

# **A New Paradigm of Socio-Economic World Order From a Jain Perspective**

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- By Dr. S.L. Gandhi

## **At the Zenith of Materialistic Progress Social Values Reach their Nadir**

The age we live in is marked by mounting unrest, unprecedented economic disparities, abject poverty, tantalizing hunger, increasing threat of global warming, gross violation of human rights, rapidly expanding ethos of terrorism, ever-increasing population, unsustainable human lifestyle, gradually disintegrating institution of family and swiftly widening web of vengeance and violence. This dark reality is staring us in the face. Twenty five years ago Fritjof Capra, the eminent physicist and philosopher, wrote the following lines at the beginning of the first chapter of his popular book ‘*The Turning Point*’ which I reproduce for the benefit of us all:

*At the beginning of the last two decades of our century, we find ourselves in a state of profound, worldwide crisis. It is a complex, multi-dimensional crisis whose facets touch every aspect of our lives – our health and livelihood, the quality of our environment and our social relationships, our economy, technology, and politics. It is a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions; a crisis of a scale and urgency unprecedented in recorded human history. For the first time we have to face the very real threat of extinction of the human race and of all life on this planet. <sup>1</sup> (Most distressing than the possibility of the extinction of the human race is that even if it survives it will be no better than dead.)*

When I look at the world today eight years after the advent of the third millennium I find that the multidimensional crisis hinted at by Mr. Capra 25 years ago continues to deepen and the threat of extinction of human race appears more real than even before.

The gale of globalization may have brought prosperity to the creamy layer of the global society as well as to the middle class but the poor are becoming poorer and their woes continue to multiply. Moreover the so called rich are also not experiencing a state of blessedness, rather they are living a dreary mechanical life which does have abundant resources of

material comforts but is bereft of happiness and satisfaction. As a result they are only carrying the burden of life. They are also not able to realize that life is a precious gift, a celebration. The conclusion is that the poor are afflicted by want whereas the impact of affluence has made the rich indifferent to inner consciousness.

Man has made phenomenal progress since his advent on the planet earth. With the help of science and technology he has already reached the zenith of his materialistic progress. Thanks to science he has now access to supersonic jets, spacecrafts and bullet trains for his travel on the earth and for exploration in space. He has already landed on the soil of the moon and has unraveled its mystery. He is now trying to reach the Mars to unfold the mystery that surrounds it. Moreover the latest scientific marvel in the form of internet for instant communication with individuals and organizations in any part of the world has radically altered his life. In addition computer, cinema, television, FM radio, mobile phones and print and electronic media have not only made our lives interdependent and interconnected but have also made us highly vulnerable and unsafe. The invention of the atom bomb is the most devastating device of the twentieth century which caused the unprecedented nuclear holocaust at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The use of atom bomb by the USA to secure its victory over Japan will go down as the most heinous crime against mankind. The world is now grappling with the problems of nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation. Our dream of a nuclear weapons free world remains unfulfilled.

The question arises whether it is possible for us to reverse the trend, and whether Jainism, a religion that enjoins its followers to put into practice the universal values like restraining their propensities for wealth, over-consumption, violence and ostentation, has the potential for a new socio-politico-economic world order embedded in social ethos. Can it provide a new paradigm of socio-economic order and ensure prevention of escalation of politico-military and economic crises? Can it offer a solution of the problems of climate change and environmental and ecological degradation? My reply is that if people practise the Jain doctrine of ahimsa, anekant and non-possession, then not only the threat of the extinction of human race can be averted but the quality of life can also be considerably improved.

### **Jainism and the Present Crisis**

In the wake of the problems generated by climate change, pollution, environmental hazards and escalating terrorist strikes in USA, India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and in many parts of the world in the first decade of the millennium, more and more people have shown interest in Jainism which is

known for its philosophy of ahimsa (nonviolence) and *ichha pramaan* (limiting one's desires, wants and possessions). Since Jainism enjoins its followers to refrain from killing not only humans but also from killing plants, trees, birds, all forms of biologically diverse species including insects and microbes and also from polluting air, water, fire and earth as it involves injury to life, it is being increasingly recognized as one of the world's most ecology friendly religions. Reverence for all forms of life is the essence of the Jaina belief. Talking of Jainism, the well-known exponent of environmental ethics, Mr. Michael Tobias writes in his book "Life Force: The World of Jainism."

*"Jainism is a momentous example to all of us that there can, and does exist a successful, ecologically responsible way of life which is abundantly nonviolent in thought, word and deed. We might misread our history, go forward confusedly to perpetrate other follies but we will do so knowing that there is a viable alternative".<sup>2</sup>*

Michael Tobias is just one example. When he became familiar with the Jain Doctrine he realized that the only way to prevent the extinction of the human race is to live in harmony with nature. Jainism champions the cause of all sentient beings that inhabit the planet Earth. In a way it is 'a secret refuge for plants and animals.' It offers a practical outline for a new model of a nonviolent socio-politico-economic world order. Violence destroys everything while nonviolence preserves life and ensures durable peace. Jainism goes to the root. The seeds of physical violence first sprout in the human mind. They later manifest themselves in injurious physical activities. The root of the crisis that we face today lies in the excessive rise of passions (*kasaya*) like ego, hypocrisy, greed and anger in human nature on account of their deluding effect. Jainism believes that the dissipation of *kasaya* alone will result in universal peace.

In the preface of his treatise entitled "Jain Darsan: Manan Aur Mimansa" (Jain Philosophy: An Analytical Study and Commentary) His Holiness Acharya Mahapragya, a celebrated Jain thinker and social reformer elucidates it further:

*"Jainism is neither bound by caste nor by any institution. It is an awakening or consciousness of dharma. Jainism has declared that any individual, irrespective of his caste, creed and dress, is entitled to moksa (liberation or salvation) provided his religious consciousness has been awakened and his passions of raaga (attachment) and dvesa (aversion or hatred) have been completely annihilated. The dharma*

*(religion) that keeps dharm-chetana (religious consciousness) free from sectarian confines can be described as the spiritual dharma. Anekant Drishti (non-absolutist attitude) to know the truth and the spiritual dharma to accomplish it are the two fundamental achievements of Jainism.*”<sup>3</sup>

Acharya Mahapragya makes a clear distinction between sect and *dharm*. A sect may serve as an infrastructural facility but it is not *dharm* in the real sense of the word. Attachment to a sect only generates fanaticism and creates deluded beliefs. The two basic features of Jainism as highlighted by Acharya Mahapragya lay down a strong foundation for a harmonious society.

Before I turn to the main theme of my paper i.e. the Jain Paradigm of Socio-Economic World Order, it will be in fitness of things if we learn about the main challenges presented by the existing model of the world order.

They are sedentary lifestyle, ostentation, consumption, starvation, social and economic disparities, corruption, lack of integrity, bad governance, fast spreading culture of violence and vengeance, ecological and environmental degradation and above all wanton race for arms including nuclear arms. Despite persistent efforts made by the United Nations, nuclear disarmament remains a distant dream. The five nations which had created huge piles of nuclear weapons including nuclear missiles and atom bombs before the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty came into existence are not ready to destroy their weapons of mass destruction. This situation has created a big obstacle in our endeavor to achieve world peace. We have now nuclear and non-nuclear nations. It means that the non-nuclear nations, many of which have achieved nuclear technology but are not allowed to manufacture nuclear weapons, will remain subservient to the nuclear nations. This disparity is also causing a great concern.

### **The Jain Paradigm of Socio-Economic World Order**

The Jain paradigm of a socio-economic world order is based on man’s enlightened worldview or what we call *smyaktava*<sup>4</sup> in Jain terminology. This worldview emphasizes the power and autonomy of consciousness against the brute force of matter. It is, therefore, wrong to inflict misery on any living being for any material gain. This concept of Ahimsa is central to the sustainability of a socio-economic order. Let us take a note of what Lord Mahavira said: “*All souls (jivas) are equal. After having known this truth man becomes indifferent to killing any life form of the world. All living beings love to live. They want to savor happiness. They are perturbed by*

*sorrow or suffering. They dislike killing and love life. They want to live.*"<sup>5</sup> He further states that a wise man should think of all *jivas*. Since all *jivas* dislike suffering, he should not kill any living being. His message is crystal clear. It asks man to be careful since he is not alone. He is surrounded by *jivas*. But Mahavira also knew very well that for a householder it is not possible to completely abstain from violence so he exhorts him to at least abstain from avoidable violence. It means he should not kill innocent living beings, desist from cutting trees and destroying plants and minimize and limit his needs. He shouldn't waste food. He should eat less and save water and other resources on this planet. A vow (*commitment*) is considered essential. To begin with he can take a small vow which may be developed gradually.

(i) The Jain View of *Samsara* and Suffering

The Jains believe that hankering after mundane objects only leads to frustration and that *samsarah* (world) is *asarah* (vain). It is the sum total of the Jaina precepts and beliefs. All *jivas*, whether they live on the planet earth or in hells or in heavens, are subject to suffering. Humans suffer on account of their unworthy deeds. Poverty, slavery, disease, old age and fear of death envenom their lives. Horrible torment begins as soon a *jiva* enters the womb and experiences oppressive narrowness. Even gods suffer. The *jivas* of hells undergo indescribable pain on account of the bad deeds in their previous existences. Worldly life bereft of spirituality is synonymous with suffering. In *samsara* suffering is like the mountain Meru and joy is small like a grain of mustard. It quickly disappears like a wave.

Intensity of suffering and increase in joy depend on man's bad or good deeds. The Jain theory of *karma* makes it clear that a *jiva* can come out of the cycle of suffering if he knows the causes which bind the soul in *karmic* bondage and strives to remove them. They are *mithyatva* (heterodoxy), *avirati* (non-restraint), *kasaya* (passions) and *yoga* (activities). This karmic belief of the Jains goes a long way in ensuring social excellence and regulating social life in as much as it advocates cooperation rather than competition.

(ii) Vision of a Casteless Society : Equality of All Souls

The Jaina doctrine visualizes a casteless society where all *jivas* are considered equal. Lord Mahavira said that every *jiva* has the potential to become *paramatma* (great soul or God). Even an insect may attain this level when it is born a human in the next birth. Though Jainism grants equality to all souls, in reality we find classes and subclasses in

society determined by their previous karmas. But Jainism prohibits its laity from looking down upon any individual on account of his profession or caste or poverty.

(iii) Practical Ethics

The doctrine of *karma* is the basis of the theoretical dispensation of the Jainas. In the same way it controls the whole system of practical ethics. All of our activities have a corresponding response in the subtle matter. Man's good or bad activities (in thought, word and deed) cause the influx of this *karmic* matter into the soul. However, the *karmic* dust can be removed from the soul by purifying the mind and emotions by avoiding all sinful physical, mental or vocal activities. One can stop the influx of this harmful matter by one's righteous conduct and the practice of equanimity.

Jain ethics lays down clearly what one should do and what one should avoid in order to minimize worldly suffering. It also lays down a moral code of conduct for laymen and laywomen (*shravaks* and *shravikas*) consisting of twelve *anuvrats* (small vows). Five of them are *anuvrats* (small vows), three are *gunavratas* (qualitative vows) and four are *siksavratas* (instructive vows). They are as follows:

(a) Five small vows (anuvrats)

1. Gross vow of Refraining from Violence (*sthula pranatipataviramana*)

It is difficult for the householder to avoid injury to life in the daily routine of cultivating land, cooking food, grinding corn, cleaning the toilet and so on. The *Swopajna Bhasya Tika* by Siddhasenagani says that a householder should desist at least from intended or deliberate acts of gross violence.

2. Gross vow of Refraining from Lying (*sthula mrsavadaviramana*)

The householder cannot refrain from all forms of falsehood. He should at least take the small vow of refraining from false statements.

3. Gross vow of Abstaining from Taking anything that is not given (*sthula adattadanaviramana*)

He should not take anything without the consent of the owner.

4. Gross vow of Refraining from all Illicit Sexual Contacts (*sthula maithunaviramana*)

The householder should desist from sexual activity with anyone other than one's spouse.

5. Vow of Limiting One's Possessions (*parigrahaparimana*) The householder should limit his possessions voluntarily.

The above *anuvrats* (small vows) which are the exact counterparts of *mahavratas* (big vows) are supported by seven supplementaries. They include three *gunavratas* and four *siksavratas*.

(b) Three *gunavratas*

6. Vow of Limiting the Area of one's Activities (*digvrata*)

The householder should take a vow to restrict his travel and movement to a limited area.

7. Vow of Limiting the Quantity of Things One Will Use (*bhogopabhogaparimana*)

The householder should take a vow to make use of only a definite number of things for sustaining life.

8. Vow to Abstain from Purposeless Harmful Activities (*anarthadandaviramana*)

The householder should take a vow to refrain from all such purposeless activities as are harmful to others. He should not think ill of anyone nor cause injury to anyone.

(c) Four *siksavratas*

9. Vow of Remaining Completely Equanimous for a Fixed Period of Time (*samayika*)

The householder should take a vow to keep aloof from sinful conduct for a set period of time (48 minutes at a time).

10. Vow of Reducing for a Limited Period of Time the Limits of the Area Set Forth in the Sixth Vow (*desavakasikavrata*)

The householder should take a vow to restrict his movement to an even more limited area for a fixed period than the one fixed under vow No. 6 above.

11. Vow of Observing Fast and Living Like a Monk for Certain Days (*posadhavrata*)

The householder should take a vow to observe complete fast for a whole day and night and pass that period in religious meditation and behave practically like a sadhu.

## 12. Vow of Sharing with Deserving Guests (*atithismvibhaga-vrata*)

The householder should take a vow to share his food or clothes with wandering monks.

The observance of these practical precepts by individuals of society leads to the advent of a society in which life becomes a journey towards peace rather a struggle for mundane prosperity at the cost of moral values.

### (iv) The Three Pillars of a Socio-Economic World Order

According to Jainism the main cause of human suffering is unrestrained desire and man's greed for possessions – be they animals, land, wealth and buildings. Even while aiming at worldly prosperity gross ethical principles are not to be violated. If a businessman follows the law of the land, refrains from deceiving and adopts fair means to earn wealth, he will serve as a model of a responsible citizen for others. I find that the Jain message of *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *aparigrah* (non-possession) and *anekant* (non-absolutist attitude) can provide a framework for a Jain paradigm of socio-economic world order based on the twin principles of co-existence and cooperation. The three principles stated above are the pillars on which the edifice of a new model of socio-economic world order can be built.

1. **Ahimsa** – As already stated *ahimsa* or abstinence from violence in thought, word and deed is the hallmark of Jainism. The main problem that humanity faces today is that of violence. It has become a powerful weapon of those who believe that it is only by the use of force and coercion that they can suppress dissent and make their opponents kneel before them. Others think that even a valid demand can only be met by use of force against authorities. Today everyone wants a gun to settle an old score or protect himself. The gun culture is percolating through schools, colleges and universities. Under the pretext of security all nations are vying with one another to manufacture or buy the arms that can kill more.

The culture of violence that we find predominant in the modern society has made our life difficult and insecure. United Nations is deeply concerned about the growing trends of violence among children. It has created '*a decade of a culture of peace and*



*nonviolence for the children of the world*' (2001 to 2010)<sup>6</sup>. It is for the first time that the world leaders recognized the power of nonviolence and declared an action plan to promote a culture of ahimsa. Subsequently the UN body has also declared Oct. 2, the Birth Day of Mahatma Gandhi, as the World Nonviolence Day. So far so good but Jainism warns that nonviolence and austerity go together; where there is lust for luxuries, violence is bound to follow. That is why Mahatma Gandhi led a life of austerity and preached dignity of labour not only in words but in practice also.

Jainism believes that diversity is the beauty of the universe. If we can pledge ourselves to avoid unnecessary and deliberate violence and coexist despite diverse beliefs, cultures and languages, we can dream of a harmonious global society.

Lord Buddha and Lord Mahavira have shown us the right path. Gandhi was influenced by the Jain concept of ahimsa to which he refers in his autobiography. He has demonstrated to the world that ahimsa alone can solve many problems. By creating an awareness of reverence for all form of life we can preserve our ecological harmony and control further degradation of our environment.

The Jain term for nonviolence is ahimsa which means abstinence from violence. The Tattvartha Sutra makes clear that 'taking *life away out of passion is violence*.'<sup>7</sup> It means that if an injury is caused without any motivation or deliberate intention and if we act with utmost care and vigilance, it in itself does not constitute an evil act. If an individual, driven by anger, pride, deceit and greed, takes someone's life away, it is violence. The Jain view attaches enormous significance to mental, emotional and verbal violence. All forms of physical violence result from them only. According to Jainism it is this aspect of violence and nonviolence that governs a society.

2. **Non-possession or *aparigraha*** – It is the most important Jaina principle which if adhered to sincerely by the people can usher in an era of lasting peace and happiness. Acharya Mahapragya often says that instead of *ahimsa parmardharma* (nonviolence is the greatest *dharma*), we should say *aparigraha parmardharma* (non-possession is the greatest *dharma*)<sup>8</sup>. Unrestrained desire to possess everything that fascinates us – be it women, wealth or edibles (*possessiveness*) is the main cause of the imbalance in our life. The crisis of the shortages of commodities that sustain our life has also been caused by the excessive rise of *kasaya* (passions) in human nature. We have scarcity of food, water, houses and clothes. They are sufficient to sustain the

people on the planet but the tendency of hoarding creates artificial scarcity. The Jain principle that enjoins us to limit our possessions voluntarily can help us to combat the problems of poverty, hunger and shortages. On the one hand we find the number of billionaires increasing, the number of the poorest of the poor seems to be growing fast on the other hand. If the millionaires or billionaires can limit their possessions, the excess can be utilized to meet the challenge of poverty and hunger.

The Tattvarth Sutra describes *parigraha* as *muccha* (7.12 Tattvarth Sutra-English) i.e. clinging is possessiveness. Clinging to the animate and the inanimate is possessiveness. A feeling of attachment to material objects is at the root of all problems. The more we are detached, the nearer the goal we are. The intensity of “mineness” makes it necessary for a person to have possession which inevitably involves violence, falsehood and theft. Jainism lays emphasis on the restraint of a desire to possess and hoard. The ideal is complete non-possession which can be attained only by ascetics but a householder is taught to fix a limit to his possessions.

3. **Anekant** – The third principle, that of anekant (non-absolutist outlook) is a most significant feature of Jainism. The world is full of contradictory beliefs. But Lord Mahavira says that contradictory viewpoints and beliefs can co-exist. There is no need for disputation and rejection. The truth in its entirety is known only to perfect souls or omniscient beings. The Jains call them *arhats* (the souls that have destroyed their karmic bondage by purifying the self through austerities and equanimity). Each seeker of truth experiences a grain of truth and propounds a philosophical standpoint. A standpoint is a way of approaching the truth. It is an individual observation or experience. These angles and ways of approach lead to partial truths. Conflict arises when the follower of a particular faith insists that what his faith says alone is truth and the rest are heretic beliefs. According to Lord Mahavira truth is many-sided. One may be true from one standpoint and wrong from another standpoint.

He said, “*I salute Anekantavada (the doctrine of non-absolutism), the only Guru of the world, because without it worldly activities come to a standstill.*”<sup>9</sup> Leave apart the question of realizing the truth, but one is unable to maintain a relationship even between a family and society.

Acharya Mahapragya says, “*Anekant is the axis of all, it is the only world teacher or spiritual administrator (anushashta). Since the*

*whole truth and the entire sphere of worldly activities are governed by it, I bow before it.*"<sup>10</sup>

Our life is dependent on pairs of opposites. If the pairs of contraries are eliminated, life will also come to an end. Lord Mahavira's doctrine of non-absolutism not only recognizes the philosophical standpoints put forward by other religious groups, but also asks its followers not to disparage the contrary beliefs or the beliefs propounded by other groups. Anekant thus becomes the most powerful instrument of religious reconciliation. Without this non-absolutist attitude democracy cannot succeed. Anekant is a source of durable peace in a democratic society.

Dr. Nathmal Tatia, an eminent Jain scholar and translator of Tattvarth Sutra [published as *That Which Is* in English, observes in his note on this dual aspect of truth:

*"It was due to the doctrine of philosophical standpoints that Jainism became a veritable repository of philosophies that originated and flourished in India."*<sup>11</sup>

(v) Relative Economics and Socio-Economic World Order

Though Lord Mahavira didn't make any direct comment on economics, his message has in it a fundamental basis of sustainable economics – a new model of economics that is inclusive and that ensures justice to all and unlike globalization marginalizes none.

Before I embark upon explaining the theory of relative economics as propounded by His Holiness Acharya Mahapragya and its role in shaping the Jain model of economics I would briefly touch upon the salient features of the modern system of economics based on production, distribution and consumption. If any one of these functions slows down, it may affect our economy adversely and may even disrupt it altogether. In order to create and multiply demand consumption becomes an important factor. The people living in rich countries have enough money to buy and consume. They were encouraged to consume excessively so that industrial production could be boosted and growth rate could be increased. Fierce marketing by companies led the Western society to believe that consumerism was in national interest. As mass consumerism swept the developed nations, it caused unprecedented damage to the environment of the earth and contributed greatly to excessive emissions of greenhouse gases. They created holes in the ozone layer

triggering global warming. It is an irony that until recently 85 % of the resources of the planet earth were consumed by the people of USA, Europe, Japan and South Korea leaving only 15 % of the material resources available for a vast majority of human population that inhabit South Asian region. This is changing now, but not because aforementioned countries consume less, but because the latter raise their levels of consumption with frightening speed. The victim of this development is the planet itself, with all beings on it. It is ethically wrong and sinful beyond sane reasoning.

The modern economic system has, of course, contributed to sustained growth and development but it has affected our ecosystem and environment badly and has also given rise to widening disparities. It has now been acknowledged by eminent economists that this growth is unsustainable. The crisis of sustainability is so grave that UN had to declare another decade for the education of sustainable development (ESD) (2005 to 2015).

His Holiness Acharya Mahapragya, the author of *Economics of Mahavira*, and the spiritual Patron of Anuvrat Movement – a movement which inspires people to pledge themselves to observe small vows (basic vows) enjoining them to refrain from inessential violence, war, ostentation, religious intolerance, injury to trees, environmental pollution, dishonesty and deception in business, intoxicants like alcohol and drugs like heroin etc. – is deeply concerned about this self-inflicted deplorable plight of the people of this planet.

He is of the view that the root of the problem lies in our lifestyle, propelled by the competitive modern economics, but totally devoid of ethical values. It is making people self-centered, greedy, insensitive and violent. Economic power wielded by multinationals is contributing greatly to a cult of violence and hatred. The current model of economic systems being followed all over the world is accelerating the slide to eco-catastrophe. Let us listen to what Acharya Mahapragya says:

*“If economics continues to remain merely the economics of utility, it will not be possible for us to remove social disparities. If the basic human values like nonviolence, peace, purity of means, self-restraint as propounded by Lord Mahavira are integrated with the modern economic principles, it will bring about a big change in social outlook towards production, distribution and consumption. It will also result in the fulfillment of the*

*primary needs of the poor and weaker sections of society. Lord Mahavira had laid down the vow of non-possession for ascetics. He knew that it was not possible for the house-holders to refrain completely from possession, so he propounded the principle of limiting individual desires and needs. If an individual can limit his desires and needs, it will pave the way for an economically sustainable society.*"<sup>12</sup>

Mahapragya's new model of economics is based on Lord Mahavira's philosophy rooted in nonviolence, which is an all-encompassing human trait indispensable and inevitable for the sustainability of the world. Relative Economics rooted in *ahimsa* is being advocated as complementary to the modern economic system which doesn't recognize ethics and emphasizes only wealth creation by earning profit. It ignores those who cannot compete and helps only those who are already rich. Acharya Mahapragya has laid down thirteen principles of relative economics.

1. Parigraha – man's desire to acquire material resources and hoard – is responsible for the increasing trends of violence in society. Relative economics believes that if *parigraha* is limited violence will decrease automatically.
2. Dishonesty and corruption dominate the world of business. The increase in unethical business practices is causing social unrest. We need to integrate ethics into business.
3. Increasing greed for wealth must be controlled.
4. Only big industries are promoted and small industries are neglected. This practice increases unemployment at lower level. Relative economic advocates bridging this gap.
5. Rampant mechanization contributes to galloping unemployment. A way has to be found to reduce mechanization in industry.
6. Wealth is becoming an end in itself. Our perverted view that wealth is a source of happiness needs to be changed.
7. Material comforts have become our priority. Greed for accumulating wealth needs to be curbed.
8. Policy of investment is faulty. Relative economics pleads for judicious investment.
9. Limitless consumption gives rise to reactionary violence. Those who are not able to get two meals a day tend to resort to violence.

10. Industrial development is instigating individualism at the cost of society. A self-centered attitude has no place in relative economics. It inspires people to rise above selfishness.
11. Hedonistic mentality is detrimental to society. It needs to be curbed through moral awakening.
12. The stream of compassion is drying up gradually. Development of humaneness and sensitivity in society can meet this challenge.
13. The problems of hunger and disparity are the by-products of modern economic system. Relative economics attaches great significance to the alleviation of hunger and poverty.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Acharya Mahapragya is of the view that the principle of *aparigraha* is central to relative economics. It touches the core of our consciousness. It doesn't mean that individual wealth and profit are altogether prohibited. One can earn wealth but the means he adopts should be honest and he should voluntarily fix a limit to his possessions. The basis of *aparigraha* is that we are not attached to our material possessions and are free from deluded belief. We call the present age materialistic because there isn't any limit to consumption. Consumption is an inevitable social process. Without it our worldly interaction will come to an end. What is necessary is that we change our outlook on life and minimize our *murchha* (deluded belief) towards material objects. The Jain model of socio-economic world order is based on *samyaktava* i.e. right understanding of the reality of life. One who has *samyaktava* believes in the existence of the soul and interdependence of *jivas*. He also has reverence for all life forms, avoids unnecessary violence and limits his consumption and needs. Governed by this general attitude the Jain model of society remains free from incidents of deliberate violence involving murder and rape. There is no exploitation and the needs of the poor are paid attention to. It permits reasonable competitiveness but asserts that excess of everything is bad.

Acharya Tulsi's *Anuvrat Movement*<sup>14</sup> which was launched in Delhi in 1949 to rid the world of violence and immorality, aimed at creating a new paradigm of socio-economic world order. Acharya Mahapragya has given it a new form by presenting it as the basis of relative economics.

I sum up my paper by quoting a paragraph from Acharya Shri Mahapragya's book 'Anuvrat Darshan'-

*“Man accepts the concept of parigraha. He also recognizes the importance of the value of an object and the joy that he derives from it. As a matter of fact the fulfillment of a need is neither joy nor sorrow. The idea*

*of joy beyond it is a psychological belief. A material object is neither parigraha nor is it the cause of bondage, nor can it be said to be full of sorrow. It is only when it is associated with our desire, that it becomes the cause of bondage or sorrow. In reality parigraha is synonymous with desire.”<sup>13</sup>*

These words of wisdom have in them an eternal message for politicians, citizens and economists. If they can listen to them, violence in society will diminish and social excellence will prevail.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The Turning Point : Science, Society and the Rising Culture by Fritjof Capra, page xvii, an imprint of Flamingo 1983 published in Great Britain.
2. Life Force: The World of Jainism by Michael Tobias page 1, published by Asian Humanities Press 1991 New York
3. Jain Darsan Manan aur Mimansa by Acharya Mahapragya, published by Adarsh Sahitya Sangh 1994 preface page IV
4. The term '*samyaktva*' is used to mean right faith. Dr. Nathmal Tatia has translated it as 'enlightened worldview' in the English rendering of Tattvarth Sutra. It is true understanding of the ethical and spiritual problems of worldly bondage P5-1.1  
  
Muni Shri Nyayavijayaji defines it as faith in the existence of soul, in its good and bad states or births and in the possibility of its attaining spiritual perfection (*kevalya*). In *Hisyoesastra* 11.15 Acharya Hemchandra lays down characteristics of *samyaktva* (i) *sama* (tranquility); (ii) *sam....* (intense desire); (iii) *nirveda* (disgust for evil and sinful activities); (iv) *anukampa* (compassion) and (v) *astikya* (belief in righteous conduct).
5. Atma Ka Darsan (Jain Dharma: Tattva aur Aachaar) page 254 published by Jain Vishva Bharati (Ladnun) 2005
6. Realizing the gravity of the situation the Noble Peace Laureates signed an appeal for the children of the world in 1997 and called for an international decade of peace. The UN General Assembly endorsed their appeal and passed resolutions (UN Resolutions A/RES/52/13: Culture of Peace and A/RES/53/243: declaration and programme of action on a culture of peace) UN declared 'A Decade of a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World' (2001-2010)
7. Tattvarth Sutra (*That Which Is*) published by Harper and Collins, USA in 1994 in association with the Institute of Jainology, UK.



8. Ghat Ghat Deep Jale published by Jain Vishva Bharati 1980 page 452
9. Atma Ka Darsan published by Jain Vishva Bharati (Ladnun) in 2005 page 503.
10. Anekant Hai Tisara Netra published by Tulsi Adhyatm Needam JVB Ladnun 1982 page 2.
11. Tattvarth Sutra published by Harper & Collins USA in 1994 page 140 sutra 5-31.
12. This extract has been taken from Acharya Mahapragya's speech on Sapeksh Arthshastra delivered at a conference in Delhi in 2005.
13. Anuvrat Darshan published in 1954 by Adarsh Sahitya Sangh.
14. The word '*anuvrat*' has been used in Jain scriptures for the twelve small vows meant for Jain votaries. '*Anu*' means small and '*vrata*' means a vow i.e. small vow. Acharya Tulsi gave the *anuvrat* the form of a mass movement which is not restricted to Jain laity. Taking cue from the twelve vows of *shravaks* laid down by Lord Mahavira Acharya Tulsi formulated a new code of ethical conduct for the followers of all faiths. Its main aim is to awaken moral consciousness of an individual and thus work for the regeneration of moral and spiritual values in society. It enjoins an individual to pledge himself to the observance of eleven small vows and join the worldwide network of self-transformed people. An *anuvrati* – one who commits himself to ANUVRAT – refrains from unnecessary violence, false statements, illicit sexual behaviour, destruction of environment and disparagement of the principles of other faith traditions.

The author has referred to the following books :

1. Atma Ka Darsan – Acharya Mahapragya
2. Economics of Mahavira – Acharya Mahapragya
3. Anekant Hai Tisra Netra – Acharya Mahapragya
4. Philosophical Terms : Glossary and Sources – Dr. Kala Acharya
5. The Life Force – Michael Tobias
6. Nonviolence to Animals Earth and Self – Christopher Chapple
7. Ahimsa Anekantvad and Jainism – Dr. Tara Sethia

8. Tattvarth Sutra – Dr. N. Tatia
9. Contribution of Acharya Mahapragya to Indian Culture – Dr. Dayanand Bhargava (unpublished)
10. Jain Darshan Manan aur Mimansa – Acharya Mahapragya