

*Teachings Of Jainism In The Eyes Of Some Great Men*¹

compiled by Dr. Sudeep Jain

Mahatma Gandhi:

I believe that leading an irreligious life is improper and inexcusable. Further, unscrupulous life is like a boat without a sail. A life without principles is devoid of mental discipline and health. There is no religion higher than truth and no religious edict superior to 'Nonviolence Is The Supreme Religion' (AHIMSA PARAMO DHARMAH). When a religion denounces violence, the degree of truth in it is enhanced.

Bhagwaan Mahaveer was a reincarnation of nonviolence. His virtuosity conquered the world. His name is worshiped because of his teaching of nonviolence. The glory of religion is magnified by the degree of nonviolence it promotes. Bhagwaan Mahaveer developed the virtue of nonviolence to the extreme.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the First President of India:

I consider myself to be extremely fortunate to have the opportunity of living in the region of Mahaveer's birth [Bihar]. Nonviolence is a special inestimable possession of the Jain religion. No other religion in the world has disseminated nonviolence to the same extent as Jainism.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan:

If humanity is to escape the path to devastation and to follow the road to well being, then it is imperative for all to adopt Bhagwaan Mahaveer's message and follow the auspicious course epitomized by him.

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru:

It is our hope that success will be achieved by propagating the message of service and impassioned renunciation [non-possessiveness] formulated by Bhagwaan Mahaveer.

¹ Abridged English adaptation of the article 'JAIN DHARM AUR BHAGWAAN MAHAVEER KE BAARE MEN MAHAAPURUSHON KE UDGAAR', published in the prestigious journal 'Prakrit Vidya' of January-June 2003.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel:

Jainism is not adopted by just wearing saffron-colored clothes. A real Jain is one who succeeds in controlling one's sense organs. Nonviolence is the religion of the brave, not of cowards. Jains should take pride in the fact that the [Indian National] Congress is getting the Indians to follow their eminent belief [in nonviolence]. Jains should boldly practice non-possessiveness.

Kaka Kalelkar:

In my view, Bhagwaan Mahaveer was an ultimate atheist. He propagated his teaching of nonviolence not only for humanity but also for the well being of all sentient beings. He had an intense desire for the welfare of all worldly souls in his heart. That is how he could enlighten the path to deliverance for all. I can assert with confidence that Mahaveer's principle of nonviolence can lead to happiness and peace in the world.

Lal Bahadur Shastri, Prime Minister of India:

If instead of criticizing and finding faults with others, we adopt the beautiful and efficacious teachings of Bhagwaan Mahaveer, then bribery, dishonesty and oppression will definitely disappear from society. If we cleanse ourselves of our weaknesses and faults like Bhagwaan Mahaveer, then the world around us will be spontaneously ameliorated.

Dr. Kalidas Nag, Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University:

The Jain religion does not belong to a particular community or religious faction. It is, on the other hand, a universal, comprehensive and representative religion. ***Jain TEERTHANKARS were the great souls who did not indulge in conquering lands. Conquering kingdoms is not hard but conquering the self is. So they conquered their passions. This is the greatest achievement that makes human life meaningful and spirited. Enemies are quelled through wars for some time but animosity does not vanish. Violent wars do not bring peace, harmony and welfare in the world. It is only the principle of nonviolence that has brought enlightenment of humanity. Advancement of nonviolence is the greatest accomplishment of humanity.***