

6.4 Science of Jainism 5 Vows

1. Non-Violence : We do harm and violence to living-beings for the sustenance of our body. We cannot live without killing living beings. Even our breathing involves violence. Therefore, we have to restrict our violence to utmost and absolutely necessary. Therefore, meat-eating, hunting, fishing etc. are forbidden. The strength of non-violence is the light of intellectual discretion and mental purity. And with this strength, world of human beings can become rich in friendliness, sympathy, love, spirituality, happiness and bliss. Non-violence is a spiritual power.

2. Truth : Truth is an important virtue in Jainism. A True Jain cannot be a liar. To tell a lie is sin. To speak the truth which is wholesome and conducive to welfare is virtue. In Acharāṅg Sutrā, it is said; “ O men, understand Truth rightly. The intelligent person who obeys the command of Truth, crosses death.” That is, he becomes immortal.

3. Non-theft : Employing unfair means of business, owning another man’s property by fraudulent tricks, deceiving others by misleading them, breach of one’s confidence, damaging others’ interest by cunningness- all these are vicious acts of theft- directly or indirectly. Picking up of goods forgotten by others, employing thieves to get something for you, encouraging and prompting others to steal, approving others’ acts of stealing, receiving stolen merchandise, using false weights and measures, non-payment of tax, indulging in smuggling- all are acts of theft. Taking anything owned by others, through injustice, dishonesty, fraud, and unfair means is an act of theft.

Vicious Professions Gambling and speculations are never considered to be an honest business. It fosters dishonesty and idleness. If someone gains in it, a number of persons are ruined.

Limiting one’s possessions

Jain scriptures propound the vow of limiting one’s possessions. Renouncing excessive luxury, inordinate worldly pleasures as also waste of wealth in many ways can raise the standard of morality in the society. The objective of this vow is to limit one’s possessions rather possessive instinct. One can live decent life in simple means. It is sin to keep and collect which one cannot utilize during one’s lifetime.