

## **Covid-19 and the Pandemic of Fear: Some Reflections from the Jaina Perspective\***

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**Abstract:** This paper reflects on the current Covid-19 crisis and the emotional stress that it leads to from the Jaina perspective. It demonstrates that any pandemic like situation is concomitant with a pandemic of emotions as well; fear and stress being prominent of them. The problem of fear is grave and must be dealt with equal measures. The concept of fear is thus analysed from various perspectives as gleaned from the diverse range of Jaina texts. The paper attempts to make the philosophical texts come alive into the current situation and shows how a *samyagdṛṣṭi* remains unaffected (though, not absolutely) and *mithyādrṣṭi* goes through constant turmoil despite facing the same circumstances. This can be further seen as a case of applied philosophy and ethics.

**Keywords:** *Saptabhaya*, Fear, *Samyagdṛṣṭi*, *Mithyādrṣṭi*, Pandemic, Covid-19, Applied Ethics.

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\* In citations, the numbers along with the abbreviations refer to that of verses if the text is composed in verses; if the text is in prose, they refer to page numbers. All translations of Sanskrit or Hindi texts are of the authors unless explicitly mentioned.

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*“There is no source of fear for the soul other than the external objects (like the body, the relations), which the ignorant, believes as his own; there is no source of security other than the experience of the pure soul, which the ignorant soul dreads.”*

- ST, 29

*“... the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror, which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”*

- Franklin D. Roosevelt<sup>1</sup>

## I

Unlike an epidemic, which affects people restricted to a certain community or region, a pandemic like situation has no boundaries. Each and every person faces the consequences of a widespread outbreak of a disease. Merriam Webster defines pandemic as an event: occurring over a wide geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population.<sup>2</sup> In the current scenario, the Covid-19 (SARS-Cov2) crisis has affected billions of lives across the globe. Humanity is put to a test like never before. Hardly, anyone of us alive today had witnessed the perils of the Spanish flu pandemic that lasted for three years exactly a century ago. It is beyond imagination if the Corona crisis also continues to go on for a similar period. And it is not just about the number of lives that are lost. A pandemic like situation ensures that everything gets affected: humanity, religion, science, health, society, economy, politics, language, art - in short, no sector / domain is unaffected from a pandemic like ‘Covid-19’.

The reactions to a situation like this range from mental emotions like anxiety, fear, depression, loss of hope, irritation, tension, and anger to certain physical hardships related to the body, livelihood, health issues etc. Every sneeze or instance of cough now looks as if it is a sign of this deadly virus. It may take time for people to see the common cold as ‘common’ in the post-corona world. Unemployment, depression and poverty are viewed as a threat to progress and this pandemic has aggravated them like never before.

However, amidst all the implications and consequences of this or any other pandemic like situation, if there is one necessary corollary that goes along with it, left, right and centre, is fear. Although this is applicable to all pandemics, researchers have raised this question specifically with respect to the current situation as well: ‘is there a fear / stress pandemic concomitant with the Covid-19 pandemic?’ (Ornell, Schuch, Sordi, & Kessler, 2020).

Disease mongering is another issue which has its own consequences to deal with (Vance, 2011). In short, people are suspicious and constantly living in fear - every day, every moment. They may not be dying in large numbers, but the emotional turmoil that one has to go through is nothing less than facing death itself. Some may even experience an 'existential crisis'. From individual level, to that of society, of nation, of humanity, and of any living being on this Earth, there are many dimensions to this emotion of fear. Individually, some are so scared to pass it on to their kith and kin that they have ended up taking their own lives.<sup>3</sup> As a community or a society, people are scared of losing their identity, status, recognition - as if facing extinction. At the global level, the constant blame-game between the Chinese Communist party and the non-Chinese governments (US, in particular) had also instilled a fear of another war for some time. Such devastating have been the implications of this pandemic that fear itself has taken a form of its own. In fact, the number of people affected by Covid-19 are nowhere close to those affected by the *fear* of Covid-19.

Ironically, there are no precautions or guidelines issued in order to save oneself from contracting this 'fear' from those who are victims of it. The official sources of information all around the world are not helping in getting rid of the same, let alone social media. On the contrary, there is a vast literature and digital media which has been alleged to have increased fears in the public (Riva, Benedetti, & Cesana, 2014). There is a need to dispel the fear of this pandemic. The death toll is updated on a minute by minute basis which does more harm than good. One can sense the fear in the eyes of the people every time a person dies in the neighbourhood due to Covid-19. Surely, people have been dying from other diseases as well - like depression, tuberculosis, cancer etc. However, unlike the death tolls of Covid-19, there has never been a counter in place to report that on a day-to-day basis. There can be a lockdown on the entire economy, but it seems that many are free to talk about Covid-19 by blowing facts beyond proportion and thus spreading more fear. There is no word of caution for the audience on the same. All these factors have aggravated fear beyond control.

Lawton (1938) suggests, especially, among children, that 'the largest group of fears are those which are acquired through direct imitation of those who are afraid... Fears can be caught like colds... Fears also may be picked up through indirect imitation'. The dangers of fear are not only emotional stress or depression, but it also has an impact on the biological health of an individual. Many studies from modern medical science show how fear results in breakdown of

immunity - which is the only factor that matters in a fight against virus. [Reed and Raison \(2016\)](#), and the works cited therein, have presented a detailed analysis of how continued stress leads to dysregulation of neuroendocrine and immune systems.<sup>4</sup> Persistent fear leads to a Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). Ayurveda views fear as a consequence of the imbalance of *vāta doṣa*, i.e., subtle energy associated with movement ([Pillai CC, 2018](#)).

Thus, what one may observe is that every pandemic like situation (related to a disease) inevitably involves a pandemic of emotions as well: especially, of fear, stress, depression etc. and the latter is more contagious and dangerous than the former. It thus becomes imperative to deal with this ‘pandemic of fear’ along with the pandemic of Covid-19. The rest of the paper shall be concerned with questions like - what do we mean when one says - ‘I have a fear of...’? How does this emotion arise? And more importantly, why does anyone fear at all? How does one deal with it? These questions can be analysed from various perspectives, viz., neuro-biological ([Koutsikou, et al., 2014](#)), psychological, philosophical, ethical, religious ([Brekke, 1999](#)), and spiritual, but we may restrict our enquiry to the psychological and philosophical perspectives in the light of Jainism.

## II

The various types of harmful / adverse emotions, viz., anger, jealousy, pride, greed, dishonesty, fear, frustration, sadness, guilt and many more, often can be traced down to a common source - ignorance (*mithyājñāna*). All these emotions represent a certain type of desire - so, for instance, one is angry when s/he *wishes* ill of others; greedy when s/he *craves* to possess something in abundance; jealous when s/he cannot *see* the progress of others; scared when one does not *want* something to happen and so on and so forth ([MMP: 38-41](#)). The source of this desire is ignorance. All types of desires can be classified under two categories: attachment (*rāga*) or aversion (*dveṣā*). Ignorance of the self and reality leads one towards these forms of desires.

The pursuit of happiness in the state of ignorance thus is misconstrued. Not being aware of the true wealth of the self, the *jīva* often looks outside for sources of happiness. Thus, in order to pursue that, there exists a constant desire towards the accumulation of certain objects and disassociation from some others. Due to this, there remains a constant fear of the opposite, viz., a constant fear to get rid of any disagreeable thing which has come in one’s possession and also a constant fear to not let go of things which one possesses with great affection ([Cf. TS: 9/31; 9/33](#)). And in order to overcome this fear, there seems to be only two possible alternatives - either all the

desires get fulfilled or the *jīva* gets rid of all the desires (not letting them arise at all). Of these, the former is not even theoretically possible, let alone in the praxis; so the latter seems the only way out (MMP: 306). We shall discuss more on this in the last section of the paper. Let us now move to a more specific account of fear and its types.

Fear is usually defined as an emotion of “uneasiness that arises as a normal response to perceived threat that may be real or imagined... the word ‘fear’ comes from the Old English word ‘faer’, meaning sudden calamity or danger, and refers to justified fright” (Doctor, Kahn, & Adamec, 2008, p. 232). Fear can be classified in various ways such as instinctive, imaginary, learnt, taught, rational and irrational, positive, and negative and so on.

In Jainism, we come across, if not more, at least three distinct accounts of fear (*bhaya*): one as an instinct (*sañjñā*); second as an emotion or a quasi-passion (*no-kaṣāya*); and, the third in the form of seven types of fear (*sapta bhaya*). Although none of the three accounts are exclusive to each other, there is certainly a difference of emphasis. As an instinct, the emphasis is on the very nature of any mundane life which inevitably involves fear in some or the other form. As a passion, it connotes a more negative tone - something which is destructive. The third instance, viz., of seven types of fears, is intricately connected with *samyagdarśana*<sup>5</sup> (right belief of the self and the reality). One who possesses such a view, viz., *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, is said to be free from the seven types of fears and, by implication, we can say that a *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* (one having a false view of reality) is not free from them. Let us then analyse these accounts one by one.

The term *sañjñā* has several denotations. The most popular usage is present in grammar wherein it refers to one of the parts of speech - noun. Another usage is in the field of psychology and epistemology where it refers to consciousness, and sometimes, knowledge as well. Moreover, in Jaina epistemology, the word stands for a distinct source of *pramāṇā*, i.e., re-cognition (TS: 1/13). There is another sense as well in which the term has been employed in the Jaina texts - as an instinct - and with which we are concerned in the present context. Although there is vast literature on the subject if one looks at developments in modern psychology since Freud, we may restrict the current discussion on instincts in the context of Jaina tradition.

Four instincts have been identified in the Jaina texts, viz., hunger (*āhāra*), fear (*bhaya*), sex (*maithuna*), possessions (*parigraha*).<sup>6</sup> In a way, all four are mutually related and either of them can become a triggering point for the other. These instincts, in themselves, are not that destructive. However, being infatuated by either of them is what makes them dangerous (BhPā: 112). A similar

version of these are included in the list of sins (*avrata*) or passions (*kaṣāya*) but there certainly is a difference of emphasis such that one is dangerous whereas the other does not seem to be *that* dangerous. So, engaging in sexual activities (*abrahma*) is in itself a *sin*, but as an *instinct*, it does not give a negative connotation as much as it does as a sin. Same is the case with fear. As an instinct, it gives a different impression as compared to a (quasi) passion. Moreover, the reasons for its (fear *qua* instinct) arousal are also very general in nature like (GoJī: 136) -

‘the sight of some very fearful object, by attention towards it (through remembrance, or on account of hearing stories relating to fearful objects and incidents), by weakness of mind; (as well as) by the premature operation of fear-karma (a minor passion, and a sub-division of right-conduct-deluding-karma, an internal cause).’

Thus, one can see two different versions: fear *qua* instinct and fear *qua* passion. We shall now proceed onto the discussion of fear *qua* passion.

Passions have a wide range from being ‘mild to severe’ (*tīvra-manda*) and from being ‘more harmful to less harmful’. It is possible for a passion to be mild and yet more harmful; on the other hand, it is also possible for a passion to be severe and yet less harmful. These two categories, viz., intensity and the level of impact, are thus exclusive from one another. The distinction in terms of mildness or severity is captured by the six *leśyā* (BhDī: 71-88) whereas the distinction in terms of level of harm caused is categorised into four types: *anantānubandhī*, *apratyākhyānāvaraṇa*, *pratyākhyānāvaraṇa* and *saṃjvalana* (TS: 8/10; GoJī: 283). Thus, each passion, viz., anger (*krodha*), pride (*māna*), deceit (*māyā*) and greed (*lobha*) have these gradations in terms of how harmful they are. Based on the account given by Mehta (1957, p. 19), they can be defined as:

1. That which obscures right conduct completely and leads to endless suffering in worldly life is referred as *anantānubandhī*. This is the most harmful of all.
2. That which hinders even partial self-discipline but is less dangerous than the first one is called as *apratyākhyānāvaraṇa*.
3. That which obstructs complete self-discipline (but allows partial restraint) is known as *pratyākhyānāvaraṇa*.
4. And that which arrests the attainment of a passionless state (though granting complete self-restraint) is called as *saṃjvalana*. This is the least harmful of all.

This kind of classification of passions is closely connected with the scheme of *guṇasthāna* (spiritual stages) as well.<sup>7</sup> Although these four levels are primarily related to the four passions, one may extend this distinction to the remaining nine quasi-passions (*no-kaṣāya*) as well.<sup>8</sup> So fear being one of the quasi-passion, we may consider the same sort of classification for fear as well - amongst which, as mentioned earlier, the fear of the level of *anantānubandhī* is the most dangerous. The remaining three levels are less harmful. By implication, this also means that the fear which is of any of the three latter types is at least *better than* the first one. This in turn leads to the interpretation of the fear in a positive sense - that it is not harmful in the way in which *anantānubandhī* is. Thus, we may discuss fear in these two senses - one, most destructive, and two, less destructive (as compared to the former), and therefore, in some sense, positive (this shall be discussed at the end).

Fear, in its most destructive form, has received considerable treatment in the Jaina texts. A *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, one with correct understanding of the seven fundamentals (*tattvas*), is said to be free from seven types of fear (SS: 229-230). These seven are enumerated as: (i) *Ihaloka bhaya* → Fear of enemies and adversities related to ‘this life’; (ii) *Paraloka bhaya* → Fear regarding the ‘next life’- where will be my next birth etc.; (iii) *Atrāṇa bhaya* → Fear of being ‘insecure’; (iv) *Agupti bhaya* → Fear of one’s ‘secrets being revealed’; (v) *Marāṇa bhaya* → Fear of ‘death’; (vi) *Vedanā bhaya* → Fear of ‘suffering’; and (vii) *Ākasmika bhaya* → Fear of any ‘unexpected and unfavourable’ incident (MĀ: 53; ĀKh: Kalaśa 155-160; PA: 513-546; JSK: Vol. 3, 206; ARK: Vol. 5, 1378).<sup>9</sup>

All the seven types generally co-exist and the difference is merely in terms of one being explicit and the others implicit - but not of exclusive presence. Based on this, and the scheme of *guṇasthāna* as well, it can be inferred that the seven types of fear are of the *anantānubandhī* type. Since *samyagdarśana* is free from this level of passion (*kaṣāya*), by implication, we can say that these seven fears, which are of the *anantānubandhī* type, are directly connected with *mithyādarśana*.

### III

Regarding the question as to how a *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* is free from these fears, we may dwell for some time on the very nature of *samyagdarśana* and its connection with fear. Jainism talks of *samyagdarśana* as the starting point in the path of liberation / complete happiness. *Samyagdarśana* is defined as the right belief in the seven *tattvārtha*.<sup>10</sup> The belief in these *tattvarthas* can simply be

understood as the correct belief of oneself (*jīva*) and the other (*ajīva*) along with the knowledge of suffering (*bandha*), liberation (*mokṣa*) and their respective causes (*āsrava*; *saṃvara* and *nirjarā*).<sup>11</sup> Such is the force of this understanding that it changes the perception of the universe to a great extent. It enables one to further tread on the path of liberation, and without which, all other endeavours, like mere accumulation of knowledge or performing penances, are deemed futile (PSU: 21).

The true belief is accompanied by eight virtues (SS: 228-236; RKŚĀ: 11-18; PSU: 23-30).<sup>12</sup> The first among them, i.e., doubtless-ness (*niḥśaṅkita*) is of importance for our present purpose. *Niḥśaṅkita* is the absence of doubt as well as the absence of fear (SS: 228). An important point to be noted here is the fact that only in the absence of doubt, one becomes fearless. Thus, a *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* is naturally free from the seven types of fears. In other words, fear and decisive understanding / firm conviction / belief cannot co-exist. Jaini, in his commentary to the same verse, further adds that a right believer is firmly convinced that his soul is all-supreme and permanent. Moreover, he has an unshakeable belief that the soul is indestructible and cannot possibly die or suffer from any accident; it is immaterial and free from any physical ills. It is not about suppression of fear, rather it is not letting them originate at all.

As we had discussed in the first part of the paper, a pandemic like situation naturally leads to fear of various types. These various kinds of fear are captured in some or the other form in the seven types which had been enumerated in the second section. However, a short note before we move on to that discussion: the *niḥśaṅka-ness* of *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* is not that the person is completely unaware of the situation and is absorbed into a deep meditative state. And with respect to *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*, it is not the case that s/he always lives in constant fear of death etc. But these kinds of fears are very much present at the subconscious level and their actualization may depend on circumstances (*dravya*, *kṣetra*, *kāla* and *bhāva*). Thus, the life of a *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* (in the present context, the one in fourth *guṇasthāna*) can be very much similar to that of *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* - the difference between the two is more in terms of their perception of the self and the universe. This difference is instantiated in the following part in their respective hypothetical responses to a pandemic like situation:

1. *Ihaloka bhaya* → A *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* identifies oneself with many non-self-entities – whether living or non-living. Hence, in a crisis, s/he experiences constant fear of losing the loved ones; of being deprived of their company; and of many other socio-economic adversities which a

pandemic-like situation naturally brings in. With many businesses shutting down and the rising number of lay-offs among the major companies may lead to job-insecurity, loss of profits, economic standstill etc. A *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, on the other hand, contemplates on the transitoriness of the same and knows that ‘I am not these’ thereby remaining unaffected to any such adversities (PA: 513 ff. and ĀKh: Kalaśa 155 ff.; the numbers henceforth refer to these texts respectively). S/he further reflects on the very nature of the universe (*loka*) that ‘the external *loka* is actually not mine, and it is the soul (consciousness) which is my *loka* and which is permanent, hence from what shall I fear?’ (514). Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

2. *Paraloka bhaya* → This is more dominant as and when one approaches the end of the current life, *i.e.*, death. A *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* longs for a birth in heaven and fears from hell - though unsuccessfully. For, the actions from the present life are the ones that shall determine the next birth (517). A *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, on the other hand, knows that my consciousness is my only abode (*cit-loka*) and ‘no matter where shall be the next birth, my wealth shall remain with me without losing even an iota of it’ (523). Thus, the focus of the latter is more on the mind rather than the external situation. Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

3. *Vedanā bhaya* → *Vedanā* (pain), especially of the physical type, is the result of imbalance of the three bio-elements, *viz.*, *vāta*, *pitta* and *kapha* (524). Any kind of physical sickness, if persistent for a longer period, may have serious consequences on the mental health of the person as well. A *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*, thus, goes through a constant fear of, first, not contracting the disease, and second, if at all one does get affected, it should not be painful. The physical pain sometimes becomes so excruciating that s/he might prefer death (in other terms, committing suicide) rather than enduring the pain. A *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, on the contrary, differentiates oneself from the body and thereby its pain by identifying oneself with consciousness. This consciousness is perceived to be always free from any type of illness (527). S/he further observes - ‘the intangible nature of the self is like that of space. Just as fire may burn the entire house and yet the space, which was occupied by that house, remains unaffected, similarly, even if the body may endure significant pain, my existence remains intact’ (528; 156). Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

4. *Atrāṇa (araksā) bhaya* → In a situation where everyone may rush for protecting oneself, and at most, one’s own kith and kin, the *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* feels insecure about oneself (531-32) - ‘what if there is no one to take care of me, where shall I end up?’ Hoarding of the essential goods, medicines and other practices are quite common in these situations. Obviously, the supplies are

limited and this is accompanied by the constant fear of missing out. Even the slightest indication of symptoms related to the virus puts the *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* in a spot of bother. However, the *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, knows that the existence of each substance is independent of others (534-35; 157). The soul's existence is not dependent on any other entity for its protection. S/he further embraces the fact that whether one's *karma* is bad or good, irrespective of any efforts, one has to face the consequences; hence, worrying is not the solution. Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

5. *Marāṇa bhaya* → Being devoid of vitals (*prāṇa*) is death. 'I should live on forever, I should not die, I should not face death in any circumstance' etc. - these kinds of thoughts constantly accompany *mithyādr̥ṣṭi*. Since s/he identifies oneself with the body, the fear of death is inevitable (540) Thus, the news of death aggravates the emotional state of the person. In the pandemic like situation, this is what is served constantly, which in addition to instincts, results in conditioned fear of death (542). *Samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, in contrast, identifies himself as a conscious soul which is free from birth and death (158). Moreover, s/he acknowledges the fact that the body and soul are conjoined for a time frame and will get separated one day or another. And thus, it does not matter to him that such a separation happens now or years later. Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

6. *Agupti bhaya* → A *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* is afraid of getting exposed or of letting his /her secrets being revealed and is obsessed with a threat of its consequences. Say, for instance, s/he may want to hide any potential symptoms of the illness; or would like to get tested privately; or would like to manipulate the results. A *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*, in a similar situation, stays calm and composed because of not identifying oneself / one's existence with any illness as such (159). Moreover, there is nothing secret as such in the life of *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* which s/he may have a fear of not getting it out in public. Thus, lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

7. *Ākasmika bhaya* → the fear of accidental, unexpected, and unfavourable events. *Mithyādr̥ṣṭi* finds oneself in a stressful situation when s/he imagines various kinds of unfavourable circumstances for the future - 'what if I am left alone with sudden demise of my dear ones', 'what if out of nowhere I get fired from my job', 'what if'; and thus constantly suffers from mental agony (543). The crisis is in itself a sudden event, which has, in a very short time, changed every form of our lifestyle. The alarming speed at which it is spreading makes one fearful and s/he wakes up every day with the thought 'what if I have contracted the disease?'. Conversely, *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* has a belief in eternality of the soul (self) and of all the substances (546; 160). No change is random or arbitrary, or to put it in other way, it is always in correspondence with the nature of the

substance. Just as one cannot produce a golden pot from clay, similarly, the transitions in the soul will not digress the boundaries of its essential nature. Hence, there is no scope for something that is absolutely random. Things will eventually happen the way they were destined to be, no matter what. With this attitude, thus lives *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* fearlessly.

One may say that this kind of analysis and treatment of fear may sound too idealistic or that which is not practically possible in the current situation. But that is not what this paper is concerned with. The task at hand was to show how fear is a result of improper understanding of reality. So the focus is more on ‘beliefs’ rather than on ‘actions’ (Cf. Descartes, 1996).<sup>13</sup> Alternatively, and as mentioned earlier, the *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* with which we are concerned here is not one from the higher stages of *guṇasthāna* (like an ascetic), but one who is in the initial stage on the path to liberation and has not undertaken any particular vows like *aṇuvrata* or *mahāvratā* (thus, the name, *avirata samyagdr̥ṣṭi*). S/he too will have certain kinds of fear, but they are categorically different from the seven destructive ones. S/he may have fear of committing any kind of sins which may further lead to wandering in the mundane world.<sup>14</sup> There is also a constant fear of not transgressing the path of *Jina* and that His teachings should never go out of sight. Moreover, the life of *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* is always in accordance with the laws of the state and norms of the society. S/he is ever cautious about breaking the same (BhDī: 64). However, these are not the differentiating marks of a *samyagdr̥ṣṭi* since the *mithyādr̥ṣṭi* may also have these kinds of mild levels of fear (along with the destructive ones). All these instances point towards a fear in the positive sense of the term - being cautious - and which is not altogether destructive. Nonetheless, the fear which is presented by the present situation of Covid-19 is far away from the life of *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The narrative on the physical, social, economic, national and international effects of pandemic is widely discussed, but this paper was an attempt to ponder on the emotional effects of a pandemic with a focus on fear from the Jaina view. It is written from the perspective of psychology, spirituality (*adhyātma*), and philosophy. There are many other approaches to deal with the pandemic from both - within Jainism and beyond as well. One may take them further from here: on the role of *santhāra* / *sallekhanā* in the present scenario, on the concept of gifting ‘fearlessness’ (*abhaya dāna*); on the relevance of twelve *anuprekṣās* etc. However, they more or

less can be narrowed down to ‘belief’ and ‘action’ and this paper heavily focuses on the former aspect.

It has been argued that the problem of fear is far more dangerous as compared to Covid-19. Treating fear and making oneself strong enough to face any kind of situation has an overall effect on both – the mind and the body. Being free from fear serves spiritual well-being, and at the same time, as a necessary corollary, it helps in maintaining a stronger immune system. The various types of fear as enumerated in the Jaina texts have not received much attention. An attempt has thus been made to see how Jaina metaphysics is intricately connected with the praxis. Although the Jaina ethics does have its own place in dealing with matters like pandemic, the hard subjects like metaphysics also have a role to play, and perhaps, a more significant one. This can be further analysed and subjected to a critique as well. Nevertheless, this is an unexplored territory - the link between metaphysics and ethics; and the present paper serves in filling that gap to some extent.

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## Abbreviations, Sources and Notes

- ĀKh Amṛtacandrasūri’s *Ātmakhyāti*. See [SS](#).
- ARK Vijay Rajendrasūriśvara’s *Abhidhāna Rājendra Koṣa*. Vol. 5 of 7. Ahmedabad: Abhidhana Rajendra Kosh Prakashan Sanstha. 2<sup>nd</sup>. 1986.
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<sup>1</sup> The Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies <https://www.inaugural.senate.gov/about/past-inaugural-ceremonies/37th-inaugural-ceremonies/> (last accessed 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Pandemic <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pandemic> (last accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> June, 2020).

<sup>3</sup> IRS officer kills himself due to covid fears - <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/delhi-irs-officer-kills-himself-covid-fears-6459122/> (last accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2020)

<sup>4</sup> Also see <https://www.apa.org/research/action/immune> and the suggested further reading on how ‘stress weakens the immune system’ (last accessed 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2020).

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<sup>5</sup> This term does not have a translation which is unanimously agreed. Right vision, right faith, right belief - are often used interchangeably. Vide [TS: 1/2](#), we can say that 'belief' captures meaning more appropriately than others. However, unless one arrives at a literal translation which captures the meaning in a holistic manner, these terminological compounds are better explained in phrases rather than word-to-word translation.

<sup>6</sup> The references to these four instincts are ample and found in both the traditions. See, for instance, [SAS \(4, 4, p. 17\)](#): *Cattāri Saṇṇā Paṇṇattā Tamjahā - Āhārasaṇṇā, Bhayasaṇṇā, Mehuṇasaṇṇā, Pariggahasaṇṇā* and [Dh \(Vol. 2, 413\)](#): *Saṇṇā cauvvihā āhārabhayamehuṇa-pariggahasaṇṇā cedi*; [GoJī: 135-138](#); and [JSK: Vol. 4, 120-121](#).

<sup>7</sup> So, *anantānubandhi* is absent from 4th onwards, *apratyākhyāṇāvaraṇā* is absent from 5th onwards, *pratyākhyāṇāvaraṇa* is absent from 6th onwards and the stages from seventh to ninth are classified based on the intensity of *saṃjvalana*. The 10th stage has the last residue of the remaining passion, viz., lobha, post which one becomes completely free from passions (*vītarāga*). For a general introduction to *guṇasthāna*, see [Sukhlal \(1988, pp. 80-86\)](#).

<sup>8</sup> So far, this kind of explanation has been explicitly found in only one text ([BhDī: 50](#)). However, it can be easily derived from further textual sources which speaks of innumerable sub-types of passions ([GoJī: Verse 283](#)).

<sup>9</sup> The discussion on *saptabhaya*, in this paper, is mainly drawn from the Digambara literature. In the Śvetāmbara āgamās, the seven types enumerated are: 1. *Ihalokabhaya*, 2. *Paralokabhaya*, 3. *Ādānabhaya*, 4. *Aślokabhaya*, 5. *Ākasmikabhaya*, 6. *Ājīvikabhaya* and 7. *Maraṇabhaya* ([ARK: Vol. 5. 1378](#)). Among these, the third, fourth and the sixth differ from the Digambara version. Since the latter part of the paper focuses heavily on *samyagdṛṣṭi* and *mithyāḍṛṣṭi* as found in Digambara texts ([ĀKh](#) and [PA](#), in particular), the same has been followed in the paper.

<sup>10</sup> There are many other ways in which *samyaktva* has been defined (see, for instance, [YŚ: 2/2](#); [RKŚĀ: 4](#)). However, the belief in seven fundamentals encompasses all other ways of defining *samyaktva* ([Cf. MMP: 323-330](#)).

<sup>11</sup> This kind of exposition of the seven *tattvas* is found in quite a few texts. See, for instance, [TSā: 6-7](#).

<sup>12</sup> In the context of *samyaktva*, this notion of eight virtues (*aṣṭa aṅga*) is predominant in the Digambara tradition. In the Śvetāmbara tradition, the concepts of *liṅga* and *bhūṣāṇa* have been articulated which are not found in the Digambara tradition. However, they are co-extensive to certain extent. So, for instance, *sthairya-bhūṣāṇa* is equivalent to *sthitikaraṇa aṅga*; *prabhāvanā* is commonly accepted as a virtue in both the schools; moreover, the concept of *aticāras* is also symmetrical to both the schools ([TS: 7/18](#) in the Śvetāmbara recension and [7/23](#) in the Digambara). The first *aticāra* is 'doubt' (*śaṅkā*) and the denial of which denotes doubtlessness or fearlessness (*niḥśaṅka*). For an entire discussion related to this, see [Williams \(1963, pp. 41-50\)](#).

<sup>13</sup> "I know that no danger or error will result from my plan [the method of doubt], and that I cannot possibly go too far in my distrustful attitude. This is because the task now in hand does not involve action but merely the acquisition of knowledge."

<sup>14</sup> *Samvega* is the perpetual fear of the cycle of existence or transmigration ([SSi: 6/24](#)). [Wiley \(2004\)](#), citing [Vidyānanda](#), shows how it is possible only for a *samyagdṛṣṭi* to develop the attitude of *anukampā*, *saṃvega* etc.