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Engaging Jainism with Modern Issues

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(ABSTRACTS)

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Advocacy of Animal Rights through Ahimsa and Denial of Animal Testing in Jainism

Samani Shashi Prajna

Jainism originated and developed on the Indian soil containing a profoundly progressive social attitude even in antiquity. Jain thinkers discussed at length how one could protect the environment and save oneself, society, nation and all creatures from natural calamities through non-violence. As violence proceeds from intolerance rooted in ideological absolutism, ahimsa requires a firm foundation for tolerance, a foundation provided by the philosophy of anekānta. The anekānta philosophy can be seen as providing an ontological basis for the principle of non-violence. Jainism can be viewed as transforming the principle of ahimsa from epistemological respect for the view of others, into the respect for the life of others.

An equality of all forms of life and reverence for all of them is its central teaching. Mahavira taught, 'As you want to move but also the existence of non-movable earth, air, water, fire and vegetation, and he made a fundamental contribution to our understanding of ecology. As the jaina lifestyle is based on the vegetarianism and on non-violence, jains are compassionate towards animals and try their best to avoid any sort of violence, cruelty, slaughtering. In the proposed research paper efforts will be made to illustrate the canonical references as cited in scriptures for protection of animals and the forests where they reside. Along with this, article attempts to illuminate cruel behavior and heart touching tools, methods used during the tests through the videos uploaded by PETA Animal Rights Protection Organizations. The latest statistical data of medical and cosmetic tests done on animals throughout the world for human health and beauty sake is being charted out. It also explains how animal rights and animal welfare can be attained by small acts of self-imposed restraint over non-usage of leather made products, non-intake of medicines involving animal tests, non-intake of non-vegetarian food, and non-usage of cosmetic products made out of animal

testing, so on and so forth. So an endeavor is made to highlight how 3000 years back Tirthankar Mahvira of Jainism has addressed questions of ecology and the environment and created an awareness regarding the inter-connectedness, and inter-dependence of all natural systems i.e., non-human animals, Human and all five kinds of one sensed immobile beings by implementing the Jaina ethics of self-imposed restraint.

Disastrous Consequences of Following Jainism for Certain Patients: Result of Misplaced Concepts or Is It the Religion at Fault?

Dr Anushul Kumar Jain

Disease does not discriminate any one on the basis of caste, creed, religion or sex. The treatment protocols also mandate strict adherence to therapeutic protocols ir-respective of any individual's faith or beliefs. As physicians we try to tailor therapies which let an individual follow his religion as far as possible. Many religions are rigid for example-no blood transfusions allowed in Jehovah's witness. The way out is let the individual donate blood prior to his operation and then transfuse it back during surgery. But in dire emergencies, the results can be disastrous.

The Jainism is unique for its flexibility and this feature makes it amenable to engagement with modern way of life. One of the facts that the Jains don't eat non-vegetarian food, onion, garlic etc and certain other foods are easily manageable medically. The aspect of not eating after sun set is again managed by timing the doses of medicines as per the diet schedule of an individual. The major problem comes when some individuals are on complete fast or eat once a day for a period of time. One patient stopped essential medications during periods of fasting and met his fate. Another decided to avoid admission till 'Paryushanparva' was over and passed away of massive heart attack. Yet another took to prolonged fast ignoring his diabetic medications and barely survived. Same is true for the debate on fasting/santhara. A simple example-have you ever seen a weight lifter lift 150kgs without practice? They start with 10,20kgs and so on and it takes a proper training to reach these extreme levels. Should this mean that the sport be banned? More examples, the boxing or gymnastics, motor cycle/car racing. These sports are full of dangers to life,