

Research Paper-4

**Title: Modernity, Postmodernity & Jainism**

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## **Modernity, Postmodernity & Jainism**

Despite being not a field of my interest I am writing a paper on Modernity, due to my topic of PhD research which is: Jain Science and Spirituality in **Modern** Context. Thankfully a prominent scholar Dr. Dayanand Bhargava, asked me to search and know about what exactly modernity is, so that I can take my research work forward, in a more efficient way.

As I am reading and searching for books, essays and articles on the same, I am mesmerized by the way information is getting unlocked in front of me and how much ignorance I held within, using any word randomly without even trying to even think of its roots and history. Still this is my encounter and definition of modernity: in our daily routine all of us use this term – MODERN, in our sentences. For example: I have a modern thinking, she wears modern clothes, stop being an old style, be a little modern etc. without knowing what exactly modernity is?

What common people like us don't know is that modernity has to do something with the history of the world, especially Europe. Modernity by itself is a very abstract concept, which can be associated with all new experiences in history. It is largely temporal because what is modern today is the old or obsolete tomorrow. Modernity is said to be logic of negation because it tends to give importance to the present over the past, and at the same time also frowns over the present with respect to the future.<sup>1</sup>

### **What is Modernity & its history**

Modernity is a term of art used in the humanities and social sciences to designate both a historical period (the modern era), as well as the ensemble of particular socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices that arose in post-medieval Europe and have developed since, in various ways and at various times, around the world.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)

<sup>2</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity> (Retrieved on 07/12/2016 @ 4:30 PM)

As a historical category, modernity refers to a period marked by a questioning or rejection of tradition; the prioritization of individualism, freedom and formal equality; faith in inevitable social, scientific and technological progress and human perfectibility; rationalization and professionalization. Some writers have suggested there is more than one possible kind of modernity, given the unsettled nature of the term and of history itself.<sup>3</sup>

We can see how individuality is the most important trait nowadays and each one of us is supposed to respect the other one's individuality, irrespective of what is he/she may wearing or looks like or wants to do with his life. Homosexuality is also gaining acceptance under this context. Gay marriages are legal in many countries. The way youth wants freedom now, was never like this before. No one tolerates someone else's interfere in their personal life.

Charles Baudelaire is credited with coining the term "modernity" in his 1864 essay "The Painter of Modern Life," to designate the fleeting, ephemeral experience of life in an urban metropolis, and the responsibility art has, to capture that experience. In this sense, it refers to a particular relationship to time, one characterized by intense historical discontinuity or rupture, openness to the novelty of the future, and a heightened sensitivity to what is unique about the present.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps modernity is the only way forward, because no matter what ideas, oozed from two different generations, will continue to differ. The older generation will continue to raise their brows at the younger one's quest for freedom and equality. Their rational questions must be answered by the previous generation else the youth is not going to have faith in them. At the same time the present generation has to prepare itself to give satisfying answers for each of their doing to the coming generation as well, for I believe the coming generation is going to be even more rebel.

There can be no room for improvement if one is content with the way things are. The same principle applies for society – people must welcome change, or modernity, as it comes because nothing is constant and forward is the only direction we must go. Man must

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity> (Retrieved on 07/12/2016 @ 4:30 PM)

adapt in order to survive, for although tradition has been clearly linked to a person's morality, there is still the undisputable fact that modernity is the solution for progressiveness; in moving forward we can promote open-mindedness, live a more comfortable life and have more freedom.<sup>5</sup>

Though the way morality was defined in the past, differs radically from what morality is today. The way moral values are depleting today is shocking. Earlier people used to struggle a lot to save their character, their ethics, whereas now these traits get compromised to solve even tiny purposes. I believe open mindedness and modernity are almost the same, the confusion starts when some people get confused and start to believe that wearing short clothes or speaking a particular language, for example English in our country, is a sign of modernity and they treat a lady in a saree/suit or a Hindi speaking person, as less modern. Hence modernity needs to be understood properly, by some lesser-developed minds. Modernity gives one the freedom to be oneself, not to get judged by someone else, the so-called modern humans.

Modernity is often argued about as being the culprit for the loss of values. This is not necessarily true, as modernity only promotes being more open-minded and knowledgeable; it is up to a person whether he/she wants to use this opportunity to pursue worthwhile information. As times are getting more and more progressive, we are learning to be more accepting. For example: mental illnesses such as depression are slowly being recognized as actual illnesses and are being treated as such. Many social issues are now openly discussed instead of being kept in the dark. Modernity has enabled people to live more comfortable lives. Communication and wellbeing have been greatly improved by modernity.<sup>6</sup>

From a purely historical perspective however, the society which evolved in Europe after French Revolution, which was a period of far-reaching social and political upheaval in France that lasted from 1789 until 1799, and was partially carried forward by

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<sup>5</sup> <http://studymoose.com/tradition-versus-modernity-essay> (retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:25 PM)

<sup>6</sup> <http://studymoose.com/tradition-versus-modernity-essay> (retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:25 PM)

Napoleon during the later expansion of the French Empire,<sup>7</sup> of 1789 can be termed as modern so much so that there is a marked difference or break in the way of thinking, living and enterprise between societies after and before the French Revolution. The evolution of the society was not a process that happened overnight. The roots of the modern society and its gradual evolution can be traced back to the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

We must thank the French Revolution for our present modern thinking, freedom and individuality. Though we can see that changes that are taking place today in the societies do not require slow evolution, they are rapid and can be seen easily. For example: inter-cast marriages used to create a clutter in families, whereas perhaps within a period of past 10 years, the thinking has been changed and now parents are more accepting towards the choices of their children. One more example is, now parents are more acknowledging towards the choice of study and field of work-interest of their off springs.

The period from that point in history to the French Revolution is termed as the period of intellectual enlightenment when there was a radical change in philosophy, science, politics, arts and culture. It was on these new forms of knowledge that the foundation of the modern society was based.<sup>9</sup>

From the above description we must notice that modernity is related to openness of thoughts, where a modern person shows acceptability towards different personalities and point of views regardless of what he/she may think about the same hence in short modernity can be called – ‘changing with times.’

The modern era has unfolded in the shadow of the French Revolution. The Revolution resulted in the suppression of the feudal system, the emancipation of the individual, the greater division of landed property, the abolition of the privileges of noble birth and the establishment of equality. The French Revolution

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<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) (Retrieved on 16/12/2016 @ 4:30 PM)

<sup>8</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

differed from other revolutions in being not merely national, for it aimed at benefiting all humanity.<sup>10</sup>

Modernity is change that may pinch as people are so used of the old customs that they don't want to adopt newer concepts and find it difficult to adapt accordingly. A general example can be taken from the current situation of demonetization in India, where cashless transactions seem to be the need of the hour to prevent black money. Hence people have to learn to use credit card and e-wallet, whereas the people, who are accustomed to these, are very few. Almost everyone from the older generation is cribbing as they don't want to learn how to use them and then they have a doubt to get cheated through cyber crime i.e. hacking etc. But as one may assume that within a few years these concepts will replace transactions that involve cash and everyone will be used to of it. So we can call this example the modern way of spending one's money.

Modernity can be a topic of long argument but it is good until one's moral values and conscience are not at stake, here I want to make it clear that being modern is not bad of course but there are many people in the society who take it in a wrong way and use this concept to fulfill their selfish needs by calling themselves modern. For example- having an extra marital affair, out of lust, cannot be modern; neither exploiting someone sexually for the sake of any particular excuse.

Rousseau, an eighteenth century Genevan philosopher, composer and writer,<sup>11</sup> claims that humans are essentially benevolent by nature. He believed in the concept that devoid of civilization, human beings are essentially peaceful and egalitarian and live in harmony with the environment.<sup>12</sup>

There are many other basic changes during the enlightenment. The key ideas, which formed the basis of enlightenment period, were autonomy and emancipation, progress and the improvement of history and universalism. The development of scientific

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<sup>10</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French\\_Revolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Revolution) (Retrieved on 16/12/2016 @ 4:30 PM)

<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques\\_Rousseau](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Jacques_Rousseau) (Retrieved on 17/12/2016 @ 11:20 AM)

<sup>12</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)

knowledge gave rise to religious skepticism. People were no longer willing to submit blindly to the dictates of ordained religion. In other words they attained emancipation from the shackles of religion that had governed almost all aspects of their lives. This emancipation led to autonomy of the individual.<sup>13</sup>

The above Para explains that the people who belong to the current times, like myself, are lucky that they have the right to raise honest questions and seek for their answers, though they are rare but as I can observe their numbers are increasing rapidly. The upcoming generation of our children is not going to compromise at any cost, if their queries would not be answered. As in earlier times the inquirers were not only criticized but used to get punishment also.

Individuals began to decide for themselves instead of submitting to an external authority such as religion. The people now decided by themselves what kind of authority, rules and regulation would be good for them, and such authority must be natural and not supernatural. Enlightenment encouraged criticism. Enlightened thinkers did not hold anything sacred and freely criticized, questioned, examined and challenged all dogmas and institutions in their search for betterment or progress. Thinkers such as Voltaire, a French Enlightenment writer, historian, and philosopher famous for his wit, his attacks on the established Catholic Church, and his advocacy of freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and separation of church and state,<sup>14</sup> defended reason and rationalism against institutionalized superstition and tyranny.<sup>15</sup>

What would be the queries of people after say hundred, two hundred or three hundred years, for at that time thinking of this era would be obsolete? Will their rationality be different? Is human searching for freedom through modernity? If yes, why mental diseases, breakups are so common and increasing rapidly? Is modernity taking away our peace of mind?

As I was thinking and discussing about the Modernity paper with my daughter; recently I visited a Jain guru along with her, who offered her to teach Jain philosophy, instantly me and my daughter

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Voltaire> (Retrieved on 17/12/2016 @ 2:30 PM)

<sup>15</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)

had the similar thought that neither I am going to send her to that guru nor she would come on her own as they have an orthodox way of teaching which is not understandable by the youth. And my daughter later conveyed that mom I will only study through you. Whereas I found out that I have that maturity that I can describe the youth the teachings of Jain philosophy in a modern way, that is in a simple language, keeping in mind their perspective and way of life. As we were moving out of the temple my daughter said, 'mom this can be called teaching Jainism in a modern way' and both of us started smiling.

Just like everything else modernity also comes with its own pros and cons. If we discuss about moral values, the way our parents used to think about relationships and openness, we used to differ with them. And now our children have an even more open view about relationships, where there is even more acceptance and liberty. Whereas earlier relationships were based on fear of elders and society, current relationships are fearless and more expressive and with (perhaps) the least care of the society, as society is a third person that has nothing to do with an individual's life. People are becoming more self-centered as they think peeping into others' life only brings unhappiness and unnecessary tensions and vice versa.

The scientific revolution during the period of the French Revolution, culminating in the work of Isaac Newton, presented a very practical and objective view of the natural world to people at large, and science came to be regarded very highly. Scientific inquiry was gradually extended to cover new social, political and cultural areas. Such studies were oriented around the cause and effect approach of naturalism (the philosophical belief that everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted).<sup>16</sup> Control of prejudice was also deemed to be essential to make them value free. Enlightenment thinking emphasized the importance of reason and rationality in organization and development of knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Earlier people used to come to their relatives' house without any prior notice, whereas in modern times people are so busy that they don't welcome any uninformed guest. Families are shrinking rapidly as

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<sup>16</sup> Definition at [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (Retrieved on 20/12/2016 @ 2:15 PM)

<sup>17</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)



people are neither ready to accommodate with many people nor they tolerate anyone else's interference in their lives. Where they have to be answerable about almost each of their action to their elders. Though this is increasing their personal space but they are becoming more solitary in their lives. They don't have anyone to share their feelings and emotions. Perhaps this is the reason that divorce rates, cases of depression etc. are also increasing.

As I am contemplating over it, I can analyze that there lie few years as link, between the pre modern and modern times, and each one is right from its point of view. For example: in earlier days there used to be big, joint families with many people living under one roof, men used to have joint family business and women used to complete the household chores either together or each used to have a responsibility for a particular task, like preparing food, washing clothes, cleaning of the house and utensils; having limited desires and spending their free time either gossiping about the other women and relatives or doing the extra work like sewing clothes, grinding spices etc. All children used to grow together, going to school together. If there used to be a conflict in husband-wife or between two brothers, the elders used to pacify them with their experience. Gradually, over the years, the familial circumstances started taking bitter shape as one member or the other had an ego problem or a different interest in business or had an inter-cast marriage (which was unaccepted by the whole family) or was not ready to be answerable for each of his doing or third person interference and so on...

Slowly people started to think its better to move out and live a peaceful, nuclear, family life (which was better for their growing up children as well) rather than staying in a negative, manipulative joint family atmosphere and through, making themselves distant, this they retained their lost love towards their whole family. Over a period of, say 10-20 years this became a trend and now we can rarely see big, joint families. Hence increase of nuclear families benefitted people in a way where each member is free in his/her own space, carrying on their own responsibilities, expanding their personalities by doing whatever they want. As everything has its own pros and cons, now parents have to look after their children on their own, along with looking after the household. Anyways it's always better to be lovingly distant rather than staying together with no or lesser peace of mind. This way we can clearly see modernity is not totally bad, it has to arrive with the passing of time, and no one can stop it.

With modernity people began to believe that they could better their own lot through more scientific and rational approach to everything. People began to believe in change, development and progress --- all basic

tenets of modernity, as we know it today. Autonomy to decide for their own good, gave the people the right to choose the form of authority that could lead them as a society or community towards better future and progress.<sup>18</sup>

Of course modernity started with simplifying things and having a sense of self-identity but in the current times modernity has its own boundaries; where people have almost surrendered their freethinking to media, gossiping news, blind following of religions and misguiding cinema. Perhaps again a revolution is needed to get back the self-worth of the masses.

Modernity is a post-traditional order, but not one in which the sureties of tradition have been replaced by the certitude of rational knowledge. Modernity is a risk culture. Under conditions of modernity, the future is continually drawn into the present by means of the reflexive organization of knowledge environments.<sup>19</sup>

Recently I was going through an article on Internet titled, '10 things you should not do being modern', to my surprise the first thing was - how step out of a car? I wondered about would these kinds of articles decide how should I move out of my car? If things will keep going like this no wonder we will have a future of people who have completely dependent thinking on media etc. with no thoughts of their own. Else also the way certain product base agencies are affecting people through their advertisements, pushing them to buy their products through controlling people's emotions, is miraculous and does not indicate a good sign.

Modernity reduces the overall riskiness of certain areas and modes of life, yet at the same time introduces new risk parameters largely or completely unknown to previous eras. In high modernity, the influence of distant happenings on proximate events, and on intimacies of the self, becomes more and more commonplace.<sup>20</sup>

No doubt things have become much smoother now, like communicating with a daughter in another country is so easy that it doesn't seem that the child is that far away. Getting in touch with one's old friends and relatives has become frequent through social media websites like Facebook and Twitter, with everyone sharing their family's vacation pictures, or where did they had dinner last night or how is a particular

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<sup>18</sup> <http://studymoose.com/modernity-and-literature-essay> (Retrieved on 14/12/2016 @ 6:40 PM)

<sup>19</sup> Giddens Anthony. Modernity and Self Identity (MASI). Stanford University Press, California, 1991. pp. 2,3

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

person feeling right now etc. But on the contrary everyone has become more expressive and is ready to share his/her innermost feelings, desires, dreams and frustrations, anger on these sites. Which was not so in early times, of course people used to lead a happier, healthier lives then also, but now these sites have become an integral part of everyone so much so that people cannot live without them.

The more tradition loses its hold, and the more daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and global, the more individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options. One might imagine that 'lifestyle' refers only to the pursuits of the more affluent groups or classes. The poor are more or less completely excluded from the possibility of making lifestyle choices.<sup>21</sup>

When someone from a smaller town moves to a metropolitan city of the same country, he finds himself stunned with the speedy, competitive life in big cities, with no one to talk to and everyone seems so busy and self-centered that the newer person finds it quite difficult to adjust. Those who are strong or needy enough to adjust, do so, else there are many who returned to their villages. Those who stay, change themselves according to the lifestyle of the city, though they keep missing their old style but they find themselves with no choice. Here modernity seems to be a compulsion on that particular person.

Modernity, one should not forget, produces difference, exclusion and marginalization. Holding out the possibility of emancipation, modern institutions at the same time create mechanisms of suppression, rather than actualization, of self.<sup>22</sup>

From the above Para we can easily analyze that nowadays modernity is about imposing what a particular person or institution think is right. Here the true thoughts of a person do not matter. What matters is how in a particular way one must think or react to a specific situation. None is bothered about the self-realization or self-introspection.

Personal, meaninglessness – the feeling that life has nothing worthwhile to offer – becomes a fundamental psychic problem in circumstances of late modernity. We should understand this phenomenon in terms of repression of moral questions which day-to-day life poses, but which are denied answers. 'Existential isolation' is not so much a separation of individuals from others as a separation of from the moral resources necessary to live a full and satisfying existence.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. pp. 6

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. pp. 9

For example – wearing Indian traditional clothes like: saree and suit, may have been a part of life of a woman; but if she moves to a bigger city and finds the job of a security guard, she has to wear the uniform of the same, which is trouser and shirt, especially in front of her in-laws, for a traditional woman it can be big deal and so do for her in-laws.

Girls from smaller towns with bigger dreams in their eyes move to Mumbai to become film stars without knowing how much exploitation lies in this industry. Few of them compromise by keeping their moral-values at stake, to get work. Some succeed and some go back after exploitation.

The world of high modernity certainly stretches out well beyond the milieu of individual activities and personal engagements. It also intrudes deeply into the heart of self-identity and personal feelings.<sup>24</sup>

If we contemplate seriously over modernity, we find that this race is all about self-identity, with thoughts like how am I looking in this particular dress or haircut; or what would people think or say about me, with a desire of, 'they must think and talk positive of me.' Here it is not about how do I think or feel, or what do I want, but how would people think of me? This is the control of modernity which is I must say not healthy at all. People may go in depression if they find themselves unfit in the so-called modern society and the rest can be fulfilled by the taunting comments of the classmates or colleagues.

Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question, 'How shall I live?' has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat – and many other things – as well as interpreted within the temporal unfolding of self-identity.<sup>25</sup>

The original progenitors of modern science and philosophy believed themselves to be preparing the way for securely founded knowledge of the social and natural worlds; the claims of reason were due to overcome the dogmas of tradition, offering a sense of certitude in place of arbitrary character of habit and custom. But the reflexivity of modernity actually undermines the certainty of knowledge, even in the core domains of natural science.<sup>26</sup>

Whenever someone does a particular thing he thinks this is the only best way through which this could have been done. Without giving much thought to what his ancestors did, was also done with lots of patience, contemplation and rational thinking. In these terms of course

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. pp. 12

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. pp. 14

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. pp. 21

we can say that the world was still growing when there was no modernity, though bound in conventional systems, things were still moving.

Everyone living in the conditions of modernity is affected by a multitude of abstract systems, and can at best process only superficial knowledge of their technicalities.<sup>27</sup>

Modernity has limited the capabilities of humans; the way earlier people were used to of struggles is not the same now. For example – today as soon as we open our eyes in morning, we have a gas stove in our kitchen to make tea instantly. We have refrigerators to keep edibles stored for a longer duration. Today if we ask someone about how to lit a conventional stove, or how to preserve food items without using a fridge, obviously we won't be able to tell.

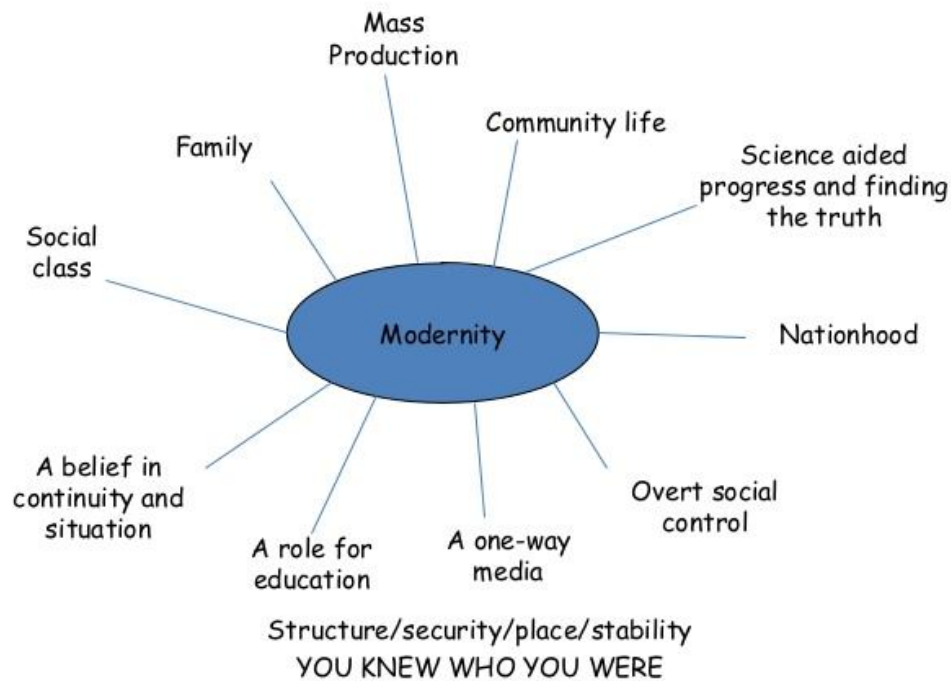
How beautifully the author, Anthony Giddens, has described the importance of language in human history and modernity. When he says, 'Virtually all-human experience is mediated – through socialization and in particular the acquisition of language. For human life, language is the prime and original means of time-space distancing, elevating human activity beyond the immediacy of the experience of animals. The spoken word is a medium, a trace, whose evanescence in time and space is compatible with the preservation of meaning across time-space distances of human mastery of language's structural characteristics.'<sup>28</sup>

Modernity is about how should you behave according to the society and not how do you feel. Think in a social way, not what you think is right. Hence it has become a society of second handers and first handers are mere a frustrated spectators.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid. pp. 22

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp. 23



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We can clearly see the benefits of modernity in the above diagram, where things are getting produced in bulk; there is almost no scarcity of anything, science is progressing booming, people are recognizing the value of education and on the other hand the social control is increasing on a person's life and one way media is influencing the crowd in many manipulating ways.

### **The Consequences of Modernity**

The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion. In both their extensionality and their intentionality the transformations involved in modernity are more profound than most sorts of change characteristic of prior periods. On the extensional plane they have served to establish forms of social interconnection, which span the globe; in intentional terms they have come to alter some of the most intimate and personal features of our day-to-day existence.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.slideshare.net/smccormac7/worksheet-19871745> (Retrieved on 27/01/2017 @ 12:30pm)

<sup>30</sup> Giddens Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1990 pp. 4

When we see the globalizing, rapidly increasing trend of social media, i.e. Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, mobile phones etc., which has transformed the way people used to think and share their emotions, feelings and day-to-day happenings of their lives; it mesmerizes us. And surprisingly it is a transformation that has occurred in the past ten years, so much so that we cannot imagine our lives without them, they seem to have become a body part, where if, any one of them is not working, we find ourselves handicapped. Indeed they have swiped away the traditional way of living, when people used to travel, communicate and live without all these, and it may be surprising for the newer generation that they, too, used to not only survive but also live happily.

Abstract systems have provided a great deal of security in day-to-day life, which was absent in pre-modern orders. A person can board a plane in London and reach Los Angeles some ten hours later and be fairly certain that not only the journey be made safely, but that the plane will arrive quite close to a predetermined time. The passenger may perhaps only have a vague idea of where Los Angeles is, in terms of a global map. Only minimal preparations need to be made for the journey (obtaining passport, visa, air ticket, and money) – no knowledge of the actual trajectory is necessary.<sup>31</sup>

Whereas in earlier times traveling was not only much more time consuming, but also involved many dangers that involved threat to a person's life. Along with risks other tensions were there like if the traveller will get food on the journey or not? What if he falls ill on the way? If some dacoits would loot him etc.?

Trust in abstract systems is the condition of time-space distancing and of the large areas of security in day-to-day life which modern institutions offer as compared to the traditional world.<sup>32</sup> Without a doubt now we can travel long distances more reliably, have a distant, efficient conversation or a business meeting with someone sitting thousands of miles away. One can develop good relationships with one's online friends as well. This way we can see that modernity is not bound to dresses and thinking only, it works beyond and serves well to the humans.

Though modernity brings its own risks, which may be outlined as under:

- Globalization of risk in the sense of intensity: for example, nuclear war can threaten the survival of humanity.<sup>33</sup> The way all nations are focused to own nuclear power is dangerous indeed. It will

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. pp. 112

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. pp. 113

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. pp. 124

take only a wrong step by any nation to start the nuclear war through out the world, which need not to say can erase the whole humanity.

- Globalization of risk in the sense of the expanding number of contingent events, which affect everyone, or at least large numbers of people on the planet; for example, changes in the global division of labor.
- Risk stemming from the created environment, or socialized nature: the infusion of human knowledge into the material environment.
- Awareness of risk as risk: the 'knowledge gaps' in risks cannot be converted into 'certainties' by religious or magical knowledge.<sup>34</sup> Indeed people are unaware of risks that modernity gets with it. For example: In this context I would like to share one of my personal experiences, being a blogger and writer, I have to sit on computer for long hours, to minimize my efforts, I bought an iPad; as soon as I started working on it, I developed cervical pain along with stiff shoulders and neck ache. This is just a tiny example, whereas the modernity is effecting us can be much more hazardous for our health and many other issues like own individual thinking etc.

Anthony Giddens says, 'what I have termed the intensity of risk is surely the basic element in the 'menacing appearance' of the circumstances in which we live today. The possibility of nuclear war, ecological calamity, uncontrollable population explosion, the collapse of global catastrophes provides an unnerving horizon of dangers for everyone. Globalized risks of this sort do not respect divisions between rich and poor or between the regions of the world. Of course, this should not blind us to the fact that, in conditions of modernity as in the pre modern world, many risks are differentially distributed between the privileged and the underprivileged. Differential risk – in relation, for example, to levels of nutrition and susceptibility to illness -- is a large part of what is actually meant by 'privilege' and 'under privilege.'<sup>35</sup> I wonder how true is that! The underprivileged that are illiterate and have lesser possessions are always worried about the source of food at the very next meal and not how will they survive in the long run, or what are the challenges of modernity or what would happen if a nuclear war occurs.

The juggernaut of modernity is not all of one piece. It is not an engine made up of integrated machinery, but one in which there is a tensionful, contradictory, push-and-pull of different influences. Any attempt to capture the experience of modernity must begin from this view, which

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. pp. 124-125

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. pp. 125-126



derives ultimately from the dialectics of space and time.<sup>36</sup> Indeed the way time and space have erased many distances, has to be kept in mind when one tries to get the hold of modernity.

In relations of intimacy of the modern type, trust is always ambivalent, and the possibility of severance is more or less ever present. Personal ties can be ruptured, and ties of intimacy returned to the sphere of impersonal contacts – in the broken love affair, the intimate suddenly becomes again a stranger.<sup>37</sup> This can be seen in many broken relationships of the current times, where the couples are getting divorced after twenty-twenty five years of their marriages and starting new lives with new partners. Whereas earlier things like these were never seen. This is a bad consequence of modernity. Again it is seen as mutual understanding and respect for each partner's space in the modern world but the bitter marks these long relationships leave on the hearts and souls of the partners, is indescribable.

One of the fundamental consequences of modernity is globalization. This is more than a diffusion of Western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed. Globalization – which is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates – introduces new forms of world interdependence, in which, there are no others. These create novel forms of risk and danger at the same time as they promote far-reaching possibilities of global security.<sup>38</sup> Globalization has decreased the distances in many ways, for example – technology, media; social media have done a tremendous job in this context as people have to just click on the search button of any particular search engine to find whatever they want to know, no matter how far that particular information is located. On the contrary all this have made people more self-centered, people are welcoming towards their online friends but in real life they may be bitter to their physical family or friends.

Modernity is inherently future-oriented, such that the 'future' has the status of counterfactual modeling.<sup>39</sup> Though future always stays the unknown for us but through modernity we all are running into a direction full of higher risks and dangers as self-centeredness, whether of a person or a nation, is increasing like never before.

### **Post-Modernity**

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. pp. 139

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. pp. 141

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. pp. 175

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp. 177

Change, being the only constant in the universe, is applied on modernity as well. How can modernity stay for too long; hence postmodernity replaces it.

Postmodernity is the state or condition of being postmodern – after or in reaction to that which is modern, as in postmodern art. Modernity is defined as a period or condition loosely identified with the Progressive Era, the Industrial Revolution, or the Enlightenment.<sup>40</sup>

The post-modern outlook sees a plurality of heterogeneous claims to knowledge, in which science does not have a privileged place.<sup>41</sup> This may be due to the globalization and access of information to everybody, through Internet. Where each one is sharing his/her own experiences in form of posts, blogs, and write-ups. And it seems to be the time of information and not knowledge because almost everyone is having gadgets to see and check whatever info is required, whether it is about the benefits or side-effects of a particular medicine, disease, airlines, film star, or nation. You name it, the Internet has it. And thankfully we have search engines like Google, who have made life so easy that everything is just a click away. Though the chances of getting wrong or misleading information are always there.

In the academic world, post-modernity is best understood as a new organizing principle in thought, action, and reflection, connected to many changing factors in modern society. The term postmodern was first applied, around 1971, to a new architectural style, which combined old, classical forms with modern pragmatism and scientific engineering.<sup>42</sup> Basically the purpose, of both modernity and postmodernity, is to create betterment for the society. Where things are easier and more understandable than before, plus they are smarter and easy to use and of course more accessible to the people.

Hence the movement of postmodernity is not called ‘antimodernism’ because it is not a rejection of modernity, but as its advocates claim, an effort to combine the best of the modern world with the best elements of the traditions of the past, in an organic way that eliminates the worst parts of both.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (Retrieved on 28/01/2017 @ 12:21pm)

<sup>41</sup> Giddens Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1990 pp. 2

<sup>42</sup> <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mizrachs/pomo.html> Author: Mizrach Steve (Retrieved on 28/01/2017 @ 12:25pm) pp. 1

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

Rather than entering a period of post-modernity, we are moving into one in which the consequences of modernity are becoming more radicalized and universalized than before. Beyond modernity, I shall claim, we can perceive the contours of a new and different order, which is post-modern; but this is quite distinct from what is at the moment called by many 'post-modernity.'<sup>44</sup>

One can look at postmodernism as: a reconsideration of the central constellation of ideas in the arts, economics, politics, philosophy, and sociology. Postmodernism is a parasite within the body of modernity, digesting it with its enzymes; it is not a conqueror or a destroyer. No discontinuity is noticeable: which is why some people still feel this is a 'modern' age, unable to see the thousand simultaneous, invisible paradigm shifts which annulled modernity, fraying it at its edges, rather than attacking its core.<sup>45</sup>

For the postmodernists, intention is everything, and reception is everything, but content is nothing. For most modern artists, this makes postmodern art one big fraud.<sup>46</sup>

There are many problems in postmodernism. At various turns, it has been accused of being romantic, idealistic, unrealistic, wooly-headed, and so forth. But there are those who feel it is truly dangerous. Do the postmodern means to put an end to progress itself, to consign us all to a steady state Utopia where all needs may be provided for but there is no room for growth, change or movement? The post moderns say no, they want to move forward in a way that utilizes the insights of the past but is not identical to it. Their struggle is to fight the vast totalizing schemes. Postmodernism is at once a rejection of teleology (the philosophical attempt to describe things in terms of their apparent purpose, directive principle, or goal), yet it contains in itself some teleological notions of 'where things are going.' A bundle of contradictions, an enigma within an enigma.<sup>47</sup>

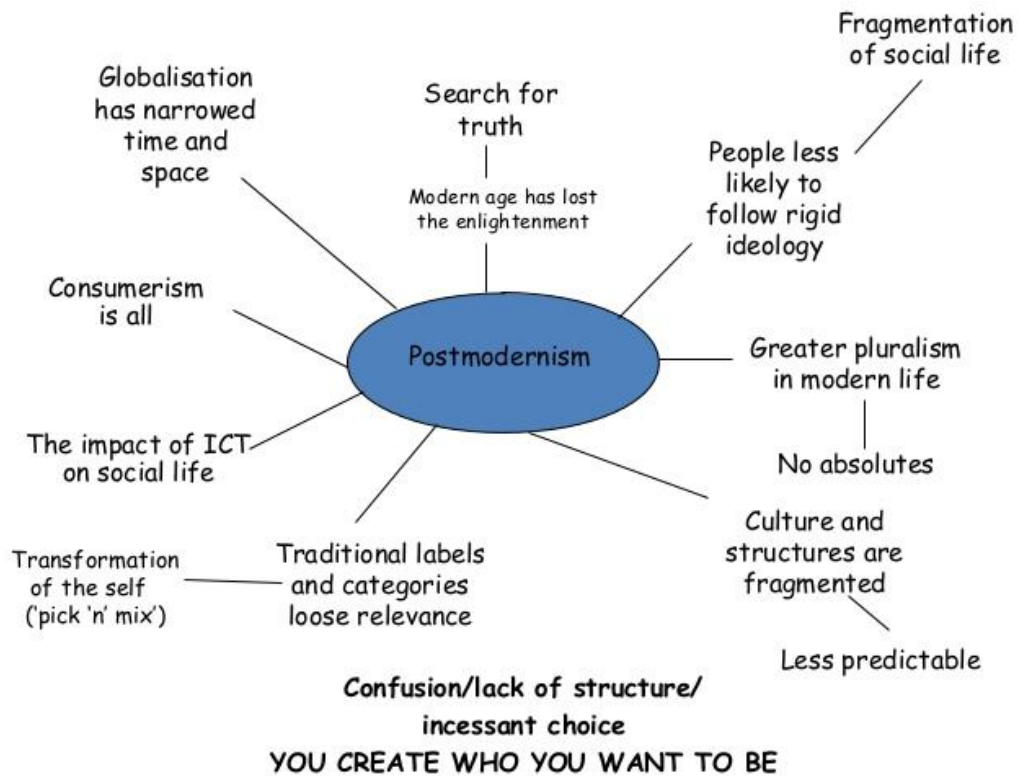
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<sup>44</sup> Giddens Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1990 pp. 3

<sup>45</sup> <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mizrachs/pomo.html> Author: Mizrach Steve (Retrieved on 28/01/2017 @ 12:25pm) pp. 2

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.



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In this diagram it is understandable how post-modernity is impacting the society and the world at large in positive and negative ways. Here consumerism is at the peak, moral values are at depletion, people are not acceptable towards strict rules, be it family or religion. People looking for philosophical queries are lesser hence awakening is less too.

In a post-modern world, time and space would no longer be ordered in their interrelation by historicity. Whether this would imply a resurgence of religion in some form or another is difficult to say, but there would presumably be a renewed fixity to certain aspects of life that would recall some features of tradition. Such fixity would in turn provide grounding for the sense of ontological security, reinforced by an awareness of a social universe subject to human control.<sup>49</sup> This state, I believe, can be attained through understanding the religious philosophies through newer, fresher

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.slideshare.net/smccormac7/worksheet-19871745> (Retrieved on 27/01/2017 @ 12:30pm)

<sup>49</sup> Giddens Anthony, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, California, 1990 pp. 178

and more honest perspective, where they are not catering to the selfish desires of men but the truth.

### **Modernity and Jain Philosophy**

When I kept modernity and Jainism on the same scale, I noticed, surprisingly, they were at the same level. Whereas modernity belongs to the current times, the teachings of Jainism are for all the people irrespective of which time period they are from. The only thing required is, efficient people who can study and understand the core knowledge and simplify it according to the people's mindset. I also felt just like modernity was achieved through people's rational awakening and through simplification of old beliefs, the forgotten teachings of Jainism, which are highly rational but unfortunately have been kept behind the bars of orthodoxy, can be understood through simple interpretations and daily life examples. For this is the philosophy of freedom and equanimity but has been adversely understood as well as depicted.

I believe if one wants to learn and explore newer things, one is supposed to share one's own thinking and beliefs with others so that one can get feedback and get to know others' thinking on the same. Else one's own knowledge gets decompose and converts into bondage rather than freedom. This, I feel, is the situation with Jainism. Jain people hesitate in sharing the teachings of the wonderful philosophy of Jainism, with others. According to me there are two reasons: one is, if they know, they feel superior of themselves and (un) knowingly get bound in pride, which they are not supposed to and the second is, their knowledge is limited to a fewer things, out of that immensely rational knowledge, what they talk about is food and kitchen and that their religion is the supreme most, that it shows the path to emancipation and we, being its proud adherents, go to the temple daily, we avoid eating certain veggies, we are dedicated to our sadhus by heart, that is it! They are indulged in this blind following so much so that they have given the place of God to their Sadhus and they love working as their servants. I wonder if this is not blind following then what? They do not talk about knowledge, forget the rationality. They do not talk about inner-softness, compassion, awakening, universal brotherhood, as they consider themselves as moksha-margis.

When one studies a religious philosophy, for example Jain philosophy in this context, one gets to know that the nature of the soul in its pure state is free from any boundaries, compassionate and knowledgeable. Surprisingly almost all western philosophers have concluded the same through their own personal experiences.

When we talk about karma, how does the universe work, soul, rebirth etc. though these topics seem related to religion and some supernatural power seems to be working behind them. But as we go deeper into the religious philosophies, where no one has modified them, all these seem to be natural laws and not done by some supernatural being.

Of course there can be no modern context of the soul, karma or substance; they can only be understood in the modern context, what I am trying to say is, in simpler terms. For example: earlier people used to believe what they were told, like the nature of soul is calm, knowledgeable and free but today it is not like that, the guru has to explain the same in rational terms, either by giving an example with which the disciple can relate or making the disciple understand according to his mindset.

I also believe that getting acquainted with the real knowledge opens the doors of creativity. The purpose of religion must be to tap into the higher consciousness, and to recognize and respect one's individuality; and not to make one afraid or fill one with a feeling of guilt, so that one finds oneself unable to get over that negative feeling forever and spends one's life in fear, wandering at the doors of different deities, trying to please them without knowing their journey.

The central project of postmodern philosophy is to challenge the notion of philosophy itself – i.e. the rationalistic ideal of discovering of discovering truth through pure reason. The postmodernists challenge any philosophy of totalization – one that creates a closure around it self and claims a preeminence in access to universal principles and timeless truths.<sup>50</sup>

Many philosophers feel uneasy about postlogocentric philosophy because it questions reason and logic itself. Some are put off by its relativism and its willingness to question the notion of truth or

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<sup>50</sup> <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mizrachs/pomo.html> Author: Mizrach Steve (Retrieved on 28/01/2017 @ 12:25pm) pp. 6

meaning itself. As Rorty (an American philosopher) sees it, in direct defiance of the analytic philosophers, there are no statements which make purely abstract truth-claims, only statements which make references to a type of truth, whether that be scientific truth, metaphoric truth, mythic truth, or humanistic truth. Many postmodern philosophers lean to an epistemology of constructivism – that reality is created through our categories of understanding and our modes of organizing perception – and to a denial of ontology itself, that there are somehow things ‘out there’ which ‘exist’. Others see the root of the problem, which could not see that there might be things, which are partially true or partially false, and that in every case to say that X ‘is’ Y is a partial lie.<sup>51</sup>

Mainly, the key element of postmodern philosophy is the ‘linguistic turn’. The postmodernists see the root of many philosophical problems in the use (and misuse) of language. If one understands fully Derrida’s (French philosopher) explorations of ‘play’ in language and the ‘referent problem,’ then they may realize that any statement may contain an inexhaustible number of meanings. And based on that fact, there are therefore a multiple number of ways of viewing the world and experiencing it.<sup>52</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Everything comes with its own pros and cons, whether its knowledge, a relationship or in this context – modernity. I mentioned knowledge because I feel it is not easy to handle it and carry it forward in a healthy, sane way, for everybody. Though change disturbs and often gets things unwanted, unknown with it, but that is true too, this is the only way towards growth. Modernity is a change, a freedom from history, which has now converted into postmodernity.

Being off topic, writing this paper was a tough task for me, but when I tried to contemplate about how necessary was it, I deeply realized it was absolutely required, as the topic of my PhD is ‘Jain Science And Spirituality in Modern Context’. I express my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to respected Professor Dayanand Bhargava

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<sup>51</sup> <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mizrachs/pomo.html> Author: Mizrach Steve (Retrieved on 28/01/2017 @ 12:25pm) pp. 6

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

who, kind of, opened my eyes about the topic I chose. I had to understand what modernity is? How does it work? What does it provide? In which direction it takes the society? And how essential is it? As my aim is to understand and spread the teachings of Jain philosophy in a modern and liberal way, now I find myself more capable to throw light on the same and now only I realize, why was it necessary to do so. Reading books and articles on modernity not only enhanced my knowledge but also cleared my vision.

I am asking myself, 'what is my aim exactly? Is it to make everyone understand the core of Jain philosophy and through it making them free? That they do not have to be dependable on any supernatural power to get their wishes fulfilled? That they have to learn to take charge of their own lives to be independent? That they have to start respecting themselves by not bowing their heads in front of each door or to get their selfish needs fulfilled? That they have to understand that there are innumerate points of views to see and understand a particular situation and through getting it clear, we can have a more peaceful world to live in? That equality and compassion towards all beings, are the ways through which we can move ahead? That if one's quest is real, one can get the answers of the same? That yes, one may get rational answers to one's innumerate philosophical queries? That one may have to take one's logical reasoning up to a plane where one is extremely intelligent and needs no one, as one has solved all the mysteries of the universe?

After reading and writing about modernity, I find myself asking the following questions as well: If I see a vision of independence of all human beings, would the world come to a halt after that? Is it the right step to make people aware of their hidden strengths? Is it okay to tell them not to worship at every door? In times when God is the only escape people have to get their selfish desires fulfilled and to unload themselves of their guilt, is it okay to tell them that there is no god? That there is only godhood, and each one of us has the capability to become god, by following their (the ones who have attained the same) footsteps?

This paper made me contemplate deeply about my topic of PhD research, that what do I exactly mean by Jain science and spirituality in modern context? Firstly science and spirituality are universal and objective topics; hence there can be no Jain science or Jain spirituality. Secondly, as Prof. Bhargava asked, 'can there



be a modern context of soul or substance?' At that time I kept mum, as I didn't know the answer. Though today also I feel that perhaps I chose the wrong words, but the concept I had in my mind was to make people understand the beauty of Jain philosophy in a modern way. Of course soul cannot have a modern context, one can only look at it in a modern way, i.e. in a way in which one can feel, understand and experience the same.

I concluded that modernity is not only about clothing and thinking but it covers almost each arena of our lives, be it food, our grocery, eating patterns, our style of living, our educational institutions, our watches, cars and what not. It has influenced our relationships also, in terms of lesser tolerance, and enhanced egotism. Nowadays even olden marriages are getting broken because everyone needs one's own freedom and space. Though the rightness of the decision may be relative. Even young children are also not ready to adjust with their parents, as each one wants to live in their own way, and no one's interference in the same is tolerated. Today we have innumerate choices, whether it's about buying grocery for the kitchen, furniture for home or office, or a mobile or laptop. So much so that we are stunned and the pace in which things are getting modified is so fast that if I buy a mobile today, within a few months a newer model of the same arrives in the market, cancelling the amazing effect of the previous one.

Newer employments are gaining importance as with speedily changing times, people are getting themselves modified. For example – online shopping is becoming trendy as people have an option to pay on delivery and the whole range of a particular thing is available on the website, that too in cheaper prices, online money transactions are becoming safer and consume much lesser time and effort, and newer ways of building construction are gaining popularity as they too, are less time consuming and also eco friendly.

Though modernity has spoiled the environment through different business that involve the use of chemicals, for example plastic is a household thing for each one of us, despite being known to its hazardous effects still we are dependent on it so badly that perhaps we are unable to imagine our lives without the same. Be it plastic containers, which keep the food fresher for longer, polythene to put garbage or clothes and soda bottles etc.

But the thing mesmerizes me the most is that, surprisingly still peace of mind is becoming a rare state to achieve. Despite being all the so-called freedom, respect for individuality etc. people are still craving for something else, that is unknown to them. And that I believe is the path towards real freedom, the liberty of soul that can only be gained through right knowledge. An awakening of the senses that makes one a rational seeker and one gets introduced to one's own infinite hidden capabilities. Which I believe can be achieved through understanding the teachings of Jain philosophy. Though I also believe that awakening cannot be attained through studying Jain philosophy only, for it is an inner, deeper thing that happens as destined but gaining knowledge with an honest intent can enhance that process.

On this note, I end my paper, with a hope that modernity will keep guiding the mankind and that the mankind will be sufficient enough to understand the power of it's soul and will not let itself swipe away easily by easy surrendering.