

## 6.1 Which are Jain Achars? Duties of householders.

According to Hindu belief, Nirvān can be achieved by following any of these three paths viz. Dharma, Devotion (भक्ति), Knowledge (ज्ञान). According to Jain Philosophy there are 3 jewels which are to be followed viz.

1. Rational (Right) Conduct (सम्यक चारित्र)
2. Rational (Right)World-view (सम्यक दर्शन)
3. Rational (Right) Knowledge (सम्यक ज्ञान)

The Jain unified path to *Mokshā* need All Three. For a Jain, *Mokshā* is a final reaching point, where soul becomes free from pains of birth and rebirth. It is a state of permanent liberation.

### What path a Jain Householder – (Shravakā -Shravikā follow) to attain Mokshā.

One needs a firm determination and great amount of self discipline. Both determination and self- discipline spring from taking of vows – पचकमाण. The lay persons of Jain Religion – Popularly now known as Shravakā and Shravikā are advised to take introductory vows and they are advised to practice self – restraint. The partial self restraint is known as Das Virti (दश विरति) and the total restrain is known as Sarvāvirti (सर्व विरति). However, it may not be possible for all the lay Jain followers to take even the introductory vows due to several personal and social responsibilities and limitations. Such persons however follow the principles and practices to the best of their ability. From this practice, the ‘Pratyakhyānā’ or ‘ Pachakkhanā’ concept has been started, according to which the vows for limited time period even for a day or few hours are taken and followed e.g. Fast for a day or Ekasana (only one meal a day) Biyasanā (Only two meals a day) etc. This is an attempt to balance between the domestic routine life vis-à-vis desire to live more devoted life. Even attempting such small small vows can bring a peaceful and stress-free life to its followers, besides, bringing a new harmony in the society.

The Jains emphasis on self-control; and all such practices of self-control are incidentally promoting better health. Some of the practices are;

**Vegetarianism :** This is most important practice of Jainism and is directly related to principle of Non- violence. Any Non Vegetarian food involves violence, may it be meat, egg, fish etc. Any such food is totally and completely forbidden for Jains.

Even among vegetables, the root vegetables also contains large number of germs, and therefore all root vegetables are also forbidden for Jains. Jains do believe, and strongly believe, that even vegetables have life; therfoer they have limited the consumption of vegetables too. Jains’ concept and belief in vegetarianism is very subtle and very scientific.

**Periodic Fasting (Upvasā)** Everybody cannot remain on fast-some people find it difficult to follow. But they can follow. *Unodari* (Consuming little less then one usually eats) If you eat, 4 *Chapaties*, regularly so in *Unodari* you take 3 *Chapaties*. This also helps to gain self control, and any body can easily practice it.

**Boiled Water** In Jainism there is special significance of boiled water. During any *Vrat* consumption of boiled water is compulsory. But some Jains even without any vow or *Vrat* prefer to use only boiled water. The reason is simple, Water contains a lot many germs, not seen with eyes. But science has proved it in laboratory. On a microscope, a single drop of ordinary water would show thousands of living germs in it. They harm your body from within. Boiled water is sate water. All the germs are killed and no new germs can be born in it. Thus it is most safe water.

**Eating before sunset** A strict Jain would never take any food after sunset. Indeed this practice from health pint of view, provides sufficient time for food to digest. But from non-violence point of view also it has special significance. After sunset, in the dark, a number of bacteria are generated in food- items.

Even small unseen insects are likely to contaminate the food items. Therefore taking food after sunset is considered to be as bad as Non-Vegetarian food. "To take the food at night (after sunset) is gate way to Hell."

All these practices are related to food and health. But for a Jain, there are several practices for peace of mind.

**Prayers and Worship** There is great significance for a Jain to worship God/ Tirthankara in temple and Guru (a monk) in an *Upashrayā*. In order to give thanks for or appreciation for their grace and to draw spiritual inspiration from them most Jains daily visit a temple, humbly bows down, offer *Pooja* with several substances like Sandal Saffron Paste, Flowers, fruits, Rice, Sweets and of course Money. The Worship (*Vandanā*) to Guru (a monk) is meant for one's appreciation of the life he leads.

**Forgiveness (*Khshama Yachana*)** This is also a great practice of Jainism. The principle of Non-Violence has been taken to such an extreme, that even doing something bad, or telling something unpleasant creates a subtle violence. So a true Jain always repents for his misdeeds and asks for forgiveness;

‘*आमेमि सच्च जुवे, सच्च जुवा जमंतु मे  
मिति मे सच्चा भूवेशु, वेरं मज्ज न के नहिं*’

This is the real spirit. Ask for forgiveness for whatever you have done in present or past, knowingly or unknowingly.

**Meditation (*Sāmāyik*)** *Sāmāyik* is a meditation for 48 minutes; during which a devotee, keeps himself / herself totally devoid of the worldly activity which is for better for soul. *Sāmāyik* . literally means ‘aspiring for liberation through equanimity’. For the period of 48 minutes, the devotee is detached from all external activities. This is considered to be the highest form of religious discipline; and is widely recommended by monks and nuns, and equally widely practiced by Jain men, women and children.

**Confession (*Pratikramān*)** *Pratikramān* is another religious discipline in which the Jains repent for their sins and misdeeds done to one and all. This is a activity to make the mind clean with repentance, and soul light with a sense of forgiveness. *Pratikramān* is an act of genuine introspection of one's total activities. During the course of moral life, we knowingly and unknowingly, directly or indirectly, commit a number of offences – by mind, by speech or by action. *Pratikramān* is a time when one reminds oneself of such offences done to others – to any body human species, all other inferior species, plants and what not. If with a clear conscious, we beg pardon for such misdeeds the sins are washed away and soul becomes light and pure. It requires great amount of humility.

*Pratikramān* is of 5 kinds depending upon the duration of period covered for confession and accordingly, the rituals change.

1. *Rai Pratikramān* Confession for misdeed during night.
2. *Devsī Pratikramān* Confession for misdeeds during a day.
3. *Pakkhi Pratikramān* Confession for misdeed in 15 days.
4. *Chaumasi Pratikramān* Confession of misdeed in 4 months.
5. *Sāmvatsari Pratikramān* Confession of misdeed in whole year.