

# CONTROL OF KAṢĀYAS AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

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## Abstract

Jainism attributes the misery in the world to feelings of anger, arrogance, deception, and greed termed *kaṣāyas*. These are also accompanied by quasi-passions, also termed *kaṣāyas*, causing misery. In the present context, people undergo various issues but do not identify their emotions or passions. If passions are identified as the root cause of misery, it will become easier to eradicate them and pursue emotional well-being.

## Introduction

Jainism identifies the control of *kaṣāyas* (passions or emotions of anger, arrogance, deception, and greed), *no-kaṣāyas* (quasi-passions), and base impulses as the main determinant of one's spiritual progress.<sup>2</sup> The literal meaning of *kaṣāya* is to gain *samsāra* again & again, meaning as long as we have *kaṣāyas*, the cycle of birth and death will continue.<sup>3</sup> In fact, it regards the erasing of these intertwined emotions all the way down to the micro-level from one's character as essential for achieving one's highest potential – *mokṣa* (liberation).

It places so much importance on this topic that hardly any Jain ritual, prayer, or worship is devoid of a plea to *tīrthaṃkaras* to provide continual guidance and insight to overcome these emotions. Jain seers and sages have labeled them as highly destructive and advised their followers repeatedly to be constantly aware of them and direct their efforts initially at reducing their intensity and eventually eliminating them altogether. Jainism's recognition of the vicious role played by *kaṣāyas*, the benefits derived by lessening or eliminating them, and their inverse relationship with peace, harmony, and spiritual ascendance could comprise a major contribution of Jainism to mankind.

Spiritually, the Jain religion links *kaṣāyas* with the generation of new karmic particles and resulting bondage. The karmas in turn are characterized as the major cause of the cycle of birth and death and the bodily forms that a worldly soul goes through. Its core teaching states that the damage caused by the *kaṣāyas* has an immense impact not only on the present life but also on future lives as well. The less the intensity of these destructive emotions, the better the quality of life, and the lighter the karmic burden, the faster the rise on the spiritual ladder.

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<sup>2</sup> “*darśanacāritramohanīyakaṣāyavedanīyākhyāstridviṣoḍaśanavabhedāḥ samyaktvamithyātvatadubhayāni kaṣāya-nokaṣāyāvanantānubandhyapratyākhyānapratyākhyānāvaranasamjvalanavikalpāścaikaśaḥ krodhamānamāyālobhā hāsyaratyaratiśokabhayajugupsāstripuṃnapuṃsakavedāḥ*” (Tattvārthasūtra 8.10)

<sup>3</sup> “*sakāṣāyatvājīvaḥ karmaṇo योग्यं pudgalānādatte| sa bandhaḥ|*” (Tattvārthasūtra 8.2-3)

## Types of Kaṣāyas

Jainism, primarily, discusses four types of *kaṣāyas*: anger (*krodha*), arrogance (*māna*), deception (*māyā*), and greed (*lobha*). In addition, Jainism also identifies nine other related passions called *no-kaṣāyas*. Nine *no-kaṣāyas* include laughter (*hāsyā*), feelings of liking (*rati*) and disliking (*arati*), grief (*śoka*), fear (*bhaya*), disgust (*jugupsā*), and the female libido (*strī-veda*), male libido (*puruṣa-veda*), and neuter-libido (*napuṃsaka-veda*). They serve as a catalyst to invoke the primary emotions. Each of the four primary emotions is further subdivided into four categories (thus making a total of 16). These 16 subgroups of *kaṣāyas* plus nine *no-kaṣāyas* make a total of twenty-five.<sup>4</sup> This group of 25 comprises conduct-deluding karma (*cāritra mohanīya*) in the karmic language. The subdivisions of anger, arrogance, deception, and greed are based upon the intensity and duration of each of them. The subdivisions are:

- (a) **Anantānubandhī Kaṣāya** (highly intense emotion): This type of emotion stays with a person for an extended period and could be regarded as a deep groove cut into a piece of rock. It takes years for the groove to disappear from the rock. In the same way, it takes a long time to get rid of this type of extreme emotion and hence is considered highly detrimental to one's well-being.
- (b) **Apratyākhyānāvaraṇīya Kaṣāya** (strong emotion): This type of emotion usually tapers off after about a year. It is likened to a mud wall that slowly melts away with the arrival of the monsoon.
- (c) **Pratyākhyānāvaraṇīya Kaṣāya** (mild emotion): This type of emotion goes away after a few months. It is less intense than the previous category but more intense than the next category. It is compared with a line in the sand that disappears when a strong current of air passes over it.
- (d) **Samjvalana Kaṣāya** (very mild emotion): A person shows a mild form of reaction in the spur of the moment under the influence of this type of emotion but becomes calm quickly. It is compared with a line in water created by a moving finger.

The above subgroups are shown in a tabular form below. The table also illustrates the nature of each of the *kaṣāya* as far as their duration is concerned:

Kaṣāya	Anantānubandhī	Apratyākhyānāvaraṇīya	Pratyākhyānāvaraṇīya	Samjvalana
Anger <sup>5</sup>	line in rock	line in earth	line in sand	line in water
Arrogance <sup>6</sup>	stone pillar	bone	piece of wood	cane

<sup>4</sup> “*darśanacārītramohanīyakaṣāyavedanīyākhyāstridviṣoḍaśānavabhedāḥ samyaktvamithyātavadubhayāni kaṣāya-nokaṣāyāvanantānubandhyapratyākhyānapratyākhyānāvarāṇasamjvalanavikalpāścaikaśaḥ krodhamānamāyālobhā hāsyaratyaratīśokabhayajugupsāstripuṃnapuṃsakavedāḥ*” (Tattvārthasūtra 8.10)

<sup>5</sup> *silapuḍhavibhedadhūlījalarāisamāṇao have koho | nārayatirīyanārāmaragaṅsu uppāyao kamaso* || (Gommaṭasāra Jīvakāṇḍa 284)

<sup>6</sup> *selatṭhikaṭṭhahavette ṇiyabheṇaṇuharamtao māṇo | nārayatirīyanārāmaragaṅsu uppāyao kamaso* || (Gommaṭasāra Jīvakāṇḍa 285)

<b>Deceit<sup>7</sup></b>	root of bamboo	horn of sheep	urine of cow	weeding-spade
<b>Greed<sup>8</sup></b>	fast-color	grease	body-feces	turmeric -color

It is interesting to note that the primary emotions take many forms and shades in human life (and animals too), validating the subdivisions outlined in the scriptures. For example, anger may be expressed as mild anger, angry outbursts, emotional rage, hate, animosity, and vengeance, while arrogance could take the form of self-importance, egotism, conceit, self-praise, and jealousy. Deception may surface in cheating, dishonesty, distortion, hypocrisy, dirty politics, cunningness, fraud, and trickery; on the other hand, greed could show up in the form of self-indulgence, delusion, discontentment, mad craving for money, sex, and power.

Our minds are filled with many of these emotions around the clock. Unfortunately, most of us do not recognize the havoc they inflict upon our thought processes and our behavior. Because of the critical impact they have on our short and long-term future, let us examine them in a bit more detail and discuss the steps suggested by our seers to overcome them.

### **Krodha (Anger):**

Anger is, indeed, one of the most powerful emotions. People react to life situations at times with anger rather instinctively, without realizing the consequences. They get angry, lose their sense of discretion, and sometimes, jeopardize relationships with their loved ones in a split second — the relationships that might have taken them years to build causing irreparable damage. We delve into real-life instances, illustrating the swift erosion of emotional bonds due to unchecked anger. It is not only the social damage that anger inflicts upon us. It also damages the body and mind. When we get angry, our heart pumps faster, blood pressure goes up, blood flow quickens, muscles tense, and more sugar is added into the bloodstream. Headaches, tension, and stomach problems are also said to have been connected with anger. A meticulous analysis of the enduring effects of anger reveals its association with severe health conditions, including heart disease, a weakened immune system, and reduced life expectancy.

From the vantage point of the karma theory, anger has very serious consequences too. The stronger the intensity and duration of this emotion, the stronger the karmic bondage – the bondage that causes dire consequences not only in this life but also beyond. To overcome this emotion, first, we need to understand the underlying process:

<sup>7</sup> *veṇuvamūlorabbhayasiṅge gomuttāe ya khorappe | sarisī māyā nārayatiriyānarāmaragāisu khivadi jiyam* || (Gommaṭasāra Jīvakāṇḍa 286)

<sup>8</sup> *kimirāyacakkataṇumalahariddarēṇa sarisao loho | nārayatirikhamāṇusadevesuppāyao kamaso* || (Gommaṭasāra Jīvakāṇḍa 287)

<b>Provocation (anger initiator)</b> <i>(Provocation Catalysts could come from memories, interactions with others, disagreements, unfavorable situations, greed, and other sources)</i>		
Path-I		Path-II
↓		↓
<b>Anger Creation</b>		<b>Anger Recognition</b>
↓		↓
<b>Anger Expression</b>		<b>Awareness</b>
↓		↓
Instant Revenge	Slow Revenge	<b>Anger Prevention</b>
↓	↓	↓
Reactions	Reactions	Stop and think techniques
↓	↓	↓
-Violent	-Speak ill will	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Count 10</li> <li>2. Think positively</li> <li>3. Resolve conflict through negotiations</li> <li>4. Use religious remedies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Forgiveness</li> <li>-Understanding</li> <li>-Compassion</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
-Defensive	-Stop speaking	
	-Hate	
	-Revenge	

As the left side of the above chart depicts, anger has two components: creation and expression. Most people follow path-I and upon provocation get angry and express their anger either instantaneously or slowly over a long period of time — sometimes for decades! The intensity of anger expression depends upon the person’s psychological makeup and karmic burden.

Usually, anger expressed in this fashion is destructive because it is accompanied by a number of other harmful emotions such as hate, a sense of revenge, violence, and many others that linger on in a person’s psyche for a long time. Obviously, we won’t have to deal with anger expression if we stop it right before it raises its ugly head – i.e., from the very moment it pops up. It means the instant we start getting angry, we need to quickly recognize the emotion and take a detour (path II)! If we realize it and become aware of it, then most probably we will be

able to control it. This means we must allow our minds to stop reacting fast. If we just pause, reflect, and think for a while, it will be difficult to get angry! That is one of the reasons modern psychiatrists recommend counting to 10 when we are about to explode, and suggest other ideas as well to tackle anger-provoking situations.

Now let us look at the religious remedies. First of all, almost all major religions of the world have identified anger as one of the major sins. The common antidotes recommended are forgiveness, compassion, and understanding. It appears that the emphasis is on anger control and prevention rather than expression.

Those who came up with these spiritual cures had human weakness and foibles in mind and advised us to react to anger-generating stimuli with a compassionate heart and an attitude of forgiving and forgetting. The following Biblical passage and Jain composition on forgiveness express a similar thought:

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving. (Ephesians 4.31)

I forgive all souls, and may all souls forgive me, I am on friendly terms with all, I have enmity towards none.<sup>9</sup>

### **Arrogance (māna)**

Arrogance is probably a more destructive human emotion than anger because the latter at least needs an external catalyst, while arrogance does not. We can hide the anger, but arrogance is apparent to all around us. Anger in many cases is transient in nature and it may subside in due course and may be easy to forget and forgive, but arrogance is an ongoing phenomenon fueling the fire on a continual basis. An arrogant person is constantly occupied with boosting his ego and does not hesitate to employ devious means to earn undue respect, prestige, or salutations. If we study the history of mankind, we will find that it is replete with stories of people who fell from grace or were destroyed or ruined by arrogance. Here is a short story from Greek Mythology: Icarus – the protagonist of the story – arrogantly believed that he could fly with artificial wings; his arrogance led to his literal downfall, however, as he flew so close to the sun that the wax with which his wings were fastened melted. (Lesso)

A major US corporation copied a competitive product to grow even faster. The competitor claimed that the product infringed their patents but was willing to settle for only 200 million dollars. But being rich, the former was just too stubborn and arrogant. It fought in court for almost 10 years, lost in the end, and wound-up spending almost 9 billion dollars by the time the dispute came to an end.

These stories support the common knowledge that the people who are affected by arrogance usually become ‘blind’ and stubborn, live in a dream world, and cannot see what others see. Nor do they realize that they have a serious mental disease. Usually, they walk around with a

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<sup>9</sup> *khāmemei savvajīve, savve jīvā khamamtu me |  
mittī me savvabhūesu, veraṃ majjha na keṇā || (Āvaśyakasūtra 97)*

large ego, surround themselves with like-minded selfish friends and they tend to see – with jaundiced eyes – arrogance in others, not in themselves! They are out to prove to the world how smart and superior they are compared to others.

Jainism suggests the use of humility and politeness in day-to-day interactions and has structured many religious practices to fix the problem. They are designed not only to soften one's arrogance but also to soften other vices that are closely linked with arrogance, such as anger, deception, lust, and greed — starting from early childhood.

The following practical steps can help us recognize arrogance and rectify our behavior:

- **Acknowledge the problem:** The first step is the recognition and acceptance of the problem. Unless one accepts that there is a problem and is willing to do something about it, nothing can happen. If a sick person refuses to accept the fact that there is something wrong, he or she will not seek medical help.
- **Do a reality check:** One way we can deflate our ego is to see that there is always someone better than us no matter how inflated we feel about our wealth, power, knowledge, talent, appearance, and so forth. Karma theory (Cause & Effect) teaches us that the objects of our arrogance and good fortune are the fruits of our karmas from the past and could all disappear one day because everything in life is transient and cyclic.
- **Know that this too shall pass:** Every time we go through an ego-boosting situation, we need to think that nothing is going to last forever.
- **Remind ourselves that truth has many angles and perceptions are relative** – like the blind men describing the elephant, we must remind ourselves that ours is not the only correct viewpoint. To find the right approach, we need to be polite and receptive enough to listen to the ideas and viewpoints of people with different cultures and backgrounds. Sometimes we will discover that we were way off in our approach! Being polite does not mean total agreement with the viewpoints of the opponent. It only means listening to the other party consciously. Listening with a spirit of reconciliation cannot co-exist with arrogance! This is one of the main messages of *anekāntavāda* – another cardinal principle of Jainism.
- **Recognize the equality of souls:** We need to respect all life and all human beings. Jainism clearly says that all souls are equal. This means that any temporary perception of superiority should not blind us and make us arrogant.
- **Humility produces positive results:** We need to understand that humility generates respect, cooperation, and pleasant vibrations while dealing with our fellow human beings. Arrogance on the other hand invites contempt, dislike, and hate. Our choice should be obvious.
- **Arrogance obstructs and humility fosters the resolution of conflicts:** More problems have existed throughout history because of ego clashes. If we show humility to others in resolving a conflict, even our opponents will calm down and show a way to get out of it.

On the other hand, if we are perceived as arrogant, our opponents will play hardball and devise ways to teach us a lesson, thereby lowering the chances of resolution.

### **Deception (māyā)**

The human mind has an uncanny ability to craft devious means and cheat others to satisfy one's low-level desires to procure more money, power, prestige, or many otherworldly objects. Greed and perverse knowledge (wrong beliefs) are the primary drivers of this emotion. They make the person resort to lies, stealing, fraud, dishonesty, and hypocrisy.

The person with deceit does not hesitate to employ any unethical and immoral means to achieve the end objectives. He thinks one way, speaks something else, and acts altogether differently – showing a lack of harmony between his thoughts, speech, and actions. The history of mankind contains many stories showing that deception does not work in the long run. Eventually, the dishonest person gets caught and suffers from the social, monetary, and mental consequences. Deception in general ends up in an ugly manner. It is just a matter of time.

The huge Bernie Madoff scandal is an excellent example of how far greed and deception can push a person down. Madoff yielded to these negative emotions. He caused pain and suffering not only to himself but also to thousands of his fellow human beings. (Henriques)

Karmic consequences of deceptive behavior are horrendous. Deceptive thoughts and behavior make one suffer not only in this life but also cause one to be born as an animal in the next life. Since the root cause of deception is unlimited greed based upon ignorance, we need to step back and examine and correct our real character, motives, and goals in life.

The antidotes for deception are leading a simple life and maintaining a straightforward disposition. The “simple life” obviously entails harboring limited desires, which abrogates the need to resort to dishonest means. A straightforward person will act without a hidden agenda, have a much lighter karmic burden, and live a more peaceful and serene life.

### **Greed (lobha)**

Greed is the most powerful and dangerous of all emotions and is the most difficult to control. It provides fuel for the fires of anger, arrogance, and deception and is therefore considered the father of all sins (evil activities). Although an iota of it, it can stay with a person even after the other three primary emotions are wiped out. As some redness stays in the cloth dyed with safflower even after washing, this emotion stays with a person all the way to one of the higher rungs of the spiritual ladder (10<sup>th</sup> *guṇasthāna*).<sup>10</sup>

Gandhi once said that there is enough in the world to satisfy everyone's needs but not enough to satisfy everyone's greed (Gandhi 3). Greed begets human desires, the greater the number of desires, the higher the mental turmoil and dissatisfaction. There is just no end to the craze and

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<sup>10</sup> *dhudakosumbhayavattham, hohi jahā suhamarāyasarijuttam |  
evam suhamakasāo, suhamasarāgotti ṇādavvo || (Gommaṭasāra Jivakāṇḍa 58)*

madness to seek more and more. The result is dissatisfaction, stress, tension, and mental and health problems.

The cure prescribed in religion is contentment, by limiting one's desires to a more reasonable level and maintaining a balance between one's greed and needs.

### Types of No-kaṣāyas

As stated earlier, the scriptures have identified 9 *no-kaṣāyas*. They are quasi *kaṣāyas* that help generate the primary emotions. They are:

1. Laughter (*hāsya*),
- 2-3. Emotions of happiness or unhappiness (*rati* and *arati*),
4. Grief (*śoka*),
5. Fear: Fear of authority, enemy, next life, loss of wealth, loss of life due to an accident, not being able to earn a livelihood, death, and loss of reputation (*bhaya*),
6. Disgust (*jugupsā*),
- 7-9. Female libido, male libido, and bisexual libido (*strīveda*, *puruṣaveda*, and *napuṃsaka-veda*)

Jainism recommends the use of equanimity in the face of all the above situations.

### Kaṣāyas, No-kaṣāyas and the Karmic Cycle

The Jain religion regards the entire spectrum of *kaṣāyas* and *no-kaṣāyas* as nothing but the product of past karmas. Here is the way the cycle occurs:

1. When the past karmas come to fruition and an event occurs, people react with emotions rather blindly. Their emotional reactions are normally based upon ignorance (*ajñāna*), unrestrainedness (*asaṃyama*), and wrong belief (*mithyātva*) and thus on an impure state of mind. (Todarmal 46)
2. Emotions generated are of two broad categories at this stage: *rāga* (attachment) and *dveṣa* (aversion). Attachment gives rise to two primary emotions (deception and greed) and 5 *no-kaṣāyas* (laughter, feelings of happiness, and 3 emotions related to libido). Aversion gives rise to the remaining two primary emotions (anger and arrogance) and 4 *no-kaṣāyas* (feelings of unhappiness, grief, fear, and disgust).<sup>11</sup>
3. Emotions identified above lead to verbal and physical actions involving violence, lies, stealing, sexual acts, and possessions (wealth accumulation).
4. Mental, physical, and verbal acts then lead to the formation of new karmas leading to further bondage.
5. The bondage becomes a cause for a new cycle of birth, growth, decay, and death.
6. Thus, the cycle of worldly life continues to move indefinitely.

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<sup>11</sup> “*kaṣāyamadhya krodhamaṇadvayaṃ dveṣāṅgam, māyālobhadvayaṃ ca rāgāṅgam, nokaṣāyamadhya tu strīpūṃnapuṃsakavedatrayaṃ hāsyaratidvayaṃ ca rāgāṅgam, aratiśokadvayaṃ bhayajugupsādvayaṃ ca dveṣāṅgamiti jñātvayam*” (Brahmadeva's Vṛtti on Bṛhad-Dravyasaṃgraha 48)



It may be instructive to note the relationship between toxic emotions and verbal and physical acts of sins (step 3 above). In Jainism, sins such as violence, speaking lies, stealing, sexual lust, and mad craze after money are considered to have their roots in *kaṣāyas* and have proclaimed that there is a strong connection between the two. One is a cause; the other is an effect. For example, violence does not start in a vacuum. Usually, it is preceded by either a trace of anger, ego, greed, or a combination thereof. Without violent thoughts, there can be no violent action. Even a giant war starts with a single angry thought on the part of an individual and then – before we know it – it catches wildfire. The same reasoning applies to other vices. Jainism says that if you control these deadly emotions, the control of physical behavior will follow automatically:

If we want to reprogram our belief system and overcome biases, we're not even aware we have, let's make an effort to take charge of our thoughts and reactions. Let go of the passions (*kaṣāyas*) of anger, hatred, ego, and deceit. The root of these passions is attachment (Nanavati).

This is very profound, as here the Jain philosophy is showing a way to bring about a spiritual transformation at the individual level that in turn leads to a better society.

### **Contemporary Societal Ills**

Wars and terrorism in different parts of the world, financial collapse, and global warming are some of the major ills that have impacted the lives of millions all over the world recently. If we analyze each of them, we can easily trace the root causes back to the use of poisonous emotions. The Iraq war probably was based primarily upon arrogance and anger, the birth of terrorism on anger, hate, and deception, the financial meltdown on arrogance, deception, and greed, and global warming on greed. Even if we look back at the past; we will find the same common thread. Unfortunately, the political and business leaders who make decisions base their decisions to satisfy their personal egos without giving due consideration to the spiritual aspect.

Had they abided by the Jain principles and diminished the extent to which the toxic emotions and base impulses had infected their behavior, the societal concomitant harm could have been mitigated and the world would have been a much better place.

### **Discussion on how to control Kaṣāyas and break the Karmic Cycle**

The root causes of toxic emotions are ignorance, unrestrainedness, and wrong belief. Jainism has recommended many ways to address these causes and structured daily rituals (spiritual practices) as well.

The first step suggested to remove ignorance revolves around knowing, understanding, and forming a firm conviction about the true nature, identity, and power of our own soul (*swarūpa*/inner self).

The scriptures assert that worldly souls have been wandering around eternally because we lack a full appreciation of who we are; as a result, we have been eternally suffering<sup>12</sup>. This ignorance manifests itself in the way we think and act.

Because we do not know our true nature, we equate the soul with the body while, in fact, they are totally different from each other. Because of this fundamental error on our part, we tend to mistake the latter for the former. The correct approach is (1) to consider that emotions are different from the soul and (2) to make our soul (sometimes called the inner voice) the driver and controller of our thoughts, emotions, and behavior.

In reality, that is not what happens. Typically, when we receive a stimulus, the mind jumps, takes charge, and orders the body to take action without the soul (self) being cognizant.

The simple solution is to slow down before reacting to any stimulus. This will allow our soul/consciousness to take the lead and utilize its intrinsic qualities of forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, contentment, charity, and compassion.

The fire of anger can best be extinguished through the exercise of compassion and forgiveness, arrogance through humility, deception through straightforwardness, and greed through contentment.

The best way to slow down our reactions to day-to-day stimuli is through the practice of meditation. It is through meditation that we focus on our inner self, calm our minds, and reflect upon how we react. Once our mind becomes tranquil, we can start reacting positively to stimuli with a correct attitude.

We can start appreciating our real nature and listening to what our inner voice is telling us. At this stage, we can start drawing out from our dormant divine qualities, and getting answers to our questions from within.

At this point, our own experience can lead us to start thinking about the karmic cycle that governs our lives and to start developing a strategy to break this cycle through the control of emotions. This means that the next time we run into a pleasant or unpleasant situation, we will not react in the same way.

We can start reflecting upon everything as it happens due to our own past karmas and that no useful purpose is served by blaming and punishing others for our troubles. With this frame of mind, perhaps we can start controlling our minds and acting dispassionately so as to minimize the formation of new karmas.

When we read the stories of Lord Mahavir, we realize that this is the path he followed, as he won over the inner enemies of defiling emotions and achieved liberation.

The remedial process of eliminating the toxic emotions and base impulses is simple to comprehend; and yet, when a real situation arises, most of us fail miserably. We simply forget

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<sup>12</sup> *aīse mithādṛga-jñāna-caraṇa vasa, bhramata bharata duḥkha janama-maraṇa |  
tātaiṃ inako tajiye sujāna, suna tina saṃkṣepa kahūṃ bakhāna* || (Chahaḍhālā 2.1)

the core message and our mind just overpowers us. We react instinctively without giving much thought to the situation at hand and then regret it afterward. The emotional thoughts are generated at the mind level without us being conscious of them. Because the mind plays tricks with us, we need help from wherever it is available.

One person who can provide such help and make a profound change in our daily *kaṣāya*-laden behavior is a spiritual guide. He can steer us in the right direction, help us see the truth and more importantly our faults, provide feedback and put us on the right path. He can also work on our belief system and continually serve as a role model for us to follow.

In addition to getting help from a spiritual mentor, we also need to stay in the company (*satsaṅga*) of religious people for positive reinforcement and engage in self-study on a daily basis. Another step worth looking at is the development of an attitude of detachment (*vairāgya*).

This idea is summed up in the scriptures very clearly under the axiom of *Anitya Bhāvanā* or Reflection of Impermanence. It states that all material things in life are temporary, transient in nature, and come with an expiration date, a date that is out of our control. (Nyayavijaya 109-111) Pondering over this truth plus eleven others should serve as a reminder of the way things really are and enlarge our perspective. They are designed to make us detached and passion-free in our approach to solving the daily problems of life.

The practice of the following major rituals is yet another technique to control *kaṣāyas*:

- **Sāmāyika (48-minute meditation to improve self-awareness):** This daily ritual calms the mind and one's inner self. It also improves the clarity of thought and helps us gain equanimity.<sup>13</sup>
- **Pratikramaṇa (Introspection and asking for forgiveness for one's mistakes):** This is an extremely powerful tool because it provides an opportunity to acknowledge one's faults and seek forgiveness. Lasting for approximately 1 hour, this ritual is recommended for every morning and evening. If not feasible, then a longer version is recommended every fortnight, every 4 months, or once every year at the minimum.<sup>14</sup>
- **Daily reminder of 12 Bhāvanās (Reflections):** (1) *anitya bhāvanā* (transientness), (2) *aśaraṇa bhāvanā* (helplessness), (3) *saṃsāra bhāvanā* (world of transmigration), (4) *ekatva bhāvanā* (soleness), (5) *anyatva bhāvanā* (separateness), (6) *aśucitva bhāvanā* (impurity), (7) *āsrava bhāvanā* (designated inflow), (8) *saṃvara bhāvanā* (designated protection), (9) *nirjarā bhāvanā* (designated cleaning off), (10) *loka bhāvanā* (universe), (11) *bodhi-durlabhatva bhāvanā* (difficulty in achieving right thought and right conduct), and (12) *dharmasvākhyātatva* (perfect delivery of essence of religion).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "samasya āyah samāyah, saḥ prayojanaṃ yasya tat sāmāyikam" (*Āvaśyakasūtra 1-Pratijñāsūtra*)

<sup>14</sup> 'Prati' means 'back' and 'Kramaṇa' means 'to go', i.e. to go back, to reflect and review, to confess and atone, asking for forgiveness from others for one's own faults of mind, body and speech in one's daily activities, and forgiving faults of others and extending friendship to all. (Shah 12)

<sup>15</sup> "anityāśaraṇa-saṃsāraikatvānyatvāśucitvāsrava-saṃvaranirjarā-lokabodhidurlabhasvākhyātatvānucintanam-anuprekṣā" (*Tattvārthasūtra 9.7*)

- **Paryūṣaṇa** (Festival of spiritual attributes observed for 8 days every year in Śvetāmbara tradition / **Daśa Lakṣaṇa** (Festival of spiritual attributes observed for 10 days every year).

The above practices – if carried out consciously and regularly – have the power to make one passion-free. They have the power to bring out divinity from us and make us humble in our dealings with other human beings. Every one of them has a purpose and has an additive value, the sum total of which could have a profound impact on us.

I asked a Jain scholar about 35 years ago if he had any simple advice for me to control my emotions. His answer was short but very powerful. He said: “Watch your thoughts.” I did not understand the message at the time, but looking back, I feel his message showed a deep insight.

His message said loud and clear: “Thinking is everything. Every thought has karmic consequences.” Perhaps he knew that most human minds are driven by *kaṣāyas* and watching and recognizing them would be an excellent first step towards winning them over. Therefore, when we consider worldly material as good or bad for us, then these *kaṣāyas* are born which can be eradicated through reading and practicing the values told in the scriptures.

## **Conclusion**

The Jain religion is one of the very few religions that have analyzed the root cause of human suffering and offered an effective cure for mankind. It views the problems at the macro level as a reflection of what is happening at the micro level inside most of us.

That is the rationale behind its focus on the inner spiritual transformation of each and every sentient being, paving the way for happiness for all now and eventual liberation from the cycle of death and birth. This approach indeed holds the key to changing the whole world. Unfortunately, ancient Jain philosophy has remained unknown to date to the majority of people on the face of the earth.

When we read or watch the news about the daily events in the news media, we can observe that most of them are occurring because of the rampant use of toxic emotions by people. Driven by these emotions, the world in more recent times has turned upside down/inside out. It is bogged down in violence, stealing, greed, hatred, sex, religious fighting and terror. Hundreds of people are getting killed every single day. Millions of people do not get even a single good meal to eat in a day.

In this kind of environment, Jainism offers a practical and ethical philosophy and tools for living a passion-free, restrained, tolerant life, full of love and compassion. A lifestyle marked by the constant awareness of the destructive role played by toxic emotions and their control in our thoughts and behavior will help us to be more compassionate, forgiving, humble, and peaceful in living with fellow humans.

This could create peace, friendship, and harmony throughout the world. The need of the hour is for us to understand and practice this philosophy with an open mind. Perhaps President Obama recognized this point when, in the course of presenting his official remarks on Diwali on October 14, 2009, he offered the following reflection on Jainism: “In Jainism, the occasion

celebrates the attainment of *nirvāṇa* by Lord Mahāvīra, one of the long line of spiritual leaders known for achieving enlightenment by freeing themselves of base human impulses and emotions.” (President Obama's Diwali Message )

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