

JAIN FOOD TRADITIONS AND BELIEFS: FIELDWORK, FILM,
AND FLAVOR IN JAIPUR, INDIA

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Master of Arts
in
Anthropology

by
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DEDICATION



*To the Kothari family,
thank you for all your
help and support*



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ABSTRACT

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A self-reflexive appraisal of the flavors of Jain food learned during fieldwork forms a springboard from which to consider the dynamic modes and motives of Jain interlocutors as they interact with scholars. Comparing textual and filmic narratives of Jain food traditions and beliefs reveals an instantiation of Sahlin’s theoretical model of practice called the “structure of the conjuncture.” In the retelling and reproduction of Jain cultural values on food, the structure of relational symbolic values like non-violence, non-possession, flavor, and austerity become temporally entangled with media and scholarship. Jain agents commonly narrate and reproduce the “eternal” values of Jain food traditions and beliefs to Jains and to Jain scholars. But narratives filmed during the making of a Jain Food documentary indicate a shift in representation. Jain food in this context reveals reformist and global representations.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In preparing Jain food, principles of nonviolence are followed. Jain food is respected by the whole world. The current movement of vegetarian food in western countries is attracted [to] Jain food. It also helps people with their health. I take pride that the world prefers Jain cuisine, and it is becoming [an] international food. And the day is not far when Jain cuisine will be [the] world's cuisine.

~Surendar Kumar

My first experience of Jain food involved drinking *chai*, or tea (see Figure 1 for an example of an average tea break). It is served regularly in the office of the Shivjiram Bhawan, a meeting place for the Svetambar Jain Khatar Gacch Sangh, a branch of the Jain faith in Jaipur, Rajasthan. I noticed the strong taste of cardamom, a bit of ginger, the fat of dairy products, and a heavy sugary sweetness.

In the United States, cardamom pods (*Elettaria cardamomum*) and seeds are expensive commodities, but in India the smell of cardamom seems ubiquitous. The tea is quite good, and it punctuates a certain cadence of daily life in the office. Occasionally one of the “house boys” brings a bowl of *chaat*, a snack of toasted grains, or *Sev Mamra*, a mixture of spicy dry ingredients such as puffed rice, savory noodles, and peanuts.

On my first day of fieldwork at the Shivjiram, I was invited to eat lunch in the cafeteria, in the back corner of the building. I was introduced to the chef and his three assistants. They cooked in a small kitchen about 10 by 8 feet in size, with two large burners attached to propane tanks. In another pantry room, shelves were filled with 15-



Figure 1. Jyoti and Darshan share chai during a break at the Shivjiram Bhawan.

kilogram cans of ghee (a type of clarified butter) and peanut oil and 20-pound bags of grains such as rice, *channa* (chickpeas: *Cicer arietinum*), and *bajhra* (millet: *Pennisetum glaucum*). On the floor were two large trays of vegetables: tomatoes, two types of summer squash, chili peppers, green bell peppers, ginger, okra, and green beans (see Figure 2).

As we sat down to eat, the food was brought in waves. The first course contained a vegetable curry and *chapatis*, a type of unleavened flatbread commonly made from *durum atta* (a hard wheat flour), water, and ghee. Next came *bindhi*, a stir-fry of okra and chilies, and then an offer of *harchar*, or hot chili pickles. Next *dal* (lentil soup) was served in a small stainless steel cup, accompanied by a mound of white rice. I saw



Figure 2. Large pans of vegetable served at the cafeteria.

many people tearing off a small portion of chapati with the thumb and index finger of their right hands and then using it to scoop up curry vegetables or bindhi.

As the meal progressed and the light and crispy *papadoms* (delightfully crispy flatbread made of chickpea flour) were circulated, the *dal* would be poured over any remaining rice. At this point, one would use either the papadom or a metal spoon to scoop up the soupy rice. But then the servers brought me more chapatis and curry! I did not know at the time that diners are expected to politely cover the plate and shake their hands to indicate that they have eaten enough. By the end of the meal, I had consumed at least eight chapatis and three servings of curry. With a full belly and my senses charged, I set out to investigate the role of flavor in Jain food traditions and beliefs.

Background of the Study

Jainism is a lesser-known cousin of Buddhism, known for its systematic practice of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and for its monks dedication to asceticism (*tapsya*) (Babb 1996:2). Jains strive to avoid harming the smallest living things. Some ascetics go naked, while others wear face masks to avoid inhaling and killing insects. Jain laypersons follow the example of the ascetics to varying degrees and are encouraged to follow highly elaborated dietary rules and fasts. Strictly defined vegetarianism is integrated within the education of young Jains and the production of Jain identity (Laidlaw 2003:166; Dundas 2002:177). The Jains' firm commitment to vegetarianism stands out even in India, which contrary to popular belief, is not a predominantly vegetarian country. A study completed in 2006 found that roughly thirty percent of Indians are vegetarian (Puskar-Pasewiz 2010:39). Some Hindus eat meat, including Brahmins, who occasionally consume fish or some meats (Balasubramanian 2004).

The prescriptions of Jain food traditions and beliefs go beyond simple vegetarianism. The principle of *ahimsa* is applied to such a rigorous degree that Jains avoid *zamikand* (root vegetables like onions and potatoes), alcohol, honey, fermented products like yogurt, eggs, foods with too many seeds. During fasts they avoid any foods that are enjoyed for the flavor. Ingesting foods that are *ab-bhakshya* (not allowed) is believed to trigger the accumulation of particles of *karma*, which physically attach themselves to and cover the soul. As long as the soul is covered with karmic particles, one is bound to repeat the cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsara*), trapped in the "ocean of suffering" (Laidlaw 2003:397). Necessary for good health and survival, food is,

nonetheless, “dangerous, poisonous stuff; it is the world of bondage in concentrated form” (Babb 1996:178).

A central preoccupation and motivational goal for the Jains is to escape samsara (Babb 1996:195). It takes the shape of *moksa-marg*, or the path to liberation, which encourages the Jains to renounce the world and enter into the austere life of a Jain ascetic. Babb suggests that this soteriological ideal has a pervasive influence on the Jain ascetics, who are worshipped by lay Jains (Babb 1996:195). Ideal behavior for the lay Jain requires a close approximation of ascetic behavior that differs not in kind but in level of observance (Cort 2002:122).

Flavor, or blandness (defined as the lack of flavor), is connected to Jain soteriology by means of its link to karma and the path to liberation. Both Jain writers and anthropologists uniformly present narratives of Jain dietary rules that suggest that the ascetic is instructed to eat only bland food (Dundas 2002:177). “Tasteless as a mouthful of sand” is the title of the section on food in one seminal scholarly work on the Jains (Laidlaw 2003:166). Seeking or taking too much flavor in food attracts karma.

The situation with regard to Jain food is complicated further in that ascetics rely on the laity to prepare and provide them with food in a selfless act of giving. It is a complex interaction of *dan* (giving) and *gocari* (taking alms). I wondered if the interaction between the laity and ascetic through the acts of *dan* and *gocari* resulted in tasteless and bland food “trickling up” to the ascetics. So that the ascetics can properly observe correct conduct on the path to liberation, should the average lay Jain be preparing only tasteless food for them? The lay Jain cannot avoid attracting karma when cooking

because it is inherently violent. But they need to eat and cultivate a healthy body, having had the good fortune to be born into a human body in the first place (Bothra 2009).

By all discursive accounts one might think that the ideological structure of Jain food traditions and beliefs informing dietary practice is enormously powerful. It seems powerful enough to enforce an austere and allegedly boring (though healthy) diet in a land that is celebrated for its tasty and flavorful cuisine. I wondered if these accounts of Jain food could be true. I also wondered how such cultural values exist and are reproduced as India engages with contemporary effects of globalization (information and media technologies) and Americanization (Kapur 2012). Nestled in a complicated entanglement of salvation, nonviolence, relativism, and renunciation, flavor was an unlikely but fruitful place to begin my studies of Jain food traditions and beliefs. Flavor is a nexus connecting many different threads of Jain practice, historical ideological discourse, media representation, cultural values, and cultural change.

Purpose of the Study

“Jainism is a . . . symphony of perception, knowledge, and action.”

~Surendra Bothra

I came to taste Jain food in Jaipur in summer 2012 both as a researcher and as a chef with years of training in professional kitchens and at Le Cordon Bleu. I believed that I could study Jain food traditions and beliefs from the point of view of sensory ethnography, with an emphasis on flavor and taste. During the initial phase of this research, I focused on flavor from the starting point of the self-reflexive and experiencing

body, regarding the sensorial in ethnography as embedded in the approach of the embodied ethnographer (Pink 2009:46).

The self-reflexive appraisal of the flavors of Jain food formed a springboard from which to consider the intentions and imagined audiences of Jain interlocutors narrating or reproducing the “eternal” structures of Jain food traditions and beliefs to Jains and to Jain scholars. Despite my focus on flavor and food, I quickly became frustrated that I was not unearthing any new insights beyond what was already contained in the scholarly literature. The data I was collecting seemed to constitute a nearly perfect retelling of the information about Jain food.

But when I returned to Jaipur in summer 2013 to film a documentary about Jain food, the data seemed to be shifting based on the context, content, and presentation of the interviews. As I explained to my Jain interlocutors that I had brought a cinematographer with me and indicated that we intended to produce a film for broadcast in the United States, the environment and audience for the inquiry into Jain food traditions and beliefs became very different from that in prior scholarly works. The project was defined as a documentary film about “Jain food traditions and beliefs.”

The resulting narratives did not fit so neatly with the Jain food tradition described previously. The present research increases the scope of Jain scholarship by discussing a markedly different Jain food narrative that emerged in the different context of my second summer of fieldwork in Jaipur. I will focus on the similarities and differences in the narratives of Jain food traditions and beliefs as described in my two visits to India as well as in previous literature.

I hypothesize that my interlocutors in Jaipur took symbolic and social risks in representing Jain food as tasty and delicious and in describing the Jains' cultural place in a global, technologically interconnected world. In the telling and reproduction of Jain cultural values on food, the structure of relational symbolic values of Jainism become temporally entangled with media and scholarship, reinforcing "eternal" values but also risking reformist intentions. Perhaps in doing so my Jain friends perceived an opportunity to promote an ecologically sensitive and ethical high ground with a global audience that has recently been awakening to Jain philosophies of ahimsa and food practices.

Research Questions

1. What is the link between flavor, Jain soteriology, and theoretical frameworks of practice, structure, history, and agency? How can sensory ethnography tease out these relationships?
2. What are the complications and interpretations of the process of making a Jain food documentary? Why were the fieldwork data obtained in the film research of 2013 so different than the data obtained during the previous summer?
3. Is there a shift in cultural values surrounding food traditions and beliefs that reveals an emergence of a symbolic reorganization of Jain ideological and practical forces?

Literature Review

This thesis draws from the works on Jain religion and culture by John Cort (2002), Alan Babb (1996, 2004, 2013), Paul Dundas (2002), Kristi Wiley (2004), James

Laidlaw (2003), Jeffrey D. Long (2009), Michael Carrithers and Caroline Humphreys (1991), Christopher Key Chapple (2002), and Surendra Bothra (2009).

Theoretical Approaches

Paul Stoller, in *The Taste of Ethnographic Things* (1989) and *Sensuous Scholarship* (1997), promotes a reflexive and physically attuned turn in anthropological theory. Stoller (1989) shows how ethnographic fieldwork is an embodied process in which the ethnographer engages with others but also learns about his or her own understandings through physical space and sensory experiences, such as taste. He places the ethnographer's body at the center of analysis, situated in the space of social life. In my efforts to understand Jain food traditions and beliefs, I started by thinking about the subjective and physiological experience of taste and flavor.

From a biological perspective, flavor comes from an interaction between water-soluble chemicals, called tastants, and taste buds on the tongue, palate, pharynx, epiglottis, and the upper third of the esophagus. There are many tastants, but they produce one (or sometimes a few) of five basic taste qualities in humans: bitterness, saltiness, sourness, sweetness, and umami (savoriness) (Okamoto and Dan 2013:248).

The basic tastes of sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami are universal sensory characteristics of foods, independent of and irrespective of culture (Prescott and Bell 1995:202). Few if any differences in food preferences between countries can be attributed to fundamental differences in the perception of flavor (Prescott and Bell 1995:201; Prescott 1998). However, it is possible that certain types of flavors may be more

important to some cultures. A large role of culture in perception of flavor is to provide familiarity with the food or ingredient (Prescott 1998:396).

As a chef, I have experienced the interconnection between familiarity and taste. Long ago in culinary school, I was told, “Eat a food ten times with an open mind. You may hate the food or ingredient the first nine times. But on the tenth, you will suddenly discover delight in its flavor.” Even though I was largely unfamiliar with Indian food, I went into my fieldwork with an open mind and an open mouth. After eating Jain food and other cuisines in Jaipur, I became familiar with the tastes, knowing the basics of Indian and, in particular, Jain food flavors. I became more appreciative of the Indian cuisines as I got to know them better.

There is debate in anthropology about the cultural construction of flavor. Anthropologist David E. Sutton suggests there is some evidence of alternative constructions of the basic elements of flavor (bitterness, sweetness, etc.) seen among the people of Zumbagua, Ecuador, but they seem to be exceptions to the rule (Sutton 2010:215-216). There is a precedent for theorizing the universality of flavors. Sidney Mintz’s *Sweetness and Power* treats the desirability of sweetness as a given, and a driving force of the political economy of sugar’s consumption in England and production in the Caribbean (Mintz 1985:6). Bitterness can also be used as an example of a universal quality of flavor. Sutton cites the example of the ritual of Passover described in the Haggadah (a Jewish text dating from the 10th century of the common era): “These bitter herbs we eat, what is their meaning? Because the Egyptians made the lives of our forebears bitter in Egypt” (Sutton 2010:216). Drawn from my experience as a chef, and

for the purposes of this research, there are precedents to make a universal claim about flavor as universally understood across different times and places.

A theoretical foundation of the universality of flavor supports the aims of sensory ethnography, which relies on theories of description based on the perception of a reflexive and embodied researcher who brings to the study “ways of knowing” as he or she participates in the world (Pink 2009:40). In this case, my way of knowing began with the reflexive interpretations and judgments of flavors that I encountered during fieldwork. I evaluated the flavors based on my culinary training and restaurant experience. Pink suggests that this method of embodied knowing comes through active personal engagement at the moment of ethnographic practice, as the fieldworker encounters collaborators in the field (2009:41).

“Encounter” is a process of “entanglement of persons, things, sensations, and narratives” (Ingold 2008, quoted in Pink 2009:41). The encounter in turn, as in the case of this project, becomes an “ethnographic representation” when the researcher intentionally weaves together theory, discourses, and experiential knowing into a unique configuration of trajectories (Pink 2009:42). My theoretical orientations changed through the course of fieldwork, and they changed again during filming and editing. As I am still communicating with my interlocutors via email and social media, the relationship continues. In terms of ethnographic representation in this work, the theories of practice best fit with my experiences and what I think happened during the fieldwork process.

In this study, my analysis and representation of narratives about Jain food traditions and beliefs is framed by practice theory as developed by Marshal Salhins in

Islands of History (1985) and Shelley Ortner in *Life and Death on Mt. Everest* (1999). Ortner refers to “encounter” as the active moment when Sahlins’s “structure of the conjuncture” operates to produce history (Ortner 1999:23; Sahlins 1985). In Sahlins’s model of practice, change occurs as the result of these structures of conjuncture. Meaning and relational systems of symbolism unfold dynamically and take new shape as a consequence of the deployment of social practices in novel circumstances (Sahlins 1985).

The concept of the structure of the conjuncture helps to unpack the encounters, negotiations, risks of reproduction, and possible reification of Jain food as cultural forms and symbols (Sahlins 1985:xiv). Practice theory informs an attention to intentionality and agency: “Cultural forms are not merely sets of terms and codes and categories, but emerge from structures of purpose . . . and only make sense in relation to those underlying purposes” (Ortner 1999:22).

Making an ethnographic documentary falls into these frameworks of encounter, practice, and intersubjective entanglement. This is in contrast to visual anthropology as a salvage project, intent on making and preserving records of vanishing customs and human beings of this world (Mead 1975:3). Margaret Mead’s work informs this one through her suggestion of including the people being filmed in the processes of planning, programming, filming, and editing (Mead 1975:8). She implores the filmmaker to work toward reducing the hazards of bias, and to avoid “shallow claims of culture-free producers” by employing the corrective approach of including multiple viewpoints from different cultural perspectives (Mead 1975:8). Applying this attentiveness to multiple viewpoints calls into question the power differential between myself and my

interlocutors. In this case, the traditional hierarchical distinction between anthropologist and informant may be inverted.

This work, including the documentary film on Jain food traditions, is not representative of all Jains, in all places and times, or even of all expressions of Jain food and dietary practices. It could never be. These expressions are the historically and ethnographically constructed encounters that are temporally and spatially emplaced. Jain interlocutors have diverse motivations and intentions. I too bring intentions and purposes to fieldwork and filming. In the following section I look at the methods used to conduct research in Jaipur.

Research Methodology

The methods used in this research included the examination of Jain food traditions and beliefs through books, journal articles, Jain blogs and social networks, Jain cookbooks, and ethnographic monographs on the topic. I conducted ethnographic fieldwork over the course of two summers in Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. There I met with Svetambar Jain interlocutors in the Johari Bazaar. This involved eating Jain food, making a documentary film about Jain food traditions, and ethnographic interviewing and participant observation.

During the first summer, in 2012, I conducted my fieldwork research alone. My point of entry into the Jain community was through Jyoti Kothari. Dr. Brian Brazeal, my thesis advisor, introduced me to Jyoti, who is the proprietor of a gemstone and jewelry business. While I was doing fieldwork he was secretary for the Svetambar Khatar

Gacch Sangh, headquartered at the Shivjiram Bhawan in the Johari Bazaar. This is a position of considerable power in the Jain Khatar Gacch community.

When I first arrived in Jaipur I stayed at one of the delightful and inexpensive backpacker hotels. But when I first met Jyoti at the Shivjiram he insisted that I leave the hotel immediately. A bit perplexed, having acclimated to strong wireless Internet service and a modern shower, I realized quickly that there would be no arguing with Jyoti on this matter and agreed to relocate. The Jain hostel, called the Vichakshan Yatri Niwas, was predictably more austere than the tourist guesthouse. But it had the essentials, was very clean, and, best of all, it was free. I resided at the Jain hostel during the remainder of my stay, from June 10 to July 20, 2012.

Initially I felt that I was regarded with apprehension. I was a white male bachelor of prime marrying age. According to every other Jain man I spoke with, finding a wife ought to have been, without any doubt, my top priority. It was hard to explain that I was neither looking for nor interested in finding a wife at this point in my life. I found myself in a world devoid of women, with a few exceptions. During this first summer I occasionally wondered to myself, "I haven't spoken to a woman in a week. How can this be? Is this a society of only men?" During most of my time at the Shivjiram I was surrounded by men and saw women only at the puja (worship) sessions. Even then there was a relatively clear demarcation between men and women. Men generally sat on one side of the hall, women and children on the other side.

During this first summer I collected data by eating a lot and being mindful of flavors and taste. This is the method that chefs use to come to know food. It is embodied

knowledge. I also took notes using the Evernote platform on an Apple laptop. These notes document my in-person participant observations. These consisted of lots of eating at the Shivjiram cafeteria. I also conducted interviews with members of the Khatar Gacch Sangh. I ate non-Jain food with a Rajput, a Brahmin priest, and an Agrawal Hindu, even discovering a place to find an illegal cow's meat hamburger along the way. Throughout, my goal was to approach the study of Jain food in context of other Indian cuisines.

From July 16 to July 30, 2013, I returned to Jaipur with a fellow student, Ms. Kelsea Rossow, who served as cinematographer for the documentary. We came equipped with a Canon 7D digital single-lens reflex camera, a tripod, wireless audio lavalier microphones, a laptop, a light box, and an external RAID disk drive to create a triple redundancy for the data we collected. In addition to having excellent skills and understanding for operating the camera, Kelsea was invaluable in enabling interaction with female lay Jains.

The film came about in an organic fashion. The Jains of the Khatar Gacch Sangh wanted to make a film about Jainism and Jain food, thinking that such a film could be shown to their children as an educational tool. I was working with the Advanced Laboratory for Visual Anthropology (ALVA) at CSU Chico, and had just finished editing my first ethnographic documentary. The data collected during this visit took the form of recorded interviews with eight subjects. Kelsea and I also filmed B-roll and took still photos using the 7D and our Apple iPhones. Editing and post-production is an iterative process. I am working on a version of the film at the present.

Subjects

The primary subjects of this research are Svetambar Jains of the Khatar Gacch Sangh and Jains from all over the world who were visiting Jaipur. Face-to-face interviews, both on and off camera, were conducted during both periods of fieldwork. I interviewed mendicants as well as lay Jains, though most of the subjects belonged to the laity. During the first summer a Brahmin priest was assigned to teach me Hindi and he and I became good friends. I also became good friends with a young male Rajput studying law. He helped me to experience a wide range of Indian cuisine in restaurants around Jaipur.

During both summers, my main interlocutor was Jyoti Kothari, who proved to be both an invaluable guide and a dynamic and interesting lay Jain. Self-educated and well-connected, he makes things happen with a force of will like the wind. He is deeply spiritual and is often semi-jokingly accused of “going *sadhu*.” Although considered a lay Jain, he undertakes certain practices normally in the realm of the *sadhu* (male ascetic), such as rigorous fasting or having his full bushy beard plucked by hand multiple times per year. He made the introductions for me to all my Jain interlocutors. He also maintained an active blog about happenings in the Jain community. His son, Darshan, programs a Jain social website, Jainee.com, which also became a mode of communication.

Limitations and Boundaries

The authors of recent works on the Jains have avoided representations that abstract an ahistorical unity from the complexity of Jain realities (Long 2013:192-194).

Self-aware about their power to shape Jain realities, these authors wish to avoid depicting these realities in ways that minimize their historical diversity and complexity (Long 2013:192-194). When Jains speak of themselves and their traditions, they often speak in terms of eternal and unchanging truths of Jainism as a unity handed down age after age by the community of Jain ascetics (Long 2013:196-200). A self-understanding among Jains as bearers of unchanging, eternal truths is a common sentiment that I encountered frequently in my fieldwork.

There are areas of broad uniformity across the various Jain communities (Long 2013). It is desirable to accommodate the Jain sensibility that perceives these fundamentals of Jainism as expressing eternal, unchanging features of existence. Alan Babb suggests that we need to understand the Jain tradition “on its own terms. . . . From within it is a complete world” (Babb 1996:195). This thesis works with narrative representations of the Jain tradition coming from one particular Svetambar Jain sect in Jaipur. It does not speak for all Jains. There is a potential anthropological feedback loop occurring between this community and scholars, as many literature on Jains has included interaction with this community. This concept is suggested as a possible future study. The data from my fieldwork does not provide enough material for a meaningful analysis of the possible feedback loop at this time.

This research is limited in its ability to address the factor of gender in Jain food traditions and practices. During the first summer of fieldwork, it was very difficult to find female interlocutors. My contacts were organized and controlled by Jyoti to a rather high degree. When I returned in 2013 with a woman, Kelsea Rossow, the situation

was different. The Jains assumed that we were married, or at least engaged. This assumption brought down previous barriers and we gained access to a Jain home and opportunities to speak with female Jains. Our time was limited, however, and we had to follow a rigorous schedule in order to get the necessary footage in the ten days we had in Jaipur to work together on filming the documentary footage.

In a perfect world the post-production process in the making of the documentary film would be highly collaborative. Technology is a limiting factor. Ideally I would make edits and iterative versions of the film that could be viewed and approved by my interlocutors in Jaipur. Unfortunately this is not possible. I will gain approval by the community before any final cut of the film is shown publicly, and will send copies to all of my interlocutors. Editing a film introduces biases into the final work. I have chosen to focus on issues that I believe would be of the greatest value in the education of young Jains in India and abroad. The film post-production process is currently ongoing. A finished version of the documentary film is not reflected in this study.

Outline of Thesis

Chapter II of this thesis develops a baseline history and literature review of Jainism as a spiritual path and an enduring ideological structure. It includes explanations of major Jain concepts and elaborations of Jain food traditions and beliefs. Where possible, information learned during the course of fieldwork is used along side textual sources to emphasize the practical (re)production of Jain traditions and beliefs.

Chapter III analyzes the links between practice theory, soteriology, and flavor. First, I discuss four meals that I consumed during fieldwork and the methodological and

theoretical journey that I experienced while doing ethnographic fieldwork. The first meal is a Jain meal I consumed on my first day at the Shivjiram; I then compare it with non-Jain meals. Second, I present and discuss narratives about flavor and food. The first set of narratives comes from the interviews in the film; these are compared to narratives about food and flavor found in the literature review. These two approaches are discussed in terms of the theoretical “structure of conjuncture” and of practice theory as developed by Sahlins and Ortner. This theoretical framework helps to explain the difference in presentations of food and flavor by suggesting entanglements between intention, desire, scholarship, and the fieldwork encounter.

Chapter IV concludes by suggesting how the trajectory of this research could be pursued in future collaboration with the Jains in Jaipur.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW: THE JAINS

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to build a foundation from which to explore Jain soteriology in relation to flavor and to anthropological practice theory. This connection is first rooted in the (re)production of Jainism and major Jain ideological forces. Second, I connect anthropological theories of practice, history, structure, and agency to these enduring symbolic structures of meaning, and to the meaning of the process of reproduction, by interacting with the work of western scholars. My goal is to provide the reader with a broader understanding of the Jain spiritual path and how food relates to ideology and identity.

The Jains

According to India's 2001 census, there are 4.2 million Jains in the country (in press; Sen 2014). They are found mainly in western and southern India, with their highest concentrations in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Karnataka (in press; Sen 2014). Large numbers of Jains also live in other countries, including up to 100,000 Jains in the United States. There are also growing Jain communities in the United Kingdom and East Africa (in press; Sen 2014). Despite their minority status, they have had a notable presence in India for more than 2,500 years and have influenced Indian

culture throughout this time (Wiley 2004:1). Vegetarianism and the concept of ahimsa have become central to Hinduism due to Jain influence (in press; Sen 2014).

There are two main sectarian traditions among the Jains. There are the Digambar, or sky-clad Jains, whose ascetics go naked. The other group is the Svetambar Jains, whose ascetics wear white clothing. There are further divisions within these traditions; for example, among the Svetambar Jains there are image worshippers (*Murtipujaka*) and others who do not worship images, called *Teranpanthis* and *Sthanakavasis* (Wiley 2002:203,208; Carrithers 1991:45-46). The Svetambar murtipujaka in Jaipur are further subdivided into groups called *gacch* (lineage). Each *gacch* has its own religious buildings and ascetic community. Reynell suggests that different *gacch* originated as a result of rivalries between different mendicant leaders (cited in Carrithers 1991:46). The two Murtipujaka *gacchs* in Jaipur are the Tapa *Gacch* and the Khatar *Gacch*. The interlocutors with whom I worked were all members of the Khatar *Gacch*. The notion of lineage is important because it reflects the different traditions practicing subtly different versions of Jainism (Laidlaw 2003:48). Temple worship is controversial and has been opposed by different lineages in the Svetambar tradition since at least the fifteenth century (Laidlaw 2003:48-49). But it is fundamental to the Khatar *Gacch*.

The word Jain is used to describe a person who has faith in the teachings of the *jinās*, or spiritual victors (Wiley 2004:1). These *jinās* are not mythical beings, but humans who have overcome all passions (*kasaya*) and have attained enlightenment (Wiley 2004:1). The *jinās* teach the truths they realized to others. In their enlightenment they have attained liberation (*moksa*) from the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*) (Wiley 2004:1).

The basic principles taught by the jinas are, according to the Jains, eternal and unchanging.

The Arrival of Movements Opposed to Vedic Sacrifice

Non-Jain scholars hold that Jainism and Buddhism emerged in the Gangetic Basin in the sixth century BCE (Dundas 2002:13). These movements were reactions and revolts against the Vedic religions. Vedic society deployed a caste system with the Brahmins at the top (in press; Sen 2014). Not only did the Brahmins practice animal sacrifice but power and status were determined by birth and by one's caste. Jainism rejected social hierarchies in which rank is dependent on birth (Wiley 2009:65). The Jains denounced the Veda as a false scripture, and in so doing they positioned themselves as spiritually more pure than the Brahmins (Laidlaw 1995: 111). Weber suggests that the origin of the central Jain principle of ahimsa arose in rejection of Brahmin rituals of animal sacrifice (Weber 1958:198). Jain doctrine holds that all souls are equal; purity is an achievement and not an ascribed status (Dundas 2002:147-148). Not to be outdone by the emergent renouncers of the Buddhism and Jainism, the ancient Brahmins eventually adopted vegetarianism as an ideal of caste purity (Dumont 1970:149-150). Even though Jain doctrine denies the superiority of the Brahmins and the existence of castes, Jains are in fact divided into and belong to caste groups.

The distinction in contemporary times between Hindu and Jain is not clear-cut (Babb 2004:20). The various lineages (gacch) have the power to recruit regardless of caste (Dumont 1970:188). Jains will self-identify as both Jain and Hindu, belonging to

both the Khatar Gacch and the Oswal caste, for instance. In Jaipur the majority of the Svetambar Jains belong to the Oswal and Srimal castes (Carrithers 1991:46). Jyoti Kothari claims they often have ties to both (personal communication, July 2012). While often interconnected, Jains do make notable distinctions between Hindu and Jain traditions.

The Jains' emphasis on the individual achievement of spiritual purity is reflected in their characterization of Jain *tyag*, or sacrifice of worldly pleasures. Jains characterize Hindus as *bhog*, or pleasure seekers who therefore possess worldly attachments (Carrithers 1991:45) A principal ideological force of Jainism comes from the Jains' extraordinarily uncompromising pursuit of individual asceticism (Carrithers 1991:1). This call to asceticism and renouncing the world comes from the story of Mahavira, the twenty-fourth and last *Tirthankar*. He was a spiritual warrior, and the most venerated of the jinas.

Mahavira

Vardhamana Mahavira, the most important figure in Jainism, lived in the sixth century BCE. He attained liberation (*Nirvana*) at the age of 72 at Papa, near Patna. Although the precise dates of his life is not certain, the Svetambar sect dates his life from 599 to 527 BCE (Kothari interview). Mahavira did not create a new religion, but is considered to be the last of the *tirthankara*, or fordmakers. These are teachers who attained enlightenment and then made a ford, or path, that others can follow.

It is often remarked that Jainism is not a religion per se, or that it is atheistic. Many of my interlocutors emphasized that it is not a religion, but a way of life. But I also heard them refer to God on numerous occasions. When Jains describe the self of a soul that has been liberated from samsara, they use the term *paramatman*, or the supreme self (Dundas 2002:110). Jains do, on one hand, ideologically reject the idea that the universe was created by one god, or that a god can intervene in the lives of humans (Dundas 2002:110). But on the other hand, the idea of paramatman is a divine principle of a state free of karma, a potential self present in all living creatures (Dundas 2002:110).

To achieve this state of self one must follow the teachings of Mahavira on the path to liberation. The principles that he espoused form the basis for enduring soteriological and theological beliefs that, Jains would claim, have remained relatively unchanged for all of eternity (Dundas 2002:3). Teachings are not received as revelation, nor are they considered part of some magical power, as for instance the Vedas are. It is the responsibility of each individual human soul, aided by earlier teachings, to realize and know the truth (Jaini 1979:3). The path is always the same; each jina adheres to the everlasting and eternal truth (Jaini 1979:3). The scriptures in Jainism represent the literal words of Mahavira and the other fordmakers as a series of fixed truths with no beginning or end; they constitute a tradition without human or divine origin (Dundas 2002:61).

The Basic Beliefs of Jainism

Jainism is a way of life to achieve the final goal of liberation. It's not a religion, but it's a spirituality, and the ultimate goal is to attain liberation through right vision, right knowledge, and right conduct. And for all practical purposes, Jainism tells us to follow the fivefold path of *ahimsa*,

satya, asteya, bramacharya, and aparigraha. To say it in English: nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, chastity, and non-possession.

~Jyoti Kothari

The goal of the modern-day ascetic is to travel the path of liberation and escape samsara. Mahavira did this and then made the path, the ford, that subsequent generations of ascetics could follow (Kothari, personal communication, 2012). The main means of observing this path lies in Mahavira's central tenet of "suppression of the senses. . . He who conquers the mind and the passions and performs austerity correctly shines with pure soul" (Dundas 2002:18). This is accomplished in steps along the path to liberation.

Jains often define their tradition as the *moksa-marg*, the path to liberation (Cort 2002:16). The Tattvartha Sutra is an influential Jain text in which the sanctioned Jain teachings are organized into a systematic philosophy (Wiley 2004:212). It is still widely read and regarded as authoritative by both Svetambar and Digambar Jains (Cort 2002:17). The very first verse enunciates the basic concerns of the Jain religion: "The way to deliverance is right faith (*darsana*), knowledge (*jnana*), and conduct (*caritra*)" (Dundas 2002:87). These are called the "Three Jewels of Jainism (*ratnatrya*)."

Correct faith in this instance does not require a leap of faith or blind belief. It is instead considered the right way of looking at the world, an educated and positive disposition (Dundas 2002:87). In traveling the path to liberation, Jains have faith in the correct worldview. This worldview is characterized by certain verities (*tattva*):

1. sentient soul (*jiva*)
2. insentient non-soul (*ajiva*)
3. influx of karma into contact with the soul (*asrava*)

4. bondage of the soul by karma (*bandha*)
5. meritorious forms of karma (*punya*)
6. demeritorious forms of karma (*papa*)
7. blockage of this influx (*samvara*)
8. dissociation of the soul from karma (*nirjara*)
9. liberation (*moksa, nirvana*)

According to Jain metaphysics, these nine truths have existed forever and will continue to exist forever (Cort 2002:18). Traveling on this path to liberation involves increasing one's faith and knowledge of the verities. The path also involves conducting oneself in a way that reduces the influx of karmic particles, so as to burn away karma that one has already attracted in this and in previous lives. According to the moksa-marg ideology, karma is the problem (Cort 2002:7).

The Nature of Karma

In contrast to the views of other Indian and Vedic traditions, karma for the Jains is an actual physical and material substance (see Singhvi interview in Appendix F). It has two meanings: (1) action or activity; and (2) a type of extremely subtle matter (*pudgala*) that is attracted to the soul (*jiva*) by actions of the body, speech, and mind. Karma is bound with the soul whenever actions are motivated by passions. Karma clouds the soul and creates ignorance of the true nature of the universe, blocking the inherent light and perfection of the soul. Following is a story about karma from Dr. Singhvi, a Jain scholar whom I met in Jaipur. In addition to providing a vivid image of the nature of karma, it also introduces the concept of equanimity:

The basic concept of Jainism is that all souls are equal. They have equal potentiality. But the potentiality is covered by the karmas, and because of the covering, because—maybe somewhere it is loose covering, somewhere it is tight covering, somewhere it is thick covering, somewhere it is thin covering—but due to

[the] covering the power of experiencing is somewhere low and somewhere high. The power of doing [is] somewhere low, somewhere high.

So activity and experience both are related to the cover of the potentiality of soul. But as per the potentiality, each and every soul which is having body of even one sensed or five-sensed, they can attain liberation, they can have the self-realization, but only after the destruction of the cover, the annihilation of the cover.

I'll cite you one example. There is a wall, an oily wall is there. Okay. And the dust covering it. And the dust is deposited in that oily wall. And we find that a thick layer of dust has deposited to the wall due to the oiliness of this. Right. So the first layer of dust became oily, and the next layer became oily, and so where the oil is there, the dust will just be deposited. Supposing we do some chemical experiment where I do not touch the wall or do not touch the dust, but I just take away the oil from it; then the whole dust will just come down, fall down. Without doing anything because the surface is not oily.

So dust will just fall down, it will not stick over there. Dust cannot stick to oily things or a substance that can stick to it. Likewise in [our] other life, we do activity of mind, body, and speech, if we do our activities with the attachment that this is mine, I am the doer of this, I am the owner of this. These kinds of attachments, if we do, then the karmas are attracted. The karma is a technical term; karma is like a material. Very strong material, like dust particles. Okay, so it is attracted. You might say through any activity if we are attached to it, then our body has a different kind of psychology, physiology, and expressions.

And if we are not attached, our physiology, our psychology, our actions are in a different manner. So attachment invites karmas, and through this attachment. Attachment is like oily or like oil, or adjoining thing. So these attachments invite karmas, and the layer of karmas, layers of karmas, one attachment and then again, and again attachment, so a thick layer of karmas we find on the soul. But all karmas can be annihilated if that oiliness is destroyed, that attachment and diversion. (See Singhvi interview in Appendix F)

Samayik, or equanimity, is one of the basic principles explained to me in my interviews with interlocutors. Bothra indicated that it is at the core of Jainism. According to Bothra, “The basic concept of Jainism is equanimity. The equilibrium in anything. And ahimsa is supposed to be the tool that helps achieving that equilibrium” (see Bothra interview in Appendix F).

Ahimsa: The Central Principle

The concept of nonviolence, ahimsa, is the commandment most often observed by Jains, even if they do not participate fully in the Jain community and ritual life (Bothra 2009:7). It has been adopted by Buddhism and Hinduism as well, but Jains believe that they have realized it philosophically and practically to a more rigorous degree. Nonviolence (also interpreted as non-harming) is found in the Acaranga Sutra, the earliest Svetambar scripture on ascetic conduct (Wiley 2004:28). A noted passage states: “I so pronounce that all the omniscient of all times state, speak, propagate, and elaborate that nothing which breathes, which exists, which lives, and which has any essence or potential of life, should be destroyed or ruled over, or subjugated, or harmed, or denied of its essence or potential. . . . The result of actions by you has to be borne by you, so do not destroy anything” (Bothra 2009:ix).

Surendra Bothra, a Jain scholar of the Khatar Gacch, takes ahimsa not as a steadfast rule or ritual, but rather as a way of life. Ahimsa should be a deeply held belief of the mind, practiced as a discipline. Thus, it develops throughout life as an attitude or predisposition, emerging not from rules or codes but from sentiments and feelings (Bothra 2009:150). Laidlaw argues that ahimsa is the centerpiece of Jain ethics, as the varied and diverse practices and disciplines that come under the rubric of ahimsa are “united not by an argument or as means to any particular desired outcome, but by an aesthetic sensibility” (Laidlaw 1995:159). The image of the wandering Jain sadhu belies a commitment to an individual, but socially visible, pursuit of austerity and is an aesthetic embodiment of ahimsa. It is one of the most pronounced aesthetics in all of India and is

often used as emblematic of Jainism. Ahimsa relies upon the Jain notion of soul. It is central to understanding equanimity and the equality of all living beings.

Properties of Jivas

According to Jains, the soul in its pure state is characterized by the four infinitudes (*ananta-catustay*) of knowledge (*jnan*), perception (*darsan*), bliss (*sukh*), and power (*virya*). When the soul is finally freed from karma, it floats to the top of the universe to exist forever as a self-sufficient monad absorbed in the four infinitudes (Cort 2004:7). There are infinite souls in the universe, and they exist individually in different states of spiritual development (Wiley 2004:111). Souls are bound by karma in the cycle of rebirth.

Jain biology differentiates bodies inhabited by souls as ranging from those possessing one sense (touch) to those possessing all five senses (touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing) (Cort 2004:382-386). Single-sense bodies are also called immobile because they do not have the ability to move. These are earth bodies, water bodies, fire bodies, air bodies, and plant bodies (Cort 2004:382-386). Mobile bodies contain from two to five senses. Jains rank five-sensed beings as between those that are sentient and those that are not; animals, celestial and infernal beings, and most (but not all) humans are considered sentient (Cort 2004:382-386).

The Jains developed their scheme of micro-forms of life at an early stage. Plant life is as important as human or animal life. The Jains are vegetarians and depend

on plant life. On the path to liberation, it is incumbent upon the Jain ascetics to hone their knowledge and vision of other jivas.

Ascetics

Mahavira organized his followers into a fourfold order consisting of *sadhus* (male ascetics), *sadhvis* (female ascetics), *shravaks* (laymen), and *shravikas* (laywomen). Sadhus and sadhvis are the Jains who renounce the world and their families. They give away all of their money and material possessions and are instructed to lead a life of austere asceticism, learning religious teachings and wandering from place to place (Laidlaw 2003:1). The life of the mendicant is structured by rituals, with the aim of advancing along the path to liberation (Cort 2002). This involves taking the five great vows (*mahavratas*) of ahimsa, satya, asteya, bramacharya, and aparigraha (nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, chastity, and non-possession). These vows are intended to allow the ascetic to avoid harming others and to subdue passions and attachments (Wiley 2004:9).

One of the core aesthetics in Jainism is the picture of the austere sadhu or sadhvi, wandering from place to place with no possessions other than a face mask, a small broom for sweeping away insects in his or her path, and occasionally eyeglasses to help with vision (Laidlaw 2002:1). The ability to see clearly is linked to the Three Jewels of Jainism: right faith (*samyak darsan*) in the teachings of the jinas, right knowledge (*samyak-jnana*), and right conduct (*samyak caritra*) (Wiley 2004:179). One must be able to see clearly in order to avoid doing accidental harm to other life.

Ascetics are also instructed to perform six obligatory actions: equanimity (*samayik*), praise of the formmaker, homage to the teacher (*vandana*), repentance

(*pratikramana*), laying down the body (*kayotsarga*), and abandonment (*pratyakhyana*) (Dundas 2002:170). Ascetics adhere to the five great vows and observe the daily rites of the six obligatory actions in order to avoid attracting any new particles of karma (Wiley 2004:10). They also attempt to scrub away previously accrued karma by performing acts of austerity (*tapas*). In Jain theology and philosophy, radical asceticism is the only rational and moral response (Babb 1996:62). As an embodiment of the ideal, the ascetic represents an advanced stage along the path to liberation.

Lay Jains, the Ideal, and the Path to the Ideal

There are many more lay Jains than ascetics. In my fieldwork I spent most of the time working with lay Jains, and only occasionally did I have the opportunity to meet with sadhus or sadhvis. It is considered a rare privilege or honor to be in the presence of a sadhu. The Jain ascetics are held up as an ideal form by lay Jains and are even worshipped by the Svetambar laity (Babb 1996:61).

Moksa-marg is central for the layperson too, who is instructed to live according to vows similar to those taken by the ascetic. These are called the lesser vows (*anuvrat*) and they mirror the five great vows of ahimsa, aparigraha, satya, bramacharya, and asteya taken by the ascetics. Whereas correct behavior is considered a must for the ascetic, the lay Jain is constantly negotiating choices, observing the vows when possible. There is wide recognition that the ideal is not always possible, nor has it ever been possible for lay Jains, who must deal with worldly problems like family, business, and politics. This acknowledgment is part of the unique adaptability of Jainism, suggested by

the concept of non-absolutism, or the relativity of truths (*anekantavada*). The first important thing for a Jain is to preserve his life (see Bothra interview in Appendix F). One is born as a human being, and Jain theory suggests that only as a human being you can be liberated. It is a rare thing to be born into human life.

Most lay Jains are not inclined to dwell on the religious implication of daily (and potentially violent) activities, emphasizing instead the purity of their intent (Dundas 2002:191). The most important behavior for lay Jains is not strict adherence to the doctrinal prescriptions set forth by Mahavira. Rather, it is more important for them to exhibit their pure and pious intentions. This is accomplished by showing correct moral orientation through worship and by participating in public ceremonies and activities, as well as by enhancing the prestige of their family and community through religious philanthropy and social work (Dundas 2002:192).

But at a personal level, lay Jains are encouraged to practice acts of austerity and are often guided by ascetics in these tapas. Lay Jains observe samayik or meditation for 48 minutes after visiting the temple in the morning (Babb 1996:83). But the most important way in which lay Jains observe ascetic practices is in their food choices and by fasting (*upvas*) (Babb 1996:83). Negotiating food choices is one way in which lay Jains observe the vows and have practical encounters with the application of doctrine on a daily basis.

The Jain Diet: Eatable or Non-Eatable

In contemporary times the Jain diet has been subjected to a great degree of elaboration, as it is regarded as the most significant aspect of Jain social identity (Dundas

2002; Cottam-Ellis 1991:89 *in* Carrithers 1991). The ethic of nonviolence works itself out in Jain food practice and is the primary way in which young people learn to think of being Jain as an embodied distinction based on the discipline of ahimsa (Laidlaw 1995:166).

Food is divided into three categories: *tamsik*, *rajsik*, and *satvik*. *Tamsik* foods are prepared in a way that does extensive violence toward animals and countless bacteria. These foods also trigger lust, anger, and feelings of negative passions (Jain 2005:19) *Rajsik* food is prepared with flavor in mind and also for basic nourishment of the body. Fried foods are included in this category and are considered difficult to digest. *Satvik* foods are the ideal, and they are what the ascetic is supposed to eat. This category of foods does the least violence to any other life, and it “awaken(s) morality, compassion, bliss, and spirituality” (Jain 2005:19).

There is no single, comprehensive list of restrictions followed by all Jains, lay and mendicant alike. But the general practice and public image of vegetarianism is consistent across all Jain lineages and sects, including both Svetambar and Digambar, lay and mendicant.

Foods are placed in the categories of eatable (*bhakashya*) or non-eatable (ab-*bhakashya*). The most basic Jain food prohibition is that a Jain must never eat meat. This is constant in all Jain texts. But the prohibitions don’t stop with meat; Jains take vegetarianism several few steps further. Eggs, root vegetables (*zamikand*) such as onions, garlic, and potatoes are prohibited (although lay Jains do not always observe this provision). Alcohol, drugs, honey, and any food with a large number of seeds are also ab-

bhakhshya. During certain times of the year, such as the monsoon season (*chaturmas*), Jains often refrain from eating leafy green plants and mangos, due to the large numbers of insects that could be accidentally eaten in this way.

In my fieldwork I observed a frequent emphasis on what was non-eatable.

Jyoti on numerous occasions would begin to write these foods down as a list or declare them aloud:

The Jain diet is completely vegetarian. But it is much more than a vegetarian diet. As I told you, alcohol is not included in the Jain diet; though it is considered vegetarian, it is not included. Similarly all toxic items, drugs, etc, have to be avoided in Jain food. And especially, as I told earlier, vegetables grown underground, sprouts, fungus, mushrooms—these types of vegetables are also non-eatable.

Fermented food is also prohibited, but not milk or other milk foods which normally vegans avoid. So Jain food is not vegan food, it's vegetarian food. As I told you earlier, that there are 22 kinds of non-eatables, and fermented food is one of those. And principally, these are non-eatable, but in practice, most of the people eat [many of them]. Only a few staunch Jains, we can count their number on our fingers, don't eat all these 22 non-eatables. (Interviewed at the Shivjiram Bhawan, 7/19/2013)

Lists of non-eatables often include eggs, fish, garlic, onion, carrots, cauliflower, leeks, turnips, eggplant, pomegranates, dates, figs, walnuts, pine nuts, ginger, chilies, industrially bottled liquids, industrially canned food, vinegar, honey, alcohol, coffee, tobacco, fermented yogurt, and cultured cheeses (Carrithers 1991:92-93). In some instances, atypical non-eatables include snow, clay, poison, and hailstones (Cort 2002:128).

In addition to avoiding the foods listed above, the reinforcing vows (*gunvratas*) encourage Jains not to eat after sunset, or *ratri bhojan bandh* (Cort 2002:128; Jain 2005:15; Saint Chandraprabhu: Appendix). This rule is difficult for many Jains to

observe today, especially those working in careers that require travel abroad. It is typically observed only by sadhus and sadhvis, laywomen, and older retired laymen (Cort 2002:130; See Sadhvis interviews in Appendix F; Saint Chandrapradbru interview in Appendix F). The cafeteria at the Shivjiram Bhawan in Johari Bazaar food does not serve food after sunset.

The description of Jain food restrictions given above is by no means exhaustive. Food practices have been explored in relation to many different aspects of Jain practice and identity, such as an aesthetic (Laidlaw 2002), a transaction with an absent lord (Babb 1996), a negotiation of the religious rules based on renunciation of food and the social rules based on the consumption of food (Cort 2002:130), or simply a central austerity that has a decisive effect on one's rebirth in the next life (Dundas 2002:177-179).

This is a brief overview of the dominant and allegedly eternal principles that bear on Jain food traditions and beliefs. These were the narratives about Jain food that were told to me during my first summer of fieldwork encounters. In my interviews with both lay and ascetic Jains, I found very little deviation from what I had read about Jain food in previous scholarly publications.

Nowhere in the literature review could I find a positive description of Jain food, nor did I find any discourse on Jain food being healthy and tasty. This fact will be important in Chapter 3 when I compare discourses on flavor and blandness. In the next section I will describe the food transactions between the laity and ascetics. These transactions of food and the dietary prohibitions placed on Jains led me to a vexing

question: if the ascetics rely on lay Jains for food, and if ascetics are supposed to only eat bland and tasteless food, does this mean that the laypeople are cooking bland and boring food all the time? If not, what does this mean about Jain food narratives and the context of describing and representing Jain food?

Gocari and Dan

Jain ascetics depend upon the laity for food and all the other necessities of life (Cort 2002). The sadhus are forbidden from preparing food directly (because of the violence inherent in cooking) and must obtain all their food as gifts (Babb 1996:58-59). This is called gocari, or alms. It is likened to the grazing of a cow and is not considered begging (Babb 1996:59). The laity must offer food to the ascetic without preparing it especially for him. And the ascetic is supposed to inspect the kitchen and approve of the manner in which the food is prepared.

The act of giving alms (dan) to the wandering ascetic seeking his daily gocari is central to the tension involved with preparing and consuming food. Svetambar sadhus will take an alms bowl and collect food twice a day, they will then take the food back and eat privately, mixing the food with preboiled water and gulping down the mixture quickly, without enjoyment (Babb 1996:59).

For the Digambara mendicant, the rules are even stricter, with no alms bowl allowed, and only once per day in the morning can they accept food in the palms of their hands. After the mendicant has inspected the kitchen of the unsuspecting lay family, if satisfied they signal approval of the dietary habits that he sees and will accept the food. It

is thought to be a great shame and embarrassment if a sadhu comes to one's house but refuses to eat one's food.

I followed a Svetambar sadhu on gocari in Johari Bazaar during summer 2012 when he went to a layperson's house. The visit was premeditated, and the sadhu did not inspect the kitchen. Jyoti told me that the household had an elderly man who was very ill, and it seemed as if this visit was a courtesy to the household. After collecting the food, the sadhu took it back to the Shivjiram to share with two other sadhus in isolation.

The second gocari that I observed firsthand occurred in summer 2013. We were all at Ameeta Jain's magnificent house, which was the location where an eminent sadhu was staying for chaturmas (the monsoon season). Gocari, in this case, simply involved a younger monk going downstairs to the kitchen and collecting food in the alms bowls (see Figures 3 and 4). He returned upstairs with the food and the three monks ate in isolation.



Figure 3. Svetambar sadhu taking alms.



Figure 4. Close-up of layperson dishing food into alms bowls.

During that second summer, I also observed and filmed a Digambar Jain taking alms (see Figure 5). That summer, a historic puja was occurring while I was in Jaipur. Eminent and popularly known Digambar and Svetambar monks came together to hold a joint 45-day puja, or worship session. Coming from this event, I was allowed, along with my cinematographer, to observe the Digambar monk taking alms. He was naked and at the center of a large hall, with thousands of people surrounding him. On his left and right were guards carrying machine guns.

Jains waited on both side carrying food; in fact, people surrounding the monk seemed to push frantically to get close to the monk and offer food. He seemed stoic in the midst of the scene, calmly accepting tiny bits of food in the palms of his hands. He would take a bite about every 20 seconds, and much of the food fell from his hands into a basin



Figure 6. Digambar sadhu taking alms in public.

situated below him. It would have been impossible for him to eat all the food that people were offering him.

In the following section I will talk about gender issues. Although there are considerably more female sadhvis than male sadhus, the female ascetics never rise to the level of fame and celebrity status granted to this naked digambar monk.

Gender

One key difference between the two major sects of Jains, Svetambar and Digambar, lies in their attitudes towards women. The Digambar view women as spiritually inferior to men and as not possessing the proper sex at birth to attain liberation in their present form (see Jyoti Kothari Interview Appendix F). The Svetambar, on the other hand, insist that women are the spiritual equals of men.

In the Svetambar community of Jains in Jaipur, women are strictly limited to the domestic realm (Carrithers 1991:54). The women are responsible for preparing food for the men, who labor outside the home. Lay Jain women are generally considered more pious than men and participate in more overt religious activities (Brazeal, personal communication; Babb 1996:84; Laidlaw 2003:169; Carrithers 1991:54).

Although Jainism is often perceived as a male-oriented, even misogynistic culture, laywomen are deeply involved in the reproduction of Jain community through the reproduction of religious practices and the education of Jain children (Dundas 2002:55). I encountered some interesting gender dynamics during fieldwork. For instance, when I was introduced to the sadhvis while filming, Jyoti was quite dismissive of their level of education or authority. He said many times that, when compared to the sadhus, they are ignorant. But on the other hand, Jyoti went to great lengths to help me get an interview with “a learned Jain scholar” who was a woman. From this contrast I inferred that Jyoti was somewhat tense about how the female sadhvis would represent Jainism and Jain food in a documentary but had no worries about my interviewing the “esteemed” Dr. Singhvi (he even left the room during most of the interview). I thought that his views were less about misogyny and more about anxiety regarding the structure of conjuncture. I gathered that Jyoti is, on the whole, relatively aware of the process of reification that occurs when scholars come and write books about Jainism. He has, in fact, assisted many of the scholars mentioned in this literature review. These relationships hint at a feedback loop between anthropologists and this community of Jains. But based

on my limited time in the field, this question is beyond the scope of my research at this time.

Assuming that Jyoti was reflexively implicated in the (re)production of Jain principles by means of his key role in the making of the documentary, during our encounter with the sadhvis (which I pursued despite his reluctance) Jyoti was nervous that they would mess things up or portray the enduring ideological structures incorrectly. Jyoti's intentions were complicated by the lesser education of the sadhvis. In actuality, the interviews provided by the sadhvis were totally in line with typical Jain ideological representations. I suppose that Jyoti had nothing to worry about in the end, but from the framework of practice theory, the risk-taking involved in practical encounters during fieldwork and filming explains Jyoti's dismissive attitude toward these particular women. He had a different attitude toward Dr. Singhvi, because of her perceived higher level of education.

Another facet of gender and food, but one that I was not able to observe firsthand, is that women are more likely to undertake religious fasts (Wiley 2004:86; Dundas 2002:199). In the next section I will give a brief overview of Jain fasting.

Fasting

Fasting is the most common and visible practice through which the laity demonstrates Jain ascetic ideals (Dundas 2002:199). Prior to fasting, the individual takes a vow. This is not a private matter. The lay Jain (usually a woman) meets with an ascetic who oversees the vows and confirms the woman's dedication and commitment to the fast (Dundas 2002:199). This fasting by women is a form of austerity that helps to prevent the

accrual of karma, but it is also a practice that brings prestige. Fasting is an expression of a woman's chastity, and it functions to raise the social status of a family, and by extension the woman's relatives, through the confirmation of her moral purity (Dundas 2002:199; Laidlaw 2003:168-169).

In a more general and quotidian way, Jains are encouraged to avoid certain foods at certain times, but especially during certain festival times, such as *Paryusana* (the rainy season festival). Sugar, salt, oil, ghee, curd, and milk are often avoided for a day, since these are ingredients that add flavor to food. These omissions are particularly important when a person undertakes the *ayambil* fast.

Ayambil, from the Hindi word for eating only bland food, is “a practice undertaken by Svetambar Jains of eating one meal a day of bland foods that are considered to be ‘sour,’ such as boiled rice, gruel, and barley meal. These foods are prepared without using any oil, ghee, sugar, salt, or curds, and they do not contain any dry or green fruits” (Wiley 2004:48). Interestingly, I did not encounter this word at all in my fieldwork. I did observe that it is typical for lay Jains to abstain from eating certain foods at certain times, but this behavior was driven by a feeling or sentiment in the heart. Many Jains engage in a gradual reduction of their intake of these foods, which could enflame the passions (See interviews of Ameeta, Surendra, and Dr. Singhvi in Appendix F). But like much of Jain practice, fasting is an individual pursuit, and levels of adherence lie along a spectrum from the ideal condition (practiced by the ascetic) to the less ideal behavior of lay Jains. On the most austere end of the spectrum is *sallekhana*, a religious

act of fasting at the end of life. Jyoti provided me with a revealing account of *sallekhana*, which I will summarize in the next section.

Fasting at the End of Life

For some ascetics, one of the most important and difficult acts of austerity is the *sallekhana* (also called *samadhi maran*). In general this is known as a fast at the end of life, or a religious death through fasting (Wiley 2004:181). But there is often confusion and sensationalism about this act. It is connected to the topic of this study as it demonstrates the ideological and soteriological linkage between the total avoidance of food and the final scrubbing away of karma within an individual's soul, which can then be liberated. My discussion of *sallekhana* with Jyoti was the most poignant moment in my fieldwork. Jyoti stressed the importance of equanimity in relation to *samadhi maran*:

When a person decides to go for *samhadi maran*, the master who is the *acharya* [teacher], is the deciding authority, because he knows all the pros and cons of this act. So one has to go to his guru, his teacher, asking him to permit *sallekhana*. In that case, his teacher has to ask the *acharya*, the ultimate authority, and if he permits, he gives permission to the person willing for... *samadha maran*. If the guru thinks this is not fit for him or her, or that he has not enough mental or spiritual strength to bear the pain and penance of a *samadhi maran* offer, he may not permit him or her.

Once *acharya* permits, and it is believed *acharya* is so capable that he can judge everything—he can judge all levels of physical, mental, and spiritual strength of the person, and then only he gives permission—after one gets permission from *acharya*, then he declares it to the *sangh*, and then everyone knows that yes, the person is going for *sallekhana*.

It is believed that *sallekanha* is a very difficult act. One needs a very high level of physical mental and spiritual strength. ... He becomes a true ascetic. He becomes tranquil. He feels equanimity. When all this happens, he scrubs karmas in huge quantity.

I want to focus on the misconceptions.

Sallekhana is not only fasting, as opposed to popular belief. It is a sacrifice of food, yes. But this is not the whole thing about samadhi maran. As I told earlier, it is to decrease, to make peanut [to make very small], his visaya and kysaya, earthly pleasures, things and everything. And it is to attain equanimity, the most important thing; when a person attains equanimity, he is very close to omniscience, and then close to liberation. Especially for the Western world, I want to send this message: Do not see sallekhana, samadhi maran, as suicide or merely as a way of fasting.” (See Appendix A)

During this explanation, I felt an overwhelming sense of awe come over Jyoti. His eyes glistened and I too was infected by a deep sense of reverie and awe. I felt the presence of salvation in the room, and in a way, for the first time, I was swept into the religious feeling of Jainism. I also felt a deep respect and admiration for the Jains who undertake this fast.

In this description of sallekhana, Jyoti was invoking a certain intention, a purpose. He also demonstrated knowledge of and sensitivity to how Jains are perceived and written about by scholars and people in the “Western world.”

In the next section I will discuss how the enduring ideological structures described above, particularly food and vegetarianism, influence Jain status and practice in the business world.

Socioeconomics and Status

Jains have held an elevated social position in western India (Laidlaw 2003:103). In Rajasthan they are elevated by their wealth and their association with the Rajput aristocracy (Laidlaw 2003:104). Dundas suggests that much of Jain economic power, like that of Protestant Christianity, results from the Jains’ principles of self-reliance and responsibility, which create a good environment for commercial activity

(Weber 1958; Dundas 2002:196). But this does not explain everything. One prominent concern among Indian merchants, both Jain and Hindu, is the concept of *abru*, or reputation. Their reputation is based on publicly observable correct behavior, itself regarded as an index of inner piety (Dundas 2002:196). One of these conservative principles has been strict vegetarianism.

Being perceived as a vegetarian was very important to Jain traders in Rajasthan in ancient and pre-independence times (Babb 2004:57). Their early relationship with the politically dominant Rajput meat-eaters and their opposition to the Brahmins who practiced ritual animal sacrifice shaped the highly elaborate form of nonviolence and vegetarianism that came to be so central to Jain economic and religious life (Babb 2004).

Babb (2004:53) suggests that the Jains have applied to their rules and regulations on food the same systems of accounting ledgers, lists, tables, knowledge, and ability to quantify things that also helped to make them the most successful traders and money handlers in Rajasthan throughout recent history (Babb 2004:53). By the 19th century it was estimated that half the commercial money in circulation from Rajasthan to the Bay of Bengal was under the control of Jains, even though they constituted a miniscule fraction of the population (Dundas 2002: 196).

Another way in which businesspersons could augment their reputation was to direct one's wealth outwards as religious giving, in the form of supporting the construction and upkeep of temples and the endowment of animal hospitals, the latter being a sign of one's commitment to nonviolence (Dundas 2002:197).

We devoted much of our filming in Jaipur to the beautiful Jain temples that the Khatar Gacch administers. They are impressive displays of fine quality and richness. Jyoti was quite insistent that I film various aspects of the temples, such as certain frescos, architecture, and statues. The connection between these temples and Jain food traditions and beliefs fits with my overall impression of the Jains and the history of Jainism. On one hand, there are enduring structures (symbolized by the massive and beautiful temples). On the other hand, Jyoti and numerous other Jains, both lay and ascetic, participated in the practical construction of an ethnographic place influenced heavily by the presence of a camera and a cinematographer. When the camera was running, the classic representation and narratives of Jain food as bland, boring, and dangerous, took second fiddle to a projection of Jain food as healthy, ethical, tasty, and of interest and relevance to the Western world.

In the next chapter I explore data that emerged from the ethnographic place that was practically enacted during my second summer of fieldwork. I explain the relationship between these data and my first summer of fieldwork, when I applied the sensory ethnographic methodological approach. I begin by showing how flavor was the linchpin of this ethnographic and intersubjective turn.

CHAPTER III

DATA AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Flavor is an interesting nexus, a starting point—or, rather, a convoluted tapestry—by which strings and processes of Jain practice and ideology are tied and tugged at the moment of ethnographic encounter and history is (re)produced. I never imagined, when I first set out to study flavor, that it would prove to be such a complicated yet intriguing aspect of Jain culture. I wasn't interested in simply how the food tasted, or in whether it was bland; I also wondered about the context of the telling of Jain food traditions and beliefs. I asked: what does it mean that Jains have told scholars that ascetics (and laypersons if possible) should eat only bland food? If this claim does not match my practical observations, why is there a neat uniformity of description of Jain food in the literature?

As described above, discourse on the enduring Jain traditions, beliefs, and practices is largely about foods that are avoided, omitted, or prohibited (Laidlaw 2002:166). These were the discourses that I encountered without fail during my first summer of fieldwork. In the major Jain texts, food is described first in relation to ahimsa. Second, the prohibitions are explained. Third and finally, scholars describe how these dietary rules or signposts translate into a continuum of practice for both ascetics and laypersons (Laidlaw 2002:166-172; Cort 2002:127-133; Dundas 2002:172, 176-177;

Babb 1996:58-60, 178-179; Carrithers 1991:89-94). The relative consistency of these textual accounts of Jain food suggests a strong and enduring Jain food tradition.

These narratives can be viewed in their environmental context. In this thesis the environment “comprises not the surroundings of the organism but a zone of entanglement” (Ingold 2008:1797). In the literature, the Jains are depicted as eating bland food and as taking no pleasure in eating. This is consistent with the historical construction and maintenance of their their reputation. Bland food discourse is also consistent with their soteriological concerns. The path to liberation does not come easily for one who takes too much pleasure in life. In my fieldwork encounter, framed as the making of a Jain food documentary, the Khatar Gacch Svetambar Jains in Johari Bazaar play a double game. They are a small but wealthy community, predominantly gemstone merchants, who have connections with Jains living abroad (Babb 2013:134). Non-Jains might also be included as an audience for which to promote a pure and ethical image, a new Jain food brand, so to speak. But the Jains also seek to reify and reinforce tradition for their home audience. This dual emergence occurs in the microsocial moment when they participate in ethnographic encounters, in the “structure of the conjuncture.”

The following section will build a sensory ethnographic case for a reflexive and embodied way of knowing Jain food and flavor. It will draw on data collected during my first summer of fieldwork in 2012.

Jain Meals: Shivjiram

During that first summer, I obtained many of the recipes encountered at the cafeteria located in the Shivjiram. I received the recipe described below from Divya, a

lady who frequently stopped by the Shivjiram to pick up a takeout meal. She would talk to me while she waited for the cooks to prepare food in the *dabba* (stacked containers) that she brought with her. Divya told me that the recipe came from a Jain cookbook written by Tarlal Dal, a chef referred to as the “Julia Child of India.” Dal reportedly made it acceptable for women to consult cookbooks for recipes; until then such referencing was considered a disgrace or shameful, a sign that the woman’s family lacked a rich culinary tradition. However, this taboo has now dissipated, and Divya often referred to cookbooks. The following recipe is representative of the flavors of the dal (lentil soup) served every day at the Shivjiram,

Dal ingredients:

- 1/3 cup chana dal (split Bengal lentil)
- 1/3 cup toovar (arhar) lentil
- 1/3 cup moong dal (split green lentil)
- 1 tbsp urad dal (split black lentils)
- 1 tbsp whole moong (whole green lentil)
- 3 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder (haldi)
- 1 tsp coriander (dhania) powder
- 1/2 tsp garam masala
- 3 cloves (laung/lavang)
- 2 bay leaves (tejpatta)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds (jeera)
- 2 green chili peppers, slit
- a pinch of asafoetida (hing)
- 2 tsp dried mango powder (amchur)
- 2 tsp tamarind (imli) pulp
- 3 tbsp ghee

This particular version of dal creates a thicker soup than was served at the Shivjiram, which was slack with added water. I would occasionally consume the

Shivjiram's soup with a spoon; at other times I would pour it over rice and scoop it up using a papadom or chapati. The papadoms are light, crispy, wafer-thin crackers served at the end of the meal. The chapatis served at the Shivjiram are especially delicious. They are freshly cooked, bathed in ghee and salted.

The first time I ate a meal consisting of dal, bindhi, curry, chapati, rice, harchar, and papadom, it was a fairly exotic combination of flavors. Due to my limited experience in cooking Indian food and limited exposure to Indian restaurants, I lacked familiarity with Indian cuisine. As discussed above, familiarity can be a factor in the perception of flavor and taste in food. But I did not find this food unpleasant or boring. On the contrary, it was very good.

The flavors in that first meal at the Shivjiram, considered from the perspective of biochemistry, suggest a very tasty dish for several reasons. Fat, the main indicator of flavor, is present in the form of ghee added in significant quantities. Ghee was applied liberally to the chapatis with a brush, and the chapatis accompanied nearly all the other dishes. Ghee thus made its way into many if not most mouthfuls of this meal. In the United States, it is common knowledge in the culinary world that adding butter to a dish is a surefire (if unimaginative) way to make it taste good. Some chefs, such as the renowned southern U.S. television chef Paula Deen, wrap their entire culinary practice around the use of butter. And ghee is a form of butter.

Another trick in the culinary world, which often makes food seem to taste better when prepared at restaurants, is to season food liberally with salt. Salt activates the salivary glands in the mouth, thereby intensifying the perception of flavor. Again, those

seemingly innocent chapatis bring the key components of flavor to the curries and other side dishes due to the salt content that they contribute when one uses the chapati like a spoon to scoop up food.

The presence of these two very important flavor ingredients helped to make my meal at the Shivjiram very tasty. Evidence from a biochemical perspective of flavor supports a baseline perception of flavor. Fat and salt interact with the tongue in the same way, regardless of cultural background. Over time I came to know the Jain food served from the Shivjiram kitchen well, and feel comfortable making a claim to good flavor as a reflexive ethnographer. As a chef I could readily both perceive that this food tasted good and understand why.

After eating Jain meals, I wanted to contextualize Jain food by also eating non-Jain meals, both in restaurants and in people's homes. I frequently ate food prepared by street vendors. There was a cart outside the Jain hostel that served roasted corn. After the cob was rubbed with lime, a spicy and salty mixture was applied. In the next section I recount three meals in particular that helped me to place Jain food in the context of other Indian foods available in Jaipur. This experience is illustrative, but it obviously does not cover the millions of distinct Indian ways of cooking and preparing food.

Non-Jain Meals: Dr. Dubey

Within the first week after my initial greeting at the Shivjiram, Jyoti had arranged for me to learn Hindi from a private tutor. Dr. Dubey, who became my tutor, is a Brahmin. His last name means that his patrilineage had mastered two Vedas. He invited

me to his house one evening for dinner, where I met his family and partook of the classic Rajasthani dish *dal bati churma*, which Jains also consume frequently.

Dr. Dubey's wife prepared this dish from memory and did not use a cookbook. It was a preparation of dal similar to the recipe included above by Tarlal Dal. *Bati* is a flaky round bread usually baked over firewood, in a gas tandoor, or (more commonly today) in an electric oven. Irrespective of the cooking technique, the bread is always served dipped in ghee. *Churma*, the sweet part of the dish, is made by using leftover dough from the bati, combining it with sugar and ghee, and then deep-frying the patties in more ghee. The result is a high-calorie dish that is tasty, if not heavy.

This preparation of dal bati churma was similar to the dishes prepared at the Shivjiram. The primary difference is that Mrs. Dubey served it with a salad of iceberg lettuce, tomatoes, and onions. The Jains did not eat leafy greens during this time of the year. During much of my stay, the Jains were observing chaturmas, the holy period that coincides with the coming of the monsoons. This is a period marked by fasts and holy festivals. It is also the time when wandering ascetics are expected to stay in one place. The consumption of leafy greens is inherently more dangerous for Jains during this time because of the proliferation of life forms such as insects hidden in the leaves. I never encountered any salads or leafy greens while eating food at the Shivjiram kitchen, nor did I see any served at the large festival pujas.

My meal with Dr. Dubey, the first meal I had shared with a non-Jain, was good but not any better than what is served at the Shivjiram. The chapati served was not bathed as generously in ghee and salt. The little salad was nice but lacked dressing. The

bati was extremely dense and I could hardly finish it. Finally, the sweet churma was good and very sweet. Based on my initial comparison, I began to harbor suspicions that the Jains were eating better than one might suspect from the literature on their allegedly bland cuisine.

Aditya

Aditya and I became friends early in summer 2012. He identified himself as a Rajput; he was studying law in Delhi. His father was a long-time member of the police force, a common Rajput profession. Aditya is in many ways embodies the ideology of the “modern” Indian. He drove his own compact car, had the latest iPhone, and was obsessed with American movie stars and sports figures. He was not a vegetarian and enjoyed eating out at nice restaurants. However, he respected vegetarians and did not eat cow’s flesh. But he said it was a sign of a changing India that so many Hindus were eating meat and adopting American habits. We prepared the recipe below after trying it first in a fancy restaurant.

Laal maas (recipe obtained from Aditya’s mother)

Ingredients:

Mutton 1,000 gm
Ghee 200 gm
Dahi (yogurt) 200 gm
Onion 200 gm
Lahsun (garlic) 100 gm
Adrak (ginger) 25 gm
Namak (salt) 25 gm
Lal Mirch (red chili peppers) 25 gm
Dhania (coriander) 25 gm

Haldi (turmeric) 5 gm
Jeera (cumin) 5 gm
2 badi elaichi (black cardamom pods)
Dalcheeni (cinnamon sticks), 2 pieces 1" each
4 loung (cloves)
2 tejpatta (bay leaves)
1 hari mirch (green chili)
Hara dhania (green coriander chutney) 20 gm

Method of preparation:

1. Slice one onion and keep aside. Grind onion, lahsun and adrak.
2. Wash mutton pieces. Add dahi, grinded onion, lahsun, adrak, namak, lal mirch, dhania, haldi, and jeera to mutton and mix well.
3. Heat ghee/oil in a pressure cooker. Add badi elaichi, dalcheeni, loung and tejpatta.
4. After 30 seconds, add one sliced onion. Fry until onion turns golden brown. Add finely cut hari mirch to it.
5. Add marinated mutton and cook until the oil from meat separates.
6. Add 600 ml of warm water and cover the lid.
7. After the first whistle, adjust the heat and keep on flame for 20 minutes.
8. Turn off the gas and keep the lid covered for another 5 minutes.
9. Open the lid and add half of the 20 gm of hara dhania to it; put the lid back on.
10. Garnish with remaining hara dhania before serving.

We shopped in the morning, took a rest, and then cooked in the evening. It was a long day, and I developed a healthy respect for the Indian cooks who prepared complicated meals like this one daily.

This meal is interesting in comparison to some of the other meals I ate. First, it contains meat in the form of mutton. Second, it did not call for any ghee. I ate other meat-based dishes that used pork or chicken, but these too seemed to contain less ghee. Additionally, the meat dishes we ate were accompanied by *naan*, a tandoori flatbread. In

the cases I observed, these were not coated in ghee. I began to suspect that when meat was used, the fat from the meat was sufficient to create the mouthfeel and flavor that in other circumstances are accomplished with ghee.

Laal maas is a spicy dish and included an abundance of chilis. But on many occasions the harchar served with Jain meals easily compensated for the lesser amount of spice, bringing the dish up to a comparable level of spicy heat. When I ate the meat after weeks of mostly vegetarian Jain dishes, I was surprisingly underwhelmed. It tasted very similar to many vegetable, chickpea, or paneer curries that I had been eating. Many of the same spices were used: cardamom, cumin, ginger, cloves, and cinnamon. The biggest difference was the stringy and tough texture of the meat. Texturally, the Jain dishes relied more on paneer, chickpeas, and vegetables like okra to impart a firmer mouthfeel during chewing. This rather pronounced experience with meat led me to think non-vegetarian food was not, in my opinion, noticeably better than the vegetarian and Jain food I had been eating.

After Aditya and I were out on the town one night, participating in libations, I made a daring suggestion. I was very curious to see if it was possible to obtain black-market beef, food made with cow's flesh. Aditya said he knew just the place, and he took me to the opulent Marriott hotel in Jaipur. The restaurant there obviously catered to Indians and businesspersons from around the globe. The style was more like what I knew from the United States, and, to be honest, it felt nice in an oddly comforting way.

I scanned the menu but did not see signs of any cow meat being served. Then Aditya lowered his head and said in a voice almost in a whisper, "Did you see the

“Marriott Burger? It is what you seek.” There were multiple burgers on the menu: veggie burger, chicken burger, paneer burger, and at the bottom, almost as if it was being hidden, was the Marriott Burger. It listed no ingredients; the menu said simply that it was a special burger for tourists.

When the waiter came to take our orders, Aditya ordered pasta with red sauce and a glass of fresh orange juice. As he turned to me, I noticed that Aditya was displaying a tension not observable previously. And when I spoke my order—“I’d like the Marriott Burger, please”—the waiter’s mouth went agape and he fell back not so subtly, as if catching himself from falling. It was an immediate visceral reaction that he was unable to conceal, despite the restaurant’s presentation as a Western-oriented, four-star affair.

Aditya didn’t seem to make much of the matter after that; I think he was trying to play it cool. But I did notice a few glances from other waiters, and I felt as if I had committed an error in judgment. We waited at least an hour for our food. When it did arrive, the Marriott Burger looked like a standard hamburger at a typical American all-night diner. But when I bit into it, I was shocked. It was awful. Really awful. I couldn’t make it past two bites. It was definitely cow’s flesh, really gamy, but overlaced with a pungent smell of spoilage. I suspected that perhaps the Marriott Burger was ordered so rarely that the restaurant kept the beef patties frozen for long periods of time. Whatever the reason, it tasted awful.

Eating part of the beef hamburger was followed by a certain guilt. I had come to study a system of food that I thought might be a model for Americans. Seeking out the hamburger was a moment of, well, just wanting to see if one can actually find a

hamburger in India. And it can be, provided that one's standards are not very high. The following section describes one of the last meals I ate during my first summer of fieldwork.

Yogesh

Yogesh is a young agrawal Hindu man whose family ran the small grocery store that I frequented near the Jain hostel. After weeks of seeing each other daily, he invited me to eat at his home with his wife and son. He said that his family was very ambitious and that his father had opened up the grocery store to help his children get ahead. Yogesh was fluent in English and was studying French as well. He worked two jobs (running the store in the evening, and working at an English call center at night). He said that he could make ten times as much money by working for a French call center, and he was hoping that he could save money from that job to start a more modern grocery store.

Yogesh's wife prepared dal bati churma for me. It was similar to the dishes prepared at the Shivjiram and at Dr. Dubey's house. The dal was a bit thicker, the bati dense, and the churma exceedingly sweet. The chai had a very pronounced flavor of ginger. This dal bati churma was good, but didn't really stand out. By this point during my sensory ethnographic pursuit, I was beginning to think that from a flavor point of view, the Jain food I had experienced by now was not drastically different from what my Hindu friends were eating. It was perhaps even more tasty and flavorful.

I came to recognize the constitutive elements of many dishes here. The fat comes from ghee or peanut oil (or sometimes animal flesh, in the case of the dishes with

meat) and from the many different vegetables used, such as okra or squash. Dahi, or yogurt, is sometimes incorporated as a sour element. Foods are salty by default, with no noticeable difference here at Yogesh's residence, Dr. Dubey's home, or the Shivjiram's cafeteria. In the following section I will discuss the implications of my flavor judgments and how they led me to consider closely the reasons underlying the narratives that describe Jain food as bland.

Embodied Ethnography

Ethnography is a process of creating and representing knowledge (about society, culture and individuals) that is based on an ethnographer's own experiences. It does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality, but should "aim to offer versions of ethnographer's experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations and intersubjectivities through which the knowledge was produced." (Pink 2009:8)

During my first summer in Jaipur, I came to see Jain food as full of flavor, not bland at all. Early on I identified the two components, ghee and salt, that appeared to indicate that the Jains were in fact eating tasty and flavorful foods. When compared to non-Jain meals, the food served regularly at the Shivjiram and during festivals was very good and flavorful. My intention that summer was to get to know Jain food as an embodied, reflexive, and experienced food taster. I believe that I accomplished this goal. I came to know the flavors of typical meals served to Jains at the Shivjiram, which catered to roughly 300 people in and around Johari Bazaar each day. Much of the food prepared was picked up by women to feed their families at home.

Each of my interlocutors provided a different perspective. Eating meat-based dishes with Aditya, a Rajput; taking meals with Dr. Dubey, a Brahmin; dining with

Yogesh, his wife and newborn: these were important encounters during which I formed a context of personal knowing. I was becoming entangled with the lives of the people whom I describe as my interlocutors.

Jyoti, in our informal interviews, described food traditions and beliefs much like scholars of Jainism. He began with crafting lists of ab-bhakshya, non-eatables. He seemed to assume that I wanted to know, or at least observe in person, the rules, elaborations, and spiritual reasoning behind the Jain diet as discussed in the literature. He spoke about the scholars who had visited and conducted research before me, such as Kristi Wiley and John Cort.

At a certain point I became a bit discouraged. It seemed that most everything Jyoti, two young sadhvis, an older and “esteemed” sadhu, and a few others were telling me was taken straight from the books from my literature review. Jyoti even showed me his copies of some of these books, signed and dedicated to Jyoti by their authors.

A few weeks into fieldwork, Jyoti and I began discussing the possibility of making a documentary film about Jain food. He was keen on the idea and indicated that his son, Darshan, could perhaps serve as a technology assistant. At about at the same time, however, our discussions also became less frequent. Jyoti is a very busy man and he was in the midst of arranging the details of chaturmas and several large pujas. I was spending more time with Dr. Dubey and trying to learn Hindi. While I tried to have lunch or dinner at least once a day at the Shivjiram, I was also hanging out with Aditya and getting to know the regional cuisine.

Sensory ethnography was an important methodological tool for this work. I abided by the chef's imperative, namely, that to know and appreciate the subtleties of any cuisine one must eat, eat more, and then eat again. (Never trust a skinny chef.) And I accepted the theoretical premise that this sort of reflexive knowledge is legitimate. Meanwhile, all my conversations with Jain interlocutors about food and Jainism were virtually identical, neatly mirroring the narrative and ideological structure outlined above in the literature review.

In retrospect, I can see how the focus on flavor led me on a trajectory that culminated in the filming of a documentary and the resulting emergence of a different context. If I had not questioned the literature, or questioned directly the ways in which food was described to me, I would not have developed a theoretical framework of ethnographic place, representation, entanglements, and practice. Questioning and coming to know, as an embodied taster, the flavors of Jain food led me to the dynamics of practice in the ethnographic encounter, the ephemeral environments full of the desires and intentions of both mine and those of my interlocutors.

When I returned the following summer, this time with a female cinematographer, the fieldwork context changed dramatically. The environment was totally different, emerging and growing in a different modality. I felt the difference. The first summer I got the impression that my status as a bachelor automatically made some families suspicious of my intentions. Ostensibly my partner, Kelsea's presence fostered an improved image that helped grant access to more people in the community. The women and young children were impressed with Kelsea. They frequently complimented

her on her pretty long light brown hair. We had a nice camera and were going to make a professional documentary.

Our act of wielding a camera, together with a self-conscious performance of directing a Jain food documentary to be shown in America, produced the environment in which a practically novel (re)presentation of Jainism and Jain food emerged.

Approaching Jain food from the perspective of flavor was the precursor and linchpin to the evolution of practice that occurred in the field.

Soteriology and Flavor

The link between flavor, soteriology, and practice theory can be explained as follows. Flavor is tied to soteriology because the ascetic is instructed to avoid enjoyment, suppress the senses, and eat only bland food. This is instrumental in destroying the karma on his or her soul. The denial of flavor, or the importance of taking bland food, is linked to the path to liberation, which requires observance of the mahavrats (great) and anuvrats (lesser) vows. The vow of aparigraha instructs both the ascetic and the layperson not to have attachments to flavors or tastes, that is, to exercise non-possession in the realm of food. In describing their diet to scholars in the past, and indeed in describing their food traditions and beliefs to me during my first summer of fieldwork without a camera, Jains present beliefs and practices that conform neatly to the enduring ideological structures, the canonical doctrines. Practically, their performance in these ethnographic encounters maintains an equilibrium of ideological conformity and an outward show of austerity, of ahimsa and vegetarianism. In the microsociology of the ethnographic encounters with

past scholars, Jain food traditions and beliefs were uniformly produced in the context of Western literary scholarship.

In the next section I will look at the narratives of flavor that emerged from past scholarship and compare these to the data from my fieldwork.

Jain Narratives of Flavor

Before and during my fieldwork I consulted the three texts discussed below, all considered expansive and seminal examples of western scholarship on the Jains. Their descriptions show why one might expect Jain food to be bland and uninteresting.

In his discussion of the ascetic imperative, Laidlaw suggests that “Some [ascetics] refuse all seasoning, so that eating becomes a form of austerity” (Laidlaw 2003:153). This comment is followed by the section title: “Tasteless as mouthfuls of sand” (Laidlaw 2003:166). Laidlaw suggests that his informants were very tempted by the non-eatables, but that the “Jain distinctiveness is a constructed as a collective resistance to temptation” (Laidlaw 2003:167). The sermons given by sadhus are “full of calls to give up pickles and spices, which are not necessary to sustain the body and only exist to please the senses” (Laidlaw 2003:168). Finally, he informs us that Jains who offer sweets to the jinas in ritual puja are doing so to “express their desire or intention to give up all pleasure in eating, or all delicious food, or all food, or all pleasure of any kind” (Laidlaw 2003:170).

In *The Jains*, Dundas describes the Digambar mode of taking alms: “Food will be placed in his cupped hands, thirty-two mouthfuls in all, followed by water, by the lay family, and the monk should then eat ‘without tasting the food’s savour’ ” (Dundas

2002:176). The narrative of flavor continues: “the ascetic is instructed to eat only bland food” (Dundas 2002:177). The emphasis on flavor is linked to the need to avoid excessive enjoyment of food (Dundas 2002:190). This is related to one of the three subsidiary vows (*gunavrata*) that are part of the 12 lay vows (Dundas 2002:189-190).

In *Jains in the World*, Cort introduces the ascetic as a figure who seems to enjoy the religious life: “This world renouncer, clad only in a few simple white cotton robes, who walked all over India barefoot, ate only the most uninteresting of foods, and in just a few days would pull out by hand all of his head and facial hair, was at the same time perfectly at ease talking about the affairs of the world” (Cort 2002:4).

The examples above provide the base for understanding how Jain food is depicted in scholarship. I will now discuss the narratives shared with me on-camera during my fieldwork encounters.

On-Camera Flavor

The narratives present in my interviews with lay Jains provide the lens through which to view the central problem of this work. Informed historically by a spirit of non-absolutism and by the difference between the ideal and the approach to the ideal, lay Jains assume different narrative faces that correspond to the contemporary exigencies and entanglements of a global Jain community. Dr. Singhvi provides an important illustration of this dynamic. A Jain scholar visiting from Delhi, she seemed very enthusiastic about the film project and professed a great concern for environmental and ethical issues. Below is a portion of the transcript from our documentary interview with her. Complete interview transcripts are available in Appendix A.

The interview with Dr. Singhi was an unplanned event that materialized one day when Kelsea stayed home to rest. I was in the office of the Shivjiram, and Dr. Singhi had come to Jaipur to attend the historic puja event. Jyoti introduced her as an eminent Jain scholar from a university in Delhi, and she agreed to an interview. Here are her comments on flavor:

It's very important to know and note that Jain food is not bland. . . . Food, all corns are tasty in themselves. So we have the taste of food, but we should not get attached to it. This is the basic thing. But nutritious food is never bland. I tell you, no nutritious food is bland. Any corn you take, any seed you take, is tasty. (Interviewed at the Shivjiram Bhawan in Jaipur, July 26, 2013)

Dr. Singhvi is not an ascetic, but is considered a very educated member of the laity. In her interview she seems to occupy a middle ground.

One of her chief concerns is the relationship between the Jain ethic and responsible environment stewardship (See Singhvi interview in Appendix F). She is a professor of Jain studies at a university in Delhi. Her knowledge of Jain doctrine is highly regarded, and Jyoti indicated that I could trust her accounts of Jain food traditions. This is in contrast to his attitude when he introduced me to the sadhvis, which is described below. With the sadhvis, he qualified the interview with a concern that I should take into consideration their lack of education. He seemed eager to get Dr. Singhvi in front of the camera.

Dr. Singhvi speaks highly of the basic nutritious and tasty nature of Jain food. She also narrated more typical Jain doctrines, like the importance of non-possession and the standard description of karma. Her stories are beautiful; she speaks in such an engaging manner, ensorcelling the entire male coterie present at the Shivjiram office. It

wasn't possible to clear the room of the officers working there, and I think their presence might have had an effect on some of her replies. Her status in academia possibly allows her to be more liberal in her representations of Jainism. And by the force of her own intentions, she emphasizes the Jain contribution to a political and global discussion about sustainability and environmental ethics.

In the context of practice theory, the structure of the conjuncture helps explain Dr. Singhvi's political intentions, the risks she takes in representing Jain food as tasty, and Jainism as a force in the sustainability movement. The structural constraints imposed by Jain ideology and gender is offset by her status as a highly educated doctor and Jain scholar. She represents both traditional Jainism and a reformist Jain environmentalism. The tastiness of a nutritious and ecologically friendly Jain cuisine comes out in the context of our ethnographic encounter, the on-camera interview, and her own personal position in Jain and Indian society. The gender issues present in these situations possibly indicate that formal education can elevate a woman's status higher than the status conferred by being a female ascetic. Gender issues are complicated even further in the context of the diasporic Jain laity.

Ameeta Jain lives in both Jaipur and New York, but spends most of her time in New York. At the time of our encounter, she was hosting three eminent sadhus in a beautiful home in Jaipur during the historic joint puja. Her children are growing up in the United States. She stated:

I don't think Jain food is bland at all. First of all I haven't tasted meat. So I don't how meat tastes. But when I eat my Jain food, I think it's the most delicious food.

My son tells me sometimes, “We are so lucky to be Jains,” because he hasn’t eaten meat either. But still since he likes the [American] food, he eats pasta, or he’ll eat pizza because he’s in America, so he’s used to eating those foods also.

But still when he eats a regular *roti sabzi*, he would eat it with such passion, he loves to eat that, sometimes he’s licking his fingers, so I don’t think so Jain food is at all bland, otherwise my children would have complained by now

We love our food not because it’s our food, but because it tastes so good we love it.
(Filmed at her residence in Jaipur, 7/23/2013)

The interview with Ameeta was constantly interrupted by the coming and going of children and family members. Much cooking was taking place in the kitchen, and we could smell tantalizing aromas. The interview ended when we were invited to participate in the *gocari* of the eminent sadhus, which was described in Chapter 2. Since the Svetambar sadhus eat in isolation, after collecting their food they disappeared into a room and we were invited to share dinner with Ameeta’s family. It was delicious, and we spoke informally about her life in New York. At this point Jyoti reappeared and we were off to film some Jain temples—to catch, as he put it, “the golden hour.”

Jyoti was one of the main directors of the whole affair. I was able to spend more time with him than with other interlocutors. He is widely regarded as a very pious lay Jain. His representation of Jain food occupied a mediating position between the two poles. On one hand, he emphasizes good taste; on the other, he recalls the doctrinal prescriptions of austerity and sacrifice:

I don’t think that Jain food is tasteless. These are very tasty. And Mr. Robert and Kelsea, you have also tasted Jain food in several places, several times, and I don’t think you think this is tasteless, but [with emphasis], according to the principles, because Jainism is a religion of sacrifice, sacrificing earthly pleasures is the soul of Jain asceticism, so it is believed, or it is told in the text, that for a Jain person it’s better to avoid taste while he or she is eating.

It is said that one has to eat for the sake of his own living, He should not be motivated or inclined to taste. But this doesn't mean that Jain food is not tasty. We know the Jain ladies cook very tasty food, with the combination of different kind of spices, and they make very tasty sweets and salties, and you have also tasted all these.

Jains never say you cannot cook a tasty food. It is for the ascetics, [so] that they should not have greed for a tasty food. So the Jain principles focus on non-attachment. Not [to] the outer things. In a practical way, Jain ladies cook very tasty food, and everybody enjoys that; they even give it to the monks when they come for their alms. But the monks are supposed not to incline for the taste, and this is also advised that it's better not to incline for the taste to the layman too. (Interviewed at the home of Ameeta Jain in Jaipur, 7/23/2013)

This passage shows that, in the context of making the film, Jyoti accomplished two seemingly contradictory representations. On one hand, he acknowledges that Jain food is not bland. Rather, it is tasty. But in this moment of representation he places the doctrinal imperatives of non-attachment more heavily on the ascetics, effectively promoting a tasty Jain food while adding the qualification that it is better for the layperson to subdue desire for taste.

I believe that these comments by Jyoti suggest a complex dynamic that the concept of the structure of conjuncture illuminates. In the ethnographic encounter multiple intentions and purposes are brought to bear by the parties involved. During the first summer of my fieldwork, Jyoti's descriptions of food did not include a tasty narrative. When asked about flavor, he went straight into dialogues about the great vows and non-attachment, the connection to equanimity, and from there to the liberation of the soul.

Jyoti has connected with scholars from America and Europe. In our ethnographic encounter his intentions and purposes emerged differently. In front of the

camera, the context had changed. Although he paid considerable tribute to the enduring doctrinal imperatives of non-possession, his emphasis, when talking about food and flavor, was not about omission or non-eatables. Instead, he said that the Jain ladies cook tasty sweets and salties. The narrative representation of Jain food in front of a camera, with a potentially global audience, was observably different from past narratives of Jain food.

I would also suggest that the general feeling in the air was lively with winds of change. The 40-day joint puja between Digambars and Svetambars was taking place, for the first time in 2,000 years. We were at the house of a Jain lady who lives primarily in New York City. All these factors contributed to a difference in context. In the microsociology of the moment, the creation of a film production on Jain food contained different, and perhaps risky, symbolic relations.

We also obtained comments on flavor from two Svetambar nuns, Sadhvi Sindharma Maharaja and Sadhvi Preeti. They were uncomfortable with the filming process and would not let us attach lavalier microphones to their clothing. Even our portable audio recorder had to stay about eight feet away from them. Their discourses on flavor and taste remained more consistent with those presented to and by scholars of Jainism in the past:

Sadhu will never eat for taste; the one who will eat for taste is not sadhu but a selfish person. And sadhus don't take salt after cooking food, as it pollutes the food. To avoid the contamination, sadhus don't add anything once the food is cooked.

One person cooks and another eats; in this [situation], the person who cooks thinks, "I have prepared very nice food." This will contaminate the food and eating this contaminated food will be a sin for the person who eats it. There are troubles, but

when the sadhu takes *gocari* and follows *diksha*, they eat for nourishment, not for taste. All this is for sacrifice; food is not for taste but for nourishment. (Interview at the Shivjiram Bhawan 7/17/2013)

It was difficult to find sadhvis willing to be interviewed. In general I got the impression that they were living in strict adherence to the ascetic imperatives. But they did not garner the sense of awe and respect that was shown toward the esteemed sadhus who were in town for the historic puja event.

In contrast to both Jyoti's and Saint Chandraprabhu's interviews, during the moment of the ethnographic encounter the sadhvis were less willing, or unable, to take narrative or symbolic risks in their representation of Jainism and Jain food traditions. The filming of a documentary about Jain food traditions was not an opportunity to promote Jainism or Jain food. Rather, it presented a karmic concern about getting too close to electronics. This possibly reveals the social constraints of gender and status, and their stationary geographic location in Johari Bazaar. The difference between the male and female ascetics was glaring. They looked visibly frightened of the electronic equipment. In the B-Roll (non-interview scenic or filming the environment) I observed Saint Chandraprabhu texting on a nice smartphone and taking calls. He seemed to have the highest social status of all the ascetics I encountered. As a lay Jain with considerable social power, Jyoti was not constrained by the ascetic imperative. His statements above reveal a willingness to take risks in the structure of the conjuncture. But Saint Chandraprabhu is ostensibly bound by the more austere ascetic imperative. His narratives below resemble not the ascetic sadhvis, but rather the middle ground narratives of the laity.

Saint Chandraprabhu had taken *sanyas* (renouncing his life and devoting it to god) at around the age of fifteen and had been a sadhu for thirty-five years. He claims to have written and published about 200 books that are available in India and abroad. He also claims to have worked on thousands of DVDs and videos of various prayers and preaching. This interview was conducted in Hindi, with Ameeta acting as the interpreter. When I asked him about Jain food and flavor, he responded as follows:

The Jain food is very tasty. You foreigners don't know what tasty means. You might have 10 flavors but in India we have 10 flavors per dish. In India, we vegetarians know about 500 types of flavors, which is way more than you people. (Interviewed at the residence of Ameeta Jain, 7/28/13)

In the full interview, Saint Chandraprabhu spoke about Jainism and Jain food traditions in a way that was consistent with past narratives. But when asked specifically about flavor and blandness, he reacted in a pointed manner, seeming to project a certain pride in vegetarian cuisine. This was evidence of a peculiar admission by a sadhu. His response when on camera, like Jyoti's, combined a reproduction of canonical Jain doctrine with a complimentary description of Jain cuisine. This approach suggests a shifting orientation to food, in the case of at least one highly regarded, famous and influential sadhu.

In the next section the framework of practice theory is used to discuss possible motivations, intentions, and agency with regard to historical Jain narrative trajectories.

Ethnographic Representation

Ortner uses the concept of games to reveal theoretically the entanglements of local communities or cultures with outside forces. In the Jain community in Jaipur this

includes the Rajputs, Brahmins, British, and more recently anthropologists from the United States and Europe. Due to their status as merchants and the involvement with emeralds, the Jains have been enmeshed in world economies since Jaipur was founded in the 18th century (Brazeal 2012:120; Babb 2013:50,56). These games are not only economic in nature but also involve an engagement with their own culture (Ortner 1999:248). The present study suggests that this aspect of practice theory is at work in the narrative representation of Jain food traditions and beliefs.

The Jains who served as my interlocutors no doubt played many games that I could not perceive during my limited time in Jaipur. Their approach to flavor, which led to my questioning narrative representations and then to a collaboration with them on a documentary film, offers a snapshot, a window, into one particular meshwork of the game of food, as they represent it when engaging with a global audience. I situate it as both an engagement with an economic other (i.e., the local and global business community) and an engagement with their own Jain culture.

This suggests that the structure of conjuncture is at work in the telling of Jain food traditions and beliefs, during the ephemeral and risky intersubjective play between the camera, myself, my interlocutors, and Jain history. This particular encounter grew to be such that, in practice, the Jain narrative reoriented the telling of Jain food traditions and beliefs, as a reformist and globally-oriented representation emerged.

Jyoti and Surendra Bothra explained that differences in practices are acceptable and the result of the tension between “the ideal and the path to the ideal” (Bothra 2009; see also Jyoti’s and Surendra’s interviews in Appendix F). Maintaining a

strict adherence to elaborate rules of non-eatables or non-attachment to the flavor of food is not possible in today's globalizing Jainism. Although these soteriological beliefs are embodied in the daily practices of all Jains, Jainism can negotiate the tension between the ideal and the practical even as it negotiates ethnographic encounters and manages the intentional and varied (re)production of eternal Jain doctrine.

By challenging the precept of blandness, the trajectory of my fieldwork led me into a different sort of practical relationship, or entanglement. The links between flavor, Jain soteriology, and practice are not fixed. There is no universal structure or system. Rather, flavor becomes entangled in the practice of ethnography, in this case sensory ethnography and ethnographic documentary filmmaking. The threads of these relationships extended beyond fieldwork and filming, from the Jains at home to the diasporic Jains, and back into their ideological past. This ethnographic encounter is full of intentions, desires for salvation, and imagined audiences.

The context or environment of the Khatar Gacch Svetambar Jain community in Jaipur for previous scholars was different from the environment and entanglements that I experienced in 2012 and 2013. While connected because of a feedback loop between scholars of Jainism and this community of Jains, the practical emergence of the ethnographic places is different. This fact resulted in a different ethnographic representation. One integral part of the place that I encountered both with and without the camera was the numerous Jain temples in and around Jaipur. In the next section I will introduce the juxtaposition of ancient doctrine and contemporary technological sophistication that I observed during fieldwork.

Temples and Technology

Although it included the aforementioned interviews, documentary filming also took us away from food and into other aspects of life with our Jain interlocutors. Jyoti took us to many of the beautiful Jain temples in and around Jaipur. The edited version of the film contains a juxtaposition of images of temples, statues of the Tirthankara, frescos, and beautiful and enduring architecture. During summer 2013, Kelsea and I were also tasked with filming the great historic puja, which Jyoti described as a major shift and as the first such event in 2,000 years.

Jyoti's son Darshan is the president of an information technology startup. While we were filming, we were also asked to take footage to make a commercial for Darshan's company, which was promoting a new Android app for smartphones—specifically, an innovative keyboard called KalQ, which rearranges the letters to make typing with your thumbs faster and enables more efficient use of finger gestures.

There is a palpable sense that India is changing. Everywhere we went, we met young men who talked about how India is becoming more like America, and who expressed great hope that India would become a modern state. Indeed, my smartphone seemed outdated compared to those owned by many of my interlocutors. I believe that this context of globalization, technological advances, and American influence carried over into the presentation of Jain food that we filmed.

In Salhins's view of practice, my interlocutors took a certain risk in expressing their representations of Jainism and Jain food on camera. There is a strong conservative and orthodox force in Jainism that comes occasionally into conflict with

reformist intentions (Bothra, personal communication, 2012). One of my interlocutors, Surendra Bothra, is on the reformist side of this divide. Author of *The Science of Peace* (2009), Bothra suggests that Jainism, like many other religions, has degenerated over time into a social system replete with misinterpretations and become a jumble of dogma, idiosyncrasies, and sectarian fights over petty issues (Bothra 2009:xxviii). While Jainism can appear as a spirituality of eternal and unchanging traditions and beliefs, historically there have been great rifts and changes (such as the schism between Digambar and Svetambar sects). Today there are voices that speak of reform as both difficult but necessary.

Reformist Representations

Bothra writes about the importance of a modern approach that opens new insights and directions. Even though it may go against tradition, he asserts that reform should not be taken as an attack on Jainism. Reform is an inevitable result of critical and constructive analysis, he argues, insisting that there should be no bias against healthy reforms (Bothra 2009:xxxix).

Jyoti too, by getting involved with researchers from abroad, participates in a certain reformist modality, suggestive of a certain intention or purpose that acknowledges the exigencies facing Jains today. With more Jains than ever living abroad and facing many challenges in terms of knowing the “real Jainism,” I interpret the encounters that I experienced in Jaipur as a response to this diaspora and globalization. The information shared in interviews crafted a fine balance between promoting Jainism as an ethical, pure faith that also offers a delicious world cuisine, on one hand, and reinforcing and reifying

the traditional Jain ideologies on the other hand. The only interviews that were totally “by the book,” following dogma as it has been recited to anthropologists in the past, were with those with the sadhvis.

The most outspoken and reform-like interlocutor was Ameeta. I presume that she viewed this interview as an opportunity to talk about Jainism and Jain food in a way that would be acceptable to her friends and family in New York. She describes the situation in New York as manageable for Jains with regard to food:

Oh, in New York, yes, we have lots of sadhus there. If you are in New York, you can call me and I will take you to them. We have a beautiful temple there, and we have sadhus and sadhvis visiting us. And there are two or three sadhvis that all of us live there.

In Jain tradition sadhus and sadhvis are not supposed to take a flight or something. But I believe those sadhus are, like, progressive. And they should be progressive, because otherwise people who are settled here and there would not get the essence of the religion. So we have sadhus and sadhvis who’ve gone there . . . who have given up a little bit of their tradition, just to bless us. To bless those people there who can benefit from their preachings there. (Interview at her residence in Jaipur, 7/23/2013)

Ameeta echoed some of the basic tenets of Jainism, but her emphasis was on an attitude of “live and let live” and the ethical choices we make when taking food. Like Surendra Bothra, she insisted that following the Jain spiritual path comes from a feeling in the heart and that it can begin very slowly, like peeling back layers of an onion. Her description of Jain food traditions and beliefs downplayed the restrictive elements of Jain food traditions.

In the structure of conjuncture of our encounter, the forces of history—eternal Jain soteriological structures, the symbols of the Jain tradition—took a back seat to

contemporary issues. Ameeta's performance, in that microsocial instant, reflects her different position and purpose, different outlook, and intended audience. I think the fact that she lives and raises a family in New York City accounts for her attitudes, and intentions in the context of making a documentary film about Jain Food. She is a member of the diasporic lay Jain community living abroad, and their needs and desires are going to be different than a sadhvi living in Johari Bazaar. She emphasizes that New York provides all the necessary components to living a proper and good Jain life. But the context is different.

Of course she emphasized ahimsa in her suggestions as to how the Jain life can be a good life. But the narratives that emerged, as shown above, are strikingly different from the narratives about Jain food that appear in previous studies.

Dr. Singhi also seems to fall into the reformist camp. She told beautiful stories about ahimsa, but she seemed to be reorienting these stories to say something about a Jain ecological and environmentalist ethic. The relationship between Jainism and ecology has been thoroughly addressed in a previous study (Chapple 2002). A full discussion of Jainism and ecology is outside the scope of this thesis. But again, looking at this encounter from the practice theory point of view, I was curious about the relations of Jain symbols that emerged once the camera started to roll and the context of storytelling changed.

Eat Jain Food!

From these two theoretical angles on practice theory, the statement "In Jainism, you're not supposed to eat" (Babb 1996:178) can be juxtaposed with Ameeta

Jain's very different comments seen above, extolling the benefits and tastiness of Jain food. This comment came from a lay Jain living in America, so the different emphasis is perhaps not so surprising. But even the eminent Saint Chandraprabhu declared, "The Jain food is very tasty. You foreigners don't know what tasty means." Saint Chandraprabhu is no stranger to electronic media, and his further comments, quoted below, reflect an outward-looking intention of telling. It also responds to the many discourses that suggest that Jains believe one must be born in India in order to achieve liberation:

Even if a person lives in India or in America, it never makes any difference. I'll say to my Jain brothers who don't think Jainism is a religion or culture but a lifestyle: If you can live this lifestyle then it doesn't matter that you live in India or America. The only principles are that you should be vegetarian, be truthful, and help others. This is Jainism for Indians and Americans. Thank you. (Interviewed at the residence of Ameeta Jain in Jaipur, 7/28/2013)

Saint Chandraprabhu, along with Jyoti, Dr. Singhvi, and to a certain extent Ameeta, managed to maintain the orthodox symbolic relations between ahimsa, apraigraha, and prescriptive Jain dietary elaborations and their connection to moksa-marg. For the most part, their narratives reproduce understandings of Jain food that are familiar to both scholars of Jainism and Jains themselves (who may or may not have read Western scholarship on Jainism). But we can also see how distinctly non-orthodox narratives emerged.

In the midst of sensory ethnography and the presence of a reflexive and embodied ethnographer/chef/film director, the practice of reproducing historically stable and enduring ideological structures for a film documentary emerged, for both myself and my Jain interlocutors, as a conversation entangled with history, agency, intent, and the

risks taken in the ephemeral, microsocial moment. The documentary filming context shaped an encounter from which emerged an interpretation of Jain food traditions and beliefs that was fit for consumption by today's media-savvy and diasporic Jain, while at the same time reaffirming and reproducing the eternal Jain soteriological principles.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Future Studies

This research leads me to wonder about the feedback loop between the Khatar Gacch lay Jains and the scholars who have worked with them in the past. John Cort was at the home of Surendra Bothra when I arrived there to do an interview. A photograph with Jyoti in it appears at the beginning of James Laidlaw's book *Riches and Renunciation* (2003). Alan Babb studied with the Khatar Gacch Jains in Jaipur when researching *Absent Lord*. And Kristi Wiley sent a signed copy of her *Dictionary of Jainism* to Surendra, which he pointed out to me on his bookshelf.

Feedback loops with anthropologists and the intellectuals of the communities where they study have been discussed in recent times, notably with Candomblé communities in Brazil. Stefania Capone has questioned why the discourses and narratives of the practitioners and the researchers who wrote on the subject seemed to overlap curiously, almost too neatly (Capone 2010:1). She implicates anthropologists in the construction and representation of one aspect of the religion in order to legitimize a certain part of religious discourse under the guise of scientific objectivity. This is a tantalizing line of inquiry with regard to the Svetambar Jains of the Khatar Gacch Sangh in Jaipur. In this work, the ethnographic data are not available.

In Conclusion

In classical times, Jainism came to view the universe and man's place within it as incorporating the two polarities of permanence and change (Dundas 2002:3). This balance of convictions helps us understand how Jain ideology and doctrine became stable at an early time and remained so historically, even while the Jain culture and community has evolved and adapted to changing circumstances (Dundas 2002:3). The present study confirms that the basic concerns of Jainism, understood to be the eternal principles of an eternal universe, remain consistent as presented to me during my fieldwork and documentary filming. But the other polarity, change, is also recognizable in the changes in Jain food practices and in how the Jains responded to the opportunity to describe their ethic to audiences through the medium of film.

Jains are adept at resolving apparent contradictions when practical matters conflict with ideological prescriptions. Jainism as a system is wholly consistent and rational from within. This study suggests that Jain adaptability was at work in the different environments during my fieldwork. During my first summer of sensory ethnography, I learned the Jain flavors and concluded that Jain food is flavorful. But I also became frustrated because the information communicated to me about Jain food mirrored the information told to scholars in the past. This parallel could have simply indicated the endurance and strength of Jain ideology, but in this case it didn't make sense based on the sensory data that I was observing.

From the literature review one can see a consistent approach to communicating Jain doctrine. When Jains are acting as informants or consultants for

scholars researching Jainism, the desire to represent traditions and beliefs conservatively and to approach the ideological structures of Jainism in the prescriptive modality takes precedence. Members of this community, Jyoti and Surendra in particular, have been interlocutors for anthropologists in the past and have read books written about Jains in which they are featured. The context during the ethnographic encounters of Babb, Laidlaw, Cort, Dundas, and others was par for the course, so to speak. With the exception of a documentary project currently in the works by my advisor Dr. Brian Brazeal, none of these esteemed Jain scholars were making a documentary film. Nor was their sole focus on Jain food; rather, they were more holistically studying Jainism and the Jains.

The interviews and narratives described above show the emergence of novel representations about Jainism and Jain food. They differ from previous narrative representations of Jain food, in works by scholars of Jainism in the past, and in the accounts I received doing fieldwork during the summer of 2012. They are particular to a specific moment of the Khatar Gacch Svetambar Jain community in Jaipur, Rajasthan. This included members from diasporic Jain communities abroad. At the time of the ethnographic fieldwork and documentary filming, a historic fifty-one day joint worship event between the Digambar and Svetambar Jains was occurring. It was an exciting and perhaps unusual time to be filming a Jain food documentary. So much seemed at stake, and the buzz in the air was palpable.

In addition to the historic puja event, global influences seemed at play in on-camera interviews. Dr. Singhvi expressed deep concerns about environmental sustainability. Information technology and cell phones were ubiquitous features of the

ethnographic landscape I observed. My interlocutors spoke of the changing nature of Indian society, and the stresses and challenges being put on Jain traditions (see Jyoti and Darshan Kothari's interviews in Appendix F). Clark-Deces suggests anthropologists today think about India less in terms of colonial history and more about the ways India is integrating its society into an international political economy and a transnational traffic of ideas, languages, and cultures (Clark-Deces 2011:5).

Recent works contextualize India in terms of shifting modes of production and accumulation of capital (Xiang 2008), emerging patterns of consumption (Jaffrelot and van der Veer 2005), the growth of information technology (Upadhyaya and Vasavi 2008), and diasporic communities (Leonard 2007). All of these factors seemed to be at play in the environment of the on-camera and ethnographic encounters in 2013. Using Salhin's and Ortner's theories of practice help illuminate the processes that emerged in the microsocial moments of on-camera interviews.

In Sahlins's model of practice, change occurs as the result of these structures of conjuncture. Meaning and relational systems of symbolism unfold dynamically and take new shape as a consequence of the deployment of social practices in novel circumstances (Sahlins 1985). The concept of structure of conjuncture helps to unpack the encounters, negotiation, risk of reproduction, and novel circumstances. Ortner's practice theory informs an attention to intentionality and agency by looking at the structures of purpose. In the interviews above varied intentions and purposes are suggested by putting the interviews in the context of gender, social status, education, geographic location, and level of asceticism.

I focused on food traditions and beliefs and entered into a documentary filming and fieldwork entanglement that has presented a unique emergence of narratives and symbolic representations. Practice theory and the framework of ethnographic place and intersubjectivity help to describe these different encounters that occurred over two summers. Is this solipsism? A fantasy? Even though I emplace the ethnographer's body and intentions in the data and the fields of relations, I don't think so. The hypothesis is supported by and emerged from the field data, as compared with narrative data from the books examined in the literature review. I did not go into this study expecting to discover a perspective that previous scholars seem to have overlooked, nor could I have imagined these unexpected discoveries.

But this imagining of the ethnographic encounter of meshworks and entanglements, of intersubjective collaborations on films and other projects, accurately represents, I believe, the fieldwork endeavor and the relationships in Jaipur as I observed and participated in them. In anthropology, data happen in real time, emerge from encounters, and take shape in the ethnographic representations that we subsequently construct, like a film or this thesis. This work adds to the field of Jain studies a particular and contemporary representation of Jain food traditions and beliefs, showing both continuity with an ancient tradition and adaptation to the present.

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APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

ab-bhakshya - non-eatable
abru - reputation
acharya - teacher
agrawal - Merchant caste common in Jaipur
ahimsa - non-harming
ajiva - non-sentient soul
ananta-catustay - four infinitudes
anuvrat - the lesser vows taken by laity
anektadavda - doctrine of a multi-faceted view of reality
aprigraha - non-possession
ayambil - fast where one eats only bland food
bhakshya- eatable
bhog - pleasure seaker
brahmin- an ancient social class of priests and teachers
bramacharya - chastity
chaturmas - a holy period that commences with the monsoons.
dabba - stacked containers used by ascetics to take alms
dan - giving (as in giving alms to ascetics)
digambar - 'sky-clad'; one of two branches of Jainism. Male ascetics go naked.
diksha – to eat for nourishment
gacch- a renouncer lineage, often used by the Svetambar Jains
gocari - 'like the grazing of a cow'; the act of receiving alms from lay persons
gunvratas - reinforcing vows
jinas - conquerors
jiva - sentient soul
jnana - right knowledge
karma - action or activity, or a tiny physical particle that attaches to the soul
kasayas - passion
Khatar Gacch - a Svetambar renouncer lineage and the laypersons who belong to it.
kayotsarga - obligatory rite, 'laying down the body'
mahavrat - Five great vows an ascetic takes upon renunciation
moksa - liberation
moksa-marg - the path to liberation
murtipujakas - image worshipping Jains
paryusana - eight day festival held during the monsoons
pratikramana - repentance
pratyakhyaana - abandonment, one of the obligatory actions
pudgala - type of subtle karma

puja - rite of worship, also used to describe large worship sessions.
 rajsik - flavorful preparation of food, nourishment
 ratnatrya - Three Jewels of Jainism
 ratri bhojan bandh - doctrine to not eat after sunset
 sadhu - a male Jain renouncer
 sadhvi - a female Jain renouncer
 sallekhana - fasting near the end of life
 samadhi maran - regional variant of sallekhana
 samayik - equanimity, or a meditation on the equilibrium in the universe
 samsara - cycle of birth and rebirth
 samyak asteya - non-stealing
 samyak caritra - right conduct
 samyak darsana - right faith
 sangh - religious community of ascetics and laypersons
 satvik - ideal form of food, minimal violence in preparation
 satya - truth
 Shivjiram Bhawan - headquarters of the Khatar Gacch in Johari Bazaar, Jaipur, Rajasthan.
 shravaks - lay men
 shravikas - lay women
 sukh - bliss
 svetambar - 'white-clad' one of the two main branches of Jainism. Ascetics wear white robes. This tradition includes the Khatar Gacch.
 tirthankar - ford maker
 tamsik - harmful preparation of food
 tapsya - dedication to asceticism
 tattva - verities, or truths of the universe
 tyag - seeking austerity
 upvas - fasting
 vandana - teacher
 virya - power
 visaya - earthly pleasures
 zamikand- vegetables found underground, like root vegetables.

FOOD TERMS

adrak -ginger
 amchur - dried mango powder
 badi elaichi - black cardamom pods
 bhajra -millet
 bindhi - stir-fry of okra
 chai -tea

chaat - snack
channa - chickpeas
chana dal
chapati - tortilla-like unleavened flatbread
dahi - yogurt
dal - lentil soup
dalcheeni - cinnamon sticks
dhania - coriander
garam masala - spice mixture
ghee - clarified butter
haldi - turmeric
harchar - pickled green chilli
hari mirch - a type of green chilli
hing - asafoetida
imli - tamarind
jeera - cumin
moong dal - split green lentil
laal mans - Rajasthani mutton dish
lahsun - garlic
lal mirch regional red chilli pepper
laung / lavang/Loung - different words for cloves
Namak - salt
papadom - a light crispy and thin flatbread made from chickpea flour and dusted with sesame seeds
paneer - fresh cow's milk cheese. Firm texture.
roti sabzi - Curry with bread
sev marmra - a snack common in Rajasthan. Variable ingredients, but often peanuts and puffed rice
tejpatta - bay leaves
toovar arhar - type of lentil
urad dal - split black lentils

APPENDIX B

FIELDWORK INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. In your words, what is Jainism?
2. What would you describe is the Jain Food tradition?
3. How is Jain food different from being a vegetarian?
4. Is Jain food supposed to be bland? Why?
5. Why do you think other scholars have suggested Jain food is bland?
6. What is the reason why lay Jains feed sadhus?
7. What is gocarī?
8. What would you like to say to Jains, or any Americans, through the video?
9. Are there Jains in America?
10. How do Jains in America adhere to the principles of Jain food?
11. What is ahimsa?
12. What is the situation today? With fast food and modernization?
13. How do the youth manage to maintain adherence to Jain food principles?

APPENDIX C

2012210

HUMAN SUBJECTS IN REVIEW COMMITTEE
Post Data Collection Questionnaire

Under Federal law relating to the protection of Human Subjects, this report is to be completed by each Principal Investigator at the end of data collection.

Please return to: Marsha Osborne, HSRC Assistant
Office of Graduate Studies
Student Services Center (SSC), Room 460
CSU, Chico
Chico, CA 95929-0875

Or Fax to: Marsha Osborne, 530-898-3342

Name: Robert Stevens Chico State Portal ID# 005500899

Phone(s) 760-429-8518 Email: rstevens4@mail.csuchico.edu

Faculty Advisor name (if student): Dr. Brian Brazel Phone _____

College/Department: Anthropology

Title of Project: Jain Food Traditions and Beliefs

Date application was approved (mo/yr.): 4/2012 Date collection complete (mo/yr.): 6/2014

How many subjects were recruited? 30 How many subjects actually completed the project? 2

*HARM--Did subjects have severe reactions or extreme emotional response? No

If yes, please attach a detailed explanation: _____

Your signature: [Signature] Date: 9/24/14

*Final clearance will not be granted without a complete answer to this question.

Approved By: [Signature] Date: 10/6/14
John Mahoney, Chair

VERY IMPORTANT: If you will or have used this research in your project or thesis you are required to provide a copy of this form (with John Mahoney's signature in place) to your graduate committee.

Do you want a photo copy of this form emailed to you? _____

If yes, provide email address: yes

APPENDIX D

2012210

California State University, Chico
Chico, California 95929-0875
Office of Graduate Studies
530-898-6880
Fax: 530-898-3342
www.csuchico.edu/graduatestudies



April 24, 2012

Robert Stevens
5242 Coleridge Court
Carlsbad, CA 95080



Dear Robert Stevens,

As the Chair of the Campus Institutional Review Board, I have determined that your research proposal entitled "ETHNOGRAPHY OF FOOD PRACTICES IN NORTHWEST INDIA" is exempt from full committee review. This clearance allows you to proceed with your study.

I do ask that you notify our office should there be any further modifications to, or complications arising from or within, the study. In addition, should this project continue longer than the authorized date, you will need to apply for an extension from our office. When your data collection is complete, you will need to turn in the attached Post Data Collection Report for final approval. Students should be aware that failure to comply with any HSRC requirements will delay graduation. If you should have any questions regarding this clearance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Mahoney, Ph.D., Chair
Human Subjects in Research Committee

Attachment: Post Data Collection Report

sent
4/25/12

APPENDIX E

LIST OF INTERLOCUTORS

❑ **Jyoti Kothari**

This was my main interlocutor. His manner was very casual and friendly. He was the secretary of the Shivjiram Bhawan, an elected position. I visited with him on many occasions. Formal on-camera interviews: 7/19/2013, 7/23/2013, 7/26/2013.

❑ **Darshan Kothari**

Darshan is Jyoti's only son. Our on-camera interview took place in the afternoon at the place of Darshan's work, where we had just finished filming himself and coworkers for a promotional video for their new app called KALQ. It is a keyboard app for Android. There were approximately 20 people working there, in 6 rows of PC computers, 6 to a row. He helped me with many tasks such as getting a sim card for cell phone service. He is in his early twenties. Formal on-camera interview: 7/25/2013.

❑ **Surendra Bothra**

I met with Surendra at his residence, in the heart of Johari Bazaar. His room was on an upper level, looking out over into a courtyard. The walls are filled with many books, and the floor with cushions to sit on. This interview was friendly, but somewhat formal. Formal on-camera interview: 7/22/2014

❑ Sadhvi Preeti

This was a very formal interview with a female sadhvi. We even had to keep a distance with our equipment. Jyoti acted as the real-time translator. After getting back to the United I had the video translated from Hindi to English. She seemed nice but I couldn't really tell the subtleties of the situation. Formal on-camera interview: 7/20/2014.

❑ Sadhvo Sindharma Maharaja

Interview on 7/20/2104. She was interviewed at the same time as Sadhvi Preeti. They appeared together in the interview, taking turns answering the questions.

❑ Dr. Sushma Singhvi

In the afternoon, in the office of the Khatar Gacch Sangh in Johari Bazaar. Impromptu, she just popped in and Kelsea was sick in hostel. She had come from Delhi, and was a noted Jain Scholar. Formal on-camera interview: 7/20/2014.

❑ Surendar Kumar

This interview occurred at the home of Ameeta Jain. He was very stiff and formal. He is the head of a large newspaper and I could tell he was treated with respect and high status. Formal on-camera interview: 7/24/2014.

❑ Saint Chandraprabhu

This interview took place at the home of Ameeta Jain. This man, along with two other sadhus, stayed the duration of their visit to Jaipur at this location. They three were also present at the historic puja with the Digambara Jains. This man, Saint Chandraprabhu, conducted at the puja. Everywhere people remarked about how lucky, blessed, and auspicious was his presence. Formal on-camera interview: 7/28/2013.

❑ **Ameeta Jain**

This was a lively and fun interview at her beautiful and large residence (mansion) in Jaipur. This interview was very informal. She lives in both New York and Jaipur. On-camera interview: 7/23/2014.

❑ **Dr. Dubey**

During my first summer, Dr. Dubey and I met frequently. Originally he was supposed to be my tutor of Hindi. He showed me around Jaipur and we talked on many occasions. He is Brahmin teacher and priest. He recites poetry on the air at the radio station. We never had any formal interviews but he helped me greatly understanding the rhythm of life in Jaipur.

❑ **Aditya Raj**

During my first summer, Aditya and I became good friends. We ate at many restaurants, and cooked at his flat. He was like a friend, and very easy to talk to. He was in his mid-twenties and a law student on summer vacation. He identified as a Rajput.

❑ **Yogesh**

Yogesh's father owns the convenience store near the Jain hostel where I stayed during both summers. I spoke with him almost. He was in his late twenties, married, and had one child. He was pretty stiff throughout our encounters, but he tried very hard to be friendly. Shy, I think. He invited me to dinner numerous times at his home, right behind and above the shop.

APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEO INTERVIEWS

7/16/2014 THROUGH 7/28/2014

In the transcriptions below I include the file names (such as 2nd-Jyoti-01) because it shows information about the filming. These are the files that are generated when you press the record button on the camera. Each instant of the file name indicates there was a stop in the recording. Some of these filenames have been changed and now correspond to a library of video files that are archived on an external hard drive. They also give a bit of context. Some files and sentences are very short, as there were many interruptions. I tried very hard to be accurate in the transcription. I do not change wordings in order to adhere to grammatical rules. All of the questions I asked are listed above in Appendix B. Due to the use of a lavalier microphone, it was difficult to hear which questions I asked, while transcribing.

Jyoti Kothari

7/23/2013

This takes place in the home of Ameeta Jain. We set up in a room on the 3rd floor, trying to get away from the noise and bustle of the household.

2nd-Jyoti-01

My name is Jyoti Kothari, j y o t i k o t h a r i.

2nd-jyoti-02

I born in Calcutta, in West Bengal, and then came to Jaipur in 1982. And since then I am living here.

2nd-jyoti-03

Jainism is a way of life to achieve the final goal of liberation. It's not a religion, but it's a spirituality, and the ultimate goal is to attain liberation through right vision, right knowledge, and right conduct. And for all practical purposes, Jainism says us to

follow five-fold path of ahimsa, satya, asteya, bramacharya, and aparigraha. To say it in English, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, chastity, and non-possession. Jainism is the way of life, it's not a religion, but path of spirituality.

2nd-jyoti--04

Jain food is non-vegetarian, um sorry, please repeat it. Jain food is a vegetarian food without meat, seafood, eggs, alcohol, drugs. It is the food intake is to follow the basic principles of Jainism, non-violence, and not to kill and harm any creature. In Jainism we have lists of eatables and non-eatables. There are 22 items listed as non-eatables. As a principle, one should not eat all these 22 non-eatable items. But in practice few of these non-eatable items Jain people take as their food. (Cell Phone rings)

2nd-jyoti-05

Yeah, The most important in non-eatables are meat, honey, butter, and alcohol. The other things which are on the list of non-eatables and important, are drugs, all kinds of intoxications, toxic items. And large number of vegetables. Normally Jains are known for eating vegetarian, but there are lists of large number of vegetables which are also non-eatables. Especially which are grown underground, like potatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, etc.

2nd-jyoti-06

There are several vegetables which are also non-eatables according to the Jain food principle. Especially those grown underground, like potato, garlic, ginger, onion, etc. And similarly, mushroom, fungus. These are non-eatables.

2nd-jyoti-07

According to Jain principle, underground vegetables have much more creatures. We say that there are infinite number of creatures in the vegetables grown underground. So if one eats underground vegetables, he kills infinite number of creatures. So to avoid that violence they don't eat underground vegetables.

2nd-jyoti-09

According to Jain principle, the jivas which are called soul or spirit, are divided into two parts. One which is liberated, and one is mundane. The mundane soul is again divided into two parts, one, who can move, and one, who cannot move. The movable jiva have four kinds, with two senses, with three senses, with four senses, and with five senses. Whereas the immovable kind of jiva have only one sense and those are divided again into five elements, air, water, soil, fire and vegetables. Again the vegetable kind ekendriya jivas, one sense jivas, are divided into two parts, pratyek, and sadharan. So, in pratyek vanaspatikaya, it is vegetables, there is one jiva in one body. Whereas, in sadharan vanaspatikaya, there are infinite number of jivas in a single body.

So this is a unique concept of Jainism, that infinite number of jiva can live in a single body, and mostly this sadharan vanaspatikaya are found underground. And that is why Jains don't eat underground vegetables. There are some other kinds, like mushroom, which are also sadharan vanaspatikaya. Germinated fruit, that is also sadharan vanaspatikaya, sprouts. Sprouts, like if you put any seed like wheat, if you put it in water, in a few hours it is germinated, that's sprouts, this are also an anantkya, that means there

are infinite number of jiva in one piece of wheat, or (garbled). And that's why these are among non-eatables.

2nd-jyoti-10

I don't think that Jain food is tasteless. These are very tasty. And Mr. Robert and Kelsea, you have also tasted Jain food in several places, several times and I don't think you think this is tasteless, but (with emphasis), according to the principles, because Jainism is a religion of sacrifice, sacrificing earthly pleasures is the soul of Jain asceticism, so, it is believed, or it is told in the text, that a Jain person it's better to avoid taste while he or she is eating. It is told, that one has to eat for the sake of his own living, He should not be motivated or inclined to taste. But it doesn't mean that Jain food is not tasty. We know the Jain ladies cook very tasty food, with the combination of different kind of spices, and they make very tasty sweets and salties, and you have also tasted all these.

2nd-jyoti-12

I think it is over addressing. Jains never say you cannot cook a tasty food. It is for the ascetics. That they should not have greed for a tasty food. So the Jain principles focus on the non-attachment. Not the outer things. So. In practical way, Jain ladies cook very tasty food, and everybody enjoy that, even they give it to the monks when they come for their alms. But the monks are supposed not to incline for the taste, and this is also advised that its better not to incline for the taste to the layman too.

2nd-jyoti-14

There is a difference between idealism, and the practical. And I tell you, that even Lord Mahavir told that you should practice as you wish. So there are different layers of practicing also. So one has started practicing Jainism, and if he thinks he will practice like an ascetic, that is not justified. So he has started, he at least started believing, or he has a vision of sacrifice of the earthly pleasure. But it doesn't mean he has already sacrificed everything. So he gradually progresses on the path, and as and when he started testing his own soul. That is very important. When he gets the pleasure of the soul which is coming from within. Then the requirement of earthly pleasure will gradually decrease. And that is the essence of Jainism.

Say, we see in the general life that someone is very keen in business. And when he is dealing with his clients, he forgets everything about eating, drinking, everything. We see when a person is involved in his research. And if he is keen, if he or she is keen in his research, he forgets everything, all pleasures, all earthly pleasure, he forgets music, he forgets dancing, he forgets everything. Because he is keen, he is drawn in his or her research. Similarly, when a person reaches a spiritual level, so he is drawn in that level. He is enjoying in that level. And he doesn't need all these earthly pleasures, so gradually he is sacrificing all those things. Until that, he is not sacrificing. So he is enjoying all earthly pleasures, he enjoys tasty food. But in principle, he knows, or she knows, that it is harmful for his spiritual progress.

2nd-jyoti-15

Of course Jain diet is completely vegetarian. But it is much more than a vegetarian diet. As I told you that alcohol is not included in Jain diet, though it is as considered vegetarian, but it is not included. Similarly all toxic items, drugs, etc., has to be avoided in Jain food. And especially, as I told earlier, that vegetables grown underground, sprouts, and like fungus, mushrooms, these types of vegetables are also non-eatable. So Jain food is of course is vegetarian, but not all the vegetables are included in Jain food.

2nd-jyoti-16

Fermented food is also prohibited, but not milk or other milk foods which normally vegans avoid. So Jain food is not vegan food, its vegetarian food. As I told you earlier, that there are 22 kinds of non-eatables, and ferment food is one of those. And principally, these are non-eatable, but in practice, most of the people eat, only few staunch Jains, we can count their number in fingers, they don't eat all these 22 non-eatables.

2nd-Jyoti-17

Yea, the challenges faced today by the Jain youths, regarding Jain food, is obviously much more different than past. In last 20, 30 years, there is a very aggressive marketing culture. And consumerism is spreading, globalization has its own effect. And of course it has effected too much the youth of India. I'm talking in the context of India.

And life in India is much different in these years than the past, in 1980's and 1990s when I was a child, was young, it was much different. Because at that time there was no KFC, no McDonalds, so the people have a lesser choice.

And because of television ad, newspaper ad, and this aggressive marketing culture, now they are interfering into the lives of everyone. And Jains are no exception. So it is more difficult, than say 1970s or 1980s to keep our children or young following Jain traditions. Its much difficult. But I believe if you have a strong culture, and you teach it at your home, and if you can make your children understand that following this is good for them, I think they are enough intelligent to follow that.

I can give you an example, Obesity is a big problem in the US. And just two three years back, the Obama administration has taken a decision about school food, you are as an American know better, and California was a pioneer in enforcing that act. And someone recently told me, she was also an American, she told me the slaughter of animal, the number has gone down by a billion, in the US. in 2012. So, the US who are pioneers in this consumer culture is now understanding the harms of eating meat and this type of junk food. They were exporting this, the US, the Europe, they were exporting this culture to traditional India. But they are facing the same problem. I think the Indian youth will understand this problem and the challenge we are facing today we may not face after ten years, so I am hopeful.

7/26/2013

This is the final on-camera interview with Jyoti. This interview takes place in Johari Bazaar, at the large prayer hall across from the Shivijram's main office and cafeteria. Unfortunately our audio device ran out of batteries and we lost the first part of the interview. We were able to continue, but the results were a bit rushed.

7d2-0026.mov

History of Jains, we are divided into three parts. One is prehistoric. One is we call grey area. And one is historic. So, the history starting from the first Tirthankar Lord Rishabha Adinatha is prehistoric and historian say this is (dialects?) and just a stories. History from the 22nd Tirthankar, Arishtanami or called Neminatha, and 23rd Tirthankar Parshvanath are in dark, grey area. So some historians say yes, they remain, they existed. So we keep it in grey area. And from Mahavir, all the historians accept him. Mahavir liberated 2540 years back. And uh, he took birth 72 years before he liberated, so his birth time is 2612 years ago. Mahavir was the last, 24th Tirthankara, or Jina, according to Jainism. He preached the science of non-violence, the science of peace, to the world. He was contemporary to Gotama Buddha. He was contemporary to him. (audio totally cuts out now)

7d2-0036

Yea, when a person goes, or decides to go for samhadi maran, the master who is the acharya, has the deciding, is the deciding authority. Because he knows all the pros and cons of this act. So one has to go to his guru, his teacher, asking him to permit for

yamaslinghana (? lookup?). In that case, his teacher has to ask the acharya, the ultimate authority, and if he permits, he gives permission to the person willing for (alternate word) or samadhi maran. If the guru thinks this is not fit for him or her, or he has not enough mental or spiritual strength to bear the pain and penance of a samadhi maran offer, he may not permit him or her. The once acharya permits, and it is believed acharya is so capable that he can judge everything, he can judge all levels of physical, mental, and spiritual strength of the person, and then only he gives permission. After one gets permission from acharya, then he declares it to the sangh, then everyone know that yes, the person is going for (yanla) sallekhana.

It is believed that sallekhanha is a very difficult act. One need very high level of physical mental and spiritual strength. He has to (vical? victor?) his own (can't understand, in hindi?) He decreases full kasayas, (names them, mana etc). He becomes a true ascetic. He becomes tranquil. He feels equanimity. When all these happens, he scrubs karmas in huge quantity.

I want to focus about the misconceptions. (Yamla) Sallekhana is not only fasting, opposite to the popular belief. It is sacrifice of food, yes. But this is not the whole thing about (hindi) samadhi maran. As I told earlier, it is to decrease, to make peanut, his visaya and kysaya, it is earthly pleasures, things and everything. And it is to attain equanimity, the most important thing, when a person attains equanimity. He is very close to omniscience, and then close to liberation. Especially for the western world, is I want to send the message: That don't see sallekhana, samadhi maran, as a suicide or mere way of fasting.

(I thought Jyoti was, building up to the message, particularly intense, and I could feel and see on screen that thinking about this had a deep sentiment, or he was almost in awe)

7d2-0037.mov

The jina means the conqueror. Who conquers his own inner sense cravings aversion, they are called jina. The leader of the jina, that means who leads a large number of jina, is call (hindi) or tirthankar or (orihan?), who are the highest authority in Jainism. There are 24 tirthankaras, Jain believe, out of which 21 tirthankaras are mythological figures according to the present historians. The first 21 from Lord Rishaba Adinath to Lord Malinath, sorry Lord Nami Nath, the 21st. Lord Arishtenemi Neminath, the 22nd Tirthankar, and Pashnot, 23rd Tirthankar is considered to be in grey area. Not a Mythological figure, not a historic.

Mahavir is considered a historical figure who born in 599 BCE and attained liberation at his age of 72. He initiated at his age of 30, and remained as a Jain monk for some 12.5 years. In this period, he, his conduct was with right view, right knowledge, and right action. He concentrated and meditated on his own soul, atman, and with austerity and penance. He remained tranquil, practiced equanimity, and when he achieved complete equanimity, became vitaraga and attained omniscience, kevala jnana at the time he was 42 attained omniscience at Chimek Village on the bank of (?) river in (?), in India.

After achieving omniscience, he started preaching. He has got 11 (ghandaras) principle disciples, and Indrabhuti Gautama was his first principle disciple, the first ghanadara. He preached and preached after that, for the good will for the welfare of not

only the human kind, but the whole world of the creatures. He preached ahimsa, the peace of science, non-violence. He preached truth, he preached non-stealing, he preached chastity, he preached non-possession. Also he preached anekantavada. And he preached it for 30 years, a long time he was contemporary to Gotama Buddha, and attained his niravana, his liberation at Pawapuri Bihar, at the age of 72. Since then people following the preachings of Lord Mahavira are called Jain.

7d2-0038

Start? Jains divided into two major sects, svetambar and digambar, after Bhadrabahu who went for his heavenly abode 170 after liberation of lord Mahavira. Major difference between svetambar and digambar, for the layman, is digambar Jain monks live naked, whereas svetambar Jain monks wear white clothes. There are many other subtle difference which eventually come, but philosophically, principally, technically, there are two other major differences. One, digambar Jains doesn't believe in the liberation of women. Whereas a svetambar Jain believes that anyone from the humankind can become omniscient and get liberated. Whether he is a man or woman, regardless of any caste and creed. This is a major difference.

Another major difference which is very significant, is that svetambar Jain believes that we have the original texts (???) from the tirthankar and the ghanadara. The digambar believes that all original texts are vanished, demolished, and there is nothing which has come directly from the tirthankar and ghanadara. These texts are considered in digambar Jain community as auspicious, as sacred, as the agama, in svetambar Jains.

7d2-0039.mov

Start? The process of alms, gocari, is little different for svetambar Jain monks and nuns, and digambar Jain monks. Digambar Jain monks comes out for gocari and moves around, the layman welcomes him. The significant thing is, the digambar Jain monk has something in his mind he keeps secret, he takes a bowl, that if I see this this signs, than only I take alms. So he moves around and people asking him, praying him to come and to take gocari. If he sees the sign, which he has in his mind, and its secret, then only he goes to the place and takes alms. And its a very significant event, because digambar Jain monks take alms at the place, they eat, drink only once even they don't take water after that. So its very significant. Large numbers of people welcome him at that time. Even other people who are not able to give the gocari, they also come and stand there, with their devotion, and see how the monk is taking his alms, his food.

It is little bit different for the svetambar. Svetambar monks and nuns they also get out from the (Upasara) or (Astana) where they are living, with bowls in their hands. Go to households, see whether there are food suitable for them or not, there are 42 errors or sins. So they avoid all those, and they find a pure gocari without these 42 sins, 42 dosas, then only they take the food. It must not be ab-bhakshya, it should be bhakshya, eatable, they avoid all 22 non-eatables prescribed in the Jain sacred texts. They don't take food from one place only, like Digambar Jain saints. They always take food from one place, they eat standing there.

The svetambar Jain monks and nuns go door to door, take little little from all the households, if they find it suitable for them. Suitable for their health, suitable for their

meditation, suitable for their religious practices, suitable for their spirituality. Then only they take it. And taking little from various households, they gather their gocari and come back to their Upashara or Astana and show it to their guru. After that all the monks living there sit together and eat the food. This is the process of svetambar gocari. And the process are same for sadhu and sadhvi.

Surendra Bothra

7/22/2014

Interview with Surendra Bothra at his residence in the heart of Johari Bazaar. His room was on an upper level looking out over into a courtyard. The walls are filled with many books, and the floor with cushions to sit on.

Surendra-01

Yes. Ahimsa. I written the book with the basic concept that Jains have evolved a way of life, and ahimsa basically means, absence of violence. And the term ahimsa for Jains, goes much beyond the literal meaning of violence, you see. It is non-harming. It includes, non-hurting people. Or any sort of aggression is covered by ahimsa. And it goes to the extent that even transgression is inclusive of ahimsa. So ahimsa means non-transgression also. And Jains have developed a way of life based on this. The basic concept of Jainism is equanimity, the equilibrium in anything. And ahimsa is supposed to be the tool that helps achieving that equilibrium. And ah, all that they have built up a way of life.

Surendra-02

Right vision... Yes, you see. Basically, if you... Jainism is a sort of symphony of perception, knowledge, and action. So viewing is knowing the things, and then you go deeper into it, and mold your conduct accordingly. Now as far as food is concerned, naturally it comes in the conduct. So you have a all view for the things around you, and in Jain concept, they have gone deeper than just the visual world. According to Jain philosophy, or Jain theory, life is beyond the visual world. That is there is a micro form of life. That this concept was first of all given by Jains, you see. And uh, according to them, the plant life is as important as the human life, or the animal life. And when you eat things, they are based on the basically, we are vegetarians so it depends on the plant life. So knowledge of the plant life is very important for Jains. Yes, they are a special category for jains.

The Zamikand, or the bulbous roots what you call them, they are part of the plant life, but they have special significance for Jains. Because of two reasons you see. Two basic physical reasons. One is, they are the roots, you see. The life of plants depends on them. Number two, they have a sort of inherent quality of replicating themselves. So if you consume them, what you are doing is, you are consuming the life, not only of those plants, but the plants which are going to grow out of them. So that is one reason. Another things is you see, violence, non-violence is the basic part of Jainism. So they have included health reasons in that also. Because most of these plants which are not to be eaten by Jains have got a tendency to sort of instill violence into you, into your system. That is another reason.

Surendra-03

Why the lay jains are consuming potatoes and onions, some of them. The basically, this is the difference between the ideal condition and the approach to the ideal condition. You get me? The important part is, somewhere the conservative Jains or even the monks would go for the ideal way of life. This is something that is not in Jain tenets, you see. It has been created much later.

Basic Jain thing is they have a system of layer, you see, or steps. You start from zero and go to first step, second step, third step. It's almost exactly same as your education, you see.

That you start practicing from zero. So a lay Jain has to start practicing these things from zero. That is consuming what is available. That covers all the range of sort of vegetarian food. Meat is not at all allowed, because traditionally these are born Jains, you see. If you go according to the tenets, Jains are not born, you see. Jain is one who practices Jainism, you see. But then when you are born in a family there are certain things you start learning and observing right from the beginning. But then you have to gradually sort of learn these things and start practicing. That's why you will find that lay Jains can eat certain things which a monk is not allowed. A monk is an ideal condition. It's something like he has graduated, and the lay Jain is still in kindergarten. So all stages would be there. But the conservatives don't accept these things.

But it is basically, the first important thing for a Jain is to preserve his life. Because he is been born as a human being and Jain theory says that only as a human being you can be liberated. So it is a rare thing which he has got the human life. The first

principle is to conserve it. And after that you gradually go towards purification and then all these things will come and you gradually graduate into it. So there is no contradiction in these things. You can eat things and when you know these things that there is some life form in it and you are destroying it, or this type of food is making you violent, then you gradually start going away from it and following the rules. So it is a gradual process, and once again the institutionalization have stricter rules and people have to follow them, but there is no curb on that.

Dr. Sushma Singhvi

7/26/2013

Interview with Dr. Sushma Singhvi. This takes place in the afternoon, at the office of the Khatar Gacch Sangh in Johari Bazaar. I did not know beforehand about this interview. She just popped in to the Shijiram and Kelsea was sick in hostel. She had come from Delhi, and was a noted Jain Scholar. I ran the camera and audio while conducting the interview.

Sushmasinghvi-07

My name is Dr. Sushma Singhi. And my email address is, you put that in front of gmail.com. The basic concept of non-violence was in consideration with every food, or food habit, or how to get food, or how to take food, etc., the basic concept was non-violence. We should not disturb any living being. And the vegetation is one-sensed living

being. So, he used to take the food which was not alive. Which has no life. That food was taken by the sadhus of Jainism, and that was the practice of Mahavir.

The ripe food which has fallen on the ground, or which has been cut, that cannot be reproduced. Ok the householders take food and vegetables to their houses, and they prepare it. They prepare it in the kitchen, and now that food cannot be germinated, cannot be produced. That they can take. But suppose that food is in connection with any living being, they will not take it. Water itself, water in its source, is itself a living being, according to Jainism. Fire itself is a living being, according to Jainism. A one sensed living being. So air, water, earth itself is living being. When this stone is in the mines, that grows, that expands. So that is living being. So this stone is not living being because it has come out of the mine. Like vegetables, if it is on the tree, its living being, it has life. But if the fallen fruit (it) has no life now. And also they took care that those vegetables which have intensive life, like in potato. We can have potato for many days, in that aligned position (?). So they avoided that type of vegetable also, which have intensive life, thick life. So this, the original idea of the Mahavir was, we should not disturb the nature. Let the nature grow in its own way. We should take as least as we can life with.

You must have heard the story of the six persons, they were of the woodcutters, they were coming from the, after cutting the wood. And they thought that we are hungry. So one of them just took his ax and tried to put on the tree. And then the second one said, oh don't do that. We don't need tree, we don't need wood now that we have collected the woods. We don't need the woods and we don't want to cut down the green tree. So I'll just go up and cut out some branches and we will have some fruit, for our hunger. So the

third one says, don't pluck the branches, I'll just go up and have the bunches. And then the fourth one said, don't pluck the bunches, because all of them are not ripened, so I'll just take the ripened ones. And then the six one said, why are you disturbing that tree? It has its own life, it has its own existence? It has already given us the ripened one, just see on the ground, they all are here. and we should eat them and we should feel contented.

So the thing is, if it is possible that without giving any harm to the living being, we can live a life happily, that is the best option. But because we are also living being, and we need food, water, air for our life. And so with the least disturbance to the environment we should lead our life. So this was the concept behind his food also. Food habit also. That we should choose the food which minimum disturbs the environment. Or the nature. So we should live with the nature with least disturbance to the nature, our food should not be disturbing the nature. This is the basic concept of this.

Sushmasinghvi-08

You have very rightly asked, that uh, do Jainism believe in the equality of the living beings, right from the bacteria to the five sensed animals, or human beings, or likewise? So you are right, the basic concept of Jainism is all souls are equal. They have equal potentiality.

But, the potentiality is covered by the karmas, and because of the covering, because of the maybe somewhere it is loose covering, somewhere it is tight covering, somewhere it is thick covering, somewhere it is thin covering, but due to covering the power of experiencing is somewhere low and somewhere high. The power of doing, somewhere low somewhere high.

So activity and experience, both are related to the cover of the potentiality of soul. But as per the potentiality, each and every soul which is having body of even one sensed or five-sensed, they can attain liberation, they can have the self-realization, but only after the destruction of the cover, the annihilation of the cover. Now what happens in Acharanga, Mahavir says, if we pluck the one sensed vegetation, it also has the feeling of pain, as we feel pain. But they cannot express like a person, who is deaf, who is dumb, who cannot smell, who cannot raise his hand or lie, or he is just paralyzed. But he has consciousness. If he is beaten, he is smacked, he is beaten. He can feel pain but cannot express it because he cannot speak. So likewise, these one sensed living beings also feel pain and pleasure but they cannot express in the manner in which the five sensed or four sensed or three sensed or two sensed living beings present. So this is the difference.

But and therefore, we have to use vegetation extracted for our life, our living, but we should use only that much which is bare minimum to our need. Not for lust, not for luxury, not for pleasure, not for games, not for anything. We should take as little, as much, we can fulfill our bare minimum needs. And we should not go for greed. We should not go for fulfilling our desires. Because if we go for fulfilling our desires, there is no end of desires. We have the scarcity of resources by nature. If we go by our need, there is abundance of resources in nature. Nature has already given us, in each and everything if we go by our need. But if we go by our greed or our desires, this nature, this environment cannot fulfill our desires. And so this is what he preached (Mahavir), is how to live in minimum. We should practice tapa, we should have the exercises, so that we can resist.

This is very important, because they have also the same soul they also experience pain and pleasure. We have no right to kill them. Each and every living being wants to live. Just a small (garbled)... because each and every living being wants to live, live happily, live independently, and live in their own way. So we should help living in their own way, keeping their not distorted. So Mahavira was very much of the concept that all living being has the same soul but the difference can be mitigated by annihilating the Karma.

Ok ok. So you have asked me two questions. One is regarding what is karma, which when annihilated one gets the power of soul. One things related to the food, if there is any connection between the food and the karma, clearly, because in Jainism they say true tapa, or the tapa, is asceticism. So the true austerity to the austurious activity, one can eliminate karma.

I'll cite you one example. There is a wall, an oily wall is there. Ok. And the dust covering it. And the dust is deposited on that oily wall. And we find that a thick layer of dust has deposited to the wall due to the oiliness of this. Right. So the first layer of dust became oily, and the next layer became oily, and so where the oil is there, the dust will just be deposited. Supposing we some chemical experiment where I do not touch the wall or do not touch the dust, but I just take away the oil from it, then the whole dust will just come down, fall down. Without doing anything because the surface is not oily.

So dust will just fall down, it will not stick over there. Ok dust cannot stick to oily thing or substance that can stick it. Likewise in other life, we do activity of mind body and speech. If we do our activities with the attachment that this is mine. I am the doer of

this. I am the owner of this. These kinds of attachment if we do, then the karmas are attracted. The karma is a technical term. Karma is like a material, very strong material, like dust particle. Ok, so it is attracted, you might say, through any activity. If we are attached to it, then our body has a different kind of psychology, physiology, and expressions. And if we are not attached, our physiology our psychology, our actions are in a different manner. So attachment invites karmas, and through this attachment. Attachment is like oily or like oil, or adjoining thing. So these attachment and (garbled) invites karmas, and the layer of karmas, layers of karmas, one attachment and then again, any (garbled) again attachment, so a thick layer of karmas is we find on the (atman?) on the soul. But all karmas can be annihilated if that oiliness is destroyed, that attachment and diversion.

Right now if I am, if I evict my attachment and diversion, I will always be happy, and the previous layer of karmas can be shedded of it. Now how the austerity helps in it, through austerity, we practice that how much can we live happily, freely, independently without taking help of other living things. So we just try to examine, we just try to see. And in that manner we have the heat, heat produces. And due to that heat, the karmas are annihilated. But heat is not material heat, but the aura, the aura of which gives us calmness and coolness, and so the influx of karmas is stopped, and the karmas which have bonded earlier, they also shed off because now we are not in the process of attachment and (diversion). (I think it is diversion she has mentioned numerous times but I can't quite understand)

Now the question arises, how the previous bonded is annihilated. See there is a tree having hundreds and hundreds of mangos. Each mango has the capacity to grow one more tree. So hundred mangos can grow hundred trees, and then hundred again will be with hundreds of mangos and they can have the seeds of hundreds. So there is a great chain. But if that one tree is destroyed, totally burned in the, to the roots, then no next gen is produced and these hundred mangos will also burn away, so no seed is available, so no for that progress, is. So now if we stop here at attachment and (aversion? diversion?), so the previous which are there, line, they will also shed off. If the present attachment and aversion is burned. So this chain will be stopped and there will be no need to come again and again in this worldly affair, and we will have our consciousness known to us.

What happens that the thing very near to us we cannot see. The eyes which can see other things cannot see itself. Because it is too (trails off, interrupted).

Sushmasinghvi-09

I can see. I am. My soul is not visible to me. But I can look at, oh, you are with soul and your soul is of this kind. And so this is the way we should treat with others as we like. We should fulfill other's requirements, other's need, so that we get happiness. And this is what, this relationship, that all souls are the same. So that I will, I will not be in aversion or impassioned, if I do something for you because you are the same as I. If I am doing for any dog, I won't say this is any different because my vision is on the soul of the cow or dog or tree or anything.

So if we have this attitude to see towards the soul, then the difference of body merges, and we become the conqueror of aversion, passions, and this thing. (I just looked

it up and aversion in Hindi means hatred, roughly) This is the process of karma bondage and annihilation. And therefore food is important for us, but food can give nourishment for only body, we should remember this food is for body, not for soul. And therefore we should not attach for tasty foods, or this food. Food should be enough for our body, bodily life. That is important, not the taste or not other things, not the varieties, so many. Ok. Ok.

Sushmasinghvi-10

It's very important to know and note, that Jain food is not bland. (With a twinkle in her eye) Jain food, Jain (tried?), we should not take taste in the food. We should not be attached to the taste of food. We should take food. Ok, it's necessary. But we should not mad after taste. Supposing we are mad after taste then we can have anger in our mind. If the food is not tasty we can just throw it away. What have you done?? Things like this.

We can have pride if the food is very tasty and we are giving it to some guests, oh I have given so much of tasty food, and you should praise it and likewise and likewise. So the thing is, food is for (health?) and therefore they say we should try, we should leave. Ok I will not take milk today. I will not take any preparation of milk. I will not take any preparation of ghee. I will not have any preparation of the sugar, I mean the sweet. I will not take any preparation like this. They say we should practice like this so that our tongue is not attached to taste.

But it is not taste-less. Because, supposing we don't put any sugar or any oil or anything, then we have the taste of the wheat and the seeds, and that is the real taste of the food. In fact what do we do with mingling of so many masalas and all that, the taste

of the seed is gone. So the thing is we should prepare it nicely. We should prepare it tastily. But we should not prepare it for attaching to it. Attachment and aversion is bad, not the taste is bad. So there is a difference between taste and attachment and aversion to the food.

So its not that the foods aren't tasty, or. It should be cooked properly. The taste should come of the food itself. Food, all corns are tasty in themselves. So we have the taste of food, but we should not get attached to it. This is the basic thing. But nutritious food is never bland. I tell you, no nutritious food is bland. Any corn you take, any seed you take, is tasty.

In fact, because in Jainism, the very much importance is given to non-violence. And therefore they are vegetarians. They do not want to (be) instrumental in any killing.

Supposing I'm non-vegetarian, though I haven't killed any creature, but because I'm instrumental in eating, because I'm instrumental in purchasing, because I'm instrumental in holding the meat. So meat in the street (meaning possibly here the market, like in stalls on the street) will grow, it will multiply. So if I stop eating, then the conservation will be stopped, the marketing will be stopped, and the production will be stopped and the then the killing will be stopped. So this is a big chain. Supposing one person takes an oath not to have the non-vegetarian food, it gives impact to the whole community of animals and birds and all that. Number one.

But the thing is, there are so many logics that non-vegetarian people says. Ok if you take one chapati, you have so many wheat seeds. I mean hundreds of wheat seeds, you combine hundreds of wheat seeds and then you prepare one of this roti, one bread.

And we take just one soul, and we have our food. We just have one hen, or one cow or one pig or this thing. Now the thing is, you see in a five-sensed body, each and every cell has life. Right. And this cell is potential to have five sensed create. The system in one sensed they take food from earth, and sun and air and water. Right, and their growth, their level of experience is different.

And if one kills any animal in the slaughterhouse, if you see the eyes of the animal, you won't be able to eat it, I tell you frankly. If you look into the eyes of that creature that is being killed, he expresses his soul. You cannot equate the hundred wheat seeds and one animal. Number two, as much as consciousness is developed, the pain is experienced in that volume, in that intensity. So we should take that they also want to live. And reproductive system of one sensed, two sensed, three sensed, is totally. (end of footage)

Ameeta Jain

7/23/2014

This interview takes place at Ameeta Jain's beautiful residence in Jaipur. The house was bustling with activity and it was hard to film without interruptions.

Ameeta-02

Ok. My name is Ameeta. Ameeta Jain. And I spell it as Ameeta, a m e e t a. And then Jain, j a i n. I live in New York right now. I should be saying that. Is it recording?

I live in New York, and I have like 3 children, and my husband. and we all live together. In New York. No, I was born in India. We have moved to New York about 15 years back.

Living in New York is great. Um. We all love US. As we love our country also. But um. I don't think so, there is, any difficulty regarding my food habits in New York. Because we get everything there. And in fact we get, it's very handy, and its very reachable, and we can get everything there. And you know what I believe is for any for anybody to observe any religion, anywhere is not hard if they feel they have to do it.

I have seen people who would, even in New York, where the sun sets, like after sunset you know many of our people they don't eat food. So but I have seen even in New York, many people they don't eat after sunset, do they would stop eating after 4:30 or 5:30 in Winters, when the sun sets early, and they follow that. So it is what is in your mind, and what is in your heart, that you follow. Rather than finding difficulties here and there. So the place doesn't matter, it's what you think that matters.

Ameeta-03

Jainism is actually not a religion. It is a way of life. It is how you should be practicing while you are living, in your life. So basically um all the, like the Jainism has actually evolved. From Hinduism. So they were all Hindus earlier, as far as I know. Uh. And then, people started, maybe somebody didn't feel that something was not right. And then maybe we started, uh, like a, uh, proclaiming that we should be doing certain things. SO it is actually how to live life and a righteous manner, so i believe it is a way of living life, it's like a principle of life but its not a religion, as such.

What is the Jain food tradition? First of all, Jainism believes in non-violence. So the first thing we would like to have in our food is something in which we would give the least trouble, or we would make the least violence to anybody while making our food. So basically Jain food would be like having more like herbs and vegetables and fruits. and no meat, and no seafood. basically we would not like to kill somebody to feed ourselves. But since you have to live. So there are certain things, in our religion it is said, that everything has souls. Even air has soul. Air has bodies, which have souls. Even air is filled with that. So there are certain things that are very essential for you to live. So what we would try to do is eliminate the pleasures.... that's ok. So I have to do it again?

So in our religion it is said that everything has, like, there is soul everywhere. There is jivs. They are called jivas. So basically it is there everywhere, it is in water, it is in fire, it is in air. so its like, its everywhere. So what we try to do is eliminate, try to reduce the amount of violence we could do to others. in order to feed ourselves. So that is why I said we would want to have plants more, to have um fruits more, and to grains, legumes more. So that is what Jain food is, basically. And of course dairy. Yeah you could say that. Because in fact vegetarianism and Jainism they go together. I think one of the first things a Jain would do, which a Jain ought to do, should be become a vegetarian.

Ameeta-04

Jain food also implies not harming anybody. So there could be some plants or some, as you say zamikand, which are the underground, the plants or the roots which grow underground, so basically the food which is like onions, garlic, carrots, there are certain foods which are roots. Roots are the bulbs, and those foods are also, they are

plants, but since those foods grow underground they have lots of jivas, innumerable jivas. Even if you prick like the potatoes. They say that eating the potato is actually really bad because if you prick one, then there are innumerable jivas there. So Jain food wants us to avoid all that.

So it's better if you don't eat that. But you have to go slow. Many people eat it. As I told you you can just start by leaving meat for one time maybe, and then going to other things. In many Jain families people have not practiced Jainism to the last bit, I should say. So that is why they have been eating potatoes and onions and garlic, as I do. But certain days are there in a month when we try not eat on those days. So by starting little bit, I think you can reach to the, you can go further.

Ameeta-06

As being bland? I don't think Jain food is bland at all. First of all I haven't tasted meat. So I don't know how meat tastes. But when I eat my Jain food, I think it's the most delicious food. Because believe me or not, even my son, He tells me sometimes "We are so lucky to be Jains" because he hasn't eaten meat either. But still since he likes the food, he eats pasta, or he'll eat pizza because he's in America, so he's used to eating those foods also. But still when he eats a regular Roti Sabzi, he would eat it with such passion, he loves to eat that, sometimes he's licking his fingers, so I don't think so Jain food is at all bland, otherwise my children would have complained till now. And personally for me,

I don't think so. We love our food because it's not that it's our food, that's why we love it, but because it tastes so good we love it.

And in fact I would want you to try this food too. And I think many people even in a broader scene, they would love to go to Indian restaurants, and to eat vegetarian food. So they would not have eaten it if it was bland, right?

Ameeta-07

I think for the first time of hearing it, from your mouth, that people have complained it to be bland. No, no. I think what they mean to say is, with the bland, what they mean to say is that it is not nearly, you see there is a very difference between a rich food, like because if you eat meat you will be eating a lot of, what shall I say, a lot of fat, right, that is what a meat is. A lot of fat, a lot of protein, and I think they mean that.

Our food is simpler. In our language we would say sartrik. It's like more simpler food. It's not rich, I think that is what they mean. It's not that heavy. After eating meat, you need some time to digest that, right, because it is so heavy. But I think for our food, with the vegetables, it's easy to digest. So that is what they mean by that. By bland they mean it is not as rich in fat as the meat is.

When we cook our food we don't give up salt. We believe in giving up whatever tastes, Jainism is what? I told you Jainism is not a religion, it is a practice of life. What they have taught us is the more you indulge in pleasures, the more you get used to it. So its better to start practicing little non-attachment, as you said. So how do you start that? By either eating or living, there should be certain ways to do that.

So suppose we do it by eating. So now what are the ways to stop that? So somebody would be fasting for half a day, somebody may be fasting for a full day, somebody who cannot fast, maybe they would think about giving up sugar one day, or some like butter one day, you know there are like 4 or 5 things one could give up, oil one day, then they could give up salt one day. So that is how it happens. You know it doesn't relate to the food being bland, but it relates to how you can start practicing non-attachment,

Ameeta-08

Yah, so that is one thing also. They want it to be bland, no that's the wrong way to put it. They don't want it to be bland, but if you would want to give up certain things you would try to make it a little bit blander. You see when you are used to taste, some taste, you cannot give up that taste, but if you try to put a little less sugar.

I can just give you an example, I like to drink tea in the morning, but I would like to drink it real sweet. I used to drink it. Now I am diabetic. I'm not but suppose I am diabetic. I have to give up sugar, right? But how can I give up sugar if I am so used to sugar? So what I would try to do is instead of 2 tsp, I would try to make it 1.5 tsp. in the beginning. Since the dr. has told me. This is because of health reasons. And then I could go down and move on to splenda. That is how I can change that, right?

Now this is what Jainism tells us. Jainism tells us you cannot give up anything at one go. Try to make your food a little blander, I don't know if blander is the right word or not. A little less bland, you know step by step. If you want to practice non-attachment. We have our saints upstairs, you know what they would do, they would not eat maybe

one thing one day. They would so, ok, I'm not eating this today. I will not eat this the next day. So this is how they try to practice that non-attachment.

Ameeta-09

That's a very good question. Ah, Your question is why have we still stuck to our (principles), in spite of so much fast food coming, in spite of industrialization. That is because we, this is what is very good about Jainism. What Jainism tells us is "Live and Let Live." So I think there, somewhere, people in the core of their hearts, they know that is the right thing. So maybe, because of that, when we teach these things to our children, even if my son and my daughter, would read the ingredients before eating anything. Once in awhile they would have a munchkin, they would have a doughnut, which has eggs in them. But then they would tell me by coming home, "Mom I ate that, maybe because I had to eat that today, because there was like something." But then they know that they should not have eaten those eggs. But they in their hearts they believe that by not killing anybody they can survive.

So if you know that thing, that you would be able to survive, you would be able to live a happy life, and in fact a healthier life, I don't know whether I should say a healthier life, but a healthy life, by not eating any non-vegetarian food. So if that comes to your mind, why would you want to kill somebody?

So I think that is somehow, that is the message we pass on to our children right from the beginning. And they've eaten that sort of food. See, suppose I have a newborn. And I'm going to feed him meat. He would not know what is meat and what is not meat. He would eat everything. So it is that responsibility lies on us, to show them that we

should not be eating that stuff. And I think somewhere we will be able to give that message to our children, and that is why it has, and they in their hearts, maybe they have thought it to be the right thing, so that is why they have continued it. I would not say one hundred percent, but maybe eighty percent or seventy percent.

So basically what I wanted to tell you, what I wanted to convey is, is that if you think it's the right way to eat, I think, I think you can follow it, you can take it. And that is how Jainism has survived all through these, because people, when they pass on their message to somebody, and when they think it, I think that is what they believe is right.

Ameeta-10

See, I've heard people saying, if you stop eating... In fact from our Jains I've heard that too, if you stop eating meat the number of animals would grow so many, how are you going to control them. So its better, it's like the survival of the fittest, right. So once you don't, if you don't start...

So that is a way of, like, taking out a road to eat meat. If you, see, the world has gone till now, and would go on whether you eat meat or you do not. There would be other ways in which you could control them later on. I mean, maybe right now we are breeding so many animals, you would not be doing that, right? We are killing so many animals. So if you do not need to kill them. We are killing them because we want to eat them. So, then we breed them more. And then we grow them more, so the whole process is going to change, then. You don't breed them more so you don't need to kill them more, so let nature takes it's own course.

So there are ways, and what I believe is, it's not the person, like suppose I would have been born in a family that would have eaten meat, I would have eaten meat. Because I have been grown up like that. So I don't believe that it's the person's fault when he's eating the meat. But it's a person's fault when he eats meat if he knows he can just spare a life one day, why not? Why not just stop it for a day, why not? Ok, I don't tell you stop eating meat. You've been brought up like that. But can you just do it for one day, spare a life for one day? And that is all. If you think its ok, then just do it. Start slowly. And if you think it's ok, you can continue, otherwise you have your meat then (Smiles and laughs a bit)

Ameeta-11

There are! (sadhus and sadhis in New York) He's a sadhu there (pointing upstairs to where the three eminent Sadhus are in temporary residence). Oh in New York. Yes, we have lots of sadhus there. If you are in New York, you can call me and I will take you to them. We have a beautiful temple there, and we have sadhus and sadhis visiting us. And there are two, three sadhis that all of us live there.

In Jain tradition sadhus and sadhis are not supposed to take a flight or something. But. I believe those sadhus are, like, progressive. And they should be progressive, because otherwise people who are settled here and there would not get the essence of the religion. So we have sadhus and sadhis who've gone there just to, who have given up a little bit of their tradition, just to bless us. To bless those people there who can benefit from their preachings there. So we do have sadhis, we do have sadhus there. We do have Sadhus and Sadhis in New York.

Yes! There could be be sometimes like a few of them, but when our religion,... I don't know if you know there is like an 8-day long period for us when we do a lot of fasting and when we follow our religion more. That time a lot of sadhvis and sadhus, they're coming from here and there and they visit us. There is a special place called, hmmm, there are certain places here who train their sadhus and sadhvis to go abroad. So that they can, you know that because there are a lot of Jains there (from) all over the world. So if they don't go there how are our children going to understand? And how are we going to train them so much. So they have to see a live example. So that is how it works.

(In response to my question asking if the sadhus still go on daily alms in New York) No, that is what I said, they have stopped, they have you know modified, they have to modify it. They do not live the (besect?), you know routine of a sadhu sadhvi, who is practicing here (In India). They have modified it, and then there are certain things, they have adapted, according to the situation. So that is how they do it. They don't go alms, they don't go to get alms from places, but like we go and we serve them, we give them, but we know what food they are eating. So we have to serve them that. So its like different people go here and there and they do it.

Ameeta-12

The Jain way of living is, I believe... uh, I should not say, is that I believe is the right way to live and to let others live. That is the message that Lord Mahavir has given. So basically what I would want to say is, when you want to live you even would want

others to live as well as you want to live. So if you just understand that basic thing, let others also have a congenial atmosphere.

So I think to practice Jainism, vegetarianism is not a must. You can start by just being good to others. By being kind to others. I think Mahavir's preaching was just not eating vegetarian, if you're eating vegetarian food but you're not being good or kind to others, that makes no sense. This is what our saints and our sadhus tell us. The first thing is to be a good human being. And that is what counts, and I think that is what all religion teaches. And that is what Jainism is also taught. But in our, in a broader way, because Jainism has gone back to even animals. Human beings can be kind to each other but Jainism, goes a little bit further and tells why not be kind to all the other beings, all the other souls that are with you in this world.

So it's being, it's what Jainism is, to be a good human being, a kind, happy human being, to have compassion, to have um like little mercy. That is what it is. So this is what I would like to, and especially today, in this world, when there is lot of violence, there is lot of terrorism, and there is lot of, you know people are not at all patient with each other, they everybody wants so much anger, so much hatred.

That is the message I would want to give, just try to think that what hurts you is also hurting others. If somebody pinches you, it hurts you, so it would hurt even others. So try to do good deeds, try to be good in your deeds, in your, in what you are saying, you would like to hear good things, so try to speak good so that even others would like to hear that. And I think about all, if you're being that, vegetarianism is something beyond

that, and it will come later on. First try to be a good human being, and I think Jainism has taught us that in a good way. Thank you.

Would you like to take a look so you can come (Sadhus getting ready to take daily alms).

Darshan Kothari

7/25/2013

This is an interview with Darshan Kothari, Jyoti's only son. The interview takes place in the afternoon, at the place of Darshan's work where we had just finished filming himself and coworkers for a promotional video for their new app called KALQ. This is a keyboard app for the Android operating system. There were approximately 20 people working there, in 6 rows of PC computers, 6 to a row.

Darshan-01

My name is Darshan Kothari. d a r s h a n k o t h a r i.

Darshan-02

I live in Jaipur. And my father is from Vishbengal. Ajima Visbengal. Jainism is, what I think is about Ahimsa. What Mahavira taught, ahimsa. And so do I need to describe ahimsa?

Ahimsa is about not disturbing others. And It's very difficult to explain ahimsa (laughing).

Yea, this is the most important, the basic concept in Jainism. Ahimsa is the most important and the most basic concept in Jainism. Ahimsa means, live and let others live. Ahimsa plays an important role in the Jain food. Why we eat vegetarian. Because we don't want others, other animals or living beings, from being cutted down and eaten by us. That is why we prefer vegetarian food. And in vegetarian, we don't prefer zamikand because it contains many living beings, whereas the other plants, they don't contain that much other living beings. That's why we prefer non-zamikand foods. Zamikand foods like potatoes, onions, these are zamikand: tomato ladyfinger are non-zamikand. Banana.

Mangoes are prohibited at other part of the year, because at other part of the year living beings start growing in the mango. that's why we are prohibited in that part of the year. whereas in the earlier part they are preferred because it is fresh at that time. In June and July, mango is prohibited. but I'm not confirmed it is June and July. But that is the reason.

Since I have not eaten other food, I cannot tell you that Jain food is better. But I like Jain food. I have eaten (at fast food such as McDonalds), but the vegetarian. Vegetarian burger. I have eaten at McDonalds, like vegetarian burger, all those things. No it's not ok as long as it's vegetarian. But the culture in India is changing. So we may go with that, but it's not allowed. My father and mother don't eat at McDonalds, or anything like that. But my friends who are not Jain they eat there. So sometimes I also. But it is not preferred in the family.

Yea there is a big difference (in youth culture) because my colleagues are going outside India. And it's very difficult to find the Jain food outside India, so they prefer to

eat the vegetarian. So it is very difficult. It's difficult to join the other cultures or other groups, those who eat different foods. It's difficult for us.

Its a very difficult, whether I'm (and youth) are playing a role (in changing Jainism). Yea, I'm playing a role in changing the Jainism. But I think that what it is, is better. And what we are adapting, they are impurities. And I don't prefer them. I prefer to be a strict Jain.

Darshan-03

Yea I prefer to be traditional. There are traditional youths, and some are not traditional.

Darshan-04

And we have reasons why we are eating this Jain food. And I prefer since we have these reasons, because in other communities, other religions, there are myths. But in Jainism there is a reason for everything we are doing. There is exists a reason. So I don't want to change it. I don't think the Jainism need to change anything, needs to adapt anything.

No I am not planning to learn Sanskrit. The Jain documents are in Prakrit. My father, my great grandparents, my mother, the family taught me the Jainism. And even we have a (bak *shallah*) where we were taught Jainism. Like in the summers vacations a bak shallah is organized by the society to teach the young children about Jainism. There I learned Jainism. Let me think, this is an important question.

Darshan-05

So, I would like you all to know about the Jainism. I won't force you to follow Jainism. But of course you should know about the Jainism. It's not about worshipping God, or something like that. It's a concept, a very nice concept. Where ahimsa is the main concept of Jainism, ahimsa is a very nice concept. Which base of the ahimsa is "live and let others live." So when you start doing this you will feel the inner peace. So that's the basic concept of the Jainism. That's why I would like tell to at least know Jainism.

Surendar Kumar

7/24/2013

I am leaving this transcription in the form I received it from Niranjan Arole. He graciously helped with this project. I uploaded all of the footage to YouTube. Niranjan sent the document below.

Interviewer – First tell us your name and please spell it for us. You can speak in Hindi.

Person – My name is Surendar Kumar, S U R E N D A R. I live in Jaipur, Rajasthan. I work as a chief editor of a Jain English newspaper called 'good morning India,' which is a renowned Jain newspaper. We mostly publish news for Jain Community. It usually contains activities, diets, cuisines, 'Chaturmaas' (four months, in which they are on strict

diet, fast and lots of festivals), 'Diksha' (preparation or consecration for a religious ceremony or festival), construction of temples by Jain saints.

I – What is Jain religion?

P – Jain religion is not a single religion; (2:03) it is a people's religion. (2:05:03) It's a religion of every person, (2:09) who believes in 'Ahimsa' (nonviolence), brotherhood, creed, love and positive thinking. (2:19) It's for everyone who believes in these principles (2:20s) In Jainism, we consider five gods as topmost. Those are Arihants, Sidhyas, Upadhyas, Acharyas and Sadhus. We bow to them daily (here bow is used as more of worshiping). It is the only religion which is based on non-violence. That's the main principle of the religion. Jain religion teaches us various things, such as nonviolence, love, unity. And if we followed these principles then world would be a better place. There have been 24 'Thirthankars' (more of saints, Messiah or gods) and we celebrate their all *pancha-kalyanak* (five auspicious events). And Jain religion is so vast, that the other religions as Hindu-Vaishnavas, their saints give highest importance to nonviolence, which is a Jain principle. I feel very proud of this fact.

God Mahaveer is considered as most significant god as he was the 24th 'Tirthankar.' I consider that if the whole world follows the five principles of god Mahaveer, then there won't be any violence, corruption, anarchy, confusion or disorder. There will be nonviolence, unity and love everywhere.

I – What is Jain cuisine/diet? And what are the traditions of Jain food.

P – (4:51) The cuisine of Jain food religion is pure and nourishing. This is a proud fact that only Jain food is available with all other cuisines in all restaurants and three five star

hotels all across the globe. (4:54) People prefer this food as it is pure, nourishing and it is made by following principles of purity, morality and nonviolence.(5:21) In Jain food we don't consume 'ab-haksya' (direct translation – inedible, here it means foods like meet, eggs etc.). We only eat nutritious food.

(5:38) Jain food, which is consumed by Jain saints, is made up by following a practice, in which they eat vegetarian food from various homes.

(5:45) The main aim of this (5:47) is that the food made for saints is prepared with great care, purity and sacredness. (5:59) And after the food is consumed by the Jain saints, we eat it, considering it as '*Prasad*' (gift/food by god).

(6:05) The reason, that Jain Saints take food from different homes is that there shouldn't be much of burden on one single family and so that the saints can visit their followers.(6:26) It also gives message that saints came to meet their followers, which is a very happy event for the followers of Jain religion.

(6:52) Even in preparing Jain food, principles of nonviolence are followed. (7:00) Jain food is respected by the whole world. The current movement of vegetarian food in western countries is attracted towards Jain food.(7:27) It also helps people with their health. (7:33) I take the pride that the world prefers Jain cuisine and it is becoming international food. (7:45) And the day is not far when, Jain cuisine will be world's cuisine.(7:52)

I – Now, would you like to say some things to Americans and Jains in America.

P – I would like to say to all, that when we all start to follow Jain principles, there will be nonviolence, love, unity and brotherhood everywhere. I request, I appeal all the people to follow Jain principles and make their lives happy, Thank you!

Translated by – Niranjan Arole 925-596-8633

(Notes in the bracket are for understanding and not the translation of the video)

Sadhvis Preeti and Sadhvi Maharaja

7/20/2013

This interview took place at a compound managed by the Khatar Gaccg. It was a few blocks away from the Shivjiram Bhawan. The translation of the interview below was performed by Niranjan Arole. Again, I am leaving it intact as I received it from him. As one might see, there are often many different spellings of Hindi words when transcribed into English.

S1 (old) – (0:01) Why water is boiled? (0:07) Because microorganisms are present in water and once water is boiled there won't be any microorganisms for next 9 hours, so there won't be any violence. This is the religion of nonviolence.(0:22)

S2 (young) – He's asking what is the relation of that with religion. Why not 'not boiled' water?

S1 –(0:29) if we drink water from wells, rivers and taps, there are organisms that born and die in that water. (0:41) And if we drink that water, in which they died then that is an impurity for us.(0:51) In fact it is stated in science that there are 36450 organisms present in a single drop of water.(1:00) And we consume water in great quantities. The more water we drink the more we break rules of 'Karma' and it results in increasing our sins.(1:08)

Indian Interviewer – As Sadhus go for Gochri, does Sadhvis also go for Gochri?

S2 – Yes, just like that. There are no differences.

S1 – Jain Sadhus, which are Shvetambaras (a community - direct translation white skies, I don't think that they mean white skies) hold Gochri in Patra (Utensils). Digambaras (another community – literal meaning one who wears nothing but sky) don't hold gochri in Patras but they hold it in their hands.(2:51) When Sadhus go for gochri, two sadhus go together,(2:55) when Sadhvis go for gochri, in the presence of the god' then 3 sadhvis will go together. (3:00) If a gentleman is alone at the home, Sadhvis don't go there.(3:05) If there is a lady in the home, Sadhvis go there.(3:08) If there is only a man, then Sadhvis will turn back and go, (3:13) this is god's will.(3:14)

S2 – It is in Jainism, that Sadhus and Sadhvis can go directly into kitchen. If you look at other Sadhus (of other religions), Saints or Fakirs, they don't have permission to go to the kitchen.

II – He's asking, is there any difference between food before Diksha and food after Diksha? He's especially concentrating on taste. He also asks whether you have to sacrifice the taste or you can still enjoy food of your taste, like sacrificing salt after Diksha.

S1 – Salt is used. 'Sansaris' (common people, non Diksha, literal meaning can be family guy or common person), call it Bhojan (lunch/dinner). For Sadhus it is gochri. It is like a cow. As cow goes to various places and eats little bit from each place and as donkeys eat a lot from same place. This is the difference between a Sadhu and a normal person. If a gochri is taken from one place today, the sadhu will again get gochri from that place. If

there is food for two people, sadhu will take minimum or least of it. And when a normal person eats at someone's place, he will eat a lot.(6:17) Also sadhu will never eat for taste; the one who'll eat for taste is not Sadhu but a selfish person. (6:21) And Sadhus don't take salt after cooking food, as it pollutes the food. To avoid the contamination, Sadhus don't add anything once the food is cooked.(6:35)

S2 – Does he understand it?

II – Yes.

II – He's next question is about fasting. Are there certain times in the year for fast? May be Chaturmaas? Which food they consume during fast?

S1 – In Jain religion, fasting is very important. Champa-Sadhvika had 6 months of fast during King Akbar's period. Once Akbar asked, why there are so many crowds around her. People answered, this Sadhvi is doing for 6 months. Akbar was Muslim, he said, even Muslim kids easily follow Rojas for months, what's so special about her. Then people said, fasts of Jains are very strict in which, they only drink boiled water from 10AM to 6 PM after that they don't even consume water. The water is boiled for 3 times first, so that there won't be any impurity and this water also helps people to get healthy.

II – Is there anything special about fasts during Chaturmaas?

S1 – There is nothing special. One can fast anytime, but it is done more often during Chaturmaas. Since one is on fast, they don't have to use restrooms often, which helps them not to sin. Also since they don't eat, there is no question about illness caused by food. Even doctors say that, one should fast once every eight days. And fasting is also helpful for our health.

S2 – In Jains, just like Muslim kids who follow Rojas, Jain kids also fast once every eight days. And on the day of Samvatsari, even little kids decide to fast at least that day. For Jains, these two months are very important.

II – They are asking, what is the message for young people, as what is the importance of Diksha and Sanyam (Patience), especially for today's generation.

S1 – If one takes Diksha, which helps him protecting 6 elements. After waking up, people sweep their homes; this is violence against earth. People operate stoves, this is violence against fire, people also use tap, which is also violence against water. People cut vegetables, which are violence against nature. Diksha helps us to prevent them.

One person cooks and other eats, in this, person who cooks, thinks, I have prepared very nice food. This will contaminate the food and eating this contaminated food will be a sin of the person who eats it.

S2 – The Diksha of Jain Sadhus is sin-less and sacred. The Diksha gets rid of all the sin you've done before Diksha and it says to avoid sins, or conditions where you have to sin. There is very high importance for sacrifice. The main aim is there shouldn't be any harm to any organisms.

This Kaliyug (the current world or specifically current condition of world), it is there because of the praying and worshipping of Jain saints. World's current downfalls as earthquakes are going to happen, but whoever is alive are because of Jain saint's worshipping and prayers.

S1 – There are great tides in the ocean which can destroy humans, but because of praying of these Jain saints, these tides, which are biggest on new-moons night, are slowed down

as gods listen to the prayers of Jain saints. There won't be anyone alive if there are no Jain saints.

II – He's asking, that you took Diksha because of care and love towards other organisms, it is also stated that Sadhus take Diksha for their redemption from this world. Is redemption also the reason you took Diksha? Or is it just love towards the other animals?

S2 – The god is watching everything, if we are thinking about helping others, the god will redeem us. Our today's aim is to help out redemption while helping others to survive, thrive. We walk from places to places and towns to towns for this aim only, to help more and more people. And our final aim is the redemption. To leave this entire chaotic world and to meet the Parampita (Literal translation – father of forefathers, here it means god).

II – Now, they would like to know your names.

S2 – This is Sadhvi Sindharma Maharaja and she belongs to Vallabha Samudaya (community), here we are all Vallabhas and my name is Sadhvi Preeti.

II – His question is, is it difficult for ladies to get Diksha or is it as gents only?

S2 – In today's world, women are ahead of men in all fields. The patience and tolerance in women is not present in men. And when a lady decides to do something, she will do it. It might be difficult for men to follow principles, but it is not so difficult for women. So, there is no trouble for women.

II – After following Diksha, are there any difficulties related food, which can make following Diksha difficult?

S1 – (20:11) There are troubles, but when Sadhu takes gochris and they follow Diksha, they eat for nourishment not for taste. This changes everything, including the attitude

toward the problems. (20:31) My life is meant for sacrifice; therefore if I eat what I get, that is Sadhuvriti (Saint like behavior) and if I don't then that is Tapovriti. (20:42)

Lord Adinath used to go every day for gochri after he took Diksha. In his gochri people used to gift him with elephants, horses, diamonds and pearls etc. Therefore, he was unable to eat for 12 months. When someone offered him food after 12 months, he ate. Till that time he was on a fast.

As long as there is energy or strength in body, anything can be achieved. If there is no strength, nothing can be achieved. All this is for sacrifice; food is not for taste but for nourishment. If someone ate a lot then the person will feel lazy and will sleep wasting his energy.

S2 – There are around 10000 Sadhus and Sadhvis all over in India. The sacrifice is so important that, till today no Sadhu or Sadhvi have lived on without Chaturmaas fast and food. Even in today's inflation people never ignore Jain Sadhus. And there is no worry for Jain Sadhus about food.

S1 – Even non Jain people treat Jain Sadhus with respect. They will give whatever they have made to Sadhus. Sadhus decide what is edible, what's not or if it's a sin if we ate at certain place. There are no distresses to Jain Sadhus from clothing to food as Jain community is everywhere and ready to help them, to take care of them.

II – Would you like to add something from your side?

S1 – Once Jain Sadhus were travelling with young Sadhus and Sadhvis of 12-13 years of age. They were walking very great distances when a person came and ask whether he can help them by showing way to their destination. Sadhus accepted and started following the

man, but unfortunately the man forgot the way and they were lost in wilderness. The young Sadhus and Sadhvis were hungry and they were unable to go forward. So the Sadhus started chanting Mantras, after sometimes a vehicle came there and the people from the vehicle asked that what they were doing in forest. The people from vehicle helped those Jain Sadhus by provided by boiled water and gochris. They also fed the person. It says that gods also help troubled people.

S2 – Due to Sadhus’ sacrifice and patience even gods came to help them. There’s still reliance in Jain religion. It’s just that people should have faith.

Translation by – Niranjan Arole 925-596-8633. Feel free to contact if you have any doubts. Matter in brackets is for explanation and was not present in video.

Saint Chandraprabhu

7/28/2013

This interview took place at the home of Ameeta Jain. This man, along with two other sadhus, stayed the duration of their visit to Jaipur at this location. They were also the participating svetambar sadhus at the historic puja with the digambara Jains. Saint Chandraprabhu was the primary speaker at the puja. Everywhere people remarked about how lucky, blessed, and auspicious they were in his presence. Again, I leave the transcription as I received it from Niranjan Arole.

Translation of Eminent Sadhu <http://youtu.be/76eaigq7Z1c>

Sadhu – We’ll be needing microphone or something, right? Otherwise we won’t be able to record.

Indian Man – Since you are a Sadhu, he didn't place the microphone.

S – Oh, but otherwise we won't be able to record. Sound quality won't be good either.

IM – They interviewed a Tapasvi Sadhvi before, she didn't allowed them the set it up on ground either.

S – She was a Tapasvi.

Indian Lady – Could you tell us your name and a little bit about yourself?

S – My name is Saint Chandraprabhu. I am currently 51 years old. I took Sanyas (renouncing life and devoting life towards god) around 15 or 16. It's about 35 years, since I became saint. I have written around 200 books which are published and are available in different countries. I also have done work on around 1000s of DVDs and VCDs of various prayers and preaching.

IL – The first question for you is, since these people are researching on Jain diet, what is your diet, how do you follow gochri? And what food is accepted? Also what is the difference between your food and Shravakas' (followers') food?

S – (4:15) A Jain Saint can consume food which is right or equal for his followers.(4:25) Jain saints eat food that is prepared today that is fresh and pure.(4:28) They don't eat anything which is specially made for them and anything that grow under soil (such as onions) (4:34). (4:35)We call it Satvagrahan (consumption of nutritional food) and it is Satvik (nutritious), shudha (pure) and Pavitra (sacred) (4:42). (4:44) We can eat this food twice a day (5:02).

IL – This is relates to diet only. There are lot of Vrats (religious vows, practices but in this case it mean fasts). So which one do you follow?

S – (5:19) We mandatorily follow fast from sunset to sunrise. (5:25) It's around 12 hours when we don't consume water (5:33). (5:36) Other fasts are 24 hours one, in which nothing can be consumed as food, drinks as tea, coffee or juice. Only boiled water can be consumed. (6:04) And Jain people do it for their own peace, purification of body and soul. (6:19)

IL – How many kinds/types of fasts are there?

S – (6:31) Fasting is not just starvation for 24 hours. (6:38) God Mahaveer says, if you eat little less than your hunger, it is also a kind of Tapasya (same meaning as Vrat). (6:54) In Jainism it is called as Unodari. (7:00) But, apart from that, if you don't get angry or you don't demand anything or you don't have hunger for power or praising, it is also a tapasya (7:13). In fact god says if you bow before your parents in the morning, it is also a type of tapasya.

Apart from these, If you are a family person and on eve of Chaturthi (4th day of month in Hindu calendar). If you sleep alone or not together with your spouse, it is also tapasya. There are various types of vrats but fasting is the easiest one.

IL – When you became a saint and renounced the attractions of the world, is that also a tapasya?

S – This is one of the greatest Tapasya. A person leaves everything for god, And since saints do that they are praised on highest levels. People who cannot do it, they follow different ways to do it. And since the saints leave the common life of happiness this is the greatest one.

IL – Do you read? Also what kind of literature you read and in which language?

S – We do Swadhyaya (Self Study) in Sanskrit, Hindi and Prakrit. We study Vedas, epics and religious books. But on personal level, I don't read much, I meditate more. Because, I believe, reading is external knowledge, but meditation is your own knowledge.

IL – There is a very beautiful question here. Jains consider all organisms are same, equal and are morally equivalent. Could you tell us more about it?

S – Jain religion accepts freedom of each animal. Each animal is free, but because of his karma, he lives in his conditions. But basically it's free. And since everyone is free, there is on lesser ones or greater ones.

(9:52) There is a short poem in jainism, *recites poem*. (10:02) The poem says the jeev (spirit, energy, soul) of the Thirthankars is same energy as mine. And my energy is of Thirthankars. (10:11) The only difference is of karma and the body, but there is no difference between soul and energy (10:23). As if there is a gold bracelet. It doesn't matter whether it belongs to you or me but the gold inside is same. The only difference is the shape or form that we give. It's all same in god's eyes.

IL – Five principles of Jainism as truth, non-violence and celibacy. Do all sadhus follow them completely?

S – (11:12) Whenever a person becomes a sadhu he has to follow - Nonviolence, truth, non-stealing non possessiveness and celibacy. (11:20) They are required to follow them. (11:23) We cannot say that everybody follows them with the seriousness compared to time of god Mahaveer. (11:36) But sadhus try to follow them with full power. (11:48) The thoughts behind it is that if I stopped even a single one of them, I will not be worthy of my sainthood. In order to keep respect of the sainthood, sadhus follow the

principles.(12:02) There are five mahavrats (greater vows in this case) for saints and 5 anuvrats (lesser vows) for common people .(12:07) There might be a possibility that people try to follow mahavrats but due to their difficulty they try to follow the middle of it which is greater than anuvrats and lesser than mahavrats.(12:26) It totally depends on the person's dedication (12:34).

IL – Do normal Jain people also have to follow them?

S – Not just Jains, but all people should follow them. Because nonviolence is not just a Jain principle, it's world's need. Truth is essential for everyone, non-stealing is principle of humans and non-perverseness is about respect and purity. Being in own limits is the requirement of humans. So these principles are not just for Jains but also for everyone. Mahaveer says no matter you are Jain or Brahmin or Kshatriya (Hindu castes), Jainism means living with respect toward other. It is not a religion but a lifestyle based on the five principles.

IL – The next question is, in western countries, they believe that the path of liberation requires one to remove all earthy involvements and discipline one's thoughts and passions. Is it true? Also please tell us about your path of liberation.

S – Every religion has studied their path of liberation. But when you ask what could be our path of liberation, I'd say even though you are living in world, renounce the attractions of the world. This is the prime path of liberation. Even though we live with spouse, kids, family, our soul knows that we came alone and we'll go alone. This is just the time that we stay together and spend time. Thinking like this is the first step towards liberation. One should also accept that there is nothing such as permanent. One should

accept that everything changes including family, land, money etc. One should remember that he came alone and he'll go alone. He should be pure and positive in character. This is the easiest path of liberation.

IL – This is an interesting question. Is Samadhi Maran (consciously and intentionally leaving one's body at time of liberation) important? Is it required and how it is done?

S – (16:42) Samadhi maran means, when a person's body is not useful anymore and he thinks that he reached pinnacle of his life, such person consciously leaves his body for enlighten.(17:06) In order to do so, he starts fasting, when the nutrition is stopped, body slows down the working and eventually he's soul leaves the body (17:23). It is important for the people who think they are satisfied with their life and they had a fulfilling life.

IL – It is about Sadhus Yoj (cutting hair). Why it is necessary?

S – Yoj is a test of Sadhus patience and determination. Even someone cut down all his hair he still should not sway away from his aims. But it's not necessary that if one doesn't do it he don't have patience. It's just that he should test himself for how much patient he is. It's just a test for patience that's all, there's nothing else about it.

IL – Cycle of life and death keeps us away from Nirvana (liberation). Karma is the main cause of the cycle. Can you please describe Nirjara and Keval Gyan?

S – (19:26) Sansar means cycle of life and death that goes up and down. There is anger, jealousy because of these we come and go.(19:44) The question is can we get free from it. (19:58) Yes, there is a way.(20:01) The way is when a person decides that he wants liberation, then in order to go there he have to cut down the feelings towards the world. They are the feelings towards the family, fame and money.(20:38) If a person asks 'I

want happiness.’ God says 1st get rid of “I” as it is ego.(21:03) Then get rid of the “want,” because it is a desire. If you want freedom, be free from all possessions; free you from people and relations and you’ll be free.(21:12) So if you take away the “I” and the “want,” then all that is left is happiness. Free yourself from it and that Nirjara and Moksha.(21:22)

IL – He curious about Jain food and its taste. Since it is blunt and tasteless, do we have to eat it? Why do we have to eat it?

S – (22:40)The Jain food is very tasty.(20:43) You foreigners don’t know what tasty means. (20:46) You might have 10 flavors but in India we have 10 flavors per dish (20:53).

(23:01) In India, we vegetarians know about 500 types of flavors, which is way more than you people (23:18). (23:26) Jainism is a ritual which requires you to eat the food as a tapasya (23:40).

IL – The last question is would you like to say something to Jain youths and audience in USA?

S – (23:56) Even if a person lives in India or in America. It never makes any difference (24:02). (24:08) I’ll say to my Jain brothers that don’t think Jainism as religion or culture it is a lifestyle. If you can live this lifestyle then it doesn’t matter that you live in India or America. (12:28) Only principles are you should be vegetarian, be truthful and help others.(12:43) This is Jainism for Indians and Americans. (12:49) Thank you

Translated by Niranjan Arole (925-596-8633)

Info in bracket is only for explanation and not from video