental and spiritual aspects are less talked about. This article aims at approaching the crisis from psychosocial and spiritual angle and to amplify the message ‘*to convert crisis into opportunities*’.

## II. CORONAVIRUS

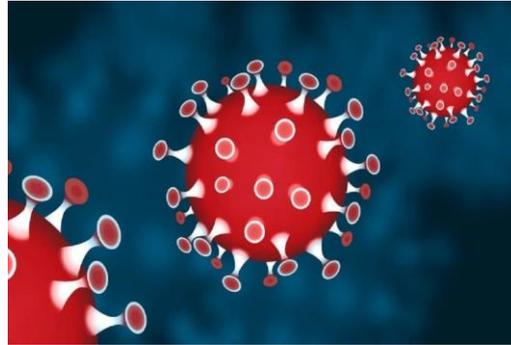
Coronavirus derived its name from the crown-like appearance (Latin *coronam*). COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease) is caused by the novel Coronavirus designated *2019-nCoV* (and

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thereafter called *SARS-CoV-2*). It was first seen in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and within few weeks has swept all across the globe. It does not respect geographical boundaries, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, race, gender and socio-political status. Compared to earlier coronavirus infections (*SARS-CoV-2002* and *MERS-2012*), present *SARS-CoV-2* infection is highly infectious. However, silver lining is that it has a very low mortality compared to many pandemics in the past.<sup>1</sup>



The Coronavirus

### III. MAJOR PROBLEMS IN PANDEMIC

We are facing many problems related to COVID-19 pandemic. We will enumerate some of them in brief.

#### III.1. Psychological Issues

Covid-19 is a huge stressor shaking up psyche and stress is perhaps at a highest level now. We are afraid of death, losing near and dear one, acquiring infection, negative emotions, anxiety, frustration, boredom, disturbed sleep, altered food habits, inadequate supplies, lack of information, losing a job, financial problems and many more. They are present not only in patients with COVID-19 but amongst caregivers and general public as well. These emotional stresses result not only in *de novo* illnesses but can exacerbate preexisting illnesses as well. It must also be noted that people who survives the pandemic may carry stigma connected with the disease. COVID-19 effected people can use spirituality to enhance their psychological wellbeing and health-related quality of life.

Fear in small dosage works to our advantage and has a protective value. However, when in excess and persistent, it can result in negative emotions such as resentment, anger, frustration, insomnia, anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies. It is also a major contributor to diseases related morbidity and mortality. Thus, it is pertinent to identify stressors early and manage them accordingly. One of the best ways to reduce stress is by developing a healthy and emotionally stable brain.

### III.2. Immunity

COVID-19 is a very virulent form of virus and body's immune system is not prepared to fight it effectively. Modern lifestyle, stress and anxiety are major factors that compromise the body immunity. Thus, we should build immunity both in body and mind. Spirituality including diet and meditation is known to increase body immunity to fight diseases.<sup>2</sup>

### III.3. Information Explosion

We are constantly being bombarded with rumors or half-baked information in media e.g. print, electronic, and social etc. The language in current media results more in psychological disturbance rather than augmenting our knowledge. So strong is this force that most of us have developed an addiction to it. Such information adversely affects our behavior, mental balance, and physical well being. We need a judicious and disciplinary approach while gathering knowledge through media.

### III.4. Lifestyle Diseases

As per WHO (2015), more than 25% deaths are related to lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disorders, obesity, and cancer. Physical inactivity, indiscriminate food intake, increase in smoking and addiction, and excessive worry are major factors in these non-communicable diseases. These factors are present with greater intensity during the lockdown period and one must be careful. Present crisis has given us a new meaning to lifestyle, and we should put it to our advantage.

### III.5. Environment

Jainism is essentially a law of nature rather than a religion itself. Its three basic principles i.e. *ahimsā* (non-violence), *anekānta* (non-absolutism) and *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness) have strong guiding force to nurture the nature.<sup>3</sup>

Present pandemic raises a serious question about ecological imbalances created by current development model. All religions in India worship nature and all living being. Maintaining ecological balance is an important ritual in all these philosophies. We have to be proactive in conserving natural resources, curtailing air and water pollution, and consume unadulterated food.<sup>4</sup> Ecological imbalances are responsible for our disturbed relationship with other members of animal and plant kingdom. It is worth noting that COVID-19 originally came from an animal source (bat) and animal transmission is an important link in its development.<sup>5</sup>

### III.6. Special Groups

Society need to take special care of senior citizens, school children, pregnant ladies, and underprivileged people as they are the most vulnerable to contact and suffer the disease. Elderly are full of wisdom and they have a lot to give to the

society.<sup>6</sup> Happiness in looking after such groups will be a boon for able bodied people.

#### IV. LESSON LEARNT

*Time indeed is the great healer as well as great killer.*

*Let's give time & deal the crisis with patience, courage and compassion. ....Authors*

*Every cloud has a silver lining*, is an old proverb. In relation to present pandemic, it can be modified as '*This cloud has many bright sides as well*'. We must audit our strength and weakness (SWOT) and see through our responsibilities. To search for opportunities in the crisis, our mindset, habits and perceptions must change to look into positive.

#### V. SPIRITUAL TECHNOLOGIES

Some of the characteristics of spirituality are quest in life, unfolding inner strengths and harmonious connections with living and non-livings in the environment. Spirituality can thus guide our scientific and technological progress for their betterment. It lays a great deal of emphasis on cleanliness not only of the body but also of the mind and the surroundings. It enhances physiological and psychological well being and improves quality of life. It also has a protective role in lifestyle diseases. While meditation (*dhyāna*) is the most important constituent, spiritual technologies also include dietary practices, mental remodelling, good sleep and enhancing body immunity. Thus, spiritual practices are good tool in our armamentarium to fight the onslaught of coronavirus infection. However, we must be cautious to use it as an adjunct rather pushing it as a wholesome cure. For further details of these techniques, readers are referred to standard text.

Our power from advanced technology has come at the cost of becoming highly dependent on it. Our enthusiasm to explore and to know is getting limited to *internet* searches rather than *internal* searches. We do not go out and explore nature and has low human touch. Thus, we should discover ways in which technology helps us in our spiritual journey as well.

While current technological advancement primarily aims at enhancement of pleasure with five external sensations; meditation (*dhyāna*) aims at mind to make it calm and relax and making body fit for spiritual upliftment.<sup>7</sup> Meditation can be equated with a state of being alone in the crowd. Ācārya Tulsi (1913–1997) and Ācārya Mahaprajna (1920–2010) developed a new system of meditation, *prekṣā-dhyāna*, which is a combination of ancient wisdom and modern science. It consists of meditative techniques of posture (*āsana*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), relaxation (*kāyotsarga*), meditation (*dhyāna*), contemplation (*anuprekṣā*), and reflection of mind (*bhāvanā*).<sup>8</sup> It results in reduction in sympathetic drive of the body and enhancement of immunity.<sup>9</sup> Its immune boosting properties to fight the infection have been observed in earlier flu

epidemic also.<sup>10</sup> Recently, there has been a surge of interest in meditation and other mind–body practices for their physical and mental health benefits and stress relief. There benefits in non-communicable diseases are well established.<sup>11</sup>

*Prāṇāyāma, being a part of meditation, is the best example to prove the benefit of yoga in the enhancement of immunity. The primary brunt of disease and portal of entry of COVID-19 is upper respiratory passage. There are several reports of an overall effect of *prāṇāyāma* training in improving upper respiratory passages and lung functions.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is a useful adjunct in limiting coronavirus invading lungs.*

## VI. IMPLICATIONS

Human beings are social animals. Thus lockdown, travel restriction and social distancing imposed are against their nature. With our super mind, we must look into novel solutions and how can we reshape our principles and conventions for a better world. In current scenario, we were ignoring social and global responsibility and putting personal gains in forefront. There is lack of peace and aggravation of intolerance, violence, competitiveness, and exploitation of natural resources. We have been relying too much on external factors for wellbeing, happiness or protection. However, we must recognize that our ultimate strength lies within our own consciousness for which this current human life is. The universal life and nature are always there to support us.

For example, the Jain doctrine gives a very valuable guidance i.e. an ordinary embodied soul can become supreme soul and *tīrthāṅkara* with his/her efforts.<sup>13</sup> So, Jain doctrine recommends that “I” must improve myself first. This means the solution to pandemic starts here, i.e. “I”. I must minimize causing violence to others which will enhance my own immunity as well as discourage others to attack me. If practiced by me, it will motivate my immediate family and friends to do the same and soon it will be a social revolution to handle pandemic.

If we look analytically, cardinal principles of Jainism have strong guiding force and can be recommended in fight against COVID-19.

- *Ahiṃsā* (non-violence): Jainism teaches us to respect all life on the earth and to avoid the gross injury to mobile beings.<sup>14</sup> This is in tuning with what we contemplate in our dealing with COVID-19. Current practice of ruthless killing of animals and depriving them of their natural habitat are key factors in genesis of this deadly virus. The first few cases of COVID-19 in China are related to wet market in Wuhan.
- *Anekāntavda* (non-absolutism): This calls for looking into a problem with many different angles with respect for each view.<sup>15</sup> This approach is of paramount importance while fighting the present crisis and is the need of the hour both at individual level, at political level and at globally.

- *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness): It preaches us to limit our desires and possessions like wealth and grains.<sup>16</sup> We need to observe it for equi-distribution of resources and see that no life on the earth is devoid of basic amenities.
- Jainism has mandatory emphasis on purity of mind (*mana*), speech (*vacana*) and body (*kāya*) of self. It also mandates purity of ambient environment. Practice of spirituality will enlighten us on the purpose of existence on present world and beyond. This will help us in achieving goal of physical and mental health. Practice of *satya* (truthfulness) and *acaurya* (non-stealing) will help in reducing fear, materialism, and corruption.

Below, we are outlining some of the areas at individual level and at society level to tackle the present crisis and will enumerate planning for future. These are not complete, and one can enlarge it with personal experiences.

### VI.1. Individual Level

- **Caring for self:** We should choose to be healthy over being ill. Self-care should not be neglected for the sake of others. We can serve others only after making ourselves fit and perfect.
- **Physical fitness:** Exercise (30-60 min daily) and proper rest are essential to keep our bodies and minds healthy. Yoga is still a better option as it affects both physical and mental wellness.
- **Mental fitness:**
  - ✓ **Positivity:** We should insulate ourselves against negative emotion by nourishing positive reactions, like replace anger with forgiveness, hate by love. This is one of the best ways to disarm fear and uncertainty.
  - ✓ **Negativity:** Avoid negative thoughts by limiting use of media as they unnecessarily create fear and anxiety. Start developing creative hobbies, taking criticism for correcting self, enhancing contacts with kids, children and elderly, and helping others.
  - ✓ **Happiness in small act:** We should train our mind to look for happiness in small act and steps.
  - ✓ **Pleasure in connecting with others:** Currently we are living in individualized societies with self-centric behavior. We have a very large capacity to give others than that for which have been trained by the society so far. The small initiatives taken in this regard will go long way in life in increasing our satisfaction.
  - ✓ **Humbleness:** We are a miniscule part on this earth and has little role in shaping things around us. This calls for a combined and a coordinated approach. Thus, we should be humble in playing our role and accept the things as they appear without any joy or sorrow.
  - ✓ **Empathy:** Till recently, we were justifying our apathy and inaction in the face of human suffering as we are directly not affected by it. Present crisis has taught that we all are interrelated and should have compassion

for each other. Our mind and environment will be totally different if we have empathy, love and positive emotions for subordinates and supporting staff, people around us and those who are vulnerable and are in need.

- **Emotional well-being:** Below are few mental exercises which one may choose.
  - ✓ **Prayer:** Not necessarily related to religion, it brings positivity, enhances physical and spiritual immunity, and increases social bondage.
  - ✓ **Organize thoughts and be flexible:** Flexible people can adopt to stress in better way.
  - ✓ **Abbreviate anger** reaction by using emotions intelligently.
    - **Accept fear and uncertainty.** Our fear of the disease is not on a strong footing. As per research, more than 80% of COVID-19 patients recover with very simple treatment only.
    - **Learn to live with situation.** It's better to be part of situation and accept it as it appears and not to worry too much for uncertainty.
    - **Hobbies.** One can enhance intellectual well being by hobbies such as reading novels, developing writing skill, playing intellect related games, quiz solving and cross words etc.
- **Physical distancing:** Gestures for greetings are changing worldwide. Classical way of greeting by shaking hands to hug is being replaced with *namaste* (folded hands). Gesture greeting will be now new age tradition.
- **Learn from kids:** Kids and youngsters are best model to cope with stress. Having learnt from them, we can guide them with practical steps.
- **Sleep:** Good sleep (7-8 hours/day) and sleep hygiene are important in maintaining physical and mental health and to boost our immunity.
- **Immunity:** Our best friend in current scenario is our immune system. Enhance it with good diet, maintaining physical and mental health and with meditation.
- **Diet:** One of the important austerities (*tapas*) prescribed in Jain religion is related to diet which includes vegetarian diet, discipline in taking meals, taking less than hunger and fasting.<sup>17</sup> Jainism also describes in detail about *bhaksya* (eatable) and *abhaksya* (non-eatable). Maintaining a balanced diet and immune booster food should be our priorities.
- **Social media:** We should be away from negative news and limit use of print; electronic and social media e.g. may be one hour in morning and evening each.
- **Extra time:** Extra time now available can be used to nurture our hobbies and family relationship.

## VI.2. Society Levels

- **Unite:** There are three strata of human experience i.e. the individual, the community and the institution. To have a safe and healthy world, each

component must play its part. Thus, we all should live with mutual respect and tolerance.<sup>18</sup>

- **Physical distancing but Social closeness:** We have to build a new network on the philosophy of less physical but more social and emotional relationship.
- **Travel:** Rather than searching peace, relaxation, and enjoyment at far flung places, we should discover joy in nearby places including at our homes.
- **Gratitude:** We should be grateful to health workers, supply chain, government and non-governmental organization all over the world.
- Extended family members and society around us are equally important in our physical and mental health. We are rediscovering values of social structure. One should be nice to spouse, other family members and neighbors. Emotional bonding and positive communication needed to be strengthened.

## VII. IMPERATIVES OF LIVING WITH CORONAVIRUS

- Nature has immense capacity to rejuvenate provided we do not interfere with it too much. Material things cannot bring happiness in our life.
- **Environment friendly:** During lockdown period, we are witnessing a cleaner environment. Now we are watching birds, fishes and land animals with their natural activities. Jain religion lay emphasis on respect to all living beings on earth and our environment (air, water and plants).
- **Role of spiritual leaders:** As per WHO guidance dated 7 April 2020, religious leaders and faith communities play a major role in saving lives and reducing illness related to COVID-19.<sup>19</sup> We should adapt to lifestyle sermons from them and attend their discourses in media.
- **Health care, Economy and Food supply:** This is one area which needs prioritisation across the globe. Rather than concentrating resources to few, Jain principle of *aparigraha* is quite relevant in present situation. Be it house lady or service provider (e.g. cook, house cleaner, washer man, driver etc), we are learning about difficulties being faced by them and should be more respectful to them. This also is in tandem with sermon of ‘all life and soul are equal’.
- **Metropolitan to Rural:** Metropolitan and large urban areas have unmanageable overcrowding at living areas, roads and workplaces. Majority of dwellers at these places live in sub-human condition. It is to be noted that COVID-19, like many pandemics in the past, affects people living in these overcrowded areas. Thus, there is strong reason to decongest metropolitan and major urban cities with development of infrastructure and industry in semi-urban and rural areas.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

Every crisis brings new opportunities and we should appreciate them and modify our approaches accordingly. COVID-19 is probably there to teach us that we have drifted far away from the right ways of life. However, we need not be helpless and working together can create a new world order for individual, society, national and international level. From individual centric, we should move to a higher social order with global flavor. While looking after our needs, we should not put others in society to inconvenience and danger. While physical distances will be a new world order, social and emotional closeness can be achieved with digital technologies. With human ingenuity, a cure could soon be there for the coronavirus, but for wellbeing of humankind in future, it is necessary that we strengthen our body and mind with spiritual technologies. We have to reinterpret our philosophies and religious belief in present context.

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# Human Crisis and COVID-19: How Can Yoga Philosophy Help?

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The widespread of COVID-19 around the globe has put humanity on trial. The present reveals itself as challenging. Feelings of fear and despair seem to be spreading rapidly among communities, leading to crisis in many cases. What to do when these kinds of feelings arise and the world seems to break down apart? Yoga literature works have shown numerous examples of human beings who find themselves in difficult situations and have offered transformative ways to surpass them. In this paper, two texts in the Yoga tradition that offer light in this direction will be explored: the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BG) and the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* (YV). Our aim is to obtain a thoroughly understanding of their most important messages regarding a human crisis. We will first contextualize these works and then refer to two philosophical systems that have either influenced them or interpreted their teachings in a particular way. The main schools of thought that will be considered are Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta. Personal reflections from an enthusiastic *yogī* and student will “humanize” further the paper and try to offer a pragmatic perspective. If some insight can be obtained about this crucial question in life, it will be worth it.

First of all, it is appropriate to locate historically the *Bhagavad Gītā* (BG) and the *Yoga Vāsiṣṭha* (YV). The BG emerged from post-Vedic India, around 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. The YV was composed later, between 1150 and 1250 CE. However, Mainkar<sup>1</sup> claims that the YV went through three major phases and the earliest work was a Brahmanical, Upanishadic text. Chapple<sup>2</sup> points out that the earliest trace of the Vasiṣṭhan philosophy found in the YV is in the *Anuśāsanaparva* of the *Mahābhārata*. In the sixth chapter, Brahmā imparts to Vasiṣṭha that human effort can be used for self-betterment and that there is no such a thing as an external fate imposed by the gods. Taking this into consideration, I suggest that the most ancient origins of these two different texts might not be that much apart in history.

For the present paper, only a shorter version of the YV has been analyzed, as a complete exploration will extend the purpose of the writing. Regarding the format, the BG is written as a dialogue between their two main characters (Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna). It is a dialogue that happens in the battlefield, just before the war begins, which is narrated by Sañjaya (the minister of the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra) to the king, as an external observer of what is happening. The YV consists of a compilation of over 50 stories that the sage Vasiṣṭha tells to Rāma. It also takes the form of a dialogue between these two main characters, but it often includes the participation of other characters depending on the particular story. Philosophical teachings are present in both texts, but metaphorical descriptions and fantastic tales are more characteristic of the YV.

Both narratives start with an individual in despair who wants to overcome his negative state and situation and takes the first step with a quest for help. Arjuna is a warrior who faces the

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torment of killing his relatives and friends or allowing himself to be killed in the battlefield. He is overwhelmed by his emotions, thoughts and feelings just before the battle starts, and supplicates Kṛṣṇa for advice. Similarly, Rāma is also a warrior afflicted by confusion. He laments that no pleasure is to be found in the world and is disgusted with the prospect of continuing with his worldly duties. This brings him to ask the sage Vasiṣṭha for guidance. Although the war context in the BG might depict a more dramatic situation, this is not the case. In fact, there is no agreement if the war actually happened, which leaves open the possibility that the battlefield is just a metaphor referring to inner conflicts and doubts. Regardless if the war is external, internal or both, it has been suggested that the dialogue between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa is not primarily about fighting in a battlefield, but rather about what a person needs to know when engaging in any kind of action. Arjuna's crisis is a radical crisis about a human life which has lost its foundation. De Nicolas<sup>3</sup> claims "it is a life in mid-air, surrounded by the anguish of a space which has no solid hold on any ground; it is also an anguish of time because one feels threatened with the extinction of one's own identity, of no longer being the one believed oneself to be".

If taken this view, the beginnings of the BG and YV are very similar. The starting point in both narratives is characterized by total chaos and negativity. It is a mixture of emotions, feelings, thoughts and sensations that leave one paralyzed and might end in a state of helplessness if not properly addressed. During the life of any human being, moments like this are bound to occur. A global pandemic such as the COVID-19 might increase the possibility, especially when it is unsuccessfully handled by those who seem to be "in charge". The energies of fear and despair are easily contagious. The media usually makes things worse with constant information charged with negativity. This increases the widespread fear which augments the negativity and creates a loop that feeds itself. A scared population is much easier to control than a serene and thinking one. Hence, reflection and philosophy are necessary. The question that arises is: are we humans reflecting enough and properly about COVID-19?

If this enquiry is deliberately explored, other questions might easily arise, questions that might touch one's most inner core. What is the purpose of life? Who am I? How can I get rid of suffering? Which is the way to follow? How should I behave? Which is the first step to get over this? etc. I think the formulation of such kind of questions is an indication of our most ultimate need for developing inner potentialities and becoming fulfilled. In this sense, a crisis might be seen as the first step in a journey of self-discovery and should not be considered a problem or an obstacle. It is just part of the trip and an opportunity to grow and become transformed. In a more macrocosmic level, chaos is part of the existence. The ancient Vedic literature referred to it as *asat*. After all, human beings are part of this universe and therefore, submitted and formed by the same principles that govern it. Taking this perspective into account, embracing crisis seems the only option for any person who sees himself in the skin of Arjuna or Rāma. But, how to proceed in this task to be successful? What can we learn about human crisis from the BG and the YV? Can this serve us during these COVID-19 times?

First of all, it is important to approach works rich in philosophical ideas like the BG and the YV as integral wholes and not by fitting them into a preexisting doctrinal category. The

teachings in these books are progressive and it does not make sense to “break them into parts” and just take what is in accordance with our own beliefs and preconceptions. In order to really comprehend the profound messages in these literature jewels, the reader should be open and receptive, willing to immerse in each of the verses and stories with a naïve and fresh attitude. This will reduce bias from limiting stereotypes and prejudices. Similarly, any person who really wants to overcome a profound crisis needs to have at least some of this attitude. A closer reading of Arjuna and Rāma’s words at the beginning of the books reveals that both of them share this disposition.

Moreover, it is paramount to consider the actual circumstance of a particular individual to make sense of the teachings. This is in accordance with De Nicolas<sup>4</sup> understanding of the person as “I am myself and my circumstance”. Profound crisis can be triggered due to many different factors, and contextual ones might be the most important ones in some cases, such as the present moment with COVID-19. It is a fact that we cannot be separated from our context. We are in constant relationship with whatever is happening around us. Our global context now looks similar; however, our most immediate context differs. I recently read a sentence on social media that summarizes this in the following way: “we are not in the same boat, we are in the same sea, some on a yacht, others on a boat, some on life jackets and others swimming with all their might”. What Arjuna and Rāma first do when they see themselves and their circumstances falling apart, is to ask for guidance. Both characters show certain awareness of their mental and emotional instability, they recognize how difficult to keep a balance mind is. Arjuna claims “The mind, indeed, is unstable, Kṛṣṇa, turbulent, powerful and obstinate; I think it is as difficult to control as the wind”<sup>5</sup> and similarly, Rāma says “The sieve can never be filled with water; or can the mind ever reach the state of fulfillment however many worldly objects one acquires. The mind flits in all direction all the time, but is unable to find happiness anywhere... Like the lion in a cage, the mind is even restless, having lost its freedom, not yet happy with its present state”<sup>6</sup>. It cannot be denied that a clear state of mind is necessary to approach difficult questions and make decisions (such as how to fight in a battle, how to rule a kingdom, or how to live during a pandemic). Therefore, the first step to overcome any profound crisis seems to be the pacification of mental and emotional fluctuations.

And how to do that? Both Arjuna and Rāma ask for help to wise teachers. They ask for guidance to Kṛṣṇa and Vasiṣṭha respectively, who have enough self-knowledge, experience and insight to instruct and guide others appropriately. They become the source of ultimate knowledge, but they only point the way: each person needs to walk the path and success relies on one’s sincere work and effort. There is no place for fate or mysterious predestinations. No matter how horrible a crisis might be, free-will always offers the possibility of choosing how to act. But in order to act favorably, the role of experienced teachers is crucial, especially in the case of a profound crisis. Kṛṣṇa advises Arjuna to ask questions to those who have already see the truth, bow in front of them and be a servant for them.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, Vasiṣṭha tells Rāma through different stories that the teachings of those more advanced should be paid attention. For example, in the story of the Philosopher’s stone, we find: “it is by resorting to the company of holy ones, by serving them and inquiring of them, that you will attain self-knowledge.”<sup>8</sup>

Proper guidance also becomes important when analyzing the messages of the texts. This is especially relevant in the case of the BG because its messages have been interpreted very differently depending on the particular ethics and background of the reader. Sometimes, inadequate interpretations have been used for social and political reasons with detrimental consequences. As an extreme case, the assassination of Gandhi was taken as the world's betterment by the man who shot him, who carried a copy of the BG and thought to be doing his best by this atrocious act. It cannot be denied that there are many political and economic interests behind the COVID-19. Unfortunately, for many, money and profit are more important than human lives. There are other viruses in other parts of the world that kill thousands of people every year and not such attention has ever been given to them; there have been many pandemics over the time of history and no such dramatic measures to deal with them have been taken. The fact that it can affect anyone, also the rich and white might have something to do with it.

Having clarified the relevance of adequate guidance when approaching the readings in the BG and the YV, we will proceed by focusing on the actual messages given by those who are considered the teachers "inside" the texts: Kṛṣṇa and Vasiṣṭha. Both of them propose Yoga, in its different ways, as the solution given for the human crisis. But which are the main features of these different ways offered by Yoga in each of the books and how do the stories unfold?

As far as the BG is concerned, it has commonly been divided into three sections, with the first six chapters dealing with *karma yoga* (the yoga of action), the next six chapters with *bhakti yoga* (the yoga of devotion), and the last six chapters with *jñāna yoga* (the yoga of knowledge). Although this is not completely accurate because elements of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jñāna* are found in all chapters, it is worth mentioning because it does include to a great extent further classification that have been made. Sargeant<sup>9</sup> translation of the BG names its chapter as one kind of yoga, and De Nicolas as well as other scholars, do refer to these denominations when discussing about the BG's messages. Although I will refer to different "kinds of yoga" in the present paper because I find that this facilitates the understanding of human crisis as depicted in the BG, it should be borne in mind that the semantic richness of the word "yoga" in the BG surpasses any kind of classifications. My own semantic analysis of the term has revealed, among other meanings, that yoga can be regarded as: discipline, equanimity of mind, action with detachment for the results, study of wisdom, state of self-realization, sacred, secret and imperishable knowledge, self-restraint, meditation, and devotion. With the exceptions when the word "yoga" is used to refer to a state of mind, the rest of the meanings constitute some of the ways that Kṛṣṇa teaches to Arjuna to overcome his crisis. Kṛṣṇa explains chapter by chapter a variety of methods to pacify the mind, go beyond fluctuations and reconnect with the most inner part of oneself. De Nicolas<sup>10</sup> calls this place "the ground" or "the field" a common place underlying existence that goes beyond individuality. Understood this way, overcoming human crisis goes far beyond solving "simple personal problems", as we are talking about getting in touch with an infinite source that sustains life by itself. Kṛṣṇa guides the confused warrior towards this source to recover his strength. He helps him to see what is happening from a broader perspective and encourages him to "get himself organized" before anything else. In current Covid-19 times, organization seems to be needed as well. I will next summarize the

main messages of the BG as they appear and relate them to the philosophical ideas underlying them. This might prove useful for the challenges, humanity is facing at the moment, as global organization is not possible without inner organization.

Because Arjuna identifies himself with thoughts, emotions, context (in general, all his circumstances) at the moment just before the battle, he is confused and does not know how to act. Kṛṣṇa judges the variety of disciplines that he presents as a solution (such as action, knowledge, meditation and devotion) are most effective insofar as they are grounded in a mental state of equanimity or detachment from the fruits of action (*karmaphalāsaṅgam*), or lead to such a state. In other words, the ability to act without expecting anything in return is paramount to overcome confusion. When a person just does what has to be done, following the *dharma*, without expecting anything in return, is said to be satisfied and not dependent. Even when he is engaging in action, he seems to do nothing at all.<sup>11</sup> This reflects the traditional understandings of *karma* and *dharma* in eastern thought. Hindus, as well as Buddhists and Jains, affirm that when an individual is following the *dharma*, the mind is not being conditioned in a negative way. Eventually, this brings the person to freedom because the past residues of karma (*saṃskāras*) become eradicated. This understanding of life has mistakenly been considered pessimistic, but it is actually all the opposite if we pay close attention and properly understand it. Doing one's duty in an attitude of detachment erases negativity, what opens the door for free-will. As far as our topic is concerned, purifying one's mental patterns is necessary to get over a crisis because it brings the person to a state in which making an appropriate choice is more plausible.

I suggest that the most powerful exercise to purify mental patterns is meditation. Chapter 6 of the BG is called the "Yoga of Meditation" (*dhyānayoga*) and goes on this direction, as it emphasizes the role of meditative exercises to keep a balance mind. There is coherence with the previous messages. Actions in accordance with one's role are required to progress in life, and meditation becomes essential to remain stable and strong (especially in difficult moments such a crisis) when carrying out these actions. At the same time, meditation is also an action by itself and therefore, it should be practiced with the same principle than other actions: without any particular expectations.<sup>12</sup>

Later on, in the reading, during chapter 9, Arjuna shows no understanding of the previous kinds of knowledges that have been explained (action, meditation, etc.). For this reason, Kṛṣṇa decides to take a different approach in his teachings and explains that he himself is the knowledge, but not as manifestations or words, but as the ground. The only secret to be discovered or knowledge to be known is to become this ground. However, Arjuna seems more concerned with identifying appearances than reaching there. He seems to conceive liberation as something in which to sustain his meditation, and Kṛṣṇa decides to humor him by giving a factual explanation of his manifestations. However, his manifestations are regarded only as appearances because there is another part of him that pervades everything: "the deepest" part, the ground. Only by realizing this part, Arjuna will be able to overcome his dilemma, and similarly, the same might happen in any individual who is trapped in a profound crisis.

In a broader sense, chapters 2 to 11 made us aware that what we call society is not wholeness, but rather a multiple set of perspectives determining distinct actions and distinct social bodies. Past impressions and future projections usually influence these perspectives. But we are not part of the past or the future (represented by Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa respectively). Our existence is found in the present moment. In de Nicolas' own words, we are "the simple and frightening *being here*: the support and renewal of all the past and the futures".<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the present is understood as our ultimate ground, that place that should be reached to overcome a profound crisis. And how does this make sense with the previous messages given in the BG? The key is that a direct experience of the present moments occurs when Arjuna sees the magnificent vision of Kṛṣṇa, as differentiated from only previous dialectical reflections. Arjuna might be an example of any person who experiences the "frightening" touch with the ground for the first time. He becomes so overwhelmed and terrified by this experience that he wants to understand it, but then, Kṛṣṇa only says: "I am Time, the world destroyer, grown mature, engaged here in fetching back the world".<sup>14</sup> De Nicolas<sup>15</sup> points out that what is relevant here is that Kṛṣṇa's action is not possible without Arjuna, as both are the world, their origin, conservation and dissolution. In regards to our topic, we see again the message that a "reconnection" with this basic ground is crucial to overcome a deep crisis, and this "reconnection" requires of an experiential part, which constitutes not only a crucial message of the BG but also of most eastern philosophies.

Arjuna is not the same after what can be considered his first step in the way out of his crisis. He has learned that what he experienced is recoverable and can be entered into in every action. He has realized that the true self is no longer a theoretical abstraction but an embodied form. That is why his questions continue on a different direction. He no longer begs Kṛṣṇa for definitive answers but asks him to further explain the nature of devotion and faith (*bhakti yoga*). I agree with de Nicolas<sup>16</sup> that the belief in life by itself is how Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna understand devotion: a faith to life in itself. It is the vital force that drives a person from both the apathy of inertia in a moment of crisis (like Arjuna at the beginning of the book) and the apathy of dread in a moment of vision (like Arjuna when he has an embodied experience). The yoga of devotion is, in this sense, the embodiment of the power of life, a journey of transformation in which inner strengths take the lead, crisis are left behind, and most importantly, liberation from suffering becomes an actual possibility for any human being. Therefore, in present COVID-19 times, we should not underestimate the role of faith.

In order to keep with our analysis of the most important messages of the BG regarding a human crisis, it is worth remembering some other main characteristics of Sāṃkhya philosophy.<sup>17</sup> *Prakṛti* includes the preexisting conditionings and qualities (*buddhi*), the sense of I (*ahaṃkāra*), the mind (*manas*) as well as the sense and the action capacities and the subtle and gross elements.<sup>18</sup> The *guṇas* are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which in psychological terms can be equated to lightness, passionate activity and lethargy.<sup>19</sup> Yoga empowers one to regulate and pacify their constant changing; with the practice of meditation, *sattva* successfully becomes predominant.<sup>20</sup> This is a subtle process that requires the apprehension of *prakṛti* by means of its effect.<sup>21</sup> The process become more subtle, as *prakṛti* is essentially different from pure consciousness. *Puruṣa* is just the seer.<sup>22</sup> But interestingly, *prakṛti* ultimately exists for the

liberation and enjoyment of *puruṣa* and therefore, both are necessary to overcome suffering.<sup>23</sup> A first realization that would indicate the beginning of a des-identification with *prakṛti* would be: “I am not emotions, thoughts, and feelings, I am not a body, I am not what I thought I was”.<sup>24</sup> This realization is necessary to transcend mental and emotional disturbances and overcome any crisis, like Arjuna at the beginning of the story or anyone who might be afraid or insecure during these uncertain times with the COVID-19 around. Using the words of the Sāṃkhya system, we would say that Arjuna was completely identifying himself with the *guṇas* of *prakṛti* at the beginning of the story but thanks to a direct experiential moment, he starts to understand that these are not his true self.

Learning about *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* is crucial in Arjuna’s recovery from crisis but not sufficient. He also needs to learn about ethics and morality to be able to continue with his tasks. After all, he is going to fight in the battle and continue with his duties as a warrior afterwards, so he needs some guidance about how to approach that. Kṛṣṇa does not encourage Arjuna to develop specific superior ethical values but defends to apply ethics in every action instead. Actions encompass everything we do in our daily basis, from “important” works (such as writing a thesis or raising a child) to the most usual routines (cooking or talking). Even thinking and remaining in silence are considered actions: “Indeed embodied beings are not able to abandon actions entirely”.<sup>25</sup> Kṛṣṇa gives emphasis to values that resemble the most important Buddhist precepts, such as love, compassion, friendliness, equanimity and purity.

In short, the ethics defended in the BG include acting in accordance with the law of nature, with detachment from the results of actions and with a social-oriented goal. This promotes harmony and it is the base of a grounded individual and a peaceful society. Therefore, we see how a successful recovery from a profound crisis requires going beyond selfish concerns and an active engagement in daily life. Acts of generosity, compassion and care for others have been numerous during last months with the COVID-2019 in the world. Many people have helped others in different ways, from providing first-aid medical care to singing peaceful songs to enhance healing. When we pay attention to the messages of the BG, we see how relevant these results.

Having explored the main messages of the BG regarding a human crisis, it is time to focus on the YV. This book is made up of six sections. The first one, called “On Dispassion”, describes Rāma’s crisis, his profound discontent with the world. Rāma experiences human suffering at a deep level and expresses his quest for overcoming his circumstance to Vasiṣṭha. In the second section, the sage explains him the nature of desire for liberation and the need of self-effort. The next two books explain creation and existence. The fifth book discusses meditation and finally, in the last book, Rāma completely overcomes his crisis and he even experiences total liberation from suffering. Which are the main reasons that make this possible?

In line with the tradition to which the YV pertains (Yogācāra Buddhism), desire is regarded as the main cause of suffering among humans in this book and there is an overall emphasis given to psychic aspects. As Chapple<sup>26</sup> explains, the world in the YV is believed to depend upon our mental constructs, which are shaped by past influences (*vāśānas*). Our interactions with the

external world and its elements are shaped and informed by these constructs. Yogic techniques are encouraged because they allow focusing inwards and understanding these interactions, which eventually leads to overcoming mental limitations and obtaining balance. The purification of consciousness is the key to liberation from suffering, and therefore, to overcome any kind of human crisis. In Vasiṣṭha's words: "the cause of enlightenment is due to the purity of the discipline's consciousness".<sup>27</sup> Applying effort (*pauruṣa*) and creativity are regarded as essential in this arduous task, and the method proposed is a sevenfold yoga that emphasizes meditation and includes: renunciation, deep thinking, non-attachment, world as a dream, non-dualism as in deep sleep, living liberation, and freedom from the body.

Similarly, to what Kṛṣṇa does with Arjuna, Vasiṣṭha starts by encouraging Rāma to take the time to examine both himself and the external world as the first step to overcome his crisis. An important difference from Kṛṣṇa's format of instructing is that many stories (and also stories within stories) are told, where different individuals experience crisis. For example, in the story of Janaka, the king experiences a breakthrough that is overcome after a period of meditation and Rāma is advised to follow this example.<sup>28</sup> This happens through the whole book: Vasiṣṭha encourages Rāma to learn from comparison and by empathizing with the different characters. As Arjuna, Rāma needs to acquire self-knowledge to get rid of suffering. Vasiṣṭha claims that when one is grounded in self-knowledge, even the worst situations become blissful.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this, Rāma also needs to comprehend how the world functions. Similarly, with the BG, there is an emphasis on knowledge, but what is actually meant by knowledge might be interpreted in a variety of ways.

Most importantly, actions performed with detachment and social engagement are crucial in the teachings of the YV. Vasiṣṭha insists in the need of aligning consciousness and promoting positive ethical and moral values with the exigencies of daily action. The rulers in his stories show justice, generosity, zeal and enthusiasm when they perform their duties after purifying and re-ordering their minds. Therefore, the total overcoming of their crisis happens when they are able to function within society with the new acquired principles and mental training. The same happens in the case of the main character Rāma, who moves from a state of chaos to a vision of oneness and freedom, while still performing his duties appropriately. We can realize that the hints about how to overcome a human crisis are very similar to the ones found in the BG: action and wisdom should go together and transcend personal concerns. Some days ago, I read a message regarding the COVID-19 that said: "more than washing hands, what the world actually needs is washing heart, mind, consciousness and spirit". To me, it is talking about this need to deeply transcend personal concerns and commit to something bigger, for the welfare of all.

In conclusion, the BG and the YV are jewels in Yoga Philosophy. The wisdom and insight found in these literature pieces goes far beyond replying the question of how to overcome what is commonly called a crisis. The incorporation of their teachings into daily lives makes them transformative for any human being who engages in such a beautiful and necessary task. This might prove very helpful in current turbulent COVID-2019 times. Yoga offers a range of

possibilities and free-will together with proper effort guarantees the success. Human crisis, in this sense, might be the first step of a transformation, both personal and global.

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- <sup>2</sup> Chapple, C. “Introduction.” Venkatesananda, Swami. *The Concise Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*. Albany: State University Press, 1984: x-xi.
- <sup>3</sup> De Nicolas, A. T. *Avatāra: The Humanization of Philosophy through the Bhagavad Gītā*. New York: Authors Choice Press, 2003: 277-278.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid 25.
- <sup>5</sup> “cañcalam hi manah kṛṣṇa pramāthi balavaddṛḍham/  
tasyāhm niḡrahaṁ manye vāyoriva suduṣkaram!” *Bhagavad Gītā* 6/34.
- <sup>6</sup> Venkatesananda, Swami. Op. cit. 1984: 11.
- <sup>7</sup> “tadviddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā/  
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninastatvadarśinaḥ!” *Bhagavad Gītā* 4/34.
- <sup>8</sup> Venkatesananda, Swami. Op. cit. 1984: 353.
- <sup>9</sup> Sargeant, W. *The Bhagavad Gītā: 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*. New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2009.
- <sup>10</sup> De Nicolas, A. T. Op. cit. 2003: 230-231.
- <sup>11</sup> “tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgam nityatṛpto nirāśyaraḥ/  
karmaṇyabhipravṛtto 'pi naiva kiñcitkaroti saḥ!” *Bhagavad Gītā* 4/20.
- <sup>12</sup> “āruruḥṣormuneryogaṁ karma kāraṇamucyate/  
yogārūḍhasya tasyaiva śamaḥ kāraṇamucyate!” Ibid 6/3.
- <sup>13</sup> De Nicolas, A. T. Op. cit. 2003: 225.
- <sup>14</sup> “kālo 'smi lokakṣayakṛtpravṛddho lokānsamāhrtumiha pravṛttaḥ”, *Bhagavad Gītā* 11/32.
- <sup>15</sup> De Nicolas, A. T. Op. cit. 2003: 227.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid: 229.
- <sup>17</sup> See Larson, G. J. *Classical Sāṁkhya: An Interpretation of its History and Meaning*. Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publication, 2001.
- <sup>18</sup> “saukṣmyāttadanupalabdhirnā 'bhāvāt kāryatastadupalabdhiḥ/  
mahadādi tacca kāryaṁ prakṛtivrūpaṁ sarūpaṅca!” *Sāṁkhyakārikā* 8.
- <sup>19</sup> “prītyaprītiviśādātmakāḥ prakāśapravṛttniyamārthāḥ/  
anyo 'nyābhibhavāśrayajanamithunavṛttayaśca guṇāḥ!” Ibid 12.
- <sup>20</sup> Chapple, C. *Yoga and the Luminous: Patañjali's Spiritual Path to Freedom*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2008: 105.
- <sup>21</sup> *Sāṁkhyakārikā* 8.
- <sup>22</sup> “tasmācca viparyāsātsiddhaṁ sākṣitvamasya puruṣasya/  
kaivalyaṁ mādhyaस्थ्यam draṣṭṛtvamakartṛbhāvaśca!” Ibid 19.
- <sup>23</sup> “autsukyanivṛtyarthaṁ yathā kriyāsu pravarttate lokaḥ/  
puruṣasya vimokṣārthaṁ pravarttate tadvadavyaktam//  
raṅgasya darśayitvānivarttate narttakī yathā nṛtyāt/  
puruṣasya tathā 'tmānam prakāśya vinivarttate prakṛtiḥ!” Ibid 58-59.
- <sup>24</sup> “evaṁ tattvābhyāsānnā 'smi na me nā 'hamityapariśeṣam/  
aviparyayādviśuddhaṁ kevalamutpadyate jñānam!” Ibid 64.
- <sup>25</sup> “na hi dehabhṛtā śakyaṁ tyaktuṁ karmānyaśeṣataḥ” *Bhagavad Gītā* 18/11.
- <sup>26</sup> Chapple, C. “Ethics and Psychology of the Yogavāsiṣṭha in the Upāśama Prakaraṇa.” *Engaged Emancipation: Mind, Morals, and Make-Believe in the Mokṣopāya (Yogavāsiṣṭha)*. Eds. Chapple, C. & A. Chakrabarti. New York, NY: SUNY Press, 2015: 173.
- <sup>27</sup> Mainkar T. Op. cit., 1977: 346.
- <sup>28</sup> Venkatesananda, Swami, & Christopher Chapple. Eds. *The Concise Yoga Vāsiṣṭha*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984: 177.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid: 372-373.

# Minimizing a Pandemic's Impact

Shugan C Jain\*

## Preamble

We face an extra ordinary crisis mankind has ever known. So, we have to adopt extra ordinary measures to face it calmly and come out stronger and wiser. Lord Mahāvīra's message of moving away from Riches to Renunciation or from *pravṛtti* to *nivṛtti* for solving our worldly problems is thus very relevant in the present scenario. We therefore shall try to revisit his doctrine to adopt some lifestyle changes in the present difficult situation to stay happy and healthy.

We begin with the guidance provided by Lord Ādinātha, the first *tīrthaṅkara* of Jains many millennia before Lord Mahāvīra. He was faced with similar situation when common man was faced with shortage of food and started fighting with each other for their survival. Ādinātha gave them the doctrine of work culture i.e. the necessity of self-effort/working to solve one's problems and not depend on someone else to do so. He asked them to select, as per their choice, one of the six basic skills and acquire knowledge of the same to practice and prosper, i.e. established urban culture. Things got better with enhanced overall prosperity. He then renounced the worldly life and attained the true knowledge of achieving lasting happiness and preached the same.

Lord Mahāvīra, the 24<sup>th</sup> and latest Jain *tīrthaṅkara* (some 2550 years ago) saw the sufferings of common man due to rampant violence in the form of social inequalities, religious rituals, excessive consumption and so on. Even though he himself was able to lead a comfortable life, yet he took an extra ordinary step to renounce everything, practice austerities without fear till he experienced true knowledge of self and lasting happiness, i.e. from riches to renunciation (*pravṛtti* to *nivṛtti*). He then guided others to experience the same. He talked of practicing 'nonviolence, self-restraint and strenuous self-effort as supreme spiritual values (*dharma*)'<sup>1</sup> with determination to gradually enhance the health of our soul and hence our worldly life now and in future as well. He said, 'every soul has the potential to become supreme soul with four infinites (infinite perception-knowledge-energy and bliss)'<sup>2</sup> through its own effort. So, impact of problems like Corona can be easily minimized by practicing his doctrine. Jains, believe in his sermons and practice them to some extent to be the most nonviolent, religious, educated and financially well of community.

## Doctrine

Main features of His doctrine are:

- a. Definition of reality as both permanent and impermanent simultaneously.<sup>3</sup>

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- b. Definition and equality of living beings, their nature and being co-related (*Live and let live*); doctrine of Ahimsā and its practice.
- c. Existence, Attributes, Function and Structure of soul, Karma doctrine.
- d. Path to attain lasting happiness: Trio of jewels together (right belief-knowledge-conduct together).
- e. Differences in attitudes and capabilities of individuals: Classification of practitioners and Re-initiation after fall, institution of vows/rules as *āvaśyakas*/obligatory daily duties, minor vows and major vows.
- f. Power of renunciation/giving up and futility of acquisitions

**We now analyze how his doctrine is relevant to minimize the impact of COVID-19.**

The path to achieve liberation comprises right belief-knowledge-conduct together.<sup>4</sup> We discuss each principle in the present context of COVID-19.

- i. **Rational Belief/Perception:** Belief and its enhancement in his doctrine mentioned above through study of holy texts, teachers who practice this doctrine and knowledgeable about the same as contained in the holy texts.<sup>5</sup> This helps us to distinguish between our permanent existence i.e. self/soul and impermanent body thereby enhancing our Self-confidence. With this, you will be blessed with Rational belief or *samyak-darśana* along with some personal characteristics<sup>6</sup> like: freedom from all doubts- expectations- blind faiths/quacks, feeling of disgust at the sight of diseased or sick person, unnecessarily publicizing faults in others and so on. You will be filled with compassion, desire to serve others, rehabilitate the fallen, and enhance your own spiritual qualities. This is the pre-requisite for our ultimate success in achieving our objective. So, make a resolution (*saṅkalpa*) that you will stay unaffected by Corona and you will be blessed with POSITIVE ATTITUDE and INTENTION. Fear and Worrying are deadlier than COVID-19 and are violence against yourself. So, stop worrying and be fearless. The solution to minimize impact of COVID19 starts with I/self and extends to others through me as COVID-19 does not attack you unless you go out and invite it. Are you not feeling happy already?
- ii. **Rational Knowledge:** Acquire knowledge about the problem i.e. COVID-19 concerning its structure, functioning and ways to protect us from its attack and spread from trustworthy sources like Government announcements, your doctor and your own experiences. Study the spiritual texts to enhance your knowledge about the doctrine mentioned above so that you become free from doubt, hankering and inaccuracy and its practice to bring changes in our lifestyle. *Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvākācāra* by Ācārya Samantabhadra and the scripture *Upāsakadaśāṅgasūtra* also, give detailed discourse of the practices and experiences of ten distinguished householders respectively which guide us to incorporate nonviolence and Mahāvīra's doctrine in our lifestyle based on the same. We shall refer to these two texts primarily in this paper. The knowledge so acquired will help us in preparing a list of Dos (*upādeya* or worthy) and Dons (*heya* or unworthy) to minimize the impact of Corona.

**iii. Rational Conduct:** The guiding principles of Conduct are *saṁvara*/stoppage of new bondage/pain (or getting inflicted with COVID-19) and *nirjarā*/annihilation of previously bonded karmas (or from COVID-19). These principles result in enhancing our spiritual health to keep inauspicious karmas at bay and change or annihilate the nature of earlier bondage/suffering. Incidentally, World Health Organization also defines Health as physical, mental and spiritual wellness. Jainism gives utmost importance for enhancing wellness of our soul or spiritual health which involves minimizing our tainted emotions (anger, arrogance, deceit and greed) as these obscure our inherent nature of infinite knowledge-perception-energy-bliss. Physical and mental health as the means are required and they become healthier with the health of the soul. Further we have to continuously make effort for being healthier by refining our life practices to face difficult and extreme situations by moving up the ladder from being a lay householder to *pākṣika* (gross votary)-*naiṣṭhika* (model votary)-*sādhaka* (seeker votary) householder. The guiding principles in for this path are:

### 1. Normal Situations:

Make a beginning for a healthy life style applicable where no epidemic or natural calamity exists: Start avoidance of violence against gross living beings (i.e. 2 to 5 sensed which can be observed by us) by maintaining an attitude of carefulness and restraint in all activities. Try to minimize violence against subtle one sensed living beings (which cannot be observed by senses like water, air, fire and earth bodied primarily). Observance of primary virtues, seven abstinences and six Daily Obligatory duties (Table.1: A-C) is recommended.

The practitioner accepts the principles of nonviolence and its observance, existence of soul as eternal and different from body. However, the worldly pursuits become primarily and spiritual health secondary/casual. Primary virtues (*mūlaguṇas*) directs us to adopt nonviolent food habits (plant based pure food free from infestation of germs and avoidance of animal-based food), and alcohol to stay physically and mentally healthy.<sup>7</sup> It is worth remembering that consumption of right food minimizes the need for medicine else medicine becomes the food. Such habits enhance our self-control to avoid unworthy activities. WHO had analyzed that vegetarians were least affected by COVID-19.

The seven abstinences (avoidance of bad habits) directs us to avoid i. going to unworthy places and ii. socially undesirable activities. In the present case it implies not going to places inflicted with COVID-19 or being involved with people identified as inflicted by the same.

The daily obligatory duties remind us of our inherent nature so that we avoid evil thoughts that lead to evil activities during the day.

In the present scenario, these observances guide us to contribute to the wellness of others through charity, social service (*tapa*) as well. Auto suggestions (*bhāvanās*) and prayers do play an important role in enhancing our adherence to worthy acts. The prayer 'Merī Bhāvanā' is very effective in bringing positive emotional change in us. The English translation of last two stanzas of this popular Jain prayer give directions in daily activities of both.

May distress and suffering no longer exist and may it rain on time;  
 May the king be righteously inclined and do justice to all his subjects;  
 May the diseases, epidemics and famine cease to spread and exist;  
 May Ahimsā pervade the entire universe and bring benevolence to all. (10)

May mutual love spread throughout the world and delusion stay at a distance from all;  
 May no one use harsh, bitter and unpleasant words from their mouths;  
 May everyone become the hero of his time and work for the progress of his country;  
 May all understand the true nature of entities/substances and hence become tolerant of all sorts of pains inflicted. (11)

## 2. For abnormal and difficult situations:

We need to further enhance our health by stricter observance of the institution of five minor vows to be able to face problems caused by sickness or such eventualities to self or family members spread of some epidemic. Table.1: D1 gives such direction in this regard. These imply that we become more careful and exercise greater self-restraint by compulsorily avoiding the five sins which significantly reduce the purity/health of soul. We do this by accepting limits on committing violence in our professional, domestic and social activities to avoid social and legal reprimand as well. These minor vows encourage us to practice greater carefulness and restraint in our own activities as well as our interactions with others to simultaneously enhance our own and others health as well.

As examples, in the present pandemic situation, these minor vows direct us (i) to stay calm, contented and healthy by minimizing our contacts with regular friends and associates and use implements (like *muhapaṭṭī*) while venturing to meet them, ii. to limit our possessions and consumption and share the surplus with the needy. Hence, we become better prepared to face the onslaught of COVID-19 and help others in need of our services.

## 3. For extraordinary situations:

Like natural calamities or pandemic like COVID-19, the above observances are to be made more stringent to become healthier (physical, mental and spiritual). Observance of Enhancing vows (Table.1: D.2) and Training vows (Table D.3) are advised along with steps indicated in 1 and 2 above.

*Guṇavratas*: *Digvrata* directs us to limit our directional movements and activities in a limited area, *anarthadaṇḍavrata* refrains us from unwanted or useless activities, and *bhogopabhoga parimāṇa vrata* directs us to limit possessions or avoid hoarding of durables and consumables and share the same with needy.

*Sikṣāvratas*: Restraining activities to home - *deśāvakāśika vrata* or even to isolated place - *proṣadhopavāsa*, spend as much time to contemplate on self and profession-*sāmāyika*, and render services to others - *vaiyāvṛtya/atithisamvibhāga*.

In the present scenario of COVID-19, we are advised to stay aloof by restricting our movements within our home, avoid physical contact with others, put extreme restrictions on our consumption and storage of durables and consumable items and share surplus so generated for the welfare of others. We should spend as much time spared by staying at home or isolated places as possible to enhance our spiritual, mental and physical health and familial interactions. Fortunately, technologies like ZOOM, WhatsApp, Skype and Google, enable us to perform most of our activities like banking, contacting people for social and professional interactions and even religious activities from home itself.

For the senior citizens amongst us and the those with a history of diseases like heart, diabetes, stress etc, they need to be extra careful and develop as much as possible detachment with family friends and worldly possessions/activities. Jain doctrine talks of this as opportune time to observe *niyama sallekhanā*<sup>8</sup> i.e. thinning the tainted emotions (*kaṣāyas*) till the Corona threat is over. It implies ‘Giving up of the body in a manner that upholds righteousness (*dharma*) on the occurrence of a calamity, famine, old-age, or disease, from which there is no escape, is called the vow of voluntary, passionless death (*sallekhanā*) by the Most Learned sages is advised.’ (Table.1: F). This implies, the people in this category have to develop an attitude of detachment, substantially reduce intake of wrong foods though gradually, spend more time praying, contemplations and self-study and share their experiences with youngsters in the family.

#### 4. **Penance:**

Simultaneous observance of penance (Table.1: E) with appropriate severity along with above observances is recommended to make them more effective in enhancing our own health, particularly spiritual and mental. These help to cleanse our soul, mind and body from accumulated or residual deterrents like bad karmas/ infection, worries and anxieties thereby enabling us to enjoy greater energy of the soul to be happier.

<b>Table.1</b>		
<b>Institution of vows in Jainism for minimizing sins and enhancing spiritual purification</b>		
<b>Notes:</b> Objective Minimise violence by adopting an attitude of carefulness ( <i>samitis</i> ) and restraint ( <i>guptis</i> ) in all physical, mental and vocal activities. Basis is equality of all living beings and living beings help each other		
S.No	Name & Brief description	Remarks
A	<b>Primary virtues:</b> Not to consume meat, intoxicants, honey and infested fruits and practice minor vows	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakaḥcāra</i> 66.
B	<b>Seven abstinences / vyasana:</b> Gambling, prostitution, hunting, harsh punishments, harshness in speech, consuming intoxicants, misappropriation of other's property	<i>Samaṇa Suttaṃ</i> 303
C	<b>Daily obligatory duties / āvaśyakas:</b> Veneration of deity/ <i>devapūjā</i> , veneration of holy teacher/ <i>gurupūjā</i> , self-study/ <i>svādhyāya</i> , self-restraint/ <i>saṃyama</i> , penance/ <i>tapa</i> , charity/ <i>dāna</i> .	Padmanandi's <i>Pañcaviṃśati</i> V.2
D.1	<b>Minor vows / aṇuvratas:</b> <i>Prāṇātipāta viramaṇa</i> , <i>satya</i> /speaking the truth, <i>asteya</i> /non-stealing, <i>svadāra santoṣa</i> /celibacy, <i>parigraha parimāṇa</i> /Limiting possessions	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakaḥcāra</i> 49.
D2.	<b>Enhancing vows / guṇavratas:</b> Limiting directions of activities/ <i>digvrata</i> , avoid wasteful activities/ <i>anarthadaṇḍavrata</i> , limiting possession of consumable and durable articles/ <i>bhogopabhoga parimāṇa</i>	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakaḥcāra</i> 67.
D.3	<b>Training vows / śikṣāvratas:</b> Restraining activities to close proximity/ <i>deśāvakāśika vrata</i> , periodic contemplations/ <i>sāmāyika</i> , fasting and self-study in holy place/ <i>proṣadhopavāsa</i> , to prepare for higher attainments or prepare ascetic life or service the venerable / <i>vaiyāvṛtya</i> or <i>atithisaṃvibhāga</i>	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakaḥcāra</i> 91.
E	<b>Tapa /austerities:</b> To burn bonded karmas associated with soul	
E.1	<b>External:</b> Fasting, eating less than normal, avoid a specific taste daily, restrictions in seeking food, lonely habitation, mortification of body.	<i>Tattvārtha Sūtra</i> , IX.19
E.2	<b>Internal:</b> Expiation/ <i>prāyascita</i> (include self-criticism, repentance, resolution not to repeat mistakes), humility/ <i>vinaya</i> , service the respectable/ <i>vaiyāvṛtya</i> ,self-study/ <i>svādhyāya</i> , renunciation / <i>vyutsarga</i> (to give up anger, arrogance, greed; family attachments, physical possessions etc), meditation/ <i>dhyāna</i> etc.	<i>Tattvārtha Sūtra</i> , IX.20
F	<b>Sallekhanā:</b> Practiced by reducing enmity, affection, feeling of mine, worldly possessions and seek forgiveness from all and criticizes his tainted emotions ( <i>kaṣāyas</i> )for wrong doings first, he accepts major vows ( <i>mahāvratas</i> ) instead of minor vows ( <i>aṇuvratas</i> ). He gradually reduces his food intake, stays at one place and increases his contemplations and self-study.	<i>Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakaḥcāra</i> 122-125.

## Conclusion

Interpretation of Jain doctrine and ethics with respect to our life style to cope with the extraordinary situation created by pandemic COVID-19 imply committing absolutely minimal violence by consuming minimal nonviolent food, exercising extreme care and restraint in our activities, withdrawing from unnecessary activities and focus on strengthening our spiritual, physical mental states by enhancing our belief system, knowledge about self, profession, family and society first. We do so by making firm resolution, isolating ourselves more and more from external world as much as possible and exercise self-restraint or by making our lifestyle practices more stringent. This implies that we move from being an ordinary lay householder to *pāksika* (gross votary)-*naiṣṭhika* (model votary)-*sādhaka* (seeker votary) householder, similar to graduating from primary school to middle school to secondary school, i.e. move up from practicing abstinences to daily obligatory duties, minor vows-enhancing vows-training vows, penance and *niyama sallekhanā* effectively by isolating ourselves from others, spend as much time as possible to eliminate our worries, adopt right eating habits, minimizing consumption and hoarding/possession and sharing the surplus with needy, enhancing our knowledge both spiritual and professional, performing penance and service to others to have a WIN WIN situation for all.

## Notes and References:

- <sup>1</sup> “*dhammo maṅgala mukhkhīṭṭaṃ ahimsā sañjamo tavo.....*”, *Daśavaikālikasūtra*.1.
- <sup>2</sup> *Paramātma Prakāśa* 112-114.
- <sup>3</sup> “*utpādayayadhrauvyayuktaṃ sat*”, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 5/29.
- <sup>4</sup> “*samyakdarśanañānacāritrāṇi mokṣamārgaḥ*”, *Ibid*: 1/1.
- <sup>5</sup> “*śraddhānaṃ paramārthānāmāptāgamatapobhrtām/ trimūḍhāpodhamaṣṭāṅgaṃ samyagdarśanamasmayam/*” *Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakācāra* 4.
- <sup>6</sup> The eight limbs of *sammatta* (*samyak darśana*): *Niḥsaṅkita*, *niṣāṅkita*, *nirvicikitsā*, *amūḍhadṛṣṭi*, *upabr̥haṇa/upagūhana*, *sthitikaraṇa*, *vātsalya*, and *prabhāvanā*. For detail see *Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakācāra* 11-18 and *Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya* 23-30.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakācāra* mentions primary virtues at the beginning of Minor vows as the text is dedicated to a votary/*śrāvaka*.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakācāra*.122; For details, see “*Bhaktpratyaḅhyāna*” in *Mulācāra* 112-114.

# Pandemic and Akartāvāda

Pragya Jain\* & Sayyam Jain†

## Introduction

“The term pandemic has been used most commonly to describe diseases that are new, or at least associated with novel variants of existing organisms.”<sup>1</sup> If there is to go by this definition, the world is always clueless as to how to handle the spread of a new disease of pandemic stature or what to “do” when such a situation arises.

The outbreak of a pandemic ensues vast changes in lives and lifestyles. The governments enforce strict laws to combat spreading the disease and encourage basic hygiene. People are asked to stay indoors, work from home and practice habit rehabilitation. The World Health Organisation (WHO) released a set of guidelines to avoid the contraction of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) or sustain the survival from it.<sup>2</sup> In fact, WHO had released a detailed set of interim guidelines in 2007 which advises people to take multiple precautions if and when a pandemic occurs.<sup>3</sup> Despite warnings and precautions, the year of 2020 saw lacs of deaths by a virus and infection prevention and control of epidemic proved to be out of hands. While the happenings remain literally out of hands, *akartāvāda* steps in making one relieved of Doership.

This paper would discuss how a pandemic causes incontrollable psycho-social mayhem and how a simple concept of Jain philosophy brings peace with it. Divided in three parts, the paper would present the behaviour of people while pandemic grips the world; the principle of *akartāvāda* (non-doership) with its three ideologies; and the theory of *Kramabaddha Paryāya* which supports *akartāvāda* in relation with the five essential factors in any action to take place. The objective of the paper is to establish *akartāvāda* as the solution to the global problem of pandemic panic.

## I

### Pandemic

Various publications like *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene* (an online journal) told stories of the infected patients spreading the Spanish Flu (1918) across countries and also the stories of experiments with the measures being taken to put a stop on the spread. Despite the measures, the Spanish Flu killed millions of people across the world leaving everyone affected in some or the other manner. People remained scared, baffled, lost and depressed.

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There may be severe disruptions of routines, separation from family and friends, shortages of food and medicine, wage loss, social isolation due to quarantine or other social distancing programs, and school closure...During the Spanish Flu, for example, merchants suffered hardship because of staff absenteeism and because shoppers were either too ill or too frightened to venture out to the stores. The personal financial impact of a pandemic can be as severe and stressful as the infection itself, especially for people who are already experiencing financial hardship.<sup>4</sup>

The efforts to combat the Spanish Flu started with closing the public places, cleaning the streets, banning crowds outside shops and limiting the number of passengers on public transport. However, the paper opined that they did not prove to be very effective. Distribution of free soaps, providing clean water, regulation of toilets, inspection of milk and other food products, forbidding spitting on the streets, voluntary or mandatory quarantine and collection of corpses were few measures taken while no effective vaccines or antivirals were available.<sup>5</sup>

It is necessary to note that people tried to “do” several things during the pandemics across centuries but apparently their actions were futile. Despite taking precautions like social distancing, wearing masks and washing hands could not avert the contraction. Also, the mental health of people went downwards as many people in India resorted to committing suicide as they could not handle the aftermath of Covid-19.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the Oxford researchers are conversing that a vaccine is not required to eradicate Coronavirus but a little patience is, as it will die down on its own.<sup>7</sup> Here, it would be interesting to see common behaviour of people during a pandemic:

### **1. Pandemic Psychology**

Scholars realise that actions are not enough to come out of the drudgery caused by a pandemic. People have to modify the mindsets to keep the emotional quotient in check. The psychological effect of a pandemic is greater than the fatal harm.

*Epidemic psychology can, thus, only be conquered when new routines and assumptions which deal directly with the epidemic are firmly in place, a process which requires collective as well as individual action.*<sup>8</sup>

Whether due to job loss, financial crisis or uncertain future, people got into depression and hopelessness during Covid-19, like during all the previous pandemics. There have been only few trends being followed to fight the battle against the disease.

### **2. Measures to Combat Distress**

Apart from the government enforcing embargo on public movement and the medical councils releasing instructions for habit rehabilitations, a number of measures were taken to prepare individuals and societies to avoid the distress during and post Covid-19. Outbreak of the pandemic brought serious changes in people’s lifestyles:

**a) Yoga**

Many people resorted to Yoga to combat the stress and inactivity caused by staying indoors. Ministry of AYUSH released guidelines for Yoga practitioners stating “Yoga may play significant role in the psycho-social care and rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients in quarantine and isolation. They are particularly useful in allaying their fears and anxiety.”<sup>9</sup> Gayathri Menon recommends *Yog Nidrā* to be included in changing lifestyles.<sup>10</sup> Although it helps staying physically active, calming mind and balancing energy flow, it cannot yet help in becoming stress-free. The mind is still working towards purposely “doing” physical activity, “making” the mind calm and “letting” the energies flow in harmony. How can one stay relieved while “doing” something?

**b) E-learning Platforms**

The world evolves manifold during pandemics. A chapter in the CBSE English textbook of Class IX imagined a world without schools in a building but schools on the computers.<sup>11</sup> The concept came alive and the schools operated through online classes in the year 2020. Although the reasoning was not to become advanced but to keep the teaching-learning process going, the practice also gave ideas to parents about home-schooling. Adding to the troubles, the increased screen time of children caused several physical issues.

**c) Superstitions**

One can never tell when superstitions creep inside an individual’s mind. Evidently, praying to the almighty to get rid of the pandemic reached its heights as people in some parts of India took to worshipping the Corona goddess and offering food to its effigy. People also offered their prayers at river *Yamuna* for she is the sister of *Yama*, the god of death. Moreover, some political leaders arranged a cow urine party saying the disease is a punishment by nature for eating non-vegetarian food.<sup>12</sup> All this “done” in April, the number of Covid-19 cases had risen to more than 12 lacs in India by July 2020.

**II****Akartāvāda**

The principle of Non-doership (*akartāvāda*) in Jain philosophy propels the idea of “doing” out of the window. It states that all happenings are pre-determined and are bound to happen, and that there is nothing a man can do about it. The principle of *Kramabaddha Paryāya* (Sequence Bound Modifications) states that modifications are inherent in the working of the universe. “It does not stand in need of any non-self-element in this process of change for nature of a substance is not at all dependent on others.”<sup>13</sup>

There are various examples to support the theory of *akartāvāda*. According to one of the instances, Lord Ādinātha had foretold the future events of his grandson Mārīci’s life. Nobody can question the truth in the story after these many years when all the happenings have taken place. Mārīci had not attracted the *karma* yet, while Lord Ādinātha already predicted his future. Hence, there is no doubt in the pre-determinism of the happenings.<sup>14</sup>

But the theory also keeps the sentient being (*jīva*) in the position of a creator in the sense that he cannot alter the fixed course of operation, but due to the inherent powers of the substances, he remains the creator of his own modifications.<sup>15</sup>

As all modifications are sequence bound, the theory extends itself to three ideologies:

- a) God is not the doer of the modifications of any substance
- b) A sentient being is not the doer of the modifications of another
- c) A sentient being cannot alter the modifications of his own

The first ideology rules out the idea of an omnipotent being who governs the worldly happenings or modifications. In Jain philosophy, God is considered to be an omniscient being who sees and knows everything with their past and future modifications. He does not keep a tab of people's karma neither has any interference in people's joy or sufferings.

The 300-year old popular text *Mokṣamārgaprakāśaka* proves that God cannot be a *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* or *Maheśa* (creator, administrator or destroyer) and that believing otherwise is false belief (*mithyātva*). The text argues that the trio does not have a valid reason or a plausible process to create, administer or destroy the worldly beings, therefore they cannot cause joy or suffering to anyone.<sup>16</sup>

*Samayasāra* exponentially states that the knower cannot be doer.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the omniscient cannot be omnipotent.<sup>18</sup> It is reasonably apt that passions in a sentient being actually surface due to matter (*pudgala*), and no one can modify the happenings of matter for it is a different substance. Therefore, God can only be omniscient, and not omnipotent.

The western researchers have gone to an extent saying that Jainism believes in a “founding figure” who only re-discovers or re-initiates the eternal truth through the beginning-less time.<sup>19</sup> With this ideology, they realise that God wishfully<sup>20</sup>, omnipotently or instrumentally<sup>21</sup> cannot save people during pandemics no matter how much one worships him. Faith gives strength to a person, but it cannot bring changes in the nature or reality.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, this particular argument that God does not interfere in world's happenings or that he does not modify the pre-determined sequence of substances isolates Jain philosophy from the rest of the Indian or western philosophies.<sup>23</sup> It also releases the burden from the shoulders of God to be the creator. It, thus, means that the one who realises that he does not have to “do” anything feels relieved and can attain eternal happiness.

The second ideology allows the sentient being to remain free from modifying other sentient beings or non-sentient substances. One person cannot help the other person in any way because a sentient being is just the knower, and not the doer in that matter. With reference to the conventional point of view, a sentient being is only the doer of his own *karma* while he cannot modify the *karma* of another sentient being. Like if army win the battle, the king gets all the credit despite remaining absent from the war front.<sup>24</sup> This ideology refers that if a person is

destined to be victim of a pandemic, blaming the government or anyone else for that matter is inappropriate and worthless.

The third ideology digs deeper and makes one dependence-free and self-driven. It points out that *karma* is matter and a sentient being does not enjoy the fruits of it.<sup>25</sup> Whether the person realises himself as a detached self or not, it is the eternal truth that he cannot alter his own passions or delusions. He is, apparently, only a knower of his passions, *karma* and their fruits. Also, if *karma* and the sentient being are the cause of each other's destiny, *karma* should also feel the passions.<sup>26</sup> But it doesn't work that way. In fact, a sentient being cannot be one with his own passions which releases him with the doership of his feelings, emotions and causing *karma* in turn. This ideology of Jain philosophy helps those who have to go through pandemic in getting rid of the negativity and staying at the bank of the river while watching the emotions coming and going. Zero involvement in a thing helps in feeling light and relieved.

### III

#### **Krambaddha Paryāya**

The Jain philosophy staunchly puts forth the idea that all the happenings are fixed in the timeline. While establishing the fact that God is omniscient, it is also clear that God has seen the past and the future of everyone as he professes openly about them.<sup>27</sup> It makes people free of the burden of rectifying their past and building upon their future. The whole exercise of “doing” is futile and staying in the moment brings ultra-relief.

It is said that 608 sentient beings attain salvation in every six months and eight moments.<sup>28</sup> When this rule is pre-determined and there cannot be any modification to it, people try to get into those 608 beings of current cycle. When the number of people is fixed, a particular being's chance is also fixed. Realising this makes it easier to stay in the present.<sup>29</sup> Also, when the omniscient has seen the future of all sentient beings, no deity or super power can alter the future; and those who believe in this fact are wise while the dubious are fool.<sup>30</sup>

There are five factors (five *samavāya*) in Jain philosophy that support the above theory.<sup>31</sup> These five are essentially present while any action takes place:

- a) *Svabhāva*: All substances have the strength to modify themselves according to their true nature, like one can extract oil from sesame seeds and not sand.
- b) *Puruṣārtha*: Utility of the strength is required to get the action done, like the strength of the sesame seeds is utilised while extracting oil from it.
- c) *Kāla-labdhi*: The right time of that act taking place is pre-determined, like when exactly will the oil be extracted from the sesame seeds.
- d) *Bhavitavya*: The act, which is able to be done, only gets done, like oil will be extracted from the sesame seeds from the first sack while the second sack waits for its turn later.
- e) *Nimitta*: There is always something that does not become the oil itself but takes the blame of the whole process, like the machine that helps in the extraction of oil.

Similarly, a pandemic has its nature to occur, it utilises its full force to take place, there was a particular time for it to occur, it was bound to take place and the natural circumstances that caused its spread were also pre-determined.

## Conclusion

No one could deny the stress factor during or post a pandemic. Taken all the measures, there is nothing that could put a full stop to the epidemic miasma. Neither the governments nor the healthcare facilities nor the almighty himself could help people avoid the dreadful domino-effect of a pandemic including widespread emotional distress and social disorder. The key to happiness is the acceptance of non-doership – of both God and of the sentient being. Accepting the theory and remaining *sahaja* (indifferent) is the key to survive any pandemic. The five essential factors that play active role in any act being done also does not require interference which makes one free and relieved. The principle of *akartāvāda* releases the burden from one's shoulders of "doing" anything. It makes one realise that he can only "know" what is happening and stay aloof from the panic of a pandemic.

## Notes and References:

- <sup>1</sup> Morens, David M. et al. "What is Pandemic?" *The Journal of Infectious Diseases* 200.7 (2009): 1018-1021. doi: 10.1086/644537.
- <sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. "Coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) advice for the public." *who.int*. 4 June 2020. Web. 5 September 2020.  
<<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>>.
- <sup>3</sup> Silva, Carmem L Pessoa and Wing-Hong Seto. Ed. "Infection prevention and control of epidemic-and pandemic-prone acute respiratory diseases in health care (WHO Interim Guidelines)." *World Health Organization*, June 2007. Web. 5 September 2020.  
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- <sup>4</sup> Taylor, Steven. *The Psychology of Pandemics*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2019: 5-6.
- <sup>5</sup> Martini, M. et al. "The Spanish Influenza Pandemic: a lesson from history 100 years after 1918." *Journal of Preventive Medicine and Hygiene* 60.1 (2019): E64-E47. doi:10.15167/2421-4248/jpmh2019.60.1.1205.
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- <sup>7</sup> "Oxford researches feel Covid-19 pandemic will end on its own; won't need a vaccine." *Times of India*. *timesofindia.com* 4 July 2020. Web. 7 September 2020.  
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- <sup>8</sup> Strong, Philip. "Epidemic Psychology: A Model." *Sociology of Health & Illness* 12.3 (1990): 258.
- <sup>9</sup> *Guidelines for Yoga Practitioners for COVID-19*. New Delhi: Ministry of Ayush, Government of India. Web. 10 September 2020.  
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<<https://www.hindustantimes.com/fitness/yoga-to-the-rescue-in-this-lockdown/story-J3uaUAjRxbBCDg0xVIgkIM.html>>.

- <sup>11</sup> This chapter portrays future where children are home-schooled and are taught by robots. They have never been to a building called “school” and have never read a “real” book made of paper. Asimov, Isaac. “The Fun They Had.” *Beehive: Textbook in English for Class IX*. New Delhi: National Council of Education Research and Training, 2014.
- <sup>12</sup> FP Staff. “Coronavirus Outbreak: debunking superstition, social media rumours and challenging unscientific temperament need of hour.” *Firstpost*. firstpost.com 26 March 2020. Web. 5 September 2020. <<https://www.firstpost.com/india/coronavirus-outbreak-debunking-superstition-social-media-rumours-and-challenging-unscientific-temperament-need-of-hour-8192461.html>>.
- <sup>13</sup> Bharill, Hukam Chand. *Krambaddha Paryāya*. Trans. Manoharlal Jain. Jaipur: Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust, 1987: 89.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid: 32.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid: 91.
- <sup>16</sup> Todarmal. *Mokṣamārgaparakāśaka*. Jaipur: Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust, 2017: 99.
- <sup>17</sup> “rāyā khu ṇiggado tti ya eso balasamudayassa ādeso/ vavahāreṇa du vuccadi tattheḷko ṇiggado rāyā//”, *Samayasāra* 47.
- <sup>18</sup> Some justify omnipotence of God as a creator with a bodily form so that he can create the world. The counter-argument given by Ācārya Vidyānandi states that the one with body is wandering in the world with karma and is lack of complete knowledge, therefore he cannot be the creator of the world. Instead, God has realised complete knowledge, therefore he is omniscient; and he is free of karma (hence free of body) and therefore he is not omnipotent. See: *Āptaparīkṣā* 21-24.
- <sup>19</sup> Jeffery D. Long stated: “Lord Mahāvīra is just the re-discoverer of Jainism as he was the 24<sup>th</sup> in the lineage of the current era, and that there have been uncountable eras in past.” Long, Jeffery D. *Jainism, An Introduction*. New York: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2010: 29.
- <sup>20</sup> “na cecchāsaktirīśasya karmābhāve’pi yuḷyate/ tadicchā vā’nabhivḷyaktā kriyāhetuḷ kuto’jñavat//”, *Āptaparīkṣā* 12.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid 31-34.
- <sup>22</sup> “dehāntarātsvadehasya vidhāne cānavasthitiḷ/ tathā ca prakṛtaṃ kāryaṃ kuryādīśo na jātucit//”, Ibid 20.
- <sup>23</sup> *Samayasāra* 321-323.
- <sup>24</sup> “jodhehi kade juddhe rāyeṇa kadaṃ tti jamḷpade logo/ taha vavahāreṇa kadaṃ ṇāṇāvaraṇādi jīveṇa//”, Ibid 106.
- <sup>25</sup> “ede acedaṇā khalu poggalakammudayasambhavā jamḷhā/ te jadi karanti kammaṃ ṇa vi teṃsi vedago ādā//”, Ibid 111.
- <sup>26</sup> “jīvassa du kammaṇa ya saha pariṇāmaḷ du hoṃti rāgādī/ evaṃ jīvo kammaṃ ca do vi rāgādīmāvaṇṇā// ekassa du pariṇāmo jāyadi jīvassa rāgamādīhim/ tākammodayahedūhi viṇā jīvassa pariṇāmo//”, Ibid 137-138.
- <sup>27</sup> “takkāligeva savve, sadsabbhūdā hi pajjayā tāsim/ vaṭṭante te ṇāṇe, viśesado davva-jādīṇam//”, *Pravacanasāra* 37. “jadi paccakkha majādam, pajjāyam palayidam ca ṇāṇassa/ na havadi vā tam ṇāṇam, divvam ti hi ke parūventi//”, Ibid 39.
- <sup>28</sup> Todarmal. *Mokṣamārgaparakāśaka*. Jaipur: Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust, 2017: 301.
- <sup>29</sup> Bharill, Hukam Chand. Op. cit. *Kramaniyamita Paryāya* 57.
- <sup>30</sup> *Kārtikeyānuprekṣa* 321-323.
- <sup>31</sup> Jain, Abhay Kumar. *Krambaddha Paryāya: Nirdeśikā*. Jaipur: Pandit Todarmal Smarak Trust, 2003: 120.

# Practical Jainism & Pandemic

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## Introduction

The whole mankind is undergoing through an eternal journey from bondage (suffering) to liberation. In this eternal journey mankind has to experience different ups and downs, pitfalls, sufferings, pains and sacrifices etc. From time immemorial mankind has been facing such epidemic and pandemic problems and conditions and had strived to overcome them through the exertion of their own efforts and labor (*śrama*). Jains do believe in this process of self-effort and striving as a remedy and way out to overcome the epidemic and pandemic troubles of life. They do believe that human effort, labor and striving are the fundamental means to get rid of the bondage of the life cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*) and to reach at the 14<sup>th</sup> stage/level of purification of the soul (*ayogakevalī*)<sup>1</sup> and to establish the soul on the top of the universe by attaining liberation (*mokṣa*) where there is the perpetual bliss or eternal happiness.<sup>2</sup> The present world is undergoing through a critical pandemic stage due to the sudden outbreak of the Covid-19 virus. But what is very much important and fundamental is the striving, exertion of human labor and effort (*śrama*) to get rid of these epidemic and pandemic states, whatever may be the reasons of these panic conditions. Due to such emphasis on the exertion of the human labor and striving (*śrama*) Jainism is well known as the *Śramanic* Religion.<sup>3</sup> No ritual, no religious sacrifice or the grace of any divine being can lead the individual selves towards the attainment of liberation from these epidemic and pandemic conditions and situations. Therefore, the only way out is the great chisel of wisdom or the light of knowledge within (“*Pragya Chaini*”).<sup>4</sup>

So, the pertinent questions are what type of human effort should be exerted? What should be the nature of striving in the process of overcoming those epidemic and pandemic stages? What are the guidelines given by the Jain adherents? How far they are relevant in the present time to overcome the epidemic and the pandemic status quo? How far they are practicable in the present scenario?

## Applied Jainism and Pandemic

The Jain applied ethics is indeed very practical in regulating the human lives, their day to day conduct in a righteous direction and to make human life and conduct meaningful and fruitful. Through a critical analysis and observation of the Jain social ethics, code of conduct, lifestyle, the socio-ethical principles of the Jain religion and philosophy, we may come across different indications which are very much relevant as safety precaution and measurement to combat with the pandemic situations such as the present outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. In fact, the Jain ethical principles and code of conduct constitute a universal lifestyle for the

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whole global human society. Perhaps we were in a greener and happier earth if we have followed the Jain world view. The *Śukla Leśyā*<sup>5</sup> state of the soul and mind as depicted in the Jain world view<sup>6</sup> is the guideline to follow by every individual for the better future and the greener earth. Approximately 2500 years before Bhagavāna Mahāvīra advocated a lifestyle for the individual in society which seems to be still relevant for the whole mankind. At the very foundation of this lifestyle was the universal virtue of non-violence (*ahimsā*). This non-violence derives from their metaphysics of the world where among the seven categories (*tattva*) of the world,<sup>7</sup> two categories may be regarded as the most important i.e. Soul (*jīva*) and Non-soul Substance (*ajīva*). From the very beginning of their philosophical standpoint we can observe a respectful position and compassionate acceptance of the two separate categories. And this standpoint rules out the terroristic thought of the acquisition of the one by the other. I think, from this metaphysical standpoint springs the virtue of non-violence and it also answers the legitimate question why the Jains talk about the observance of the virtue of non-violence (*ahimsā*). Therefore, understanding the Jain metaphysics of the world is very much important for the understanding of their standpoint regarding the moral values and virtues.

The elements of the virtue of non-violence can be found in another metaphysical postulation i.e. multiple sidedness of the reality.<sup>8</sup> The whole universe is constituted by innumerable numbers of atoms (*puṅgava*) and innumerable individual selves (*jīva*). Each soul and matter possess infinite characteristics or qualities. From the practical view point the ordinary finite human beings can know only a few qualities of the objects. Therefore, all the views regarding the reality of the ordinary human beings are true from the practical point of view.<sup>9</sup> This flexible standpoint made the Jain to be non-violent in their practical outlooks. Every men's viewpoints are respectfully accepted as partially true, although not absolutely. Here, lies also the secrets of the virtues of non-violent and respectful acceptance of others positions and viewpoints. The mechanism of respectful and non-violent judgement if accepted by every individual in the world, the possibility of any future pandemic condition would be ruled out from the future history of mankind. Therefore, we may proclaim that although the humankind is undergoing through a particular critical pandemic condition, the metaphysical standpoint of the relativity of judgement hinder the possibility of any future pandemic situation and it can help to rest the mankind in a peaceful world. The seeds of the virtue of compassion can also be found to exist in this metaphysics of judgement of relativity. Therefore, instead of focusing our attention to the present pandemic condition due to COVID-19 virus, attention rather should be focused on the possibility of any future pandemic situation and precaution should be taken against them at present. The Jain metaphysical standpoint of the relativity of judgement can therefore be taken as the measurement and weapon against all that future pandemic situation of the humankind. It is not the absolutist standpoint but the relativistic standpoint which can lead the mankind towards the virtue and value of non-violence, equal respect and compassion for others which are very much necessary for the peaceful co-existence of the mankind.

If the modern world would have respectfully accepted the distinct position and equal share of the others' holdings and belongings, then there would not have any kind of pandemic

situation in the world. Violence and terrorism are due to the evil thought of the forceful acquisition of others belongs and holdings. By preaching strict adherence to the values of non-violence and respect and compassion for others, the Jain philosophy of the world succeeded in cutting the very root of any violence and conveying a universal message to the whole world. The whole mankind would not have suffered by the COVID-19 pandemic if they would have followed the Jain teachings and moral values and virtues. By overlooking the virtue of non-killing of any living being, man has chosen the non-vegetarian food habit. So far as we know that the COVID-19 virus spread from its natural host reservoir 'bat'. Scientists also proclaim that bat is the natural host of lots of viruses. As a result, until man undertakes the vegetarian food habit, there is an ample chance to be infected by them in future also. There are other animals and birds also which are the natural reservoir of different kinds of bacteria and virus. The non-vegetarian food habit therefore not only contains a greater risk, but also against the virtue of non-violence. Since even a miniature animal contains soul and has the potentiality of getting liberation, so the sole responsibility of the whole mankind is to follow the virtue of non-violence. '*Live and let live*'<sup>10</sup> should be the motto of all the individuals. The Jain vegetarian food habit has another implication with reference to the global warming. If people would take non-vegetarian food habit, there would be the requirement to raise more and more animals. On 2006 the UN has shown that animal husbandry for food produces more greenhouse gases than all the cars and trucks in the world combined.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, meat industries are the most significant causes of the environmental pollution and of the global warming. To come out of this environmental degradation, the duty of the whole mankind is to follow the Jain vegetarian food-habit. The mankind has to avoid injury both to the four kinds of mobile (*trasa*) and the five kinds of the immobile (*sthāvara*) beings as far as possible and thereby practice the high value of non-violence (*ahimsā*).

With regard to the principle of non-violence to the air-bodied immobile beings like virus, bacteria and other water bodied, earth-bodied immobile beings, the Jain prescribed five different sub-principles (*Pañca Samiti*).<sup>12</sup> The *iryā* and the *ādāna-nikṣepaṇa* which are very important among the five sub-principles of the Jain ethical code, enjoin that every individual has to be very cautious while walking so that the subtle creatures are not endangered and also that they have to be cautious while breathing so that no such creature may be killed by entering into the mouth or nose.<sup>13</sup> For these two purposes individuals have to use special footwear or walk bare foot and must use mask (*muhapaṭṭī*). Therefore, Jainism is the first religion to prescribe the use of masks. We may co-relate our present pandemic situation with the Jain principles of *iryā* and the *ādāna-nikṣepaṇa samiti* which prescribe the use of mask. Today mask force is the only weapon in hand of the individuals to combat with the Covid-19 virus. Therefore, besides undertaking the vegetarian food habit, using mask is another strong weapon for the mankind in future. The motto of using masks by ourselves although serves the purpose of saving our own lives from the infection of different life taking viruses, but the Jain practice of using masks has further rational purpose besides the above i.e. the observance of the principle of non-violence towards the smallest unseen air-bodied creatures, the killing of which will attract fresh *Karmic* particles (*pudgala*) into the individual selves and which in turn may cause the bondage (*bandha*) of the individual soul into the cycle of birth and death called *samsāra*.

Nevertheless, the *eṣaṇā samiti* also prescribes the manner of taking food. No individual should have the food prepared and meant only to serve the purpose of his own self.<sup>14</sup> It also prescribes that proper cautions should be taken regarding cleanliness of the food and sanitation in the process of preparation of food. Proper cleanliness and sanitation of the food is a means to avoid harm not only to one's own self due to viruses and bacteria and other poisonous germs which may be present in the food, but it is also a means to stop violence towards those viruses and bacteria or other air and water bodied creatures. Therefore, this Jain sub-principle (*eṣaṇā samiti*) is another important weapon to prevent any pandemic condition arising due to different germs, viruses and bacteria etc. Moreover, it helps the individuals to observe the virtue of non-violence and thereby to stop the fruition and influx of fresh karma into the soul (*saṁvara*).

All the Jain ethical principles, sub-principles, codes of conduct, rules and norms are meant to elevate the mankind from carelessness (*pramatta*) to the level of carefulness (*apramatta*). Therefore, Jain ethics is very much practical and applied one. Rather it can be best described as the care ethics which teaches the humanity to be careful in their conducts and actions in order to elevate himself to the 14<sup>th</sup> stage of the purification of the soul (*ayogakevalī*) by overcoming all the hindrances, pitfalls, pains and sufferings in the form of epidemic or pandemic. The Jain texts like the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* (5<sup>th</sup> Century BC), the *Niśītha Sūtra* (3<sup>rd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> Century BC), the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, the *Gommatasāra Sūtra* by Nemichandra (10 century AD), the *Srāvaka-Prajñāpti* by Haribhadra (7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Century AD) etc. teach the humanity about the journey from *pramatta* to *apramatta* through the purification of the thought, speech and conduct. It is worthy to mention that most of the earlier canonical texts promoted the value of carefulness and prohibited the use of any medical help, since medical treatment and production of medicine involve violence directly or indirectly to different germs, bacteria, viruses and other sentient microorganisms. Due to the strict adherence and practice of non-violence (*ahimsā*), the earlier canonical texts were against the use and production of medicine and practice of medical treatment. For example, the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* asserts that although the doctors may appear to be wise, they actually perform violence through medical treatments and practices.<sup>15</sup> To quote the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*....“A heretic professes to cure (the love of pleasure), while he kills, cuts, strikes, destroys, chases away, resolves to do what has not been done before. To whom he applies the cure--enough of that fool's affection; or he who has (the cure) applied, is a fool. This does not apply to the houseless. Thus I say.”<sup>16</sup> The *Niśītha Sūtra* prohibits monks from washing or cutting into a wound which would destroy skin microorganisms.<sup>17</sup> While the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* and the *Niśītha Sūtra* strictly prohibits the medicinal practices, the *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* undertakes a middle stance about it and opines that “true monk” as one who foregoes medical care (US 15.8), bears disease (21.18), and “should not long for medical treatment ...[but] search for the welfare of his soul (2.33). Yet, the same text implicitly recognizes that not all monks are capable of this level of restrained ahimsa, stating that a monk cannot practice the vows if sick (11.3), that mendicants should share their food with fellow monks who are ill (15.12), and are permitted to seek food to treat their own illness if needed (26.33).”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, from the above analysis we may proclaim that without seeking the medical treatment to control any epidemic or pandemic situation like the one that has aroused due to the Covid-19 virus, it is

the first duty of the whole mankind to observe the great virtue of carefulness (*apramatta*) which inflicts less violence to the living organisms and therefore is conducive towards the *saṃvara*. It helps to stop the influx (*āsrava*) of the sticky substances (*kaṣāya*) to the soul and hinders its bondage (*bandha*) with the karmic matters (*pudgala*).

Although there are diverse opinions regarding the use of medical treatment in human lives, the Jains like all other religions of the world, do agree in the practice of the meditation as a means to bringing in the harmony in life and society of the human kind. Meditation is an indispensable part of the practical Jainism from the very ancient period of the *tīrthankaras*. In this pandemic COVID-19 situation every human being is in stress, depression, afraid. Different kinds of mental disorders like sleeplessness, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorders, negativity etc. are affecting the life of the whole human beings. As a result, the whole humanity is in a painful condition. Meditation is effective tool to reduce and minimize all those psychical problems in a very fruitful way. Minimization of stress, anxiety, negativity in life and panic attack is very much urgent in the present situation and meditation whether it is through Jain process or any other, is very much fruitful in this regard. The *śukladhyāna* of the *Svetāmbara* tradition is a holistic approach of meditation to connect the individual self with the rest of the world. It provokes the individual self to act as the knower<sup>19</sup> of the harmonious relationship with other human beings, animals and the rest of the nature. The lack of harmonious connectivity of the individual selves with the rest of the world is the cause of different chronic mental disorders. *śukladhyāna* can help the mind and the soul to rest in peace and harmony. It can establish the connectivity of the individual self with the rest of the world and thereby help in the minimization of the stress, anxiety, panic, negativity etc. The *sāmāyikadhyāna*<sup>20</sup> through the scriptural study (*svādhyāya*) of the *Digambara* tradition<sup>21</sup> is another example to reduce psychical disorders. The effectiveness of book reading as a means to minimize the mental disorders and sleeplessness nowadays proved scientifically. Therefore, my proclamation here is that both the *Śvetāmbara* and the *Digambara* traditions have their great contributions in the development of the science of meditation. The following quote from the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* is worthy to mention to substantiate our claim... “Mahavira meditated (persevering) in some posture, without the smallest motion; he mediated in mental concentration (the things) above, below, besides, free from desires. He meditated free from sin and desire, not attached sounds or colours; though still an erring mortal (*Khadmostha*), he wandered about, and never acted carelessly.”<sup>22</sup>

The *śukladhyāna* and the *sāmāyikadhyāna* have social implications also. They are fruitful in bringing about social peace, harmony and equanimity and also in the minimization of the violence, distrust, crime in the society.<sup>23</sup> Since meditation is effective in the psychical transformation of the individual, from violence to non-violence, therefore, it is very much effective in the social transformation also. The *śukladhyāna* and the *sāmāyikadhyāna* make the individual selves more compassionate to other human beings and the other living beings as well.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, we may proclaim that to generate kindness, love, compassion, friendliness and caring attitude in the society, meditation as a whole is immensely fruitful.

## Conclusion

We are in a position to claim strongly that Jainism or the Jain religion has a very practical philosophy. This applied philosophy may be undertaken as a universal guideline to lead the human life and society in a very harmonious way. The applied Jainism can guide not only the life of the ascetics, but also the laity or the common householders in a very just and righteous way. Following the ideals of the practical Jainism may also be effective to overcome the endemic, epidemic and the pandemic problems. In fact, it cuts the very root of such evils in the life and society of the humankind. Its philosophy of the minimization of wants and desires may lead the humanity and the society in a sustainable way. It would not be exaggeration to proclaim that Jainism is an inclusive humanism. It is humanism in the sense that it leads the human selves towards the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*) and it is inclusive for it claims that all living beings or selves have the potentiality to attain liberation. But it emphasizes on the human life because all other selves can attain liberation only being born as a human being. Since all other beings have the potentiality to achieve liberation, therefore, it enjoins the humanity to inculcate the attitude of great compassion (*mahā karuṇā*) towards others. Therefore, Jainism makes a harmonious connection and relation among all the living and non-living beings in the cosmos. It considers all the living and even the non-living beings the member of a large family. The whole cosmos constitutes a single society. Nobody is outside its spheres. Everything has the equal share and right. In fact, such a society is very much desirable and necessary in the post pandemic period of 2020.

## Notes and References:

- <sup>1</sup> Jain, Jayanti Lal. *Essence of Samayasār, A Text on Pure Soul by Acharya Kundakunda*. Chennai: Department of Jainology, University of Madras, 2018: 142-143.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Bhaskar, Bhagchandra Jain. *Jainism and Mahavira*. New Delhi: All India Digambar Jain Heritage Preservation Organisation and International Nigantha Research Institute, 2019: VIII.
- <sup>4</sup> Jain, Jayanti Lal. Op. Cit. 2018: 14-16.
- <sup>5</sup> “A man who abstains from constant thinking about his misery and about sinful deeds, but engages in meditation on the law and truth only, whose mind is at ease, who controls himself, who practises the samitis and guptis, whether he be still subject to passion or free from passion, is calm, and subdues his senses—a man of such habits develops the white *leśyā*” — *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*, 34/31-32.
- <sup>6</sup> Verni, Jinendra. *Saman Suttam*. Ed. Sagarmal Jain. Trans. Justice T. K. Tukol and K. K. Dixit, New Delhi: Bhagwan Mahavir Memorial Samiti, 1993: 197.
- <sup>7</sup> “*jīvājīvāsra-va-bandha-saṃvara-nirjarā-mokṣāstattvam*”, *Tattvārthasūtra* 1/4.
- <sup>8</sup> “*anekāntātmakāmvastvekāntasvarūpānupalabdheḥ*”, *Parīkṣāmukha* 3/85.
- <sup>9</sup> Sharma, Chandradhar. *A Critical Survey of Indian philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2000: 48.
- <sup>10</sup> “*Parasparopagraho jīvānām*”, *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 5/21.
- <sup>11</sup> Vide Food and Agriculture organization of the UN (FAO), FAOSTAT online statistical service (FAO, Rome, 2004)
- <sup>12</sup> “*iryābhāṣaiṣaṇādāna nikṣepaṇa samāhvayā/ pratiṣṭhāpana sajjñāḥ samitayaḥ pañca ceti vai*”, *Mūlācāra Pradīpa* 266.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid: 267-68 & 574-75.
- <sup>14</sup> “*balāyurvṛddhi susvādu, śarīropacāya ca/ tejah krānti sukhādyartham jātu bhūṅkte na saṃyamī*// Ibid: 484.

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- <sup>15</sup> *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1/2/5/94(8).
- <sup>16</sup> Muller, F. Max. ed. *Jaina Sūtras*. Trans. Herman Jacobi (Translated from Prakrit, *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*) Part-I, Book-I, Lecture-II, Lesson-V, Verse-VI. Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1996: 25.
- <sup>17</sup> Stuart, Mari Jyväsjärvi. "Mendicants and Medicine: Ayurveda in Jain Monastic Texts." *History of Science in South Asia* 2 (2014): 68-69.
- <sup>18</sup> Donaldson, Brienne. "Bioethics and Jainism: From Ahimsā to an Applied Ethics of Carefulness." *Religions* 10.4 (2019): 243. doi:10.3390/rel10040243
- <sup>19</sup> Jain, Sagarmal. "The Historical Development of the Yoga Systems and the Impact of Other Yoga Systems on Jaina Yoga." *Yoga in Jainism*. Ed. Christopher Key Chapple. London & New York: Routledge, 2016: 14-28.
- <sup>20</sup> *Sāmāyikadhyaṇa* is a particular religious practice which means the observance of Supreme Equanimity towards all living beings as one's own self. At this meditative stage, the aspirant gets involved in his own pure self and becomes free from all attachments and aversions. Right Vision (*samyak dṛṣṭi*) of the reality helps to attain the Supreme Equanimity.
- <sup>21</sup> Pragma, Samani Pratibha. "Prekṣā Meditation: History and Methods." PhD Thesis. SOAS University of London, UK, 2017: 256.
- <sup>22</sup> Muller, F. Max. ed. *Jaina Sūtras*. Op. cit. Part-I, Book-I, Lecture-8, Lesson-4, Verse-14-15
- <sup>23</sup> Jain, Champat Rai. *The Householder's Dharma: English Translation of the Ratnakaraṇḍa Śrāvakācāra*. Arrah: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917: 44 & 61.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.



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