

Chapter V: Ethical Vows and Practices for Moral Excellence

Religious practice forms the very basis of a spiritual life and one's moral perspectives. The same is especially true for Jains, which is evident in their religious practices and day-to-day life.³⁷¹ As per the Jaina tradition, a period of 48 minutes is allotted to prayer and meditation to calm the soul and induce ardent self-control.³⁷² Furthermore, Jainism is a religion that is steeped in moral life, enabling one to reach liberation. In this vein, the general perception both outside and within Jainism is that the codes of conduct are highly stringent. In today's contemporary world, the general reaction to these codes is usually either one of awe or cynicism.³⁷³ Within this purview, however, the concept of liberation for a Jaina precedes the moral codes followed by both the ascetics and householders, who are called "*Śrāvaka*" in their daily lives.³⁷⁴ This chapter will discuss the vows laid by Mahavira for ascetics and laypeople on the basis of right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.

5.1 Five Great Vows (*Mahāvratas*)³⁷⁵

In Jaina ethics, the five vows, called *Mahāvratas* (or "great vows"), consolidate the ethical foundation. They are to be observed without any exception. Umāsvāti defines a vow as "*a means to refrain from or to renounce violence, untruth,*

³⁷¹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 9, ver. 27-30.

³⁷² C.P. Jain, *Jains in India and Abroad: A Sociological Introduction* (New Delhi: International School for Jain Studies, 2011), accessed March 20th, 2016. http://www.isjs.in/sites/all/themes/school/images/jain_in_india_a_d_Abroad.pdf.

³⁷³ W.J. Johnson, *Are jaina Ethics Really Universal?*, *International Journal of Jaina Studies*. 2 (4), 2006, 1–18.

³⁷⁴ Samansuttam defined '*Śrāvaka*' as 'householder' who has right faith, listens everyday to the preaching of the monks about right conduct and put them into practice in daily life. See Samansuttam ver. 301.

³⁷⁵ *Mahāvratas* means that "great vow", *maha* (great) + *vrata* (vow), See Kristi L. Wiley, *Historical Dictionary of Jainism*, 135.

*theft, sexual indiscretion, and attachment.*³⁷⁶ The *Mahāvratā* should be practiced completely by ascetics. These five vows are 1) non-violence (*Ahiṃsā*), 2) truthfulness (*Satya*), 3) non-stealing (*Asteya*), 4) celibacy (*Brahmacharya*), and 5) detachment (*Aparigraha*).³⁷⁷ These are essential codes of conduct laid by Mahavira, and continue to be in practice today.

5.1.1 Non-Violence (*Ahiṃsā*)

*“It is the essential trait of a wise man that he does not kill any living being. Certainly, one has to understand just two principles namely non-violence and equality (of all living beings).”*³⁷⁸

Jainism is well known for its non-violence, which is the first great vow. Generally, this means not to kill, slay, or hurt any living things or cause suffering to others. Umāsvāti defines violence as “the destruction of life of any living being through negligent acts of mind, body, and speech.”³⁷⁹ Non-violence is a primary principle that Jains teach and practice, not only towards human beings but also towards moving and non-moving living creatures, including nature.³⁸⁰ According to Jaina tradition, the concept of non-violence was advocated by the 22nd Jain *Tīrthaṅkara Neminath*, and established by Mahāvira in the sixth century BCE.³⁸¹ Jagdish Prasad Sadhak (2005) notes that the concept of non-violence was foreign to

³⁷⁶ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 1.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid*, Ch. 7, ver. 8-12.

³⁷⁸ *Samansuttam*, ver. 147.

³⁷⁹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 1.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid*, ver. 149.

³⁸¹ Shugan Chand Jain and Jayanti Lal Jain ed. *Non-Violence, Compassion and Instrumentality Ahinsa/Non-Violence: Its Dimensions and Practice* (Chennai: Research Foundation for Jainology, 2009), 23.

the early Vedic tradition and Buddhism, and that it occupies the first place among the moral laws in Jainism.³⁸²

Jainism notes two types of violence: 1) external violence (*dravya*), whereby the intention to hurt or to kill is caused by entertaining impure or passionate thoughts such as anger, pride, deceit, greed, sorrow, fear, or sexual desire; and 2) internal violence (*bhava*), whereby “ill-will” causes an act of violence.³⁸³

Umāsvāti defines *ahiṃsā* as follows:

*“The destruction of vitalities of any living being through negligent acts of mind, body, and speech is termed as violence. This emphasizes the need for exercising utmost care to ensure that we do not cause any hurt to any living being by any of our acts.”*³⁸⁴

5.1.2 Truthfulness (*Satya*)

The second vow is truthfulness (*satya*), which is against falsehood and concerned with honesty. To keep this vow, a Jain should not exaggerate about someone or something. To this end, Jaina laymen are advised to guard against five things: rash speech, revealing secrets, running down one’s wife, giving false advice, and cooking accounts.³⁸⁵ Jains believe that all lies are violent and related to passionate elements.³⁸⁶

5.1.3 Non-Stealing (*Asteya*)

Non-stealing (*asteya*) is the third vow. It means abstaining from things that are not ours or that we do not need. The modern capitalized society encourages people to

³⁸² Sadhak, *Fundamentals*, 145.

³⁸³ Samansuttam notes that even the intention of killing causes the bondage of karma, whether one actually kills or not. See Samansuttam ver. 154.

³⁸⁴ Ibid, Ch. 7, ver. 8.

³⁸⁵ Stevenson, *The Heart*, 208.

³⁸⁶ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 9.

buy and take pleasure in possessing things, thereby making us greedy and covetous of materials. Robbery, burglary, and housebreaking are caused by greed and avarice. *Samnsuttam* defines non-stealing as follows: “he, who desists from a desire to take anything belonging to others, on seeing it lying in a village or town or forest, observes the third vow of non-stealing.”³⁸⁷ According to this vow, anyone can possess anything that is legitimately his or her. This is related to legal ownership. In *Tattvarthasutra*, theft is to take something without being given it (by its rightful owner).³⁸⁸ Thus, whoever keeps this vow should not keep objects that others have lost, or induce others to steal or adulterate products.³⁸⁹

5.1.4 Celibacy (*Brahmacarya*)

The fourth vow, celibacy (*brahmacarya*), should be applied by the ascetics and laypeople who want to refrain from any mental, verbal, or physical act impelled by sexual desire. This vow contains two formulations: maintaining fidelity to one’s spouse, and not committing adultery. The ascetics keep this vow strictly. From refraining from bad touch to limiting social contact with the opposite sex, a layman should refrain from all sexual activities outside of marriage and practice moderation within marriage.³⁹⁰ According to Jainism, the scope of celibacy is to avoid not only sexual activities, but also sexual indulgence through the mind and speech.³⁹¹ In this vein, *Samansuttam* denotes that self-control and devotion to celibacy are the characteristics of a true monk.³⁹²

³⁸⁷ Samansuttam, ver. 370.

³⁸⁸ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 10.

³⁸⁹ Paniker, *Jainism*, 481.

³⁹⁰ Kristi L. Wiley, *The A to Z of Jainism* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 2006) 59.

³⁹¹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch.7, ver. 4.

³⁹² Samansuttam, ver. 139.

5.1.5 Non-Possession (*Aparigraha*)

The fifth vow, non-possession (*aparigraha*), is to avoid the accumulation of wealth. It refers to limited possession of large amounts of land, jewelry, flocks, and luxurious clothing, and to the voluntarily renouncing of such things.³⁹³ *Samansuttam* states that attachment induces a person to commit violence, tell lies, steal, commit adultery, and develop a wish for unlimited hoarding.³⁹⁴ The Jaina religion divides possessions into two types: 1) internal possession: wrong belief, sexual desire, laughter, liking, disliking, grief, fear, disgust, anger, pride, deceit, and greed; and 2) external possession: materialistic possessions such as fields, houses, wealth and food-grains, stock of household goods, utensils, male or female slaves, animals, vehicles, and social status.³⁹⁵

For laymen, this vow means maintaining an attitude of non-attachment to worldly possessions and greed, but for monks and nuns, it means to not having any possessions whatsoever.³⁹⁶ There is one difference between Svetambaras and Digambaras with regard to items deemed necessary for maintaining their mendicant life: Svetambaras understand this vow as including mendicant garments, alm bowls, and a whiskbroom, whereas Digambaras include only two items: a peacock-feather broom and a water pot.³⁹⁷

These five vows are to be followed in the daily life of an ascetic and a householder, as they have acted as guiding principles for personal morality since Mahāvīra established the Jain community. These vows enhance moral excellence by

³⁹³ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 5.

³⁹⁴ *Samansuttam*, ver. 140.

³⁹⁵ *Samansuttam*, ver. 143-144.

³⁹⁶ Long, *Jainism*, 109.

³⁹⁷ Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 244.

restraining one's greed and internal or external anger, moderating eating, drinking and continence, and leading to voluntarily detachment to attain liberation.

5.2 Twelve Vows for Laypeople

Monks who seek complete and thorough uplifting of the soul adopt the *Mahāvratas* or five great vows. However, Jain ethics allows laypeople to practice 12 vows in daily life to help them control their minds and mold their conduct to the spiritual path. The 12 vows consists of five *anu-vratas*, or minor vows; three *guna-vratas*, or merit vows, as they are believed to purify and enrich the *anu-vratas* while also enforcing the external conduct of a Jaina; and four *śikṣā-vratas*, or disciplinary vows.³⁹⁸ These 12 vows form the core part of ethical practices for laymen in attaining liberation.³⁹⁹

The minor vows ensure that one follows and performs the necessary religious duties as per the prescribed methods; the merit vows deal with the external conduct of an individual; and the disciplinary vows deal with the internal conduct of an individual, which is manifested by the importance that he attributes to charity. These vows are collectively believed to prepare a devotee for asceticism in later life. Furthermore, the *guna-vratas* and the *sikṣa-vratas* are grouped together to form the seven vows for virtuous conduct.⁴⁰⁰ According to Padmanabh Jaini (1979), the vows of the laypeople are relatively weak compared to the five great vows. Accordingly, these 12 vows cannot bring an individual to liberation. The author notes that their purpose is to prepare laymen to take up the great vows that monks practice.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁸ Ibid, Ch. 7, ver. 14.

³⁹⁹ P.K. Shah (2009). English Pratikraman Observance of Self-Reflection: Original Verses English Interpretations. In: *Twelve Vows of Lay People (Shrāvaks and Shrāvikās)*, India: JAINA Education Committee, pp. 68–74, accessed March 24th, 2016. http://www.jainlibrary.org/elib_master/jaina_edu/jaina_edu_article/Twelve_Vows_of_Lay_People_200021_std.pdf.

⁴⁰⁰ Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 157-187.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 160.

5.2.1 Five Minor Vows for Laypeople (*Anuvratas*)

Anuvratas, or the minor vows taken by laypeople, are non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy or sexual restraint, and non-possession. The minor vows are less restrictive to guide a layperson to limit actions related to other living beings and strengthen him in his spiritual progress.

5.2.1.1 Minor Vow of Non-Violence (*Ahiṃsā Anuvrata*)

According to the vow of non-violence, a person should not hurt any living being intentionally and should avoid violent feeling by thought, speech, and deed. In the case of a householder, however, violence is inevitable in case of survival of the self and the family. It is recommended that the common violence inflicted be brought down, especially in household chores such as cleaning and cooking. Moreover, the acts of violence must be within reason and should not include injuring, torturing, enslaving, or killing any living beings, including the flora and the fauna. Non-violence thus forms the base of all vows. *Tattvarthasutra* describes the five transgressions of the vow of non-violence as follows:⁴⁰²

- 1) Binding any creature and putting it in a prison house;
- 2) Beating and chasing animals;
- 3) Cutting their organs or castrating them;
- 4) Making them draw or carry heavy loads; and
- 5) Starving them without food and water.

These transgressions are caused by a mind polluted by anger or other passion.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 20.

⁴⁰³ *Samansuttam* ver. 310.

5.2.1.2 Minor Vow of Truthfulness (*Satya Anuvrata*)

Truth goes beyond simply refraining from lying. Truth is what is sought after. It serves to seek and understand the reality that is presented to us so as to gather and draw from one's own inner peace and strength. Here the devotee is said to avoid lying, but benevolent lies are not considered to be a violation. According to the vow of truthfulness, one should not do the following five things: 1) give wrong advice about any matter and mislead people in matters of faith or conduct; 2) make false accusations; 3) tell the secrets of others or break the promise of secrecy; 4) committing perjury or forgery, including keeping false accounts, forging documents, and carrying on false propaganda about others; and 5) commit breach of trust or misappropriation of what is entrusted to one in confidence.⁴⁰⁴

Samansuttam further notes that laypeople should refrain from falsehood; speaking untruth about unmarried girls, animals, and lands; repudiating debts; and giving false evidence.⁴⁰⁵

5.2.1.3 Minor Vow of Non-Stealing (*Acharya Anuvrata*)

A person is not permitted to cheat others or steal from them under the tenets of this vow, whether in terms of petty possessions or of property or large number of goods. Wealth acquired through illegal means does not help in establishing socialism, economic stability, or welfare in the community. The imperative with non-stealing, however, is that an individual should not even touch a thing, even if it is worthless, if it does not belong to him. This also applies to asking for alms. Here, the seeker should only accept the bare minimum and must neither accept nor expect anything more.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, Ch. 7, ver. 21.

⁴⁰⁵ Sammansuttam, ver. 311.

This vow must be practiced strictly with honesty in all thought, process, and action.⁴⁰⁶

Umāsvāti defines five types of theft:

- 1) To encourage to steal: one may not commit theft but instigate another to steal or show one the way to do so;
- 2) To receive or buy stolen goods or property: possessing something without the owner's consent is considered theft;
- 3) To use false weights and measures for additional benefit;
- 4) To evade taxes imposed by law of the state or country; and
- 5) To use counterfeit goods or currency.⁴⁰⁷

5.2.1.4 Minor Vow of Chastity (*Brahmacharya Anuvrata*)

Laypeople are expected to conquer all of their sensual pleasures, as these are believed to cause an unnecessary waste of energy. Furthermore, they are not allowed to perform sensual acts with anyone other than their legal spouse, with whom they are also expected to restrain from excessive indulgence.⁴⁰⁸ The five violations of the vow of chastity in the *Tattvarthasutra* are the following:⁴⁰⁹

- 1) Having sexual intimacy with unmarried men or women and widows or widowers;
- 2) Keeping a mistress or seeking a prostitute;
- 3) Gossiping about sex or making sexually provocative gestures;
- 4) Leaving one's own children and celebrating the marriages of others; and
- 5) Wearing indecent dress and decorations and consuming intoxicating things.

⁴⁰⁶ Pravin K. Shah, *Five Great Vows (Maha-Vratas) of Jainism*, Jainism Literature Center. accessed March 25th 2016,

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~pluralsm/affiliates/jainism/jainedu/5greatvows.htm>.

⁴⁰⁷ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 22.

⁴⁰⁸ *Samansuttam*, ver. 314.

⁴⁰⁹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 23.

5.2.1.5 Minor Vow of Non-Attachment (*Aparigraha Anuvrata*)

One who does not understand that happiness and peace emerge from within fulfills the need for them by collecting materialistic items. However, as per this vow, one must not possess too many houses, properties, jewelry, and so on. If any surplus does exist, then the same must be used for the good of the society. In this way, the vow ensures that wealth is easily distributed to all in the society, thereby ensuring a semblance of equality, stable economy, and common welfare. The law further states that the amount of such materialistic items must be restricted, along with the amount of food consumed.⁴¹⁰ This particular vow is viewed to be in conjunction with the vow of non-violence, as it is believed to attest to the universality of life, which is beneficial to the self spiritually and to the societal riches. The five violations of the vow of non-attachment are as follows:

- 1) Accumulating more wealth than needed as determined by the vow;
- 2) Possessing land, houses, and other items beyond the predetermined limit;
- 3) Possessing gold and silver ornaments beyond the predetermined limit;
- 4) Having excessive domestic articles, including clothes, utensils, etc., and provisions; and
- 5) Having male and female servants and domestic animals and birds.⁴¹¹

5.2.2 Three Merit Vows for Laypeople (*Gunavrata*)

These three Merit Vows reinforce to be practiced by laypeople. They are: limiting movements in all directions, limiting the things of daily use, and refraining

⁴¹⁰ Samansuttam, ver. 315-317.

⁴¹¹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 24.

from unnecessary violent activities.⁴¹² These are explained in the following sub-sections.

5.2.2.1 Vow of Limited Area of Activity (*Dik Vrata*)

According to this merit vow, a Jain should limit his activities to a certain regional boundary, and should also limit the distance of travel.⁴¹³ The actions of a Jaina are limited to 10 directions: above, below, north, north-east, north-west, south, south-east, south-west, east, and west. In this case, sinning is limited to being committed outside of these areas. Nowadays, this vow includes restrictions on long-distance communication such as telephone calls, letters, and e-mail use. As for committing minor sins, limited spaces such as those that are related to survival and vocational are not restricted by this vow.⁴¹⁴ The five transgressions of this limited area of activity are:

- 1) Not limiting the extent to which one can move downwards into an underground vault or into the deeper levels of the sea;
- 2) Not limiting the extent of movement upwards;
- 3) Traveling in any of the eight directions beyond the fixed limits;
- 4) Extending the already set limits of travel; and
- 5) Crossing the fixed limits of traveling in ignorance (forgetting the limits).⁴¹⁵

5.2.2.2 Vow of Limited Consumption (*Bhoga Upbhoga Vrata*)

To limit the things of daily use, Jainism suggests refraining from eating certain foods normally allowed for a layperson, drinking unfiltered water, and practicing certain works. The vow also prohibits eating or cooking at night.

⁴¹² Arya, *Fundamental*, 68.

⁴¹³ Samansuttam, ver. 319.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, ver. 318.

⁴¹⁵ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 25.

Individuals tends to enjoy consumables (*bhog*) such as food and drink, which can only be utilized once, and inconsumables, which can be used repetitively (*upbhog*), such as furniture. There are five violations of the vow of limited use of consumables and non-consumables:

- 1) Eating live objects such as green vegetables;
- 2) Using things that possess life, such as using green leaves as plates;
- 3) Consuming a mixture of living and non-living things, such as hot water with fresh water;
- 4) Consuming fermented food; and
- 5) Consuming badly cooked food.⁴¹⁶

There are two types of discipline: 1) refraining from eating souled vegetables; and 2) refraining from fruits that have microscopic organisms and flesh. However, the objective here is to restrict the usage and enjoyment of such products. The quantity of such products is also limited by the vow not to commit petty sins, which is not restrained by the extent of non-possession (*aparigha anu-vrata*).⁴¹⁷

5.2.2.3 Vow of Avoidance of Purposeless Activities (*Anartha-Danda Vrata*)

According to this vow, one should avoid activities that serve no useful purpose and cause unsuitable minds to result in depravity, such as gambling, cutting trees or digging the ground for enjoyment, causing destruction, and giving advice that harms others.⁴¹⁸ In this vein, *Samansuttam* specifies four types of violent acts: entertaining evil thought, negligent behavior, lending someone an instrument of violence, and

⁴¹⁶ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 30.

⁴¹⁷ The souled vegetables are bulbous roots (i.e. potato, spring onion), and a Jain should refrain from traders and industries that engage in violence against fruits containing microscopic organisms. See *Samansuttam*, ver. 325.

⁴¹⁸ Wiley, *Historical*, 38.

advising someone to commit a sinful act.⁴¹⁹ *Tattvarthasutra* describes the five violations of the vow of purposeless activities as follows:

- 1) Indulging in indecent talk that provokes lust and infatuation in oneself or others;
- 2) Engaging in bodily actions to provoke laughter;
- 3) Engaging in meaningless talk, gossiping, or shameless talk;
- 4) Making and keeping weapons that cause violence; and
- 5) Accumulating things out of greed.⁴²⁰

Jains understand that some actions without any purpose bring more karmic bondage than do actions with intention at some specific time out of some necessity.⁴²¹

5.2.3 Four Disciplinary Vows for Laypeople (*Śikṣā-Vratas*)

The four disciplinary vows govern a Jain's spiritual growth. These vows are discussed in more detail below.

5.2.3.1 Vow of Meditation for Limited Duration (*Sāmāyikaka Vrata*)

Meditation is one of six essential duties followed by lay Jains in their daily lives. According to Jaina tradition, 48 minutes in a day are set aside for meditation, prayer, and reading the scriptures. Individuals need to meditate and it should be perceived through mind, body, and speech alike. Umāsvāti states that there are five violations of the vow of observing the period of meditation:

- 1) Improper thought: entertaining wicked thoughts, thinking about prostitutes, and misdirection of the mind;
- 2) Improper body movements that are unwholesome and undesirable;

⁴¹⁹ Samansuttam ver. 321.

⁴²⁰ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 27.

⁴²¹ Samansuttam, ver. 323.

- 3) Improper speech during the period, such as uttering lies or disagreeable and improper words;
- 4) Showing disrespect for the observance of this practice; and
- 5) Forgetfulness during the meditation.⁴²²

To execute the vow of meditation for a limited duration (*sāmāyikaka*),⁴²³ the devotee is expected to give up his desire for the sake of his own welfare.⁴²⁴ Thereby, a certain level of equanimity towards all living objects can be observed, and the devotee may achieve harmony with the universe.⁴²⁵

5.2.3.2 Vow of Limited Duration of Activity (*Desavakasika Vrata*)

New limits are established by this vow in addition to the restrictions already enforced by the vow of limited area of activity (*dik vrata*) and the vow of limited consumption (*bhoga upbhoga vrata*). The five transgressions of the vow of activity within limited space and durations are:⁴²⁶

- 1) Sending for someone who is from beyond the fixed limit of space;
- 2) Sending someone beyond the limit of space; and
- 3) Drawing attention through coughing or such other gestures; and
- 4) Revealing thoughts by signals or stealing a glance; and
- 5) Revealing one's presence by throwing stones or other gestures.

⁴²² *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 28.

⁴²³ The word *Sāmāyikaka* is used in two contexts. 1) It is a single great vow of restraint taken by Mahāvīra. 2) It is a ritual whereby a Jain strives to attain equanimity of mind or attain pure self-awareness. A lay person who wants to take this vow practices meditation for a period of 48 minutes three times a day. He may spend time meditating, repeating a mantra, or listening to a sermon by a mendicant. See Kristin L. Wiley, *Historical Dictionary of Jainism*, 184.

⁴²⁴ *Samansuttam*, ver. 326.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid*, ver. 327-328.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, Ch. 7, ver. 26.

Under this vow, individuals are prohibited from undertaking any activity or executing any business at a specific time period, and they are also not supposed to travel away from their house, street, or city.

5.2.3.3 Vow of Leading an Ascetic's Life (*Paushadha Vrata*)

Under this vow, laypeople are supposed to lead an ascetic life for one day. While they wear the cloth of an ascetic for the day, they are expected to refrain from any activity that is sinful and deprive themselves from all kinds of pleasure from every aspect of their senses. They are further expected to practice restrictions in their body, speech, and mind.⁴²⁷ In this period, an individual is expected to adhere to the five great vows absolutely. Moreover, the individual is required to spend his time meditating, immersing himself in spiritual thinking, undertaking self-evaluation, studying scriptures, and paying obeisance to the liberated souls, such as *Arihantas* and *Siddhas*.⁴²⁸ The five violations of this vow noted in the *Tattvarthasutra* are:

- 1) To dispose in uninspected and unswept places;
- 2) To put equipment in uninspected and unswept places;
- 3) To spread one's bedding on uninspected and unswept places;
- 4) To show disrespect for the vow of ascetics' life for a limited duration; and
- 5) To be forgetful during the observance.⁴²⁹

This vow is instrumental in encouraging and nurturing the spiritual aspect within an individual while preparing him for the life of a monk.

⁴²⁷ Samansuttam, ver. 329.

⁴²⁸ According to the Samansuttam, when a Jain practices this vow of refraining from sinful activities, practicing meditation, and repeating mantras, he is considered to be a saint. See Samansuttam, ver. 327

⁴²⁹ *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 29.

5.2.3.4 Vow of Charity (*Atithi Samvibhag Vrata*)

Charity entails giving away one's own things out of kindness and concern for others' welfare. Charity is determined by the quality of the object given, the way in which it is given, and the mind-set of the giver and the receiver.⁴³⁰ According to Jains, charity means to offer essentials such as food, clothing, first aid medications, and various other fundamental necessities to monks, nuns, and pious people who are in the need of such prerequisites.⁴³¹ One should avoid five violations of this vow of charity:

- 1) Placing cooked food with raw food;
- 2) Covering cooked food with raw food;
- 3) Falsely claiming one's own thing to be that of others;
- 4) Showing a lack of respect while giving and being envious of another donor;
and
- 5) Not giving at the proper time.⁴³²

The nourishment offered ought to be unadulterated and given with love.⁴³³ The one who offers this kind of nourishment should not set up any sustenance for ascetics or nuns, since their nourishment is restricted. Giving out one's individual sustenance as well as belongings to mendicants or pious people creates a sense of internal fulfillment and enhances individual awareness to a larger realm.⁴³⁴

5.3 Six Daily Essential Duties for Laypeople (*Avasyakas*)

There are six obligatory duties for laypeople. These duties are recommended for spiritual and moral development. Whereas ascetics have to practice the obligatory

⁴³⁰ Ibid, Ch. 7, ver. 33-34.

⁴³¹ Samansuttam, ver. 330.

⁴³² *Tattvarthasutra*, Ch. 7, ver. 31.

⁴³³ Ibid, ver. 333.

⁴³⁴ There are four types of donation: food, medicine, scriptural teaching, and reassurance against fear. See Samansuttam, ver. 331.

duties on a daily basis, laypeople may choose to practice the duties daily or occasionally during the year.⁴³⁵ These daily activities are called *Avasyaka*, which comes from “*avasa*,” meaning “independence from passion.” The traditional six obligatory duties are the following:

- 1) Meditation and prayer equanimity;
- 2) Honoring the Tīrthañkara;
- 3) Respecting spiritual teachers and elders;
- 4) Repenting for acts of wrong-doing;
- 5) Attaining self and body control by meditation; and
- 6) Renouncing pleasures, activities, or foods for a period of time.⁴³⁶

In addition, some Digambara authors recommend that laypeople practice six daily activities: worship of the divine, worship of the preceptor, study of scripture, practice of self-control, practice of austerities, and giving gifts.⁴³⁷

In a similar vein, it is imperative to discuss the Jains’ prayer followings. *Panca Namaskara*, also known as *Namaskara Mantra*, is the most commonly known prayer; it is considered the sacred chant, and is practiced by the Jaina every day. This prayer serves to surrender the self and requires one to accept the liberated soul as the ultimate divine reality. The prayer is as follows:⁴³⁸

“*Namo Arihantanam* obedience to the enlightened souls

Namo Siddhanam obedience to the liberated

Namo Ayariyanam obedience to the religious masters

⁴³⁵ Ibid, ver. 422.

⁴³⁶ Sangave, *Aspect*, 74.

⁴³⁷ Wiley, *Historical*, 47-48.

⁴³⁸ Paniker, *Jainism*, 203-204.

Namo Uvajjhayanam obedience to the religious instructors

Namo Loe Savva Sahunam obedience to all the saints in the world”

According to Jaina tradition, Jain devotion is not directed towards the divine entity but towards the liberated soul in his own life who showed the path to the Jains. The above mantra is recited orally in all-important ceremonies, including temple worship, fasting, and significant rituals. When an individual recites this mantra, she declares herself a Jain and a follower of Jaina tradition. Many devotees recite this mantra every morning.⁴³⁹ Moreover, it is believed that the presence of a religious teacher can be beneficial for spiritual enhancement, so that the devotees bow down and recite a mantra that will breed dedication.⁴⁴⁰

5.4 Thirty-Five Virtues for a Noble Life (*Marganusari Gunas*)

Jains think that codes of conduct and ethical principles are essential for individual and social life. According to Jaina ethics, an individual should be disciplined to cultivate moral capacity, which maintains social stability and makes life strong and sound. Jainism suggests 35 virtues that lead people to a noble life aimed at public welfare. These 35 virtues constitute the foundation of Jaina righteousness and illustrate the system of Jain life.⁴⁴¹

5.4.1 Eleven Duties in Life

- 1) Lawful earning: a Jain should earn money through honest, legal, and morally acceptable methods;
- 2) Proper expenditure in proportion to one’s income;

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 476.

⁴⁴⁰ Paul Maret, *Daily Practices and Recitations*. accessed 22 March 2016, <http://www.jainworld.com/jainbooks/explain/e9.htm>.

⁴⁴¹ N.K. Singh & A.P. Mishra, ed., *Encyclopedia of Oriental Philosophical and Religion Vol.7*, 327-328.

- 3) Proper dress and accessories in accordance with one's income;
- 4) Proper marriage: one should marry a girl or a boy of his or her own cultural and religious background;
- 5) Proper residence that is not too exposed and not too enclosed with neighbors and few exits;
- 6) Eating food at the proper time when one feels hungry, or after the previous food has been digested;
- 7) Eating healthy food, and not eating on a full stomach;
- 8) Respecting and taking care of parents and the elders;
- 9) Taking care of the dependents for whom one is responsible;
- 10) Rendering services to guests, monks, and needy and destitute people who come home; and
- 11) Rendering services to the worthy, i.e. the enlightened ones and the noble ones.⁴⁴²

5.4.2 Eight Faults to be Discarded

- 1) Discarding the habit of humiliating others, which destroys tenderness of the heart;
- 2) Discarding despicable activities such as deceiving others, betraying trust, and gambling;
- 3) Controlling the senses;
- 4) Conquering the inner enemies, such as lust, anger, greed, pride, arrogance, and attachment;
- 5) Discarding prejudice;

⁴⁴² Jain Center of Minnesota, *Marganusari Guna*, accessed April 6th, 2016, <http://www.jaincentermn.org/content-layouts>

- 6) Discarding a place where calamities occur;
- 7) Discarding the place and time that are adverse to us;
- 8) Discarding the three endeavors of religion, possession, and sensory pleasures that cause harm to the others.

5.4.3 Eight Virtues to be Cultivated

- 1) The fear of sins: when one is aware of committing sins, one will not do so;
- 2) A sense of shame: if one has a sense of shame, one will keep his reputation intact;
- 3) Keeping a serene temperament: one should keep one's temperament, heart, voice, and appearance gentle and serene;
- 4) Reputation: one attains a good reputation by acquiring virtues and practicing ethical principles;
- 5) Farsightedness: before taking action or a first step, one should think about the consequences of one's action;
- 6) Acting according to one's abilities and capacities;
- 7) Acquiring the appropriate knowledge, which involves distinguishing right from wrong, proper from improper, and weighing the advantages and disadvantages of one's speech, action, and thought; and
- 8) Appreciating the virtues in one's own life and in others' lives instead of looking for failures and finding faults.⁴⁴³

5.4.4 Eight Endeavors to be Carried Out with Caution

- 1) Gratitude: one should not forget the benefactor and be grateful to him;

⁴⁴³ *The Code of Conduct For Householder*, accessed April 7th 2016, <http://www.jainbelief.com/PPOJ/20.htm>

- 2) Benevolence: one should help others without any selfish interest;
- 3) Kindness: one should be tender towards others;
- 4) Fellowship: one should have fellowship with people who are virtuous;
- 5) Listening to spiritual teachings: one attains right knowledge by listening to discourses;
- 6) The eight qualities of the intellect: one should develop these eight qualities to listen to and understand the spiritual discourses properly;⁴⁴⁴
- 7) Following the traditions and practices; and
- 8) Adoring the virtuous, such as fearing social censure; helping people in need; being grateful; respecting others; discarding condemnation; praising patience; humility in prosperity; speaking sweetly and agreeably; keeping one's word; overcoming trials; planned expenditure; being noble in character; and discarding improper actions, excessive sleep, and sensual pleasures or passion.

5.5 Merit and Demerit (*Punya and Papa*)

Jainism states that *punya* leads to good karmas, and *papa* causes bad karmas.

Jainism classifies *punya* into 9 types, and *papa* into 18 types.⁴⁴⁵

5.5.1 *Punya*: Merit

Punya is the “cause of merit,” whereby a Jain can earn the auspicious fruits through his right actions.⁴⁴⁶ *Punya* brings happiness and helps people stop the cycle of

⁴⁴⁴ The eight qualities of listening to the spiritual discourses are the following: wanting to listen to the discourse; listening with concentration; understanding what is taught in the discourse; printing what is understood in the mind; thinking with logic; thinking and coming to a conclusion without any doubts; and determining its true meaning and its essence. See *The Code of Conduct For Householder*, accessed April 7th, 2016, <http://www.jainbelief.com/PPOJ/20.htm>

⁴⁴⁵ Helmuth Von Glasenapp, trans. Shridhar B. Shrotri, *Jainism: An Indian Religion of Salvation*, 227-228.

⁴⁴⁶ Samansuttam describes that one may attain the status of supreme kingship through “cause of merit” (*punya*). See Samansuttam, ver. 204.

rebirth and death.⁴⁴⁷ The nine activities of merit are 1) to give food to the hungry; 2) to offer water to the thirsty; 3) to give shelter to the needy 4) to offer a place to sleep to the needy; 5) to provide clothes to the needy; 6) to think good of all; 7) to utter good and kind words; 8) to do good deeds; and 9) to adopt modest and humble behavior, including the veneration of worthy souls and elders.⁴⁴⁸

5.5.2 *Papa*: Demerit

Jainism defines the inauspicious deed that causes pain and misery to human beings as *papa*, which means “demerit sin.” Jainism divides the demerit sins into 18, all of which produce karmas into a soul that are pain, deprivation, sorrow, poverty, and ignorance, binding human beings to the cycle of rebirth and death.⁴⁴⁹ The 18 non-virtuous activities are as follows: 1) violence, 2) untruth, 3) theft, 4) un-chastity, 5) attachment, 6) anger, 7) conceit, 8) deceit, 9) greed, 10) possession, 11) hatred, 12) conflicts, 13) calling someone bad names, 14) back-biting, 15) criticizing, 16) interest in pleasure and disinterest in religious matter, 17) deceitful lying, and 18) false faith.⁴⁵⁰

5.6 The 11 stages of Laypeople’s Spiritual Development (*Pratimās*)

In Jainism, the spiritual development of lay people is marked by 11 steps termed “*pratimā*,” which form their moral capacity. Each step is described in several codes of conduct, and when a lay Jain has passed them all, he is no longer a

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, ver. 199.

⁴⁴⁸ Shridhar B. Shrotri, *Jainism: An Indian Religion of Salvation*, 227.

⁴⁴⁹ Samansuttam, ver. 198.

⁴⁵⁰ Shridhar B. Shrotri, *Jainims: An Indian Religion of Salvation*, 228.

householder, but a monk.⁴⁵¹ The next stage is that of an ascetic. A Jain is advised to ascend these stages gradually. The stages are as follows:

- 1) The stage of right views (*Darsana Pratima*): In this stage, a Jain possesses the perspective of Jainism and practices the basic code of conduct meant for laypeople.
- 2) The stage of taking the vows (*Vrata Pratima*): A lay Jain accepts the 12 minor vows and puts them into practice without any flaws.
- 3) The stage of practicing meditation (*sāmāyikaka pratima*): A Jain begins to engage in meditation for 48 minutes, 3 times a day on a regular basis, and does penance for his thoughts and feelings.
- 4) The stage of fasting on certain days (*prosadhopavasa Pratima*): In this stage, a Jain practices fasting four times a month as a rule. During the fasting period, one should spend time in prayer, studying scriptures, meditating, and hearing religious discourse.
- 5) The stage of purity of nourishment: A layperson should refrain from serving insufficiently cooked food and should avoid vegetables that have the capacity to grow again, such as potatoes, onions, etc. Furthermore, he should not pluck fruits from a tree.
- 6) The stage of abstaining from food after sunset (*ratribhakta pratima*): After sunset, one should not have any kind of food. This includes abstinence from drinking at night.

⁴⁵¹ These steps are called pratimas. The word pratima means “body,” which is the vehicle of the human incarnation. See R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga: A survey of the mediaeval Sravakacaras* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1963), 173.

- 7) The stage of absolute continence (*brahmacharya pratima*): In this stage, a layperson maintains sexual purity and abstains from sexual relations.
- 8) The stage of abandonment of household activity (*arambhatyaga pratima*): A layperson abandons his own secular engagements and occupations. At this level, he does not engage in any activities to earn a living.
- 9) The stage of abandonment of acquisitiveness (*parigraha tyaga pratima*): When a layperson passes this stage, he detaches from his possessions willingly.
- 10) The stage of abandonment of approval for activities connected with household life (*anumati tyaga pratima*): In this stage, a Jain does not request consent from the family but refrains from giving orders related to household life. He increases his desire for ascetic life and refrains from all kinds of acquisitions of wealth.
- 11) The stage of renunciation of specially prepared food or lodging: When a layperson reaches this level, he adopts the rules for ascetics and renounces a householder's life, snaps ties with his own family, and accepts food shared by other laypeople.⁴⁵²

According to Jainism, a devoted Jain goes through the 11 stages with conviction of right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct on the basis of observing the codes of conduct and vows.⁴⁵³ These stages show that a Jain's spiritual growth coincides with moral excellence. Accordingly, a Jain is supposed to practice prescribed discipline of mental, moral, and spiritual austerities to free himself from detachment and maintain purity of action, thought, and speech.

⁴⁵² Sangave, *Aspect*, 70-73.

⁴⁵³ Kriti L. Wiley, *Historical Dictionary of Jainism*, 245.

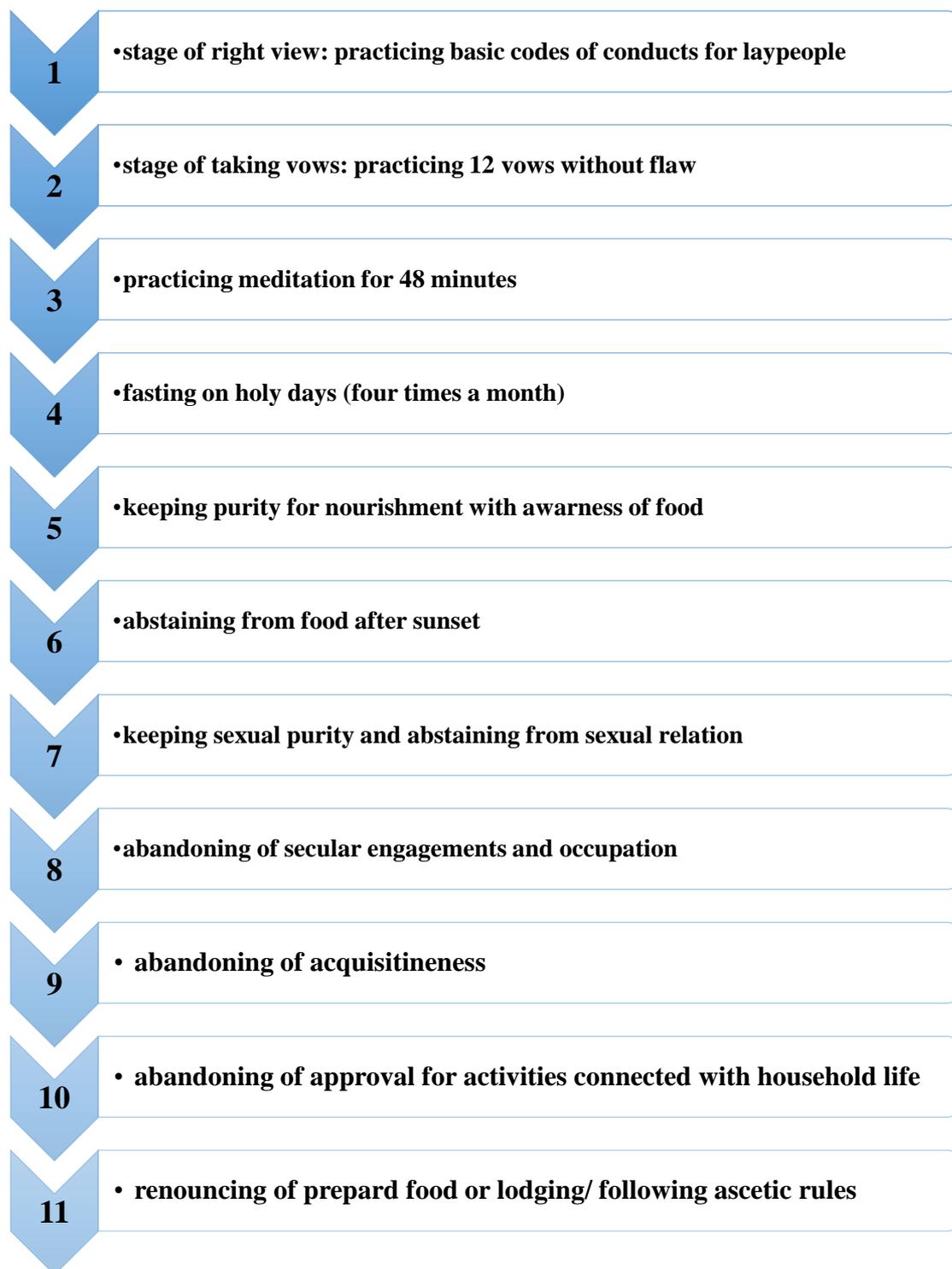


Figure 4 Eleven Stages of Laypeople (*Pratimas*)

5.7 Summary

Jaina ethics are rooted in their utility regarding the soteriological objective of liberation. The purpose of Jaina ethics is clearly to cast off malignant influences of bad karma and attain liberation. Thus, Jainism propounds codes of conduct and moral discipline for ascetics and the laypeople in great detail. The ascetics are expected to keep the five great vows completely, whereas the householders are given some freedom in this regard.

In view of this, certain routines have been laid down, including meditation, honor for the Tīrthaṅkaras, respect for the spiritual leaders, repenting acts of wrongdoing, gaining control over the self and the body, and renouncing the pleasures of life. In addition, the five great vows play a vital role for the development of ethical principles for a Jaina. Another important concept that contributes to the ethical moral development is the practice of ethical concepts in real life; the practice of non-violence and non-absolutism (considered a sub-part of *ahiṃsā*) play a vital role too. The doctrines of relativity contribute to the life of a Jaina by adding reasonability and rationality to his or her views in daily life. This is explained by the concept of *syādavada*, which means multifaceted nature of reality. Jainism also plays a strong role in the aspect of economy, where the principles of non-possession enunciate the need to be humble and detach oneself from the materialistic aspects of life. In turn, these principles are further emphasized by the Jaina practices of meditation and penance, which not only focus on the aspect of inhibiting karma, but also deal with the reflection of one's own karma, which puts one on the path of liberation while strengthening one's moral and social ethics. Within this purview, Jaina ethics extends to ecology, which again embraces non-violence and the practice of vegetarianism. Thus, the Jain philosophy also has an impact on Jain cuisine. All in all, the Jaina ethical principles have a positive impact on a Jain's moral development.