



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

B.L Sethi

M.Phil., Ph.D., D.Litt.

Dr. Shashi Morolia

Pro President JJT UNIVERSITY JHUNJHUNU

KEYWORDS :

1. Introduction:-

History is a word which tells us about our past. History is possible when we present it in proper perspective as well as proofs and facts makes its uniqueness. History is a medicine which can awaken the sleeping dynasties, societies, as well as communities.

2. The History of Jainism:-

Jainism, one of the three major religions of early India, has been continuously practised since the middle of the first millennium BC. According to Jainism in foreign countries, Published by Shri Bharatvarshiya Digamber Jain Mahasabha 2017 Page 34, by Dr Gokul Prasad Jain, Greek historian Herodotus has talked about Jain followers called Gymnosophists in Abyssinia and Ethiopia and German Scholar Mr. Samanias in Middle East Asia were Shraman Jains only. And Mr GF Muir says in the first century BC, Jain monks in thousands used to wander in Central Asia, Iraq, Siam and Palestine and preach Ahimsa. Jainism name derives from the word Jina, meaning 'liberator' or 'victor', referring to the spiritual rather than the material conquest.

History of Jainism in Africa is relatively short when compared with the histories of Judaism, Christianity and Islam on the same continent. There are about 10,000 Jains and around 10 organizations of Jainism. Jainism entered India during the late 19th century, when jains first emigrated from India to Kenya, and then to Uganda, Sudan and Tanzania. Jains emigrated to South Africa under British colonial rule in India and South Africa, and exceeded in trade and business. Due to the high number of Jain tourists, in addition to the resident Jain community, many restaurants offer Jain food.

3. The Emergence of Jainism:-

In the first half of the first millennium BC, the dominant religious Brahmin priests, acted as intermediaries between man and God. People used animal sacrifice to win favours from the Gods. Jainism emerged against this backdrop as Jainism was against slaughter of any kind. This resulted in emergence of the principle of non-violence and Jainism became a major force.

4. Meaning of non violence :-

Non Violence is a process that facilitates the establishment of durable peace and tries to prevent the recurrence of violence by addressing the root cause and effects of conflict through reconciliation and in institution building.

Peace building is an intervention that is designed to prevent the start of violent conflict by creating a sustainable peace.

5. From imperfection to perfection:-

The movement from imperfection to perfection is called progress. The physical body is imperfect and impermanent because it is under the bondage of time, space and identity. The physical body cannot attain perfection from the triple bondage of relativity. The quality of our life depends on what we are inside rather than outside. The process of thinking involves flow of thoughts. Happiness, however, does not result from material world. It is result of our attitude to life. The principal challenge bliss presents is the demand that one's ego is abandoned. If you know that happiness is the goal of all, you will stand on that broad and universal platform of brotherhood. And not only of brotherhood but also of universal oneness.

6. Peace and Harmony:-

Signs of internal bliss- Simplicity is a characteristic of greatness. Simplicity is a pre-requisite of spiritual advancement. It is a perfect

alignment of one's thoughts, words and action. Simplicity can be applied in all spheres of life. Simple living means living in moderation. Simple persons have contributed great things in their life. They were not only successful but were also perfect in all aspects of their life. When you are simple your outer and inner lives coincide. And it can happen only with peace and harmony among different people.

**7. Strong pillars of Peace-building in Jainism :-
'(i) Nonviolence is the supreme law'**

This statement has become the Jain motto. In English or other European languages a word with 'non' has a restrictive meaning as it implies only the negation of the concept. 'Nonviolence' could mean pacifism, which is already something valuable and important, but it has some idea of not acting which makes it limited.

This applies in three modes: in act, in speech and in thought. Practising ahimsa implies acting on oneself, expressed by the term – self-control. Controlling oneself, is not giving free course to one's passions, desires, ego, thus, not considering other living being as existing just to satisfy one's passions, desires or ego, in the end it means letting them live and make peace.

So Non-Violence is not the passive behaviour of people satisfied in observing what is happening around them, but the positive and constructive behaviour aiming at promoting others life and well being through gentleness, friendship, and peace. Hence it is a form of compassion.

(ii) Every soul is beneficial to other soul :

It is another Jain motto, and that the well being of one category as an impact on the well-being of another one. As the Jains say, all souls are like oneself. Destroying other souls affects them as well as one's own. This is their emphatic message.

(iii) Jainism and rational thinking :

This is encompassed in the fundamental concept of the 'three jewels' which are 'right faith, right knowledge and right conduct' They are listed in this sequence on purpose: first, there has to be an initial act of believing in a system of values and a global apprehension of it, then comes the detailed analysis of these values and concepts. And then the application of these values. Having both the intuition or awareness and the intellectual knowledge are necessary prerequisites to act properly. Only if we accept and know what is life, can we put into practice the value of non-violence in our daily life.

(iv) One soul many forms :

The doctrine of pluralism is another original and basic idea of Jainism that is connected with non-violence. It has a necessary role (of application) in non-violence. Favouring one-sidedness the Jains say, other philosophical systems encourage oppositions and conflicts, as accepting only one point of view means refusing the others and paving the way to intolerance. The non-absolute views of pluralism tend to the ideas of relativity and co-existence which create an awareness of reconciliation, a positive aspect of Non- violence and conflict-free society and it makes building of peace.

(v) Non-Violence :

One gains individual peace. Collective ethics of the society are not explicitly addressed. In fact, the idea is that as all beings are interdependent, the progress of everyone results in the progress of all. If non-violence is practised individually in all its aspects, it produces a

general improvement which has consequences on everyone. Hence, education in non-violence is required, so that it becomes something natural in each and everyone instead of being only a method of crisis management, and results into an overall change in society in the end.

8. Principles of Non-Violence:

(i) Achieve harmony through diversity:

People, race, tribes and communities might have different and varied customs, habits, tastes, character, inclinations and ideas. Their opinions and thoughts are often contrary to one another. Yet it is possible for unity to be revealed and perfect accord in the human souls. Look at the flowers in a garden, though different in kind, color, form and shape yet they co-exist nicely and make the garden look beautiful. Similarly, diversity in human beings can strengthen love, and multiplicity can be the greatest factor for co-ordination. When the diverse shades of thoughts, temperaments, character are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection can be revealed.

(ii) Positive alignment of thoughts:

Positive alignment of thought lead to action spring from within, from the inner core of the heart that all of us have in as individuals. We need to align our outer growth with inner growth through meditation. Conservation, perseverance and rejuvenation are intrinsic to sustainable inner and outer development. The growth on the material plane must be balanced with growth on subtle plane.

(iii) Enthusiasm about life and living:

Every one of us has a lower self and a higher self called Supreme! Living from lower life makes the life threatening, whereas living from higher life makes one enthusiastic and opens up opportunities. We can draw our identity from acquired knowledge. This acquired knowledge support the higher self, "Silence" is essential. Silence speaks louder than the word. During silence, one is open to life and life opens to him. Life reaches towards him in the centre of his heart. Experiencing silence is knowing yourself. Knowing yourself is freedom. In silence one can be the embodiment of joy, the very expression of love. It restores one to love and redeems one in love. In silence you will know your own beauty, your own power, your own magnificence. It is the same for all. As the embodiment of silence you are in perfection. Silence reveals the mystery of life, the wonder of life, the beauty of life, the sanctity of life, becomes our life. Creativity and enthusiasm can spring only when you are well-rested and you cannot rest if you are anxious about the outcome of your actions.

9. How to Gain Eternal Peace:-

(i) Complete Awareness leads to Peace:

Awareness is a relaxed and expansive state that eliminates tension. If one is constantly aware, he will not give any chance to cravings to take root. Awareness creates complete connectivity with divinity and all beings. All, material things lose their value and importance after a while. Divinity never changes. Divinity transcends time and space. Awareness takes one to constant bliss that is independent of bodily existence. Awareness may be equated with meditation.

(ii) Meditation:

Meditation is the journey from movement to stillness, from sound to silence. It provides undiminished joy and love, a thrill without anxiety. It can be said that meditation is a food for soul. Meditation can help one to uplifting his energy and spreading out. As a matter of fact, all powers are hidden within the self and that this power will manifest itself-when one approaches his inner-self through meditation.

(iii) Consciousness:

The soul has many identifiable attributes like consciousness and others. Life is classified on the levels of consciousness and by the origin and body structure in biology. Consciousness plays an important role in evolution. It influences the genes and their mutations. The spirituality and the role of inner forces also found to have a genetic base by science. Bernard Boars states that consciousness is a supreme adoption e.g. prioritization of alternatives, problem solving, decision making, brain process recruiting action control, error detection, planning learning, adoption, context creation and access to information. The spirituality is measured by self transcendence which is innate. It comes from within, not restraint, and penance through exercising his free will one can climb the ladder of spiritual stages and become an omniscient.

(iv) Believe in truthfulness:

Nature acts as a unit, a totality. Man should stand as custodian of Nature. Nature is a gift and man is a part of nature. The very character of nature places us under obligation to share nature's gifts equitably. Unity and identity with truth could be realized through love, selfless service to the mankind. Achieving the end is not the criteria of success but the purity of means is the first and foremost.

Conclusion:-

Peace of Non-Violence is the essence of all types of religious scriptures, of all types of vows. Truth, no-stealing chastity, and non-accumulation of excessive wealth strengthens the principle of non-violence. There are ten characteristics of natural essence of non-violence namely forgiveness, truth, purity of thoughts, self-control, renunciation, limited use of resources and chastity. The thing which suppresses proud behaviour is non-violence.