

GREED AND ITS RESOLUTION THROUGH THE JAIN DOCTRINE OF ICCHĀPARIMĀṆA

Kamal Kumar Naulakha¹

Abstract

This paper examines greed (*lobha*) and possessiveness (*parigraha*) as underlying causes of individual, social, economic, and ecological disorder from the perspective of Jain philosophy. Drawing upon Jain canonical and philosophical literature, it investigates *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *icchāparimāṇa* (limitation of desires) as ethical frameworks for addressing excessive consumption, accumulation, inequality, exploitation, and environmental degradation. Jain thought understands greed not simply as an economic impulse but as a mental passion that intensifies attachment and perpetuates cycles of acquisition, competition, and violence. Against this tendency, Jain ethics advocates restraint, contentment, moderation, and conscious regulation of material desires. The paper further engages with Acharya Mahaprajna's concept of relative economics, which reorients economic thought towards human well-being, ethical responsibility, and self-restraint rather than treating wealth accumulation as an end in itself. By placing this context in dialogue with the dominant material and growth-oriented assumptions of modern economics, the study explores the potential of Jain ethical thought to offer an alternative basis for understanding development and prosperity.

Introduction

Greed (*lobha* or *lālaca*) is a passion (*kaṣāyas*), which is the most powerful of the four *kaṣāyas*, i.e., anger (*krodha*), conceit (*māna*), deceit (*māyā*), and greed (*lobha*). The desire for possessions (*parigraha*) is dangerous because this is the harboring point for greed. In order to attain liberation, greed is the last of the passions to get annihilated.² Amongst the four subdivisions of greed – *anantānubandhī* (cause of endless transmigration), *apratyākhyānāvaraṇīya* (cause of non-renunciation), *pratyākhyānāvaraṇīya* (cause of partial renunciation) and *saṃjvalana* (flaming up) – the last to get destroyed is *saṃjvalana lobha*

¹ Chartered Accountant and Arbitrator–Mediator in Practice, Mumbai; Email: knaulakha@outlook.com

² This is indicated by Ācārya Amitagati's description of the tenth spiritual stage (*guṇasthāna*), *sūkṣma-sāṃparāya* (subtle passion). In *Pañcasamgraha* (1.22), the remaining passion is compared to the exceedingly faint inner redness of *kusumbha* (safflower), signifying an extremely subtle form of passion. More explicitly, *Pañcasamgraha* (1.132) identifies this residual passion as *aṇu-lobha*, "subtle greed," experienced by the *jīva* while suppressing or destroying *mohanīya-karma*. Thus, at the *sūkṣma-sāṃparāya* stage, anger, pride, and deceit have already been eliminated, while only an exceedingly subtle form of greed remains. Hence, *lobha* is the last of the four *kaṣāyas* to be annihilated on the path to liberation.

(which is a minuscule trace of greed). Even at the time of rising of *saṃjvalana kaṣāya*, the state of *vītarāgatā* (perfect equanimity) cannot be attained (Tḥāṇaṃ 4.284.69).

By nature, man is often greedy. He may work tirelessly to accumulate wealth, even when he does not truly need it. The desire to amass enormous wealth, without regard for the necessity of such accumulation or the purity of the means used to acquire it, can lead to crime. One who overcomes possessiveness in the mind gradually gives up possessiveness in practice as well, only then does he truly succeed in overcoming the instinct of possessiveness toward both animate and inanimate things.³ Because of the sense of “mine-ness,” the path becomes distorted, and so does knowledge. Only by dissolving the knot of attachment can one attain right intuition and right knowledge.⁴

The relationship between possessiveness and the consequences of excessive material engagement is also articulated in the *Tattvārthasūtra*. The text associates excessive *ārambha* (engagement in occupational activities) and *parigraha* with the karmic conditions leading to infernal rebirth, while their limitation, accompanied by qualities such as gentleness (*mārdava*) and straightforwardness (*ārjava*), is associated with human rebirth.⁵ This formulation is significant because it shifts the discussion beyond possession understood merely as the quantity of material goods. What matters is the extent of one’s involvement in activity and possession, together with the dispositions that accompany them. In this sense, Jain ethics locates the problem of *parigraha* not simply in having, but in excessive involvement and attachment.

Individual ownership rides on a strong current of possessiveness, but this feeling becomes weak in group ownership, state ownership, or co-operatives. There is a strong connection between ownership and violence. Where the question of possession exists, there is a strong attraction to amass wealth, and where the tendency to hoard exists, then there is a use of excessive force.

Contemporary Economic Problems

At the present juncture, mankind is passing through turmoil and facing crisis which is manifold and multi-dimensional. Humanity is stationed at a crossroad. Infatuation has no regard for any wrong or right. Where there is attachment to possessiveness, there can neither be penance, nor control over one’s senses, nor any of the prescribed rules.⁶ Although economic problems vary across geographies, lifestyles, environments, earning capacities, systems of governance, political objectives, and many other factors, in the present context they can be examined at four major levels. At each level, greed is a fundamental cause of trouble:

1. **Individual:** Attachment to money is essentially a disguised form of greed. Money is one of humankind’s most significant inventions and a powerful means of revealing

³ *je mamāiya-matiṃ jahāti, se jahāti mamāiyaṃ* | (Ācārāṅga-Bhaṣyam 2.156)

⁴ *se hu viṭṭhapahe muṇī, jassa ṇatthi mamāiyaṃ* | (Ibid 2.157)

⁵ *bahvārambhaparigrahatvaṃ ca nārakasyāyūṣaḥ | alpārambhaparigrahatvaṃ svabhāvamārdavārjavaṃ ca mānuṣasya* | (Tattvārthasūtra 6.16, 6.18)

⁶ *ṇa ettha tavo vā, damo vā, niyamo vā dṛśyate* | (Ācārāṅga-Bhaṣyam 2.59)

human nature. The intensity of greed, which lies at the root of every form of attachment and possessiveness, is inherent in human consciousness.

2. **Social:** Greed creates disparity and promotes exploitation in society. Class conflicts, such as tensions between the rich and the poor, workers and owners, or employees and employers, are major contributors to social unrest.
3. **National:** Terrorism, riots, rebellions, politics based on threats, bribery, uncontrolled urbanization, unhealthy competition, and monopolistic expansion can all be traced, in one way or another, to the greed for power.
4. **Global:** Wars, economic rivalries, corporate domination, exploitation of weaker countries, espionage, cross-border rebellions, violent uprisings, and drug trafficking are examples of attempts to acquire or maintain power on a global scale. Ultimately, the desire for such supremacy is yet another manifestation of greed.

Icchāparimāṇa and Aparigraha

In his principal code of conduct, Mahāvīra prescribed the course of observance of five major vows (*mahāvratas*) namely – non-violence (*ahiṃsā*), truth (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*), and non-possessiveness (*aparigraha*), which are adopted by the ascetics. He also prescribed a subsidiary code of conduct for lay followers which included five *aṇuvratas* (minor vows) among which the fifth one, being *icchāparimāṇa*, is defined as “voluntary restrictions upon desire for possessions” (Āvaśyaka Paṇīṣṭa 22).

In Jainism, the term *parigraha* denotes “craving for, acquisition of, or accumulation of material possessions.” The *mahāvratas* of *aparigraha* therefore calls for non-attachment and non-possessiveness. Attachment is regarded as an obstacle to spiritual liberation, as the excessive pursuit of material possessions intensifies the desire to possess, fuels the greed for acquiring more, and gives rise to the fear of losing what one already possesses. *Aparigraha* refers to the lifelong renunciation of *parigraha* through three *karaṇas*, namely committing oneself (*kṛta*), inducing others to commit (*kārita*), and approving of others’ commission (*anumodana*), and three *yogas*, namely activities of the mind (*mana*), speech (*vacana*), and body (*kāya*). (Mahaprajna, Jaina Pāribhāṣika Śabdakośa 361).

As *aparigraha* denotes restraint on materialistic possession and consumption, its very essence lies in detachment in every sphere of life. *Aparigraha* does not imply negation of life – it means being an essentialist (Bapna 168) which means to avoid attachment to any physical thing and to never crave possessing it. It is a part of the virtue of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence). One should not deprive others from having their share of things. In practical terms, it means that one should use proper restraint in consumption of goods and avoid unrestrained desire to amass wealth only for himself (Mahaprajna, Philosophical Foundations of Jainism 8). On the other hand, *icchāparimāṇa* refers to limiting one’s desires for material possessions. Environmental problems and the unhappiness prevalent even in the prosperous parts of the world are, in part, consequences of excessive consumption and the desire to possess more. At the heart of modern

economics, consumerism is pervasive, encouraging people to believe that greater material abundance is a path to happiness and that the pursuit of more is desirable. Therefore, non-possessiveness, as a discipline that cultivates restraint in one's demands and desires, is crucial. It helps reduce dependence on external possessions and, more importantly, fosters a state of mental detachment from them.

The Jain canonical text *Sthānāṅga* also mentions two types of vows for the ascetics and the lay-followers. In the commentary on the verses on the differentiation between *aparigraha mahāvratā* and *icchāparimāṇa aṇuvratā*,⁷ Abhayadeva Sūri elucidates about the former that it is a total abstinence from possessions, without any restrictions – substantial (all substances), spatial (in the entire universe), temporal (i.e. produced at night time etc.), or emotional (with developed attachment or aversion)⁸ – whereas the latter one means a partial abstinence from possession through exercising voluntary restrictions on the desires for accumulation of money and other things.⁹

Mahatma Gandhi famously observed that “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed” (Pyarelal 552). Nature provides resources sufficient to meet everyone's basic needs; yet human beings, driven by ever-expanding desires, seek to accumulate far more than they require, thereby contributing to widening socio-economic disparities. Mahāvīra, too, lucidly recognizes the intimate relationship between profit and greed: as the pursuit of profit increases, so does greed. The fulfillment of one desire rarely brings contentment; rather, it gives rise to several new desires. Thus, the cycle of acquisition becomes virtually endless. Even modern economists acknowledge that human wants are essentially insatiable – a bottomless pit that can never be completely filled. In this sense, the problem lies not in the scarcity of resources but in the limitless expansion of human wants and the consequent tendency to accumulate beyond necessity. The *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* (8.17) observes that there is no end to human desires: “greed increases along with gain,” and desires are “endless like the sky.” The person who is not vigilant, overwhelmed by greed, becomes mentally distracted by the multitude of desires and continually strives for their fulfillment. Such an endeavour is likened to the futile attempt to fill a sieve. As the *Ācārāṅga-Bhāṣyam* (3.42) explains, just as a material sieve cannot retain what is poured into it, the mind consumed by desire can never attain lasting satisfaction.¹⁰ The sieve, therefore, becomes a powerful metaphor for the insatiable nature of human desire: no matter how much is acquired, the mind continues to seek more.

⁷ *paṃca mahavvatā pannattā, taṃjahā – savvāto paṇātivātāto veramaṇaṃ jāva savvāto pariggahāto veramaṇaṃ | paṃcāṇuvvatā pannatā, taṃjahā – thūlāto paṇātivātāto veramaṇaṃ, thūlāto musāvāyāto veramaṇaṃ, thūlāto adinnādāṇāto veramaṇaṃ, sadārasaṃtose icchāparimāṇe ||* (Ṭhāṇaṃ 5.5.1-2)

⁸ *sarvasmāt kṛtāderathavā dravyataḥ sarvadravyaviṣayāt kṣetrato lokasambhavāt kālato'tītāde rātryādibhavādvā bhāvato rāga-dveṣaviṣayāt, pariḡrhyate ādīyate pariḡrahaṇaṃ vā pariḡrahaḥ, tasmād viramaṇamiti |* (Abhayadev-Sūri Commentary *Sthānāṅgasūtra* 5.5.1.389)

⁹ *icchāyāḥ dhanādiviṣayasyābhilāṣasya parimāṇaṃ niyamanamicchāparimāṇaṃ deśataḥ pariḡrahaviratirityarthaḥ |* (Ibid)

¹⁰ *aṇegacitte khalu ayaṃ purise, se keyaṇaṃ arihae pūraitae |* (Ācārāṅga-Bhāṣyam 3.42)

For Jain laypeople, material possessions are understood as a temporary means of sustaining the body to the extent necessary during its finite physical existence, rather than as an end in themselves. Wealth, therefore, should not be regarded as something to be possessed and accumulated without limit, but as a responsibility to be used judiciously and, where possible, for the welfare of those in need. Excessive hoarding and lavish consumption are inconsistent with the Jain emphasis on restraint and non-attachment. When individuals become attached to consumer goods – houses, cars, jewellery, vacations, luxuries, and accumulated wealth – such attachment can become a distraction from spiritual development. More broadly, the pursuit of ever-increasing material consumption has significant environmental consequences, as the extraction of natural resources, production, and consumption contribute to ecological degradation and climate change. Jain ethics, therefore, encourages individuals to restrain and progressively reduce their desires, distinguish genuine needs from unnecessary wants, and consciously limit their material consumption. In this way, limiting possessions and desires becomes not merely a spiritual discipline but also an ethical response to the ecological consequences of excessive consumption.

Relative Economics vs Modern Economics

The concept of relative economics, propounded by the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī Acharya Mahaprajna (Naulakha 40), is rooted in a humanistic approach. It emphasizes self-restraint, truthfulness, and other ethical virtues that may not always arise spontaneously among individuals. From this perspective, greed for material wealth and corruption must be actively curbed, while money should remain a means of fulfilling legitimate needs rather than becoming an end in itself. Accordingly, individuals are encouraged to move away from excessive accumulation and embrace the principle of *aparigraha* by exercising restraint over limitless consumption (Bapna 64-65). In this context, consumerism should be reconsidered, and *icchāparimāṇa*, or the limitation of desires, should be promoted as a more appropriate response to the increasingly complex economic challenges of the present time. The Indian classical tradition, in this regard, offers a systematic framework for organizing society, promoting economic growth, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources. Kamla Jain rightly says in her book *Aparigraha: The Humane Solution* “as *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* are the best medicines for physical fitness of the body, similarly *icchāparimāṇa* is the best medicine for social fitness of the individual” (K. Jain 43).

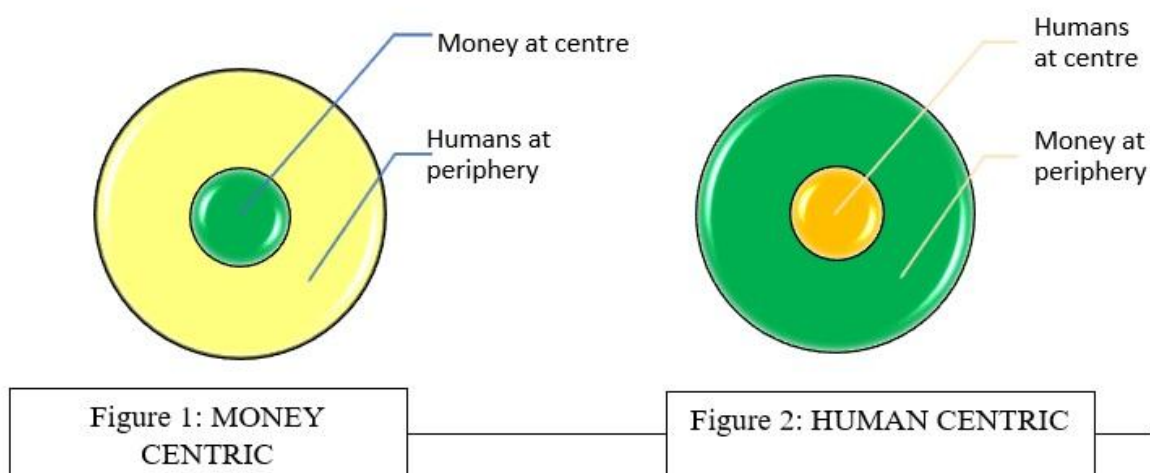
The need of the present hour is to eradicate hunger entirely by moving beyond the limitations of contemporary capitalism-based economics and embracing a humanistic economic model grounded in universal compassion, universal friendliness, contentment, selflessness, altruism, consideration for others, and, above all, the spiritual principle of *anukampā*.¹¹ Such an approach places human well-being and ethical responsibility at the centre of economic life, thereby seeking to create a system in which the satisfaction of basic human needs takes precedence over the pursuit of profit and material accumulation. By developing a humanistic

¹¹ *Anukampā* (compassion) is one of the five characteristics of an enlightened world-viewer which constitute the defining characteristics of the right faith (*samyagdarśana*) that are: tranquility, desire for salvation, detachment, compassion, and spiritual belief (G. Tulsi 90-91).

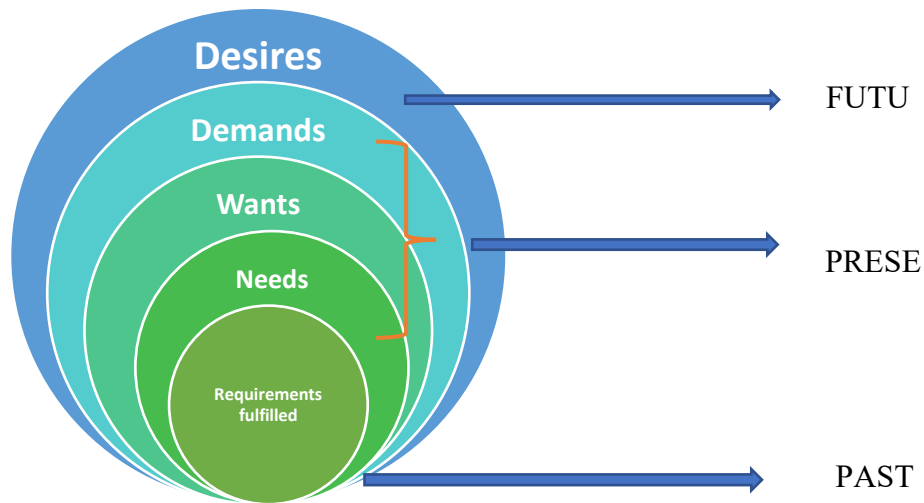
model of economics, or relative economics, and incorporating spiritual practices aimed at cultivating human consciousness, it becomes possible to address and gradually overcome greed, excessive desires, and other factors that contribute to materialistic consumption. The first step in this process is to distinguish between the temporary happiness derived from prosperity, material possessions, and physical comforts and the deeper, more enduring sense of happiness that arises from contentment, self-control, moderation of desires, and the practice of minimalism. From this perspective, humanistic economics seeks to redefine the very purpose of economic well-being by shifting the emphasis from material abundance to inner fulfilment. Such a model would enable individuals to experience genuine and sustainable happiness without making it dependent on prosperity, consumption, or material comforts.

The human development approach, introduced by the UNDP in 1990 through the Human Development Report and the Human Development Index, emphasizes placing people at the centre of the development process rather than treating economic growth as an end in itself (Human Development Report 10). The human development encompasses many spheres; however, the modern economists have confined it merely to the economic development. A holistic approach to the human development ought to be implemented, including spiritual aspects of life and not only the material ones.

There are two distinct forms of happiness: one derived from material wealth and the other arising from inner peace. From a materialistic perspective, wealth and happiness are often regarded as synonymous; however, according to Mahāvīra, freedom from possessiveness and restraint over material desires lead to genuine peace and happiness. Modern economics tends to place money at the centre of economic activity, while human beings and their ever-expanding desires remain at the periphery (Figure 1). In contrast, relative economics places human beings at the centre and regards money primarily as a means of fulfilling essential needs and sustaining life (Figure 2). Consequently, true human welfare, grounded in purity of means and humanistic ethics, takes precedence over the accumulation of wealth. When righteousness, restraint, and self-control guide economic behaviour, the human being occupies the central position, while wealth assumes a secondary role. Conversely, when morality, restraint, and ethical considerations are neglected, material possessions and wealth become the primary focus, relegating human welfare to the periphery. This distinction provides an important framework for understanding many contemporary economic problems. As long as wealth remains the focal point and human beings occupy the periphery, economic offences, corruption, and other forms of unethical economic behaviour are likely to persist (Mahaprajna, Economics of Mahavira 12).



The modern economic system rests largely on three interconnected foundations: the multiplication of desires, the expansion of needs, and the growth of demands. Desires refer to aspirations for particular means of satisfying deeper needs, while demands represent wants for specific goods or services that are supported by both the ability and the willingness to purchase them. Needs, in contrast, arise from a perceived deprivation of basic necessities or forms of satisfaction. From a comparative perspective, the domain of desires is the broadest, followed by demands, while the domain of fundamental needs is relatively narrower, although it remains dynamic and subject to change over time.



In his quest for “more,” a man just keeps moving forward. He wants “more,” since he isn’t yet happy. Happiness is a relative term and anybody who has “more” seems to be happier. In his chase for “more,” one day he becomes the richest man in his circle. Just when he thinks he would now settle down, he realizes that there are hundreds of men richer than him. He also realizes that there is no way to maintain a stable position in the market economy. The only way to remain where he is to run faster than the ones behind him. It is an aimless and blind chase after the unknown and happiness seems to be hiding somewhere behind the clouds, ever elusive (Chaudhuri and Chaudhuri 118-119). Even if some powers were to give the entire universe full of riches to any person, the recipient would still not be satisfied with this. The human soul is so inordinately unsatiated that its desires always remain unfulfilled.¹²

An ideal socio-economic system should leave no room for poverty or for situations in which people are unable to meet their basic needs. At the same time, it should not promote a form of economic prosperity that benefits only a small section of affluent society at the expense of others. True development, therefore, requires a balance between material well-being and ethical and social responsibility. Although material possessions and financial resources are

¹² *kaṣiṇaṃ pi jo imaṃ loyaṃ paḍipuṇṇaṃ dalejja ikkassa, teṇāvi se na saṃtusse, ii duppūrae ime āyā |*
(Uttarajjhayaṇāṇi 8.16)

necessary for meeting human needs, they cannot, by themselves, guarantee happiness. Progress, in contrast, represents growth accompanied by ethics, honesty, discipline, and adherence to one's conscience. It requires sustained effort and hard work guided by ethical values. Success goes a step further by combining progress with humanity, expressed through values and a positive attitude; morality, reflected in purity of conduct; and spirituality, manifested through inner stability, happiness, and peace. Thus, while growth signifies a process of quantitative development, progress represents growth guided by ethical values, and success reflects the achievement of holistic human well-being. Genuine development, therefore, should not be measured solely by economic expansion but by its ability to generate progress, positive social transformation, and sustainable human welfare.

Resolution of the Passion of Greed through the Essence of Aparigraha/Icchāparimāṇa

Greed is not only a source of violence but can also give rise to the tendency to steal and engage in other unethical forms of behaviour. These negative consequences can be addressed through the practice of *aparigraha* (non-possession) at the practical level and through *ahimsā* (non-violence) and *asteya* (non-stealing) at the ethical and mental levels. Attachment, when manifested as greed, is regarded as a fundamental cause of violence, while excessive possessiveness and the accumulation of wealth can become sources of social and individual destruction. Thus, *aparigraha* extends beyond merely limiting material possessions; it involves overcoming the cycle of attachment, greed, violence, and possessiveness.

Jain canonical literature contains a rich body of economic and ethical principles, including *icchāparimāṇa* (limitation of desires), *adattādāna* (unlawful appropriation), *bhogopabhoga-parimāṇa* (limitation of consumable and non-consumable goods), *aparigraha* (non-possession), *asteya* (non-stealing), *ahimsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *yathāsāmvibhāga* (equitable distribution), *visarjana* (renunciation or giving away), *apramāda* (mindfulness), and *santoṣa* (contentment). Collectively, these principles advocate the regulation of desires, moderation in consumption, environmental preservation, ecological balance, conservation of scarce resources, restraint in accumulation, and the maintenance of purity of means. The economics of non-violence and the containment of greed through self-restraint constitute fundamental pillars of the Jain economic vision. The Jain principles of limiting desires (*icchāparimāṇa*) and limiting possessions (*bhogopabhoga-parimāṇa*) provide an ethical framework for determining the appropriate use of resources in the fulfilment of basic needs. These principles are not merely theoretical or abstract propositions; rather, they are intended to be incorporated into everyday life. Jain texts articulate this restraint through a practical code of conduct, particularly the *aṇuvratas*, which encourage individuals to exercise self-control in their acquisition, possession, and consumption of material resources. Consequently, the ethical and economic principles embedded in Jain scriptures possess considerable relevance for addressing contemporary challenges of excessive consumption, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and economic inequality. By promoting moderation, ethical conduct, equitable distribution, and inner contentment, these principles offer a pathway towards a more peaceful, sustainable, and balanced social order. This

integrated vision of ethical restraint, human welfare, and responsible economic behaviour constitutes the essential foundation of relative economics.

Conclusion

Greed is fundamentally a disposition or state of the human mind, and its opposite, non-greed, likewise represents a cultivated mental disposition. As an individual progressively develops the practice of non-greed, the influence of greed gradually diminishes and can ultimately be overcome. Thus, the cultivation of non-greed serves as a means of exercising self-restraint and liberating oneself from the destructive consequences of excessive desire and attachment. An individual who is able to counteract greed through the conscious practice of non-greed thereby becomes capable of protecting and transforming oneself.¹³

Jainism advocates non-violence, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation of external possessions, and contentment on the basis that desires and greed are the root causes of indulgence. Though all the twelve householder's vows are a roadmap to the path of sustainability, the two vows known as *parigraha parimāṇa* (limiting one's possessions) and *bhogopabhoga parimāṇa* (limiting one's consumable and non-consumable goods) are the perfect antidote to the culture of consumerism. Only if these two small vows can be practiced by all people irrespective of their caste and creed can the eco-sustainability of the future be ensured (Bapna 150).

Jainism advocates non-violence, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation of excessive material possessions, and contentment, recognizing unrestrained desires and greed as fundamental causes of material indulgence. Although all twelve vows¹⁴ prescribed for the Jain householder provide an ethical framework conducive to sustainable living, the two principles of *parigraha-parimāṇa* (limitation of possessions) and *bhogopabhoga-parimāṇa* (limitation of consumable and non-consumable goods) are particularly relevant to addressing the contemporary culture of consumerism. By encouraging individuals to regulate their possessions and moderate their consumption, these vows offer an ethical framework for reducing excessive resource use and promoting environmental sustainability. Their universal practice, irrespective of caste, creed, or social status, could contribute significantly to creating a more sustainable and ecologically balanced future (Bapna 150).

¹³ *lobhaṃ alobheṇa dugaṃchamāṇe, laddhe kāme nābhigāhai* | (Ācārāṅga-Bhaṣyam 2.36)

¹⁴ The twelve householder's vows are: five *aṇuvratas* (minor vows) – *ahiṃsā* (non-violence), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmacarya* (chastity), and *parigraha-parimāṇa* (limitation of possessions); three *guṇavratas* (vows of restraint) – *digvrata* (limitation of movement), *bhogopabhoga-parimāṇa* (limitation of consumable and non-consumable goods) or *deśavrata* (limitation of activities within a specified area, as found in different scriptures), and *anarthadaṇḍavrata* (avoidance of purposeless or harmful activities); and four *śikṣāvratas* (disciplinary or training vows) – *sāmāyika* (periodic practice of equanimity), *deśavakāśika* (further restriction of movement and activities), *pauṣadhōpavāsa* (periodic fasting and observance of ascetic practices), and *atithisaṃvibhāga* (sharing with and providing food and necessities to worthy ascetics). See Bhargav's discussion in *Jaina Ethics* on vows found in Śvetāmbara and Digambara traditions (Bhargav 102-103).

The philosophy of Mahāvīra, centred on the cultivation of inner spiritual strength through renunciation, self-discipline, and restraint, offers a framework for addressing the proliferation of human desires without relying on coercion or external compulsion. From this perspective, freedom assumes a central position within the economic order, as genuine well-being depends upon an individual's capacity to regulate desires and exercise self-restraint. The *Daśavaikālika Sūtra* presents a path for overcoming the passions by prescribing their corresponding antidotes: anger is overcome through its subsidence, pride through humility, deceit through straightforwardness, and greed through contentment.¹⁵ Mahāvīra's economic thought is, thus, grounded in the regulation of desires and the cultivation of self-restraint, both of which are fundamental to any ethical understanding of economic life. It accommodates material as well as spiritual dimensions of human existence and, in keeping with the principle of *anekāntavāda* (non-one-sidedness), seeks to avoid a narrowly materialistic conception of economic well-being. Rather than viewing economic life exclusively through the lens of material acquisition and consumption, this perspective integrates ethical, spiritual, and material considerations into a more holistic understanding of human welfare. In this sense, Mahāvīra's economic thought offers a value-based perspective in which economic activity is guided not merely by the pursuit of wealth but also by freedom from excessive desire, self-restraint, ethical conduct, and the pursuit of lasting well-being.

Human needs, desires, and even the tendency toward greed are inherent aspects of human behaviour; however, their regulation through self-restraint and ethical discipline is essential for achieving individual and social harmony. In this context, a human-centred approach to economic development is more meaningful than one that evaluates economic well-being primarily in terms of monetary accumulation. Genuine and sustainable development must extend beyond human material interests to encompass the well-being of all living beings and the preservation of the ecological balance on which life depends. Only when economic development is guided by compassion, restraint, and concern for the well-being of all forms of life can it become truly sustainable, inclusive, and self-sufficient.

References

- "Āvaśyaka Pariśiṣṭa." *Āvaśyaka*. Ed. Acharya Mahaprajna. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 2000.
- Bapna, Ashok, ed. *Relative Economics*. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 2020.
- Bhargav, Dayanand. *Jaina Ethics*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1968.
- Chaudhuri, Malay and Arindam Chaudhuri. *The Great Indian Dream*. New Delhi: Macmillan India, 2003.
- Human Development Report*. New York: United Nations Development Programme, 1991.
- Jain, Hiralal, ed. *Pañcasamgraha*. Kashi: Bharatiya Jnanapitha, 1960.
- Jain, Kamla. *Aparigraha - The Humane Solution*. Varanasi: Parsvanath Vidyapitha, 1998.

¹⁵ *uvasameṇa haṇe kohaṃ, māṇaṃ bhaddavayā jīṇe | māyaṃ ca'jjavabhāveṇa, lobhaṃ santosaṃ jīṇe ||* (Daśavaikālikasūtra 8.36)

- Jambuvijaya, Muni, ed. *Sthānāṅgasūtra with Abhayadev-Sūri Commentary*. Vol. II. Mumbai: Shri Mahavira Jain Vidyalaya Publication, 2003.
- Mahaprajna, Acharya. *Ācārāṅga-Bhaṣyam*. Ed. Ganadhipati Tulsi. Trans. Nathmal Tatia, Muni Dulaharaj and Muni Mahendra Kumar. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 2001.
- . *Economics of Mahavira*. New Delhi: Adarsh Sahitya Sangh, 2010.
- . *Jaina Pāribhāṣika Śabdakośa*. Ed. Acharya Mahaprajna. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 2009.
- . *Philosophical Foundations of Jainism*. New Delhi: Adarsha Sahitya Sangh, 2002.
- Nathmal, Muni, ed. *Ṭhāṇam*. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 1976.
- Naulakha, Kamal Kumar. "Towards a Humanistic Economics: The Role and Relevance of Jain Principles." *ISJS-Transactions* 6.1 (2022): 33-42.
- Pyarelal, Nayyar. *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*. Vol. 2. Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1958.
- Sayyambhava. *Daśavaikālikasūtra*. Trans. Mahasati Pushpavati. Byavar: Shri Agam Prakashan Samiti, 2013.
- Tulsi, Acharya, ed. *Uttarajjhayaṇāṇi*. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 2000.
- Tulsi, Ganadhipati. *Illuminator of Jaina Tenets: English rendering of Jaina-Siddhānta-Dīpikā*. Trans. Satkari Mukherjee. Ladnun: Jain Vishva Bharati, 1995.
- Umāsvāti. *Tattvārthasūtra*. Ed. Sukhlal Sanghvi. Varanasi: Parshvanath Shodhpith, 1993.
