

Question-1: In which book, Jain philosophy is described?

Answer-1: There are many books. For example, there are 45 canonical books (Jain *Āgāms*) according to the *Shwetambar-Murtipujak* tradition. In addition there are numerous books that provide details of Jain philosophy. If there is one book to be named for Jain philosophy, it would be "*Tattvartha sutra*" by Umaswati (also known as Umaswami). As a minimum, every Jain should have this book in their home and, should read and understand it.

Question-2: What is religion?

Answer-2: The *Sanskrit* word for the religion is *Dharma*. *Dharma means* the nature of the thing. For all living beings, the soul is the real thing. The religion therefore means to see, to know and to realize the true nature of the soul. In other words, the laws of nature in truest and purest form are the religion.

Laws of nature lead us to the laws of self-initiative and self-effort. Without self-efforts and self-initiative, one cannot see, know or realize the true qualities of Self. That's why Jainism relies a great deal on one's own efforts and initiatives, and laws of nature. Our present fate is due to our past *Karma*. *One can change it by self-effort* .

Unlike other living beings, we, human beings, have reasoning mind and capacity to think rationally. We have curiosity. We want to live a peaceful, happy and simple life. Since the time immemorial, we curious human beings have been seeking answers to the questions such as: who am I? Who am I not? Who is God? Who made the universe? What is my relationship with the universe? What is my real nature? How can I achieve my own nature, my true self? How do I achieve permanent happiness? Right answers to these questions constitute the religion.

Question-3: How old is the Jain religion? What is the proof of its existence in the past? b) What is nature and how does it relate to Jain religion?

Answer-3: It is believed that Parshvanath and Lord Mahavir were historical entities. The name of Rushabhdev occurs in Vedic literature. This makes Jainism as old as the Vedic religion, if not older. Similarly, the existence of Jainism is mentioned in the canonical books of the Buddhism. Historians also agree that the Jainism is a pre-historical religion. Recent archeological discoveries like figures of Rushabhdev substantiate the Jain religion's existence since five thousand years. There are tens of thousands of years old caves that have paintings echoing Jainism.

There has been countless time-cycles in the past. During each half time cycles (trillions and trillions of years long), we have 24 Tirthankars. Therefore, the Jain religion has been preached by our Tirthankars during each half cycle.

Extraordinary details on the practice "non-violence", the concept of six substances of the universe, nine realities and many similar things preached in Jainism do support, represent and substantiate the laws of nature and the laws of universal balance. The Jain religion and the laws of nature are synonymous. Therefore, our religion has been in existence since the laws of nature have been in existence. Therefore, Jains believe that the Jain religion has been in existence since the time without beginning and will have no end.

Question-4: What is the relationship between Hindu and Jain Religions?

Answer-4: Hindu and Jain, both religions are independent. It is a wrong belief that the Jain religion is derived from the Vedic religion. Because of the thousands of years of common history and parallel culture of Hindus and Jains, there are many similarities. Both religions preach that non-violence constitutes the supreme religion. Hindus and Jains are not distinguishable when it comes to their attitude towards the life. It should be also noted that there are some distinct differences between these two religions. The concept of “non-violence” is much more detailed in Jainism. We, Jains do not believe that the universe was created. We believe that the universe is self-regulated. No one decides for us what we should get. We believe that we are the master of our own destiny. There is no divine power who decides for us. We believe all living beings are equal and all human beings are capable of achieving the liberation regardless of their race, cast, sex or color. We do not believe that the souls who have gone to *Moksha* come back to earth (take a rebirth) to save the world.

Question-5: How does the theory of "First Chicken or Egg" fit in the Jain religion?

Answer-5 We do not believe in any theory like “First Chicken or Egg.” If we were created then we can be destroyed. But our soul is immortal. Therefore, we could not have been created. We Jains believe that our souls were in existence since the time without beginning and will be in existence forever (has no end). There was no creation of the souls and will have no destruction of the souls. We move from one body to another until we achieve the liberation. After the liberation, we still exist forever in the pure soul form.

Question-6: Science has proved that there is a life in the plant. Then, how can we eat vegetables and fruits?

Answer-6: Jainism has said that there is a life in the plant much before the science has proved it. It is true that vegetables and fruits, both have lives. The ideal situation for a Jain would be to eat the ripe fruit that has just fallen off a tree. Vegetables and fruits are one-sensed living beings. One-sensed living beings have only “touch” sense. Their development of consciousness (knowledge) is significantly less than the higher (two, three, four and five)-sensed living beings like us, animals, birds, etc. For example, the level of knowledge of one-sensed living beings is only a small fraction of one letter. It is impossible to live a life with absolute non-violence. We need to eat to survive and we need to earn to live as a “house-holder”. But the basis of Jainism is “non-violence”. Therefore, we must minimize the act of non-violence. Eating vegetables constitutes minimum act of violence because: 1) Animals have more life-force, called *Prān* and more knowledge (purer -much more developed- consciousness) than the vegetables. Therefore, killing animals constitutes the higher form of violence. 2) Many other living organisms reside in an animal body and They get multiplied in a dead body. 3) Vegetables have less living cells and more water content. 4) We do not kill the plant for vegetables. We take leaves, vegetables and fruits off the plants. By removing vegetables and fruits from a tree, we sometimes lengthen the life span of the tree. 5) Eating vegetables is healthier. 6) The anatomy (teeth, digestive system, tongue, etc.) of human beings is for eating vegetarian food.

Question-7: Jains believe in the non-violence. Then, a) How can we take milk, butter, cheese etc.? b) What about the business of grocery, manufacturing plant etc.?

Answer-7: a) The question implies that if we cannot eat meat of cow, how can we consume cow's milk. When we eat cow's meat, we kill the cow. When we use cow's milk, we do not kill the cow. But we must make sure the cow's milk is extracted without causing pain to it and the milk was in excess (we did not deprive the cow's off-springs). If we do not remove the excess milk from cow, we may be doing more harm to it than help. When we use the butter and cheese, we should make sure that they (specially the cheese) do not contain any animal ingredients. Jainism considers that the use of milk and milk products is not conducive to spiritual advancement. There are people in US who are called vegans. Vegans do not eat dairy products.

b) We should choose a profession or a business that has minimum amount of violence. The Jain *Āgams* recommend staying away from the trades that involve sufferings and killing of animals, affect our environment and ecology, and pollute or dry-up our natural resources. Trades that involve weapons and explosives, fire, cutting of trees, fermented products like liquor, animal parts like ivory, leather and fur; lard, meat and honey; poisonous and toxic substances, animal testing & use and prostitution need to be avoided. Moreover, we should not buy stocks or otherwise invest in such businesses.

Question-8: *Jains believe in not killing anyone. a) Suppose you are in a desert and dying of hunger and there you see a dead animal, can you eat that meat to survive? b) You go to a grocery store and are passing by meat section. You know that meat is already there. If you don't buy it, someone else will buy and eat or it will decay. What's wrong in buying readily available meat, when you yourself haven't killed?.*

Answer-8: a) Dead bodies of animals contain lot of living organisms and that keeps on multiplying as time passes. Most organisms have the same color as of the meat. Therefore, eating meat of naturally dead animal does involve a high level of violence. Secondly, there is the risk of dying by eating the dead animal because it may contain deadly disease or our digestive system may not adjust to that meat-eating. It is of course hard to court death in absence of innocent food. There are, however, examples of Jain monks who died due to severe draught rather than eating meat or even drinking sentient water. As Jains believe that there is life after death, we should not worry about dying. One may argue that the human life is very difficult to attain. This is true. But the act of bad Karma (*pāp*) like eating meat may lead to hell in the next life. Meat eating only when there is no other alternative is not acceptable to Jainism. If we practice the minor vows for house-holders, then we will not be traveling to an unknown area. We will be limiting our travels to the familiar areas. We will also be limiting our activities to the essential needs. By resorting to such precepts, one can avert such hypothetical situation. Jainism is more about prevention of wrong situations.

b) This is fallacious since purchasing creates demand and encourages others to kill. Thus it is equivalent to oneself committing the deed. The 'neat' packaging of meat hides the pain that occurred before. It is unfortunate that packaging keeps scenes of slaughterhouses off the minds of the consumers. Mahavir Bhagwan said, "It is *Himsā* (violence) - whether a man kills living beings himself/herself, or causes others to kill them, or gives consent to others to kill."

Question-9: *I go to my friend's place, can I eat from the dish containing meat on one side?*

Answer-9: The issue is not whether you eat from the dish containing meat on one side. The real issue is how to avoid such a situation. You should let your friend know that you are a vegetarian and you do not eat meat. In all probabilities your friend will understand and respect your belief

and will not put you in a tough situation by serving you a dish that contains meat. If he/she does, then he/she may not be your friend.

Question-10: a) Why do I have to obey all these rules and regulations, when I don't know what will happen after the death? Why should I control myself rather than enjoy the life? b) Why can't we remember our past lives? c) What will happen if I remember the past lives?

Answer-10: The philosophy of *Chārvāka* did not believe in the concepts of soul and *Karma*. That philosophy laid down to eat, spend and materially enjoy the life even if you have to borrow. They claimed that no one knows whether there is a next life.

First of all, one practices the religion to attain the long-lasting happiness. Such happiness can be achieved by removing the causes of all miseries. Enjoying the material world may bring temporary happiness, but no one can attain the lasting happiness through material things. We know that money, power, name, etc. do not guarantee the happiness. How do we get rid of the miseries? The root cause of all our miseries is attachment and aversion. When we get what we want we feel happy (this is attachment) and we become unhappy when we do not get what we want (this is aversion). The rules and regulations are designed to reduce our attachment and aversion. However, one should not be forced to practice what is not appealing to his/her common sense. One should adopt the minor vows according to his/her own capacity, and then gradually progress from there.

The religion is for guiding us to find the inner (permanent) happiness. The goal of the long-lasting happiness is not limited to only this life. We believe that we had lives in past and will have lives in future until we achieve the liberation (perfect happiness). Now, the next question is - how do we know that we had previous lives and/or we will have a next life?

There are four ways to decide on the things like whether there were previous lives and/or there is a next life. These four ways are: 1) self-experience, 2) believe in the people who have experienced it or what is said in the *Jain Āgāms* (Canonical books). 3) by inference and 4) by analogy. In this fifth segment of the regressive half-time cycle, we do not have the people with self-experience. We have *Jain Āgāms* that can be trusted. But in today's world, one may ask for rationale. One has to rationalize two major aspects: 1) belief in the existence of soul and 2) belief in the theory of *Karma*. The existence of soul can be reasoned out by comparing a dead body and a living being. The differences between these two bodies are consciousness, feeling energy, ability to act etc. These differences constitute the characteristics of the soul. This leads us to believe that there is a substance like soul.

The theory of *Karma* rests on the observance of various phenomena. Why are we not equal at the time of birth? Why are some happy and some aren't? Why are some healthy and some aren't? Why are some good looking and some aren't? Why are some rich and some aren't? The rational explanation is that there has to be some aspect that makes everyone different. Per Jainism, that aspect is called "*Karma*". At the time of our birth, each one of us has a different impact of *Karma* and that makes us different from each other. We must be carrying such *Karma* from the previous life. Similarly, we add or subtract to the *Karma* every moment. With good-positive self-effort, we can change the impact of our *Karma*. As the impact decreases, the more realized are the characteristics of soul. As we know, someone gets more reward for good work in this life, while someone gets less or no reward for the same amount of good work. Why? One kills one person and gets a death sentence. While someone else kills one hundred persons and still goes free. The reward is not equal. Therefore, there has to be a next life to take care of such discrepancies.

The next question is - why don't we remember our previous life? There are eight different types of *Karmas*. One them is knowledge-obscuring *Karma*. The existence of that *Karma* does not let us completely realize the knowledge component of our consciousness (soul). There are five reasons that activate the knowledge-obscuring *Karma*: place, time, substance, emotions and transition to next life. We do not remember everything we know at every place, at every time. during every emotional experience and at every substance-encounter. The time, the place, the feeling and the substance involve in a particular situation decides how, when and where of its memory. The transition of our soul (with our *Karman* body and *tejas* body) to the next life activates the knowledge-obstructing *Karma*. Therefore, we do not remember the previous life. Since this transition to another body is an extraordinary event as compared to other events in our life, it makes us forget about our previous life.

The next question is - what happens when I remember my previous life? If this happens, this could be the most fortunate moment of our life. We will trust every thing that is said in our *Āgāms*. Our life will spiritually be more focused.

Question-11: *I cannot live in this modern day world without violating the five vows. What are your views?*

Answer-11: There are two types of vows, one for the monks and one for house-holders. The vows for monks are called the major vows (*Maha Vrata*). In the practice of *Maha Vrata*, total abstinence from violence, falsehood, stealing, carnality and possessiveness is observed. The vows for the house-holders are called minor vows (*Anu Vrata*). House-holders observe the vows of restraining from gross violence, lies, stealing, sexual activities and accumulation. These vows are not as strict as the major vows. Each house-holder can observe such vows according to place, time, feeling, capacity and profession. The degree of the practice can thus vary. A house-holder takes the vows with certain conditions that he/she thinks can practice without feeling miserable. Observance of minor vows by house-holders and major vows by Jain monks has been prevalent without significant compromise since Bhagavān Mahavir's time.

Question-12: *We say that human life is difficult to attain, but then why the population in the world is increasing? Is it because the good deeds are increasing?*

Answer-12: It is true that human life is difficult to attain and the world's population is increasing. Jainism says the human life is difficult to attain in this universe. That is said in respect to the human population in the universe. We do not have knowledge whether the population of human beings in universe is increasing or not. If it is increasing, it has an explanation that these people must have done good deeds in their past lives. The good deeds (*Karma*) to attain a human life include qualities like tolerance, straightforwardness, universal friendship and respecting all living beings. Therefore, the human life is difficult to attain. Intentional violence, attachment, meat-eating and killing of five-sensed lives lead to the life in hell. Deceit, cheating, manipulation and purposeful lying lead to a lower form of the life. Restraint, austerity, etc., lead to the life in heaven. The one sensed living beings are infinitely more than all other living beings combined. There are more two-sensed lives than three-sensed lives and onwards. The human beings are less than any other living being. In addition, the human beings are the only ones who have the capacity of rational thinking and conduct. This enables them to eradicate their *Karmas*. Therefore, the human life is the "must" before one can attain the liberation (*Moksha*).

Question-13: *Why there are 108 beads in a rosary?*

Answer-13: There are five supreme entities: Arihants have 12 unique qualities, Siddhas have 8, Acharyas have 36, Upadhyayas have 25, and Sādhus have 27. There are thus 108 unique qualities of these five supreme entities. Each bead in the rosary represents one such quality.

Question-14: *If Sidhdhas are also liberated souls, then what is the difference between Sidhdhas and Tirthankars?*

Answer-14:

There are eight major types of *Karmas*: 1) Knowledge-Obscuring, *Jnānvarniya Karma*, 2) Perception-Obscuring, *Darshanvarniya Karma*, 3) Vigor-Obstructing, *Antaray Karma*, 4) Deluding, *Mohniya Karma*, 5) Situation-Confering, *Vedniya Karma*, 6) Body-Making, *Nam Karma*, 7) Status-determining, *Gotra Karma* and 8) Age span-Determining, *Ayushya Karma*.

The first four are the destructive (*ghāti*) *Karmas*. They defile the real nature of the soul. The last four *Karmas* are non-destructive (*aghāti*) *Karmas*. When the first four *Karmas* are eradicated, the person becomes *kevali* and achieves perfect knowledge, perfect perception and perfect conduct. But there are two types of *kevalis*: 1. Ordinary and 2. *Tirthankar*. Ordinary *kevalis* do not show the path of purification to others, while *Tirthankar kevalis* preach the path of the purification (liberation - *Moksha*) to all living beings. *Tirthankar* means who leads us across the ocean of suffering. *Tirthankar* is not the founder of the religion, he/she is the propagator of truth, and path of liberation which has been preached by other *Tirthankars*. When a *kevali*, whether he/she is an ordinary or *Tirthankar kevali*, achieves *Nirvān*, he/she eradicates the remaining four (*aghāti*) *Karmas* and becomes a *Sidhdha*. For example, *Bhagavān Mahavir* became a *Siddha* after his *Nirvān*. Since he was a *Tirthankar kevali* we still call him a *Tirthankar*.

Question-15: *I don't see difference between Acharya, Upadhyaya and Sādhus. They look same to me. Is that true?*

Answer-15: It is true that they all look same. They have chosen the same path of liberation by renouncing their worldly attachments and have taken the same great vows as required for a Jain monk. However, Acharya is the head of the religious order. He is a spiritual leader and monk-scholar, responsible for maintaining the rules of conduct, providing spiritual guidance and handling the organizational needs. Upādhyāya is the teacher, who has a detailed knowledge of Jain canonical books. The monks other than Āchārya and Upādhyāya are the spiritual practitioner (*Sādhus*).

Question-16: *Why there are 24 Tirthankars, and not any other number?*

Answer-16: If we had 23 Tirthankars, then we would have a question why there are only 23, no more or no less? There are certain realities that do not need (or have) an explanation. They are just facts. So is the number of Tirthankars.

Question-17: *Why there is more history available of Rushabhdev, Shantinath, Mallinath, Neminath, Parasnath, and Lord Mahavir Swami?*

Answer-17: We have more information on the lives of Rushabhdev, Shantinath, Mallinath, Neminath, Parasnath, and Mahavir Swami because there have been many extraordinary, impressive, unique and message-oriented incidents in the lives of these *Tirthankars* as compared to others. Rushabhdev introduced the necessary things to ease the transition from primitive life

to an organized one. For example he introduced, arts of men and women, languages, tools, business and farming, governing body to handle state affairs, etc. Also there were extraordinary events in his and his children's lives. In case of Shantināth, there was an event of the previous life of Shantināth that he was willing to give his own flesh to save a bird. That event emphasized the importance of non-violence. Mallināth was a woman, and there is an event in her life that she defused the war and convinced marriage-seeking princes, who wanted to marry her, to initiate as monks. There is a very famous event in the life of Nemināth, the chapter of Nem and Rajul. Lord Mahavir had several extraordinary and exceptional events in his life; encounter with *Sangamdev*, facing *chandkausik*, association and encounter with *Goshalak*, recorded discussion with his twelve disciples, case of *Chandanbāla*, etc. There are no significant events in the lives of other *Tirthankars* like these six *Tirthankaras*.

Question-18: How do we know the future 24 Tirthankars?

Answer-18: We have been told by Lord Mahavir who attained the perfect knowledge. The preaching of the Lord Mahavir was passed on to us by his main disciples. The perfect knowledge means the knowledge of past, present and future about all the living beings and non-living substances..

Question-19: What is the significance of Paryushana?

Answer-19: *Paryushana* means to stay closer, to stay closer to the self - to our soul (*Ātmā*). *Paryushana parva* consists of eight (Shwetambar tradition) to ten days (Digambar tradition). During that period, Jains practice various restraints like not eating (fasting) or eating only one meal a day and spend more time spiritually (like listening to Jain *gurus*, reading religious books, etc.). The last day of this period is called *Samvatsari* (annual ceremony of atonement), when people undertake atonement of wrong activities during the previous 12 months. They admit their sins and pray for forgiveness (*ksama*). Admission of sins and praying for forgiveness are directed towards the spiritual teachers, family members, friends and others regardless of age or sex. Letters are written to the people they know and who were not approachable in person on the *Samvatsari* day acknowledging the wrong doings and seeking the forgiveness. The aspirant on his part gives forgiveness to all living beings and asks for the same favor from others. This is usually done through the *Samvatsari Pratikraman* (*Pratikraman* means to return from sins or faults) and raises the real spirit of universal friendship and goodwill: (*Khāmemi savvajive savve Jiva khamantu me ! Mitti me savvabhuesu veram majjha na kenai* (It means - I forgive to all living beings; may all of them forgive me. I have a friendship with all living beings and hostility towards none). The *pratyākhyāna* (renunciation of certain things) aspect is very elaborate during the *Paryushana parva*. The *Samvatsari Pratikraman* is considered a highly important practice during the *Paryushana parva*, which is the most important Jain festival.

Question-20: Why do I have to pray everyday? Why do we worship Tirthankar's idol? Why do I have to worship Idol with sandal wood paste, flowers etc.? Why people take fruits, sweets etc. to the temple?

Answer-21: We pray/worship to pay our respects to the *Tirthankars* because they have attained liberation and have laid down the path of liberation. We want to get inspiration to become like them. By praying them, we receive the spiritual incentive to follow the right path of purification. We do not pray/worship for any favors or material benefits from the *Tirthankars* or from monks and nuns.

There are eight things involved in worshipping (puja) the *Tirthankaras*: 1. Jal Puja: (Water) 2. Chandan Puja: (Sandal-wood) 3. Pushpa Puja: (Flower) 4. Dhup Puja: (Incense) 5. Dipak Puja: (Candle) 6. Akshat Puja: (Rice) 7. Naivedya Puja: (Sweet food) 8. Fal Puja: (Fruit). Symbolically each item represents a specific religious virtue which one should reflect (contemplate) in his/her mind while performing puja.

Question-21: *Why do we need a worshipping place? Can't we do same thing in our own home?*

Answer-21: The worshipping place provides the necessary environment for spiritual up-liftment just as the school provides for education. One who is spiritually advanced, can continue the spiritual activity at any place. But for most of the *Sansāris* (house-holders) we need to depend upon outside sources such as temple to make initial progress in the spiritual direction. It is also acceptable that one can practice his/her religion from home as long as he/she achieves the similar or better results. For most people, the combination of both is recommended.

Question-22: *Define the dreams according to Jain religion?*

Answer-22: According to Jainism the dreams are not only thoughts, images and emotions during the sleep; the dreams could be indicative of our past experiences as well as what will happen in future. Per Jainism, we get dreams due to: 1) experiences in this life, 2) what we heard, 3) experiences of our previous life, 4) gas, cough or acidity problems, 5) own-nature of our soul, 6) worries, 7) contact with heavenly beings, 8) religious experiences or acts, and 9) activation of good or bad *Karma*. First six types of dreams may not be fruitful, but the last three dreams can be fruitful. Per Jainism, we should not go back to sleep if we see the best dream.

Question-23: *What is the significance of the 14 dreams, which mother Trishala had? and why no less or more?*

Answer-23: There is a book on dreams in Jainism that explains significance of dreams, types of dreams and results of dreams. In that book, it is stated that all *Tirthankars'* mothers get the same 14 dreams at the time of conception. .

Queen Trishala, the mother of Lord Mahavir at midnight saw fourteen beautiful and wholesome dreams after conception. They were: 1. Elephant 2. Bull 3. Lion 4. Goddess Laxmi 5. Garland of Flowers 6. Full Moon 7. Sun 8. Large Flag 9. Silver Urn 10. Lotus-Lake 11. Milky-Sea 12. Celestial Air-plane 13. Heap of Gems 14. Smokeless Fire.

1. Elephant: She saw a big, tall, and impetuous elephant. It had two pairs of tusks. The color of the elephant was white and its whiteness was superior to the color of marble. This dream indicates that her son will guide the spiritual chariot, and save human beings from misery, greed, and attraction of life.

2. Bull: The color of the bull was also white, but it was brighter than white lotuses. It glowed with beauty and radiated light all around. It was noble, grand, and had a majestic hump. It had fine, bright, and soft hair on its body. Its horns were superb and sharply-pointed. This dream indicates that her son will be a spiritual teacher of great ascetics, kings, and other great personalities.

3. Lion: Its claws were beautiful and well-poised. The lion had a large well-rounded head and extremely sharp teeth. Its lips were perfect, its color was red, and its eyes were sharp and glowing. Its tail was impressively long and well-shaped. Queen Trishala saw this lion

descending towards her and entering her mouth. This dream indicates that her son will be as powerful and strong as a lion. He will be fearless, mighty, and capable of ruling over the world.

4. Goddess Laxmi: The fourth dream Queen Trishala saw was of the Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth, prosperity and power. She was seated at the top of mountain Himalaya. Her feet had a sheen of golden turtle. She had a delicate and soft fingers. Her black hairs were tiny, soft, and delicate. She wore rows of pearls interlaced with emeralds and a garland of gold. A pair of earring hung over her shoulders with dazzling beauty. She held a pair of bright lotuses. This dream indicates that her son will attain great wealth, power, prosperity.

5. Garland of Flowers: The fifth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a celestial garland of flowers descending from the sky. It smelled of mixed fragrances of different flowers. The whole universe was filled with fragrance. The flowers were white and woven into the garland. They bloomed during all different seasons. A swarm of bees flocked to it and they made a humming sound around the region. This dream indicates that the fragrance of her son's preaching will spread over the entire universe.

6. Full Moon: The sixth dream queen Trishala saw was of a full moon. It presented an auspicious sight. The moon was at its full glory. It awoke the lilies to bloom fully. It was bright like a well polished mirror. The moon radiated whiteness like a swan. It inspired the oceans to surge skyward. The beautiful moon looked like a radiant beauty-mark in the sky. This dream indicates that her son will have a great physical structure, and be pleasing to all living beings of the universe.

7. Sun: The seventh dream Queen Trishala saw was of a huge disc of sun. The sun was shining, and destroying darkness. It was red like the flame of the forest. Lotuses bloomed at its touch. The sun is the lamp of the sky and the lord of planets. The sun rose and and put to end the evil activities of the creatures who thrive at night. This dream indicates that the teaching of her son will destroy anger, greed, ego, lust, pride, etc. from the life of the people.

8. Large Flag: The eighth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a very large flag fluttering from a golden staff. The flag fluttered softly in the gentle breeze. It attracted the eyes of all. Peacock feathers decorated its crown. A radiant white lion was on it. This dream indicates that her son will be great, noble, and well respected leader of the family.

9. Silver Urn: The ninth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a silver urn (Kälsh) full of crystal-clear water. It was a magnificent, beautiful, and bright pot. It shone like gold and was a joy to behold. It was garlanded with strings of lotuses and other flowers. The pot was holy and untouched by anything sinful. This dream indicates that her son will be perfect in all virtues.

10. Lotus-Lake: The tenth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a lotus lake (padma-sagar). Thousands of lotuses were floating on the lake which opened at the touch of the sun's rays. The lotuses imparted a sweet fragrance. There were swarms of fish in the lake. Its water glowed like flames of fire. The lily-leaves were floating on the water. This dream indicates that her son will help to liberate the human beings who are tangled in the cycle of birth, death, and misery.

11. Milky-sea: The eleventh dream Queen Trishala saw was of a milky sea. Its water swelled out in all directions, rising to great heights with turbulent motions. Winds blew and created waves. A great commotion was created in the sea by huge sea animals. Great rivers fell into the sea, producing huge whirlpools. This dream indicates that her son will navigate through the ocean of birth, death, and misery leading to Moksha or liberation.

12. Celestial air-plane: The twelfth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a celestial airplane. The airplane had eight thousands magnificent gold pillars studded with gems. The plane was framed with sheets of gold and garlands of pearls. It was decorated with rows of murals depicting bulls, horses, men, crocodiles, birds, children, deers, elephants, wild animals, and lotus flowers. The

plane resounded with celestial music. It was saturated with an intoxicating aroma of incense fumes. It was illuminated with a bright silvery light. This dream indicates that all gods and goddesses in heaven will respect and salute his spiritual teaching and will obey him.

13. Heap of Gems: The thirteenth dream Queen Trishala saw was of a great heap of gems, as high as Mount Meru. There were gems and precious stones of all types and kinds. These gems were heaped over the earth and they illuminated the entire sky. This dream indicates that her son will have infinite virtues and wisdom.

14. Smokeless Fire: The fourteenth dream queen Trishala saw was of a smokeless fire. The fire burned with great intensity and emitted a radiant glow. Great quantities of pure ghee was being poured on the fire. It burned with numerous flames. This dream indicates that the wisdom of her son will excel the wisdom of all other great people.

Question-24: When and under what circumstances different branches of Jain religion started? What are the different sects in Jainism? Why they can't Unite?

Answer-24: About 170 years after Mahavir's Nirvān, Acharya Bhadrabahu Swami became the head of the Jain order. That time, Chandra Gupta Maurya was the king in Magadha. During that time a famine occurred for twelve years. (This is a historical fact). Acharya Bhadrabahu had predicted that long famine and realized that it will be very difficult for monks to strictly follow religion (Five Mahavrats, no clothes, beg food in hands, etc.). Therefore he, along with twelve thousands of his disciples, migrated to south and settled there so that they can follow the strict religious rules. The remaining monks were led by Acharya Sthulibhadra and he relaxed some of the rules for the monks for survival during this famine. That was the primary cause of the separation of Digambar and Shwetambar sects. However, the real separation occurred during the time of Acharya Vajrasen (six hundred years after Mahavir's Nirvān). It is a fact that Mahavir did not wear clothes after renunciation. However, his disciples were of both types (clad as well as unclad). The disciples of Parshwanath (23rd Tirthankar) wore white clothes.

Shwetambar Jains are also divided into two major subjects: Shwetambar Murti Pujak (Idol worshiper) and Shwetambar Sthanakwasi (Non-idol worshiper). There is an offshoot among Sthanakwasis which is known as Terapanthi. Digambar Jains are divided into three major subjects: Bisa Panth that accepts Bhattarak's authority, Terah Panth which does not accept such authority, and Taran Panth- Non-Murti pujak sect .

The essential philosophy of all Jain sects is similar. The similarities exist in many areas: 1. Concept of God 2. Every soul has the potential for becoming God or Siddha. 3. Metaphysics, 4. The universe composed of six substances, 5. Philosophy of Karma, 6. The seven/nine fundamentals (*tattvas*) 7. Right perception (Samyag Darshan), Right Knowledge (Samyag Jnan) and Right Conduct (Samyak Charitra) as the path of liberation. 10. five vows, 11. Five meticulousities (Samities), 12 Control over mental, verbal and physical activities (Three Gupties), 13 Multiplicity of view points (Anekantwad/Syadwad), 14) Five types of Knowledge (Jnan), 15 Fourteen Stages of elevation (Gunasthanak), 16 Twelve reflections (Bhavanas), 17 Four types of Meditations (Dhyan), 18 Six types of Leshyas (psychic coloration), 19 Emergence of 12 Tirthankars in each half time cycle, 20 Namaskar Maha Mantra and 21 Authority of Tattvartha Sutra are recognized by all the Jain sects.

The following, however, are the major differences. 1 Agams: Digambar Jains believe that all the original Āgams (Āng and Purva Āgams) have been lost. Most of them might have been lost during the twelve years of famine that occurred during the time of the Chandra Gupta Maurya (300 B.C.). They recognize other books written by great Acharyas like Kundkunacharya. Shwetambar Jains believe that 600 years after Lord Mahavir's Nirvan all Purva Āgams were lost

or not remembered by monks and hence were not saved. Only Ang and Non-Ang Āgams could be preserved. 2 Life after kevaljnān: Digambars believe that after attaining Kevaljnān, Tirthankars and other Kevaljnānis do not eat or drink; while Shwetambaras believe that they continue to eat and drink like other human beings and continue to lead the renunciate life for the remaining period of their life. 3 Sex of Tirthankars: Digambars believe that all the Tirthankars are necessarily male and there is no exception. Shwetambaras believe that generally they are male but in the present series of 24 Tirthankars, the nineteenth Tirthankar, Mallinath was a female and that was an exception to the rule. 4 Sex of other Kevalis: Digambars believe that only males can attain liberation. A female has to be reborn as a male in order to attain liberation. Shwetambaras believe that both males and females can attain liberation. 5. Clothes and Food: Digambar monks do not wear any clothes. They beg for food in their hands and eat only once a day. Shwetambar monks and nuns wear white clothes and they beg food in pots generally once a day. They bring the food to Upashraya or other place of their residence and ask their Guru for permission to eat their meal. They do not eat food in the presence of laymen. 6. Mahavir's conception: Shwetambaras believe that Mahavir's fetus was transferred from mother Devananda (Bhraman family) to mother Trishala (Kshatriya family), while Digambars believe that he was conceived by mother Trishala and the question of fetus transfer does not arise. 7 Marital status of Mahavir: Digambars believe that Mahavir was not married, while Shwetambaras believe that Mahavir was married with Yashoda and they had a daughter named Priyadarshan. 8. Tirthankara's Murti (Idol): The Tirthankar's idol can have ornaments and decorations, and their eyes look toward the worshiper in Shwetambar Murti Pujak sect. Digambar idols do not have ornaments and their eyes are turned downward in meditating position. 9. Pratikraman, Samayik, and Puja rituals are different.

It can be seen that all Jain sects have remarkable similarity in their philosophy despite minor areas of disagreements. Recently, there have been several collaborative works by all major sects. Jains from different sects outside India seem to have more unity and harmony..

About Nonviolence (*Ahimsā*)

Ahimsā and Anekāntvād (non-violence and multiplicity of views) are the bases of Jainism. All other aspects are the branches of these two aspects. The fundamentals of non-violence are: 1) all living beings are equal, 2) every living being wants to live and does not want to die, 3) every living being wants to be happy and does not like pain and 4) we need to treat others the way we like to be treated.

Question-25: *What do we mean by Himsā - violence?*

Answer-25: The nature of non-violence is judged by our intentions and actions. If a person deliberately and knowingly harms other living beings, it is violence. But if involuntarily or in unavoidable circumstances, some insects are killed, then it is an exceptional situation. Whether it is by our actions, or by our speech or by our thoughts, hurting others is *Himsā* - violence.

Question-26: *What is so unique about the non-violence preached by Jainism?*

Answer-26: In Jainism, non-violence is a timeless and far-reaching concept that can be applied to every aspect of life. Jain philosophy provides enough information regarding non-violence. Non-violence does not mean merely avoiding physical violence, but it also means minimizing the violence of thought and speech. Jainism states that anger, pride, greed, deceit, jealousy, etc.

constitute mental violence. Harsh language, unnecessary talk, lying, insisting on own ideas and not listening to others constitute the verbal violence.

Question-27: *What do we mean by minimizing necessary violence?*

Answer-27: Jains are realistic; They recognize that absolute non-violence is not practical by a lay-person. For example, we have to cook, eat, earn, wear and travel. These activities involve certain amount of unintentional but necessary violence. However, while undertaking such necessary activities, we must minimize the violence. For example: do not waste water and eat vegetables rather than eating meat.

Question-28: *But we are told that vegetables and animals both have lives. Then how can eating vegetables be less violent than eating meat?*

Answer-28: The ideal situation for a Jain would be to eat the ripe fruit that has just fallen off a tree. However that is hardly practicable. It is true that vegetable plants and animals both have lives. But eating vegetable is less violent, because: 1) We do not kill the plant for vegetables. We take leaves, vegetables and fruits off the plants. By removing vegetables and fruits from a tree, we sometimes lengthen the life span of the tree. 2) Animals have more life-force, called *prān* and more and higher consciousness than the vegetables. Therefore, killing animals constitutes the higher level of violence. 3) Many other living organisms reside in an animal body and they get multiplied in a dead body. 4) Vegetables have less living cells and more water content.

Question-29: *But meat-eating makes people stronger and healthy. Is it true?*

Answer-29: No. It is a wrong belief that animal food makes us stronger and healthy. The human physiology is for eating and digesting vegetarian food and is significantly different from meat-eating animals. Animal food is laced with fat, cholesterol, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics and similar harmful ingredients. Meat eaters are more prone to heart failure, cancer and other killer diseases. Animal food transmits as many as 160 contagious diseases to humans under natural conditions. Animal food also lowers the immune status. Vegetarianism increases endurance and stamina, and makes people healthy and smart. Vegetarian food prevents various cancers, hemorrhoids, constipation, ulcer and many diseases. Smart animals like elephants, cows, bulls, gorillas, horses, apes and chimpanzees are all vegetarian.

Question-30: *But Non-vegetarians argue that the meat is the best source of protein. Is it true?*

Answer-30: No, it is not true. Meat provides much more protein than the daily need of an average person, which is 10 to 15 grams. Excessive intake of protein is harmful. In addition, the meat protein is disease-prone. Protein from vegetarian foods (specially from beans) is very useful and quality-prone while it is not excessive. Similarly, vegetarians get their calcium, iron and other vitamin needs from various vegetables, dark and leafy greens, beans, cereals, nuts, fruits, juices, milk, yogurt etc. Do you know that 120 million animals a week are killed for food in the United States. This is equivalent of one animal per person per year on the earth.

Question-31: *Will my being vegetarian stop violence to animals?*

Answer-31: Not totally, but it will definitely decrease violence to animals. Being vegetarian is a right step in the direction of achieving the goal. In the beginning only one person takes the initiative for every cause, others follow him. Our example will encourage others. Some will renounce animal food, and so it will go on multiplying.

Question-32: *Should we react to an attack in self-defense? Should we get rid of violent animals?*

Answer-32: Well, these are two questions. For lay-persons, to defend against an attack is justifiable. In self-defense, even the killing of a man is considered justifiable, because the motivation is preservation of life. Self defense cannot be considered destruction of life. We have examples in Jain *Āgams* having people gone to heaven while fighting against attack. But to kill dangerous animals like snakes, lions, wolves and tigers is wrong, unless they happen to attack you. 'Live and let live' is the best philosophy to follow. Jain monks are, however, not supposed to react even to the violent attack.

Question-33: *Some people may say: What is wrong in being a non-vegetarian if someone else does the killing?*

Answer-33: This is fallacious since purchasing creates demand and encourages others to kill. It is therefore equivalent to committing the deed. The 'neat' packaging of meat conceals the pain that occurred before. It is unfortunate that packaging keeps scenes of slaughterhouses off the minds of the consumers. Mahavir Bhagwan said, "It is *Himsā* (violence) - whether a man kills living beings himself/herself, or causes others to kill them, or gives consent to others to kill."

Question-34: *Why meat-eating Europeans and Americans are more civilized, learned and powerful?*

Answer-34: Their civilization, learning or power is not due to meat-eating. It is due to other fine qualities like discipline, hard work, self-effort, higher productivity and quality, open-mindedness, adventurous nature, innovation, honesty, generosity, compassion, and natural resources. They also realize that vegetarianism is good for health. There are already more than 10 million Americans who are vegetarian. Do you know that Albert Einstein, Isaac Newton, George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoy and Socrates were vegetarian, not to mention Michael Jackson, Madonna and ex-Beatle Paul McCartney.

Question-35: *How does the vegetarianism help ecology and environment?*

Answer-35: Vegetarianism promotes animal preservation and forestry, and thus ecology and environment. Let me explain you by giving few statistics: 1) one acre of trees is spared each year by every individual who switches to vegetarian diet, 2) it takes 55 square foot of rain-forest to produce one pound of hamburger 3) it requires 2500 gallons of water to produce one pound of meat (one pound of wheat requires only 50 to 75 gallons of water), 4) 85% of annual US top soil is lost due to raising livestock. Do you know that one pound of beef requires 16 pound of grains and soybeans. Do you know that 15 vegetarians can be fed if one person gives up eating meat.

Question-36: *Is there any violence involved in using cosmetics?*

Answer-36: Cosmetics look innocent but there is a lot of hidden violence. Cosmetics use many animal ingredients such as carminic acid, elastin, sperm oil and musk oil. To produce one pound of carminic acid, 70,000 insects are crushed. Another ingredient called "elastin" is obtained from

neck ligaments and aorta of cattle. Sperm oil is the oil extracted from intelligent mammal, whale. Musk oil is extracted from musk of deers, beavers, civet cats and other genitals.

Make sure cosmetics, soaps, detergents, shampoos, skin creams, oven cleaners, shaving creams, etc. have alternative synthetics and plant tissues, no animal ingredients. or have "Cruelty Free" logo on these products. Read the labels and avoid the products with ingredients like glycerides, gelatin, lecithin, stearates, enzymes, lard and tallow. Do you know that an estimated 14 million animals die every year because of animal testing for cosmetics.

Question-37: *What's wrong in wearing silk sarees or silk clothes?*

Answer-37: Some think that they look cool when they wear silk. Some Jains wear silk when they go to *derāsar* for *pooja*. Do you know that the silk is made out of silkworms. To produce 100 grams of pure silk, 1500 silkworms (chrysalis) have to be killed. It is unnecessary to wear silk when we have other alternatives. If you want to look cool, wear artificial silk.

Question-38: *How about the use of leather?*

Answer-38: We wear leather belts, leather shoes. We use leather brief cases, we use leather purses. We have leather interior in our cars. We have leather furniture. Some people wear leather belt or carry leather purse when they go to temples. Leather is nothing but the skin of killed animal. Do we need to make a fashion statement by using leather when other alternatives are available?

Question-39: *Every one knows what's wrong with the use of alcohol, but what's wrong about honey?*

Answer-39: It is okay to have our parents call each other honey or if they call us honey. But it is *Himsā* to eat honey. Let me explain you how honey is made. Honeybees painstakingly take the nectar out of flowers and put in their pouches (sacs). While extracting the nectar, they also pick up many small insects. Then, the honeybees comeback to their nest and vomits the nectar in the honeycombs. Honeycomb is a mass of hexagonal wax cells built by honeybees in their nest to contain their eggs, offspring and for storing the honey. Thus, honey contains many small insects, eggs of bees and disabled bees. Like alcohol, there are millions of single-sense organisms, called *nigoda*, in honey. Therefore, we should avoid eating honey. It is said that we commit sin equivalent to burning seven villages by eating one drop of honey.

Question-40: *What kind of professions should we stay away?*

Answer-40: We should choose a profession or business that involves minimum violence. Jain *Āgams* recommend staying away from the trades that involve sufferings and killing of animals, affect our environment and ecology, and pollute or dry-up the natural resources. Trades that involve weapons and explosives, fire, cutting of trees, fermented products like liquor, animal parts like ivory, leather and fur; lard, meat and honey; poisonous and toxic substances, animal testing & use and prostitution are required to be avoided. We should not even buy stocks or invest in such businesses.

Question-41: *Did we miss any significant issues of physical violence?*

Answer-41: Yes, Animal testing in medical field and use of animals in entertainment. Animal testing in medical fields can be minimized. Most of the medical testing does not require animals.

Consuming a medicine that was tested on animal is a sinful act. Consult your doctor if there is an alternative medicine that was not tested on animal. We should also avoid the entertainment programs that involve use of animals.

Question-42: *What do we mean by violence of speech and thoughts?*

Answer-42: We Jains are very careful about physical *Himsā* but we often commit verbal and mental violence, because we do not fully understand the violence by speech and thoughts. Without proper knowledge, we are like a blind person who is surrounded by a fire. Let me give a few examples of what constitutes verbal or mental violence. Presumptions, suspicion, anger, ego, deceit, greed, spiritual-laziness, lying, spreading rumors, character assassination, wilful misguidance, forgery, use of harsh language, giving wrong suggestions, hidden agenda, disclosing one's secrets, manipulation, desire for power, superiority complex, dishonesty, causing fear to others, personal jokes, laughing at someone's failures or miseries and similar activities constitute violence of thoughts and speech.

Question-43: *How do we stop violence of speech and thoughts?*

Answer-43: Do you know that Hitler was a vegetarian? It means that being a vegetarian is not good enough. To be a truly non-violent person, we must develop the virtues of forgiveness, tolerance, humility, straightforwardness and contentment. We must adopt *Anekāntvād* (multiplicity of views) in thinking and *Syādvād* (theory of "from certain point of view") in speaking. Without that, we will never be really non-violent. Also we need to practice the four *bhāvanas* of *Maitri*, *Pramod*, *Karuna* and *Mādhyastha*.