

Present Lord
Sīmandhara Svāmī and
the Akram Vijñān Movement

Introduction

Most textbooks present Jainism as a religion which survives in a pristine state virtually unchanged from the time of its last prophet, Mahāvīra, some two thousand and five hundred years ago. Walther Schubring, for instance, wrote in his classic work, *The Doctrine of the Jainas: Described after the Old Sources*, that the ‘teaching proper’ of Jainism, which propagates monastic asceticism as the principal means of salvation, was ‘scarcely affected’ by exterior changes: ‘The new formations which developed to remain,’ he writes, ‘are nearly exclusively concerned with formalities.’¹ This view was reiterated by Robert Williams, in his book *Jaina Yoga*, which describes the textual prescriptions for the traditional rituals of lay Jainism, though he emphasised that the ‘changelessness of Jainism is no more than a myth.’

Admittedly there have been no spectacular changes in basic assumptions such as there were, for example, in Mahāyāna Buddhism. At most there have been variations in emphasis. Had Jainism, as at one time must have seemed possible, become a majority religion in southern India something akin to a Digambara Mahāyāna might, with continuing favourable circumstances, have emerged. But all that can be detected today are the traces of aborted developments.²

In his influential work *The Jaina Path of Purification*, P.S. Jaini detailed examples of the continual ‘erosive’ influence of Hindu devotionalism on almost every aspect of popular Jainism from the fifth century onwards, but restated Williams’ view:

No movement towards a more catholic viewpoint or liberalised discipline, no ‘Jaina Mahāyāna’ was ever allowed to develop among either the Digambaras or the Śvetāmbaras.³

In this essay I will present at least one case not only of a doctrine or isolated features but of a syncretistic religious movement which,

I would argue, can legitimately be called ‘Jaina Mahāyāna,’⁴ i.e. a primarily devotional form of Jainism, visibly different from the ascetic path outlined in the canonical and classical Jaina scriptures,⁵ which congenially combines Kundakunda’s ‘Digambara Mahāyāna’ soteriology (which is in many ways closer to Śaṅkara’s Advaita Vedānta),⁶ Sāṃkhya ontology and classical Jaina cosmology with a ritual idiom that is largely derived from popular Vaiṣṇava devotionalism and Tantric miracle cults?⁷

For practical purposes, I follow Heinz Bechert in defining Mahāyāna in the broadest sense through the concept of ‘salvation through others,’⁸ which is equally important in devotional Hinduism. In Buddhism, the concept has gained particular prominence in the so-called Pure Land (*Sukhāvatī*) school in East Asia and informs popular devotional practices which answer the religious needs of the Buddhist laity. The *Sukhāvatī* and similar schools offer temporary respites prepared by a *bodhisattva*, a Buddha-to-be, where the devotee prepares for one final rebirth in the presence of a Buddha after which *nirvāṇa* will be attained. In popular religion, these ‘Buddha fields’ (*Buddha kṣetra*) became soteriological ends in themselves, because they offer an easy and essentially non-monastic path to salvation which merely demands the recognition of the ‘Buddha nature’ within (*tathāgatagarbha*), that is, the true knowledge of the real self (*ātman*). In other words, ‘we are already fully enlightened Buddhas if we but recognise the face.’⁹

Instant Knowledge (Akram Vijñān)

The case I wish to present in favour of the argument that Mahāyāna-style forms of Jainism do exist — at least, on the margins of the five major traditions of the Bīsapanthī and Terāpanthī Digambara, on the one hand; and the Mūrtipūjaka and the Sthānakavāsī and Terāpanthī Śvetāmbara, on the other — is the Akram Vijñān Mārg in western India, literally the path of the stepless or instant acquisition of the knowledge (necessary for salvation). Because of its recent emergence, its lack of a scriptural ‘great tradition’ and its small size (quantity is not really an issue) the Akram Vijñān Mārg has not yet been studied, although it is highly interesting from a comparative perspective; not only because it combines Jaina and Vaiṣṇavite features in a unique way, but mainly because it offers its followers a method of purification which does not demand renunciation or

difficult religious practices, such as asceticism (*tapas*), material offerings (*pūjā*) and gift-giving (*dāna*), or other ritual observances to annihilate *karma*. It therefore presents itself as an attractive option for anyone who seeks easy access to religious purity without the desire to renounce the world or to spend much money on such ‘useless’¹⁰ rituals. Moreover, the promise of instant access to salvific knowledge poses a fundamental threat to the traditional establishment of Hindu and Jaina religious functionaries, which are both dismissed as obsolete.

The Akram Vijnān Mārg is a lay movement which teaches that there are two paths in Jainism. The dominant *kramik*, step-by-step, Jaina path of purification is predicated on the cosmologically derived assumption that due to the current absence of the conditions for the existence of enlightened beings in our world, enlightenment and therefore final liberation is, at present, not possible anymore. By contrast, the *akramik*, stepless, path, offers a direct route to *mokṣa* through the grace (*kṛpā*), of the presently existing lord (*vartamāna tīrthaṅkara*), Sīmandhar Svāmī, one of twenty Jaina *tīrthaṅkaras* who according to classical Jaina mythology and cosmography presently lives in the mythical pure land of Mahāvideha Kṣetra, some 193,950,000 kilometres north of our continent Bhārata.¹¹ The Akram Vijnān movement offers ‘instant salvation’ to its followers by claiming that Sīmandhar can be accessed through magical means that is, through direct contact with a medium (*nimitta*). The principal medium, the late A.M. Paṭel, became a *bodhisattva*-like figure for his disciples by acting as an interlocutor between humans and the presently existing *tīrthaṅkaras* in the pure land of Mahāvideha.¹² The cosmological assumptions of this new method are not controversial, although they emerged relatively late in the history of Jainism,¹³ and neither is the use of magical means of contact which, in this case, is probably inspired by the example of Kundakunda’s yogic travels to these regions in search of inspiration from Sīmandhar.¹⁴ However, nowhere has a separate path to salvation been offered explicitly in the Jaina tradition to date, though A.M. Paṭel claimed to follow the unique example of King Bhārata, the son of the first *tīrthaṅkara*, Ṛṣabha, and who, according to the Akram Vijnān version of the legend, was granted omniscience by an act of grace of Ṛṣabha.¹⁵

There are two paths to liberation or freedom from all bondage. One is the royal road climbing the steps of [spiritual evolution] slowly

[step by step]....It is a very arduous path. You have to climb up [rise] performing penance (*tap*), renunciation, incantation of god's name (*jaṭ*); and even then the sword of Damocles is dangling over your head. The second is the Akram Marg—the lift path. Here you have not to climb steps; you are to get into the lift—with wife and children, after getting sons and daughters happily married, after performing the worldly duties—for freedom from bondage. Performing all these mundane duties you do not lose your 'freedom' even for a second. This Akram Marg is also called an exceptionally 'rare' path. Once in a million years it manifests itself. Only king Bharat had got this 'knowledge' from his father, for Ṛṣabhadevji—Dādā Bhagawan bestowed this 'knowledge' only on Bharat out of his 100 sons.¹⁶

The principal doctrinal feature of the Akram Vijñān Mārg is the belief in the efficacy of the practice of *jñāna bhakti*, the magical acquisition of salvific knowledge through the devotional surrender (*samarpaṇa*) to its source—Sīmandhar Svāmī and his medium A.M. Paṭel. The main differences to traditional Jainism are: (a) indifference toward or rejection of scriptural knowledge (*śrutajñāna*) in favour of the direct experience of the soul (*ātmājñāna*), (b) rejection of physical asceticism (*tapas*) in favour of spiritual knowledge (*ātmājñāna*) as the principal means of salvation, (c) rejection of monasticism and other institutionalised forms of religious practice, (d) the possibility of salvation for all through the grace (*kṛpā*) of Sīmandhar Svāmī, and (e) the acquisition of direct insight into the true nature of the self through devotion to a knower (*guru bhakti*).

Self-enlightenment: A.M. Paṭel

The Akram Vijñān Mārg is a highly innovative religious movement. It originated in the 1960s in Bombay and is slowly spreading throughout western India and the Gujarati diaspora in East Africa, North America and the United Kingdom. The founder of the Akram Vijñān Mārg was Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel (7 November 1908–2 January 1988). His disciples called him *jñānī* or *jñānī puruṣa*—the enlightened being; *pratyakṣa ātmājñānī*—the presently living knower of the self; or simply *dādā bhagavān*—grandfather lord, because they recognised in him one who has realised his own inner ultimate self (*paramātmā*). A.M. Paṭel was a contractor by profession. He was born into a Vaiṣṇava Pāṭidār family in Tarasālī, a village near Baroda (Vaḍodarā), and grew up in the village Bhadaran in the district of Kheda in central Gujarat. It is reported that when he was thirteen he

once served a saint (*sant*) visiting his village, who blessed him with the words: 'May God gift you with liberation,' whereupon he replied:

I don't want that liberation, if God is to give it to me. 'Given by him' means that 'he is my boss and he can take it back when he desires to do so.' Liberation itself means 'a state where there is no boss, no underhand.'¹⁷

In one of his published discourses he said, 'The lid of ignorance in my case was so thin (light) that at the age of thirteen, I had intimations of immortality' (ibid.: 8). In 1923, when he was fifteen, he married Hīrābā. Because she lost an eye at a young age, he was once asked whether he was interested in remarriage. But he stated that he had a happy marriage and would keep his marital vows. The couple remained childless, because both of their two young children (born in 1928 and 1931) died a few months after their birth. At this time A.M. Paṭel encountered the writings of Śrīmad Rājacandra and, through them, became interested in Jaina philosophy. Śrīmad Rājacandra (1867-1901) was a Gujarati Jaina householder and religious visionary who inspired new religious lay movements which represent the first predominantly devotional form of Jainism. A.M. Paṭel was particularly impressed by Rājacandra's teaching of *ātmādharmā* and his rejection of *gurus* and of sectarianism.¹⁸ He also began to practice temporary celibacy, or *brahmacarya*, and at the age of thirty, together with his wife, he took the vow of life-long *brahmacarya*.

Ambalāl Mūlībhaī Paṭel had only basic formal education and did not speak any English, except a few words, which he regularly interjected into his discourse. He moved to Bombay, where he stayed for most of his working life, and operated successfully as a contractor for the company Paṭel & Co. which was engaged in the construction and maintenance of the dry docks in the harbour of Bombay. It is said that notwithstanding his occupational commitments, throughout his life he was primarily interested in *mokṣa*, liberation and *jagat kalyāṇ*, welfare of the world, which for him, as for Rājacandra, meant offering salvation for the suffering humanity through freedom from passion, or *vītarāga*—detachment from the actions of mind, speech and body.¹⁹ In July 1958, when he was fifty years old, he had what he later described as an experience of direct spontaneous enlightenment (*pratyakṣa jñāna*), which he attributed to the natural fruition of his good *karma*. The experience occurred

suddenly while he was waiting for a train on a bench on the busy platform 3 of the railway station in Surat at about six o'clock in the evening and lasted '48 minutes.' The extraordinary feeling, which A.M. Paṭel himself called 'indescribable' and never put into words,²⁰ was characterised by his disciple Nīrubahen Amīn as follows:

He had just finished his supper, and was waiting for a train. He was sitting on a railway platform bench in Surat, India, when the extraordinary event happened. The Lord became manifest in him. In one hour all the secrets of the world, life and universe opened up to him. He said later, that there are no words to describe what he experienced. Each and every *anu-paramanu* [atom] revealed his vision. He maintained that the external body of A.M. Paṭel is not God. The Lord who is manifest inside is revered by A.M. Paṭel. The experience of the Absolute established itself in him permanently. He became the Enlightened One. He became the first *Jnani Purush* to represent Akram Vijnan for modern times.²¹

Another description by Nīrubahen, which is corroborated by similar statements from other disciples, makes it clear that A.M. Paṭel had experienced what he believed to be the revelation or manifestation (*jñān pragatī*) of the god within, that is the pure self (*śuddhātmā*), the vehicle of the fully realised supreme self (*paramātmā*), which he called 'Dādā Bhagavān':²²

In the 'shrine' of the name of Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel, after infinite births, was manifested naturally: 'Dādā Bhagavān' in the form of Akram!²³ In the span of one hour he had an experience of the entire universe! 'Who are we? Who is God? Who runs the world? What is karma? What is liberation? etc. All the world's spiritual questions were answered! In this way nature offered an unparalleled absolute vision to the world through the medium of Shree Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel, a Pāṭidār of the village of Bhadran, Charotar. Although a contractor by profession, he remained a *Vitarag Purush*!²⁴

Such an 'enlightenment' experience which reveals 'each and every atom of the world' is in Jainism technically known as *kevala jñāna*, or omniscience (*sarvajñā*),²⁵ though it is also held that A.M. Paṭel experienced only *samyak darśana* or *samyaktva*, right view—that is, spiritual insight into the true nature of the self being entirely separate from the *kārmik* body (as described by Jaina and Sāṃkhya doctrines).²⁶ The ambiguity is the result of Paṭel's attempt to quantify omniscience and to define *samyaktva*, which he calls *jñāna* or *prajñā*, as 'partial omniscience.'²⁷ The words most frequently used by him

in this respect were *svarūpajñāna*, self-realisation, and *ātmājñāna*, self-knowledge (as opposed to *jagat-jñāna*, knowledge of the world, and *śāstrajñāna*, scriptural knowledge). The two terms refer to two processes which he, following Kundakunda,²⁸ regarded as intrinsically connected. Because he experienced his true self without the help of others, in Jaina technical terms, the event transformed him into a *svayaṃ sambuddha*, a being enlightened by itself. According to Nīrubahen Amīn, A.M. Paṭel explained that the revelation occurred after an experience of insult and humiliation, involving feelings based on great egotism. At the time of self-realisation, he became aware that it was not ‘I’, the pure self, or *śuddhātma*, who experienced worldly insult, but only ‘me,’ that is the relative self, or *pratiṣṭhit ātmā*,²⁹ which is a superimposed, rather alien ‘outward packing’ in the form of Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel:

What you see is Ambalāl Mūljībhaī Paṭel, a Pāṭidār of Bhadran, contractor by profession. But ‘he’ who is revealed within is a great wonder. He is ‘Dādā Bhagwan.’...We haven’t identified our ‘self’ with this Ambalāl Mūljībhaī even for a second. And ever since my self-realisation, I have been living with him as my first neighbour.³⁰

After his enlightenment experience, A.M. Paṭel stopped working full time in order to concentrate fully on the permanent cultivation of this spiritual insight and left his contractor business to his partners, while living on the dividends of his company shares. However, he remained a householder and never stopped looking after his business throughout his life, because his soteriology demanded neither renunciation of the world nor asceticism. His followers proudly report that he ‘never borrowed money from anyone in his life,’ and lived by the principle: ‘In business dharma will decrease, but in dharma, business will not decrease.’³¹

Insight through Grace: Kanu Paṭel

At first, A.M. Paṭel did not make his inner experience publicly known, except for a few relatives and close friends who noticed some changes in his demeanour and started asking questions. But already in 1962, he evoked for the first time the experience of *samyak darśana* in another person in his own rented house in Baroda. In the language of the Akram Vijñān Mārg this procedure is called ‘transmitting the knowledge.’ Why he thought this might be pos-

sible is not entirely clear, since he left few documents which could serve as a basis for a reconstruction of the development of his religious ideas. His brother's, now deceased, son Candrakānt Paṭel from Uganda (originally from Bhadaran, Gujarat), who called him reverently *dādā*, or grandfather, was very interested in his vision. Candrakānt was the first individual to experience a sudden insight into his own pure self in the presence of 'the *Dādā*.' The experience was triggered by a conversation. Candrakānt asked his *dādā*: 'Dādā are you a Jñānī? How does one recognise a Jñānī?' A.M. Paṭel's answer opened his eyes. He said:

Just slap me in my face, and look into my eyes, whether you see anything....Beat me up any way you like to make me human.³²

This event, which involved nothing but the knower's words of truth (*āptavāṇī*)³³ and an informal blessing (*āśīrvāda*) is remembered as the first performance of the *jñāna vidhi*, or rite of knowledge, the ritual for the evocation of the experience of *samyak darśana* through the destruction of all the obstructive *mohanīya*, or delusion producing *karmas*. In classical Jaina doctrine this is technically called *kṣāyaka samyaktva*³⁴ and is believed to be possible only in the presence of a Jina.³⁵

The second person to be given the *jñān* was Kanubhāi K. Paṭel (born 1930) who became one of the two principal spiritual successors of A.M. Paṭel. He was the son of Kantilāl Paṭel, A.M. Paṭel's business partner, and worked until recently as a structural engineer. For fifteen years he lived together with A.M. Paṭel in the same house in Bombay. Later he married, but continued to work in the company Paṭel & Co. He prides himself that during these fifteen years he stayed with A.M. Paṭel round the clock and looked after his physical and mental well-being. This practice is called *sevā*, service, to the Dādā. In the late 1970s Kanubhāi took some business decisions against A.M. Paṭel's advice and lost a lot of money for the joint company. Thereupon, A.M. Paṭel left the partnership. Kanu Paṭel told me in 1999 about his experience of receiving 'the *jñān*,' that is *samyak-darśana*, from the Dādā. In 1963 he underwent a major crisis, which he characterised with the words 'to be or not to be.' One of his problems was that he could not sleep. However, one night the Dādā appeared in his dreams and after this he was able to sleep for the first time in a long while. The next day he went to A.M. Paṭel, put his head at his feet and asked: 'Who am I?' The Dada then gave

him the knowledge. As in Candrakānt's case, no special ceremony was performed, just an informal conversation lasting five to ten minutes, which, Kanu Paṭel stressed, had changed his entire life. Everything turned 'upside down' for him during these few minutes.

The Rite of Knowledge (Jñāna Vidhi)

The once informal procedure of passing on spiritual energy for the separation of soul and non-soul in another person soon became more formalised. Between 1962 and 1968, A.M. Paṭel transmitted his spiritual powers only to select members of his circle of family and friends, but from 1968 onwards he offered to bestow with *samyak darśana* (*paramārtha samakī*) anyone who bowed to him and requested to be blessed by the *bheda jñāna*, the knowledge of separation. This was the origin of the devotional Dādā Bhagavān cult at the heart of the Akram Vijñān movement. In his discourses, A.M. Paṭel often said that the attribute '*Dādā Bhagavān*' was originally not of his own making, but introduced by his followers. Out of fear of public opinion, he said, he was initially not even sure whether he wanted to publicise his teaching beyond a small circle of friends, as had been the case with Śrīmad Rājacandra. But in response to public demand, he went to the Rṣabha temple in Khambhat near Vaḍodarā, where Rājacandra had stayed in 1893, to ask for Rṣabha's advice. Apparently, he was able to contact Rṣabha in *siddhaloka*, the realm of the liberated souls,³⁶ and to sit at his feet to receive the advice that he should convey 'the knowledge' to all strata of society, not merely to the select few. On request, the first public performance of the *jñāna vidhi* was held in 1968 in Bombay. In subsequent years the rite was performed at regular intervals and the procedure became more and more elaborate, until it attained its present form in 1983.³⁷

Originally, A.M. Paṭel performed what was later called the *jñāna vidhi*, the rite of knowledge, only for individuals and under the seal of secrecy. Often, the rite was performed on remote mountain tops, because intense shouting came to be seen as a key ingredient for the removal of the obstructive *karmas*, as was the blessing (*prasādī*) performed by laying hands on the head of the bowing devotee (A.M. Paṭel did not like the term 'disciple') at the feet of the Dādā. With time, the *vidhi* became more elaborate and was performed in small

groups. On request, the blessing was accompanied by a few firm knocks on the devotee's back with one of A.M. Paṭel's shoes or with a coconut, a symbol of auspiciousness which offered, as it were, a tangible equivalent to the imperceptible inner process of separation of self and non-self. All aspirants I interviewed insisted that they 'felt absolutely nothing' even at the severest blows. This divine blessing cum thrashing was called *alaukika prasādī*, otherworldly blessing, and apparently introduced 'only reluctantly' by A.M. Paṭel on 'request of the aspirants.' Additional blessings were sometimes given by showering the aspirants with rose petals.

In the beginning, the ritual was not informed by any explicit doctrine. However, from 1968 onwards A.M. Paṭel also started to teach his vision to others. On request, he held *satsaṅgs* or meetings for religious discourse in private houses, not unlike Śrīmad Rājacandra before him, and performed the *jñāna vidhi* regularly for groups of aspirants.³⁸ He now referred to himself as the *jñānī*, the self-realised knower who had directly experienced the difference between self (*puruṣa*) and non-self (*prakṛti*), and was thus qualified to act as a *sadguru* or a *satpuruṣa*, a good teacher or self-realised being, for the spiritual well-being of others, not unlike a *bodhisattva* in Mahāyāna Buddhism.³⁹

A.M. Paṭel's religious terminology indicates that his teachings were strongly influenced by the Sāṃkhya view, both echoed and criticised by Kundakunda,⁴⁰ that all forms of action in mind, speech and body are merely material; that is, natural processes and thus entirely unconnected with the true self which is in essence a passive observer, not a doer.⁴¹ For him, the illusion of a real connection between the essentially pure self and the action of mind, body and speech is a product of the conventional point of view (*vyavahāra naya*), whereas from the real point of view (*niścaya naya*) the pure self is essentially free and unbound.⁴² Liberation can therefore be achieved through the mere acquisition of self-knowledge—the intuitive and strictly non-intellectual (*abudha*) immediate experience of the true nature of the self which exists in qualitatively identical form in all living beings.⁴³ A.M. Paṭel illustrated this fundamental insight for his audience with reference to the difference between the empirical self, the ego and the pure self:

What you see here is not 'Dādā Bhagavān.' What you see is A.M. Paṭel.' I am *Jnani Purush* and He that is manifested within, is 'Dādā Bhagavān.' He is the Lord of the fourteen *lokas* (regions of the

universe) and He is within you and everyone else. He is residing in an unmanifested form within you, whereas here (within me) he has completely manifested (manifested in an absolute form)! I myself am not the Dādā Bhagavān. I bow down to the Dādā Bhagavān that is manifested within me.⁴⁴

In his later years, A.M. Paṭel explained his method of inducing liberating insight in others in his discourses. He described himself as a ‘doctor of the mind’ who uses his own miraculous powers (*siddhi*)⁴⁵ for performing painful surgery on the self of others⁴⁶ by squeezing their ego,⁴⁷ burning to ashes their sins from infinite cycles of births,⁴⁸ and finally separating their pure self (*śuddhātmā*) from their ego-centred mind (*manas*) in order to eliminate all sense of possessiveness and to make them understand the nature of *prakṛti*. He stated:

‘We’ are the exorcist [*bhūvo*] of the three ghosts of mind, speech and body that have possessed you. We can get you released from these three attachments.⁴⁹

All that is needed is the blessing of the *jñānī*, who puts his hand on the head of the aspirant⁵⁰ and uses his faculty of speech in order to transmit his divine powers of intuitive knowledge to separate self and non-self:

Suppose metals like copper, brass, silver got mixed up with gold, cannot a scientist separate them, examining their different qualities? He can do it easily. In the same way he who knows the qualities of the soul and the non-soul and who as an omniscient *Jnani* possesses infinite power, can separate these two substances after analysing them. ‘We’ are the greatest scientist of the world. Analysing every atom of the soul and the non-soul, separating both of them, ‘We’ give you the pure soul (*śuddhātmā*) in your hand in an hour.⁵¹

The destruction of the *mohanīya karmas* is thought to be achieved simply through the miraculous power of grace (*siddhi kṛpā*) of the god within, that is the all-compassionate Dādā Bhagavān as manifested within his ‘boss’ A.M. Paṭel:

Ay, we are god’s boss. Perfectly non-attached. God himself has given us the position of his superior.⁵² He told us: ‘We are in search of a worthy instrument and we discovered it in you. We are perfectly non-attached sitting in pure self-liberation. We cannot help anybody now. So you are the omnipotent manifest form. Though you live in a clay mould, you are perfectly non-attached. So we give you our

superior power and accept you as our boss. And you do good to the world.' And therefore we have become even god's boss. We are the boss of the Lord of the fourteen worlds. With all his spiritual power has the incarnation of *Jnana* manifested itself.⁵³

Like Śrīmad Rājacandra, A.M. Paṭel emphasised the impotence of scriptural or ritual knowledge for the liberation of the soul and pointed instead to the significance of direct contact with a living *jñānī*, since, in his view, the spiritual power (*siddhi*) that is necessary to separate self and non-self can only be transmitted through the direct speech (*pratyakṣa vāṇī*) and blessing of a true *jñānī*,⁵⁴ not through the indirect speech (*parokṣa vāṇī*) of the scriptures or an un-self-realised mendicant.⁵⁵ For him, the *jñānī* was the living embodiment of knowledge (*pratyakṣa sarasvatī*). He therefore never tired of emphasising the unique opportunity of meeting a *jñānī* such as the Dādā Bhagavān:

You ignoramus, a *Jnani* rarely visits the earth; and the *Jnani* of the Akram path (instant-liberation path) is born once in ten million years and that, too, in this present age of strange happenings, like the *kaliyug*. He lifts you up in a lift. You are not to gasp for breath after climbing the steps.... Only *vitaraṅga vāṇī* (speech free from any attachment) can lead to liberation. Our speech is sweet, melodious and unprecedented, unheard of before, direct. That speech [which is] contained in the scriptures is indirect. If one listens to the 'direct speech' one will have 'samakīṭ'. Our speech is *syadvada*—not hurting anybody's view or standard—but acceptable to all views. It accepts all points of view because we are sitting at the centre. Our speech is impartial... *Vitaraṅga vāṇī* is that which is replete with the feeling of complete spiritual well-being of others. Only *vitaraṅga vāṇī* can do good to a person and lead him to liberation.⁵⁶

Sīmandhar Svāmī

Although the matter is not entirely clear, it seems that at the beginning of his career as a religious virtuoso A.M. Paṭel did not refer much to Sīmandhar Svāmī, the Jaina *tīrthāṅkara* who is believed to be currently living in the mythical continent Mahāvideha. However, from the 1970s onwards, probably after a sustained reading of Jaina cosmological literature, he regularly invoked a special link to Sīmandhar Svāmī and distinguished three categories of enlightened beings: (a) the *siddhas*, or liberated beings living in *siddhaloka*, who do not speak and cannot be reached anymore; (b) the cur-

rently living *tīrthaṅkara* or *arhat* Sīmandhar Svāmī in Mahāvīdeha, who speaks to the Dādā within A.M. Paṭel, who contacts him through his ‘astral body,’ but does not instruct his followers; and (c) the Dādā, who speaks through A.M. Paṭel and instructs his disciples in this world. A.M. Paṭel claimed that he himself had not only experienced *samyak darśana*, but also ‘356 degrees’ of total omniscience (*kevala jñāna*). There was only a difference of ‘4 degrees’ between himself and the *arhats* and the *siddhas*. Because of likeness of his own soul and the souls of the fully omniscient, he said, he was able to contact Sīmandhar Svāmī directly.⁵⁷ During the *jñāna vidhi*, he claimed, the voice of the Dādā, and through the Dādā, the voice of Sīmandhar Svāmī spoke directly through A.M. Paṭel, who acted as his medium in order to transmit ‘the knowledge’ to his devotees. Because he was accepted as a partially enlightened and passionless being, and was able to mediate in this way between his followers and Sīmandhar Svāmī, A.M. Paṭel was called *khaṭpaṭ vītarāga* by his followers, the passionless one who uses tricks to get things done.

In contrast to Rājacandra and the ‘elitist’ and ‘decadent’ Jaina mendicant traditions which follow the path of Mahāvīra, A.M. Paṭel held that the worship or past or future *tīrthaṅkaras* on the basis of scriptures and images can only function as a reminder of a distant ideal, whereas he himself has given his followers the opportunity to gain liberation themselves through direct contact with the present *tīrthaṅkara*, Sīmandhar. Unlike Rājacandra, who occasionally considered himself to be ‘the second Mahāvīra,’⁵⁸ he did not present himself to be the source of possible liberation, but only an instrument, or *nimitta*, of Sīmandhar, although the distinction is often blurred in popular perception and sometimes Sīmandhar and the Dādā Bhagavān are deliberately identified.

This overview of the key differences between the teachings of Rājacandra and A.M. Paṭel points to an important shift of emphasis. The Akram Vijñān movement highlights the present possibility of salvation. It stresses the doctrinal fact that no past or future Jaina god (*tīrthaṅkara*) can grant any practical help to his present devotees, only a god living in the present (*pratyakṣa*) who is directly accessible to everyone – like Sīmandhar through his medium A.M. Paṭel – can do so. The followers of the Akram Vijñān Mārg believe that the fact that A.M. Paṭel has made his personal link to Sīmandhar available to his followers singles him out from the two other ‘omniscient’ *jñānīs*, Kundakunda and Rājacandra, as well as Kānjī Svāmī, the

brahmacārī who is technically a Jaina layman, who provided vivid descriptions of their personal spiritual journeys to Sīmandhar without offering a direct link for everyone, as the Dādā did.

A comparison of the ways in which these three Gujarati Jaina laymen cognised the possibility of establishing contact with a living *tīrthaṅkara* under the conditions of the present time cycle shows variations along the dimensions of time, place and medium of communication. Rājacandra said he gained salvific knowledge through the memory (*jātisamarāṇa jñāna*) of an encounter with a Jina of the same continent (Bhārata) in a previous life. Kānjī Svāmī achieved this apparently through the memory of the encounter with a Jina of a different continent (Mahāvideha) in a previous life, while A.M. Paṭel maintained that he was in continuous contact with a Jina of a different continent in his present life. He was the only one who made this unique link available for everyone, while Rājacandra and Kānjī Svāmī projected themselves as *tīrthaṅkaras* of the future.⁵⁹

Devotion and Self-effort

The mere participation in the rite of knowledge itself does, of course, not secure final *mokṣa*. But it is believed that it offers the possibility of achieving so-called living *mokṣa*,⁶⁰ and the prospect of being reborn ‘at the feet’ of the currently living *tīrthaṅkara*, Sīmandhar Svāmī in Mahāvideha Kṣetra, within not more than two lifetimes. According to Jaina doctrine, everyone has the opportunity of being enlightened in the presence of a living *tīrthaṅkara*, a process called *buddha-bodhita* that is attributed to his great compassion.⁶¹ The question is how to get to Mahāvideha Kṣetra.⁶² Classical Jainism teaches that a better rebirth can only be secured by reducing and purifying the *kārmik* burden of an individual.⁶³ A.M. Paṭel and his successors agree with this, but have a different opinion about the way in which this is achieved. Because they believe, like the Bhagavad Gītā,⁶⁴ that the soul is passive, not active, and that there is no real bondage between soul and body, and therefore there is no need for physical asceticism, their main concern is the continuous application of the liberating perspective of the pure soul to all aspects of life. The resulting non-attachment towards one’s own actions secures both that no new *karmas* are accumulated and that old *karmas* come to fruition naturally. In addition, they also preach the principle of non-violence (*ahiṃsā*) and the abstinence from all

intentional action in order to prevent the influx of new *karma*. If an act of violence nevertheless occurs and the ego is involved, fresh *karma* is produced. However, A.M. Paṭel taught how, through the technique of *anamnesis* of concrete violent actions from the point of view of the pure self (*niścaya naya*), any such mistake can be neutralised by a devotee of the Dādā Bhagavān who has received the knowledge.⁶⁵ The Akram Vijñān Mārg thus teaches a mixture of devotion to the pure self and ethics. In this respect its soteriology differs from purely theistic or gnostic approaches.⁶⁶ A.M. Paṭel has made the importance of the role of self-effort – sandwiched between the initial gift of *bheda jñāna* by the grace of the *Jñānī* and the final gift of *sarvajñāna* by the grace of Sīmandhar Svāmī – explicit in the following statement:

First I destroy all your blunders because by yourself it is impossible for you. How do I do it? By placing my hand on your head and letting Bhagvan (Dādā Bhagavān the Lord of the 14 worlds) give his divine grace (*kṛpa*). Thereafter, you need to remove your mistakes yourself. You will be able to see your own mistakes. Daily you will be able to see 5, 50 or 100 faults of your own and thus these mistakes will go on their own. Your realisation of your self will increase as your mistakes (faults) decrease.⁶⁷

The Dādā cannot purify. He can only give his knowledge and inspirational power to face own's own mistakes. Only the effort of maintaining a permanent awareness (*jāgrti*) of one's real self can purify. In asking the Dādā for forgiveness for mistakes during devotional practices, the devotee is not assuming that the Dādā cleanses the soul by an act of pure grace, but in evoking the manifestation of the Dādā in his/her mind, the experience of his/her own pure soul is realised. It is only the awareness that this was not 'I' who has committed an act of violence, but 'me,' that is *prakṛti* or the accumulated *karmas* which come to fruition naturally, which reduces the burden of *karma*.⁶⁸

Following

The Dādā Bhagavān cult developed first in Bombay and in A.M. Paṭel's hometown Baroda. In 1983, only twenty years after the first *jñāna vidhi* was performed, already forty of the fifty thousand followers⁶⁹ reportedly existed in southern Gujarat and Maharashtra. A.M. Paṭel's funeral in 1988 in Kelanpur near Baroda was attended

by about 60,000 people, and for 1999 the figure of about 300,000 followers is mentioned by the magazine *Akram Vijñān*.⁷⁰ The followers of the Dādā were not recruited from any particular caste. But because of his own social and professional background, many of the leading adherents were middle-class Paṭels from Mumbai and Baroda. Even today, the chief personalities of the movement are engineers, merchants and medical doctors. However, most of the common followers of the Dādā are uneducated, often illiterate, members of the urban working classes, predominantly Paṭels, Mahetās and Śāhs from the Pāṭidār, Śrīmālī and Osvāl castes of Gujarat who traditionally practise Vaiṣṇavite and/or Jaina rituals often side by side.⁷¹ A.M. Paṭel supplied their need for religious inspiration, and offered a path of salvation which was easy to understand and practise at the same time. The main reason for the popularity of the Dādā Bhagavān cult is its universal, non-intellectual and non-sectarian appeal. A.M. Paṭel was a simple, unassuming man with a good grasp of Jaina and Vaiṣṇava concepts. He spoke about subtle religio-philosophical ideas in an uncomplicated plain Gujarati language with interjected English terms which everybody could understand, and gave practical advice for the resolution of everyday problems from the point of view of ‘absolute truth.’

Community Organisation

As a matter of principle, A.M. Paṭel rejected organised forms of religion, *gurus* and religious functionaries. He nevertheless ‘agreed to’ the creation of community associations. The main association of the Akram Vijñān Mārg is the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha in Mumbai. This organisation was founded under the auspices of A.M. Paṭel himself, who appointed Khetsī Narsī Śāh, the head of the local Dādā Bhagavān Vitarāga Trust, as the first *sakala saṅghapati*, or overall community leader, who acts as the chief coordinator of the activities of all local *saṅghs*. After the death of Khetsī Narsī Śāh, G.A. Śāh from Ahmedabad was appointed as the *saṅghapati*. His main duties are to organise the movements of the religious leader and his main disciples, the so-called *āptaṭras* and *āptaṭrīs*, a category of celibate laity who are invited by devotees all over the world, and to publish the community magazine *Akram Vijñān* which was first issued in 1979.⁷² He also oversees the various building projects and looks after the community funds. Today, the organisation has important strongholds, led by local *saṅghapatis*, in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Surat, London and in the U.S.

Ritualisation: Nīrubahen Amīn

The development of the Dādā Bhagavān worship from a charismatic family cult into an organised religious movement which refers to itself as the Akram Vijñān Mārg, the stepless path of knowledge, is to a large extent, though not entirely, the achievement of Nīrubahen Amīn (born 1944–2006), the second chief disciple of A.M. Paṭel. She was instrumental in publishing the discourses of A.M. Paṭel and effected the creation of an elaborate ritualism, including the formalisation of the *jñāna vidhi* which under her influence was developed into a public initiation ceremony lasting more than 48 minutes. She also composed a *pūjā* ritual and promoted the construction of temples for the veneration of Sīmandhar Svāmī.⁷³

Nīrubahen Amīn is a gynaecologist by profession and the daughter of one of the oldest devotees of A.M. Paṭel, a multimillionaire from Aurangabad, whose family was traditionally Vaiṣṇavite. She was married, but later separated from her husband and took up medical studies in Bombay, when suddenly her husband died in 1968 under the suspicion of suicide. Shortly afterwards, her mother died as well. After these traumatic events, which left her heartbroken, she went to A.M. Paṭel, whom her father had asked to look after her in Bombay. ‘With the Dādā’s help,’ she said, she finished her medical exams at the end of the year. On the same day her father died. Before the news reached her, ‘the Dādā’ told her about her father’s death in great detail, although he had not yet received any report of the death himself. This confirmed to her his omniscience. When the official message was brought to her, she was prepared, fully detached and indifferent. The sad news could not harm her, because she had received the *jñāna* from ‘the Dādā’ A.M. Paṭel and knew that her father – as a dedicated follower of the Dādā – would be reborn as a higher incarnation: ‘Life goes on, one just changes outer appearances.’ From then on, she says, she became a devotee of the Dādā and was never again unaware of her pure self even for one moment.

Initially, Nīrubahen had no competence in the ‘science’ of the self (*ātmāvijñāna*), but she was so impressed by the Dādā that she began to tape his religious discourses (*satsaṅgs*) from 1974 onwards. She collected in this way about four thousand tapes between 1974 and 1988, which are currently compiled, transcribed (in a few cases translated) and published under the title *Āptavāṇī*, or words of truth.

The currently twelve *Āptavāṇī* volumes represent the emerging doctrinal corpus of the Akram Vijñān Mārg.⁷⁴ The first one and a half volumes of the *Āptavāṇī* were compiled both by Kanubhāi Paṭel and Nīrubahen Amīn, and the first volume published in 1973 by the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha. Volumes published later than 1983 are based exclusively on Nīrubahen's tapes. The only other textual source for A.M. Paṭel's teachings is 'Vāsudev' Naṭubhāi Paṭel's collection of *satsaṅg* notes which were published in several volumes under the title *Svarūp Vijñān* in the 1980s.⁷⁵

Except for the slightly modified, syncretistic version of the Jaina *Namaskāra Mantra*, called *Tri-Mantra*, or three-fold *mantra*, which includes references to the Jinas, Kṛṣṇa and Śiva and is recited at the beginning of every religious event of the Akram Vijñān Mārg,⁷⁶ none of the printed compilations used in the current ritual stems from A.M. Paṭel, who refused to write religious tracts. He only ever composed two short ritual texts, the *Namaskār Vidhi* in 1971–73,⁷⁷ a devotional hymn addressed to Sīmandhar Svāmī and to all other Indian saints and gods he considered worthy of worship, in descending order from the Pañca Parameṣṭhins of the Jaina *Namaskāra Mantra* down to Kṛṣṇa, the Dādā Bhagavān himself and the pure self of all living beings; and the *Nav Kalamo*, the Nine Precepts, in 1977, a prayer to the Dādā Bhagavān which is said to comprise 'the essence of all scriptures.'⁷⁸ The oldest ritual text of the Akram Vijñān Mārg which is the centrepiece of both the daily worship and the *jñāna vidhi*, the *Nīscay-Vyavahār Caraṇ Vidhi*, or Absolute-Relative Foot Worship, was written by Vanubhāi Paṭel at the request of A.M. Paṭel and Nīrubahen Amīn in 1968.⁷⁹ The opening chants of today's formalised rite of knowledge were composed by a songwriter from Bombay, Navanit Paṭel, in 1970.⁸⁰

In 1976 Nīrubahen had an ecstatic religious experience in A.M. Paṭel's presence which, in her words, also established a unique link between herself and Sīmandhar Svāmī, and inspired her to compose the text of an *āratī* ritual for the veneration of Sīmandhar. Her description of the event resembles the narration of the enlightenment experience of A.M. Paṭel. But it highlights the significance of the mediation of the Dādā and of a special *mantra* composed by him:

Naturally, before I came into contact with Pujya Dadashree, I was not familiar even with the word 'Tirthaṅkar' in its real meaning. As such, how was I to have any information regarding Shree Simandhar

Svami? It was 1971. We were in Vadva. At night, we were all sitting in a small room of Pujariji, Each one of us present there had to recite, one by one, the following mantra: 'In the very presence of Dada Bhagvan and through him, most devoutly do I bow in supplication unto *tirthankar* Bhagavan Shree Simandhar Svami, traversing at present Mahāvideha Kṣetra.'⁸¹ First of all, Dadashri recited it to show us how it should be recited. Then he penned it on a piece of paper and gave it to me, asking me to make others recite it in turn. This was my first acquaintance with Shree Simandhar Svami. Then, in September 1972, there was one *shibir* of three days in Aurangabad. During the morning prayers, Dadashri reflected on something and told us all present there: 'One who recites this mantra forty times a day shall gain the fruit of offering one hundred and eight obeisance directly to Shree Simandhar Svami.' Thereafter everyone started reciting this mantra forty times a day. Dadashri had suggested that, time permitting, you should at least once a week, on a holiday, recite this matra forty times. As far as I am concerned, the rule of reciting the mantra, which was ingrained into my being then, has come down till today, uninterrupted and unbroken. In 1976, while Dadashri was staying in Mamani Pole, Baroda, I had the golden opportunity of serving him during his illness. It was 12.30 p.m. Having taken his dinner, he was, as usual, sitting on a bench. I was sitting on a sofa just opposite to him. On the wall facing me was a photograph of Shree Simandhar Svami. While conversing—I don't know how or why, be it some divine inspiration or be it ripe time to shower his infinite grace onto me—he attuned my being with Shree Simandhar Svami and set a unique link between us! I don't have adequate words to express my Ecstatic Experience and Great Bliss of that moment. Thenceforth, the moment my *chitta* [reflective mind] feels free and unoccupied, it gets lost in the lotus-feet of Shree Simandhar Svami. In those days, when Pujya Dadashri used to smoke a *hookah* [hubble-bubble], there sprung in me such an overflowing feeling of oneness with Shree Simandhar Svami that I was divined and inspired to compose His *aarti*. The *aarti* has in it all the mysteries of my unique union with Him.⁸²

Nirubahen Amin continued to work in a small surgery in Bombay until 1978, when A.M. Paṭel suffered a fractured leg. From then on he needed constant medical care and Nirubahen was asked to stay with him and to do *sevā* in the place of Kanu Paṭel. Her medical expertise was particularly valuable during A.M. Paṭel's missionary tours abroad between 1982 and 1987, which Kanu Paṭel, who had to look after the business of Paṭel & Co., could not join. Thus, for the last ten years of A.M. Paṭel's life Nirubahen became the person

closest to him, apart from his wife. Being the daughter of a multimillionaire, she was able, like her brothers, to live off her share in her father's business.

During the last years of A.M. Paṭel's life, the issue of how the movement could be perpetuated beyond his death was hotly debated. After some hesitation, A.M. Paṭel finally agreed in 1980 to the construction of a temple for the worship of the three images (*trimūrti*) of Sīmandhar, Kṛṣṇa and Śiva in order to spread the message of universal religion. But he spoke out against the worship of his own image and insisted that his method of liberation should only be spread by the lineages of his successors, which he called *jīvanmūrti*, or living idols:

Don't we have the (paintings) of Mahavir and Kṛṣṇa? Keep them.
Don't put our photograph. It won't be useful to you in any way.
We'll leave behind us our successors and then the (chain) link of
Jnanis will continue. Therefore find out a living idol. The puzzle
won't be solved without his [sic!] guidance.⁸³

In 1993 the impressive Tri-Mandir temple near Surat was inaugurated and a *dharmasālā* was built nearby, both under the management of the Mahāvideha Tīrthadhām Trust. But, although the Tri-Mandir temple in Surat was constructed in such a way as to demonstrate that the same god (the pure soul) dwells within everyone – in Sīmandhar, Kṛṣṇa and Śiva – it also offers the chance to worship the photos of A.M. Paṭel and Kanu Paṭel in a separate chamber underneath the central Sīmandhar Svāmī Temple.⁸⁴

Succession Dispute

Shortly after the death of A.M. Paṭel on 2 January 1988, the Akram Vijñān Movement split into two factions. The person who was close to him until 1978, Kanubhāi K. Paṭel, took over as the sole religious leader of the Akram Vijñān community with the institutional backing of the main community association, the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha in Bombay. Nīrubahen Amīn seceded and created a separate community on her own. There are two conflicting accounts of this split.

According to Nīrubahen, A.M. Paṭel decided near the end of his life to secure the continuation of the Akram Vijñān Mārg by passing on his powers (*siddhi*) of liberation (*mukti*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and grace (*kṛpā*) to a number of successors. In 1987, he blessed

Nīrubahen 'in the presence of Sīmandhar' with a secret *mantra* through which she would be able to temporarily manifest the Dādā (the pure soul of A.M. Paṭel) within herself and thus be able to access him, and through him, Sīmandhar's spiritual power. In this way, a spiritual link would be maintained across the hiatus of physical death between the presently living *tīrthāṅkara* Sīmandhar Svāmī, the *jñānī puruṣa* Dādā Bhagavān and Nīrubahen who was called *satpuruṣa*, the divine being or the being of truth. A.M. Paṭel also gave her the authority to perform the *jñāna vidhi*, and trained her for five months, during which she learned the required words by repeating what he said.

After the death of A.M. Paṭel, Nīrubahen began to perform the *jñāna vidhi* on her own, claiming that the Dādā had given her the powers to do so and is actually speaking through her for a significant part of the ritual. Nīrubahen present herself as a medium (*nimitta*) of the Dādā. However, she says that she communicates with him even in her dreams, where she experiences how the Dādā passes her messages to Sīmandhar and Sīmandhar's answers on to her. This assertion was not acceptable to the leaders of the Jay Saccindānanda Saṅgha, who supported Kanu Paṭel as the successor of A.M. Paṭel, because they would not accept a female leader. However, Nīrubahen continued and left the community organisation to build up her own following. Like A.M. Paṭel, she officially rejects the notion of organised religion (in order to juxtapose herself against the followers of Kanu Paṭel), but nevertheless inspired the creation of organisations of her own supporters, first the Dādā Bhagavan Foundation Trust of Ajit Paṭel in Chennai and Ahmedabad, and more recently the Sīmandhar Svāmī Ārādhanā Trust in Ahmedabad and Nīrubahen Amīn's own Mahāvideha Foundation in Mumbai. At the moment, Nīrubahen Amīn is the most popular religious leader of the Akram Vijñān movement. She also frequently appears on Indian television. Since 1999 she is called Nīru-mā, 'Mother Nīru,' by her followers.

This version of events is contradicted by the account given by the followers of Kanubhāi Paṭel. They produced a tape of a private conversation between A.M. Paṭel and Nīrubahen, which was recorded by chance on their tour of the United States on 19 September 1987, to prove that the Dādā intended Kanu Paṭel and not Nīrubahen Amīn to be his successor.⁸⁵ At the beginning of the short conversation, conducted in a husky voice with long intervals

between utterances, A.M. Paṭel gave her instructions for his funeral and then, using the formula ‘*Dādā Bhagavān bole che*’ (Dādā Bhagavān says), he said that Nīrubahen should continue to perform six more *satsaṅgs* herself. After this, she should help Kanubhāi in the same way as she helped him to perform the *jñāna vidhi*. He then said: ‘I have [already] passed the *vidhi mukeli* [rite of liberation] on to Kanubhāi.’ This evidence seems to prove that A.M. Paṭel wanted his two main disciples to work together. He wanted Nīrubahen first to teach the performance of the ritual to Kanubhāi and then to assist him. At the time, Kanubhāi had no experience in performing the *jñāna vidhi* himself. He apparently received the powers to do so from A.M. Paṭel already in the early 1960s, but refused to perform the *vidhi* ‘out of respect (*vinaya*) for the Dādā.’ However, Nīrubahen performed the *jñāna vidhi* a few times herself. When she saw that it worked successfully, she simply continued and refused to step down and serve Kanubhāi.

The followers of Kanubhāi accept that Nīrubahen acquired many powers in her years in the presence of the Dādā, but emphasise that the power of liberating others has not been given to Nīrubahen, which she accepts herself. By contrast, the first two disciples of A.M. Paṭel, the late Candrakānt and Kanubhāi, are regarded by them as *jñānīs* in their own right who are entitled to perform the rite of knowledge on their own, without recourse to the Dādā. Many of Kanubhāi’s devotees accept his claim that he will be reborn as one of the twenty-four *tīrthaṅkaras* of the next time cycle (*kalachakra*) and recite verse no. 10 of the *Namaskār Vidhi*: ‘*Dādā Bhagavān na bhavi tīrthaṅkar sāhebo ne atyant bhakti pūrvak namaskār karuṇ chuṇ*’— ‘With extreme devotion I offer my salutations to future *tīrthaṅkara* lords of Dādā Bhagavān.’⁸⁶ In other words, they see encounters with him as a possibility to establish a direct link (*ṛṇānubandha*) with a future *tīrthaṅkara*. ‘Kanudādā’ as he is sometimes called, is also recognised by the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha as the ‘presently existing enlightened being’ (*pravartamān pragaṭ jñānī puruṣa*).⁸⁷

Two Approaches

Nīrubahen Amīn accepts that the Dādā passed the authority to perform the *jñāna vidhi* also to Kanu Paṭel (though not the *mantra*). But she does not agree with Kanu Paṭel’s claim to spiritual leadership under the pretext that he is the currently living *jñānī puruṣa*.

Because, in her view, A.M. Paṭel was the only *jñānī*, she merely assumes the humble role as his spiritual medium (*nimitta*) for herself. Moreover, she accuses Kanu Paṭel of not distinguishing between *samyak darśana* and *mokṣa*, that is between the experience of the difference between body and soul, and salvation. Because he claims to be the self-realised one, she says, Kanu Paṭel has no religious aim, no transcendence to offer anymore, although his conduct hardly matches his claim to have reached salvation within the world. ‘No-one owns this knowledge, only the *tīrthankaras*,’ she says, and only ‘someone with sufficient purity can give the *bhed jñān* to others.’⁸⁸ Nīrubahen Amīn unequivocally states:

The science of Akram Vijnan is transferable. Thousands became enlightened through the grace of Dadashree and thousands continue to experience instant living *mokṣh* even now provided they surrender their intellect and their beliefs to god, Dādā Bhagavān, the lord of the universe, who was fully manifest in A.M. Paṭel.⁸⁹

It becomes obvious in the following quotation that Nīrubahen’s interpretation of God comes close to what might be called the ‘Jina-nature within,’⁹⁰ which is generally contrasted by her with the ‘self-deification’ practised by Kanu Paṭel:

A very important message of note for all who are new to Pujya Dadashri’s Science of Akram Vijnan is to be aware that the title of Dādā Bhagvan can never be given to any living being. Dādā Bhagvan is the name given to the Lord within. This was frequently asserted by the *Jnani Purush* Dadashri and now is being asserted by Pujya Nīrubahen and all who have received Jñān from her.⁹¹

Kanu Paṭel, on the other hand, insists that one cannot transfer spiritual experiences by performing ritual acts or by becoming a medium. Words themselves are not important, whether they are the exact utterances of the Dādā or not. The *vidhi* can be performed in any language, not only in Gujarati as Nīrubahen maintains.⁹² For the *jñāna vidhi* to be efficacious it is of the utmost importance that the performer is enlightened himself. Everything must be based upon one’s own experience, on mind (*manas*), not on action or speech:

‘I cannot be out of my centre,’ he said, ‘my experience is individual, it has to be independent. There cannot be any hierarchy. The Dada did not give special powers to anyone. No person can make others experience the truth, neither can books nor any transfer of

intellectual knowledge. Grace is the only way to achieve self-realisation. And grace exists only when nothing is given and nothing received. I am neither the giver nor the receiver. I am totally free. I am not out of my centre. My own experience is more important than the word. The Dada's speech is fundamental in the *vidhi*, yet the potential for divine speech is essentially existing within everybody. Every human being can have the experience of liberation out of suffering in the present life. Only animals and plants cannot have this experience. The *vidhi* itself does not cause any material changes.⁴⁹³

Kanubhāi also claims to have experienced great intimacy with the Dādā, although Nīrubahen stayed with A.M. Paṭel during the last ten years of his life, and says that the Dādā was principally opposed to the development of any cult, and did not design any definite ritual, like Nīrubahen, because he thought that rituals and ceremonies develop naturally as a form of *vyavasthit śakti*.

However, there was another reason for the departure of Nīrubahen. Kanu Paṭel and the *saṅghapati* were simply not prepared to accept a female leader, although they offered Nīrubahen the opportunity to work for the *saṅgha*. They reported that the Dādā himself was opposed to women becoming *brahmacārīnīs*, 'just because they don't want to marry.' Apparently, A.M. Paṭel said: 'Women cannot observe my principles and better do more chanting,' although this is uncorroborated by the followers of Nīrubahen. He apparently also believed, like most Jainas (and Hindus), that women have an inferior *kārmik* constitution and that, therefore, few have higher spiritual experiences. It is widely held that women generally have more *mohanīya*, or mind-deluding, *karmas* and therefore cannot realise the effects of the *jñāna vidhi* as easily as men. Although the influx of new *karmas* will be stopped after undergoing the ritual, too many old *karmas* continue to discharge. Kanu Paṭel claims that this was the reason why A.M. Paṭel had initiated only *āptaṭputras* and no *āptaṭputrīs* at all [Kanu Paṭel has not initiated any *āptaṭputras* or *āptaṭputrīs*].

Kanubhāi's followers generally criticise Nīrubahen's 'desire for power' and her 'lack of humility' which they see confirmed by the fact that, in contrast to the Dādā and Kanudādā who continued to wear their everyday dress after their enlightenment, she (and her main disciples) changed her dress to pure white, thus getting involved in the 'relative world.' The Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha officially rejected Nīrubahen Amīn's claim that she is medium of

the Dādā, discouraged her following and frequently broke up her meetings. In 1993, at the consecration ceremony of the Akram Vijñān Sīmandhar temple near Surat, the association produced a written document in which it renounced all responsibility for Nīrubahen Amīn's actions.

The aversion between the two sections of the Akram Vijñān movement is currently only concealed under a thin veil of silence publicly observed by the followers of both sides. Nīrubahen Amīn is said to have taken advantage of her position 'as a nurse' to claim greatest closeness to the Dādā out of greed and depression. And Kanu Paṭel is painted as a 'religious imposter' who claims *jñānī* status on no merit. Stories about the embezzlement of community funds to cover Kanu's business losses are also circulating. The religious leaders of both groups pressurise their followers to take sides or to risk losing the *jñāna*, 'because the turmoil of doubt caused in the mind will attract more *karmas*, if you support both sides, you lose your *jñāna*.'⁹⁴ Most followers understand this of course not in *kārmik*, but in personal terms, and fear to lose spiritual and social support. An atmosphere of supernatural angst therefore prevails in the Akram Vijñān community today.

Routinisation of Charisma

The developments shortly before and after the death of A.M. Paṭel correspond well to the pattern outlined in Max Weber's theory of the routinisation (*Veralltäglicdung*) of charisma. In fact, the two solutions offered – the attempt to perpetuate the charismatic cult of the Dādā through a designated, similarly qualified successor, on the one hand, and the objectification of charisma in *mantras* and designated ritual acts with a magical link to the original charismatic source, on the other hand – are paradigmatic options of the model. The two groups also play the two sides of the ambiguous Dādā cult against each other: the Dādā as the medium of Sīmandhar, and the Dādā as a self-enlightened being. Since both groups tend to rely more and more on the creation of religious institutions and rituals, in particular the devotional worship of the Dādā image, it seems that Nīrubahen is better placed, because of the detachment of the source of charisma from her person to a *mantra* which can be transmitted from *guru* to *guru*. Therefore, (a) her future successors will not have to pretend to be self-enlightened, but will qualify for the performance of the *jñāna vidhi* by merely receiving the blessings of

their predecessor and the Dādā's *mantra*, (b) the leadership and the *brahmacarya vrata* can be given by the spiritual leader, or *ātmajñānī*, of the movement to both men and women, and (c) the option of a pure image cult, entirely detached from a *guru* lineage, is maintained by the consecration of a new temple, the Mahāvideha Tīrthadhām, in Ahmedabad on 31 December 1999, to match the temple of Kanu Paṭel's followers in Surat. Ultimately, the anti-female position of the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha and the lack of a successor to Kanu Paṭel will probably turn the tide in favour of Nīrubahen Amīn, who is already more popular than Kanu Paṭel outside India, where she has founded the Jaya Saccidānanda U.K. and other community organisations in the U.S. However, it should be noted that some followers of the Dādā, most of them *mahātmās* associated with the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha, accept neither Nīrubahen nor Kanubhāi as their *gurus* but continue to venerate the Dādā and Sīmandhar Svāmī. Similar forms of routinisation of charisma can be found amongst the Śrīmad Rājacandra movement and the Kānjī Svāmī Panth.⁹⁵

Conclusion

In contrast to the theistic Vaiṣṇava traditions, which propagate devotional religion (*bhakti mārga*), and to Śrīmad Rājacandra, who promulgated a '*kramik*' combination of devotion, asceticism and knowledge, with an emphasis on devotion, the new Akram Vijñān movement professes to follow the path of knowledge (*jñāna mārga*). However, a comparison with the Puṣṭimārgīs in Ujjain, for instance, who are aptly described in Peter Bennett's ethnography *The Path of Grace*, shows that the Dādā Bhagavān cult incorporated key elements of Vaiṣṇava forms of worship in their religious practices. Both traditions share the doctrinal rejection of asceticism and of strict rituals, and claim to offer a universalistic trans-religious vision open even to Muslims or Christians. However, the mediating role of the *guru* is pre-eminent and often no clear distinction is made between god and man. In practice, the professed doctrinal universalism therefore invariably turns into *guru* cults with exclusivist tendencies. The most visible resemblance between the Puṣṭimārgīs and the Akram Vijñān Mārg (as well as the Svāmīnarāyaṇ tradition) is the practice of symbolically surrendering all worldly attachments, that is *karmas*, including one's property, through a formal resolution (*saṅkalpa*), called *samarpaṇa*, at the point of initiation.⁹⁶

In contrast to Jaina mendicants, the *sadgurus* of both the Rājacandra and the Akram Vijñān movement have in common with Hindu *gurus* that they often present themselves as *avatārs*, as manifestations of gods on earth, or as their mediums. However, in practice the distinction between incarnate god and medium is hard to maintain. Gombrich and Obeyesekere, who investigated the current urban resurgence of ‘spirit cults’ in Śrī Laṅkā, which combine elements of traditional Buddhism with influences of *bhakti* and Tantra, have observed:

One can of course argue a difference between miracles, which a god produces by his grace to favour his devotees, and magic, a technique by which humans can coerce unseen powers. But when the miracle-working god takes human form, the distinction becomes blurred...⁹⁷

Gombrich and Obeyesekere interpret these spirit cults as imports from Hinduism, though the Buddhist *bodhisattva* worship takes similar forms. P.S. Jaini, who often acts as a defender of the classical view of Jainism, has also argued that similar popular forms of *bhakti* religiosity amongst Jains are forms of Hinduisation (though imported in a consciously Jainised form)⁹⁸:

For Jainas, in other words, no synthesis of the human and the supramundane was ever possible; hence the *tīrthaṅkaras* [and not the *bodhisattvas*] remained the highest models of spiritual development, and such tantric practices as identification of the self with the deity were simply out of the question.⁹⁹

Although Jaini principally denies the existence of a ‘Jain’ cult of chosen deities (*iṣṭa-devatā*),¹⁰⁰ he does not fail to mention the frequent examples of Vaiṣṇava and Tantric influences on Jaina texts and practices such as the deification of the Jina, the visualisation of omniscience or the concentration on that which transcends form, mentioned for instance in Hemacandra’s *Yogaśāstra*, which ‘give the meditator a kind of experimental contact with the “ultimate Self” (*paramātmān*),’ an experience which, Jaini hastens to add, is ‘not equivalent to that of *siddhahood*’ itself.¹⁰¹ J.E. Cort also noticed that Mūrtipūjak Jains in Gujarat often blur ‘the distinction between the Jinās and the living mendicants, in the same manner that Vaiṣṇavs oftentimes conflate Viṣṇu-Kṛṣṇa and their living gurus.’¹⁰² However, ‘the Śvetāmbar Mūrtipūjak guru remains much more a human being, albeit a special, powerful human being, whereas among the Hindu guru cults the guru tends to assume the status of a deity.’¹⁰³

I would argue that the ‘Digambara Mahāyāna’ teachings of Kundakunda, which have greatly influenced a variety of Jaina lay movements, including the Śrīmad Rājacandra movement and the Akram Vijñān Mārg, cannot entirely be brought under the verdict of Hinduisation.¹⁰⁴ The fact that they could be easily reinterpreted by the layman A.M. Paṭel from ‘theistic,’ ‘devotional’ and ‘Tantric’ perspectives rather seems to reflect the fact that there is not one Jainism made up of a fixed set of discernable ‘core beliefs’¹⁰⁵ promoted by identifiable individuals or groups but a plurality of doctrinal elements and practices that are compiled, combined and labelled in various ways.¹⁰⁶ What is certainly special about any self-consciously ‘Jain’ movement is the principal emphasis on the soteriological importance of non-injury and the soteriological goal of liberation preached by the Jinās, which is shared by both Kundakunda and the Akram Vijñān movement, although the latter adopts the Sāṃkhya ontology of the passive soul whereas Kundakunda retains the traditional Jaina interpretation of the soul as intrinsically active. In his analysis of Kundakunda’s concept of self-realisation, William Johnson writes: ‘one can only speculate on the effect of such ideas on the Jaina layperson,’ arguing

that any changes must have been largely in terms of expectation rather than practice... such theoretical possibilities as that of a ‘Jina-nature’ nevertheless make liberation *seem* closer. They are affectively satisfying...¹⁰⁷

The logical, although not necessary, conclusion Johnson writes, for those who take Kundakunda’s mystical philosophy seriously ‘would seem to be abandonment of the external forms of Jaina ascetic life in favour of self-realisation, to be achieved by meditation on the pure self. It never quite comes to this.’¹⁰⁸

This article has attempted to show that there is now a religious lay movement which works out the implications of Kundakunda’s ideas from new angles. It can from different points of view, be interpreted as a form of ‘Digambara Mahāyāna,’ ‘Jaina Sāṃkhya,’ ‘Jaina Vaiṣṇava syncretism’ or ‘Jaina Tantra.’¹⁰⁹ However, to the participant it does not merely represent an admixture of elements of Buddhist, Vaiṣṇava and canonical, classical or mystical Jaina sources, to the latter of which it is, nevertheless, closely related, but a new doctrinal synthesis, which offers salvation to everyone in the mythical pure land of Mahāvideha Kṣetra through the grace of Sīmandhar Svāmī. Because of the similarities in doctrinal structure, this synthesis can be legitimately labelled ‘Jaina Mahāyāna.’

Notes

'This essay is based on intermittent field research in London, Ahmedabad, Surat and Mumbai between 1997 and 2001. If not indicated otherwise, all texts and translations have been cited verbatim from the literature of the Akram Vijñān Mārg.

1. Walther Schubring, *The Doctrine of the Jainas: Described after the Old Sources*. Translated from the original German by S.B. Shrotri, 2nd English Edition (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1935/2000), 60f.
2. Robert Williams, *Jaina Yoga: A Survey of the Medieval Śrāvakācāras* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963/1983), xix.
3. Padmanabh S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 88. See Chapter 9 on the issue of Hinduisation.
4. I will not attempt to trace the history of specific doctrinal imports from Mahāyāna Buddhism into Jainism but rather emphasise the general structural parallels to a new Jain religious movement.
5. If anyone should prefer the label 'Jaina Sāmḅkhyā' or 'Jaina-Vaiṣṇava syncretism' for the characterisation of the Akram Vijñān Mārg, I would not object, since the thrust of my main argument is not affected by this.
6. The Digambara ācārya, Kundakunda, lived in South India sometime between the first and the eighth century CE.
7. The 'import' of elements of Mahāyāna, Sāmḅkhyā and Vedānta philosophies, especially by authors such as Kundakunda who are associated with the Digambara Jain 'mystical' tradition, has been discussed in particular by Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Jainism: An Indian Religion of Salvation*. Translated from the original German by Shridhar B. Shrotri (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1925/1999), 504; A. Chakravarti, 'Introduction,' in *Ācārya Kundakunda's Samayasāra, with English Translation and Commentary based upon Amritacandra's Atmakyat*: 3rd Edition, edited by A. Chakravarti (New Delhi: Bhartiya Jñānpith, 1925/1989), 103ff; Adinath Neminath Upadhye, 'Introduction,' in *Śrī Yogīndudeva's Paramātmaprakāśa (Paramaḅḅapayāsu): An Apabhraḅśa Work on Jaina Mysticism* (Bombay: Sheth Manilal Revashankar Jhaveri, 1937), 29ff; Walther Schubring, 'Kundakunda echt und unecht,' in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 107 (1957) 568–74; Ram Jee Singh, *The Jaina Concept of Omniscience* (Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, 1974), 54–57, n. 25; Bansidhar Bhatt, 'Vyavahāra-Naya and Niścaya-Naya in Kundakunda's Works,' in *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, Supplement II* (1974) 283; Bansidhar Bhatt, 'On the Epithet: nāṭaka for the Samayasāra of Kundakunda,' in *Jainism and Prakrit in Ancient and Medieval India*, edited by N.N. Bhattacharya (New Delhi: Manohar, 1994), 432, 455; William J. Johnson, *Harmless Souls: Karmic*

Bondage and Religious Change in Early Jainism with Special Reference to Umāsvāti and Kundakunda (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995), 45, 180ff, 281-87; Nalini Balbir and Colette Caillat, 'Introduction,' in *Yogīndu: Lumière de l'Absolu*, traduit de l'apabhraṃśa et présenté par Nalini Balbir et Colette Caillat, Préface de Bernard Sergent (Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1999), 40ff.

8. Heinz Bechert, 'Buddhist Modernism: Present Situation and Current Trends,' in *Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft in den Ländern des Theravada-Buddhismus. Band II. Burma, Kambodscha, Laos, Thailand*. Neuausgabe mit Supplementen sowie Personen- und Sachregister (Göttingen: Seminar für Indologie and Buddhismuskunde, 2000), xxxii.
9. The student of Mahāyāna Buddhism will find numerous structural similarities in the following description of the Akram Vijñān Mārg, although I refrained from pointing them out one by one, to mention only the significance of wisdom, compassion, devotion and magic in the cult of the *bodhisattva* and the concepts of *Buddha kṣetra* and *tathāgatagarbha*. There are equally important parallels to Vaiṣṇavism.
10. Statement of a male devotee of the Akram Vijñān Mārg in London.
11. On Sīmandhar Svāmī and Mahāvideha see Mohanlal Mehta and K. Rishabh Chandra, compilers, *Prakrit Proper Names, Part II* (Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, 1972), 799; and Paul Dundas, *The Jains* (London: Routledge, 1992), 255f, n. 65. Sīmandhar is not only worshipped by the Akram Vijñān Mārg. The Mūrtipūjaka Tapāgaccha tradition of the *ācāryas* Buddhīsāgarsūri, Kailāśāsāgarsūri, Kalyāṇsāgar and Subodhsāgar, inspired the construction of the first modern Sīmandhar temple in Mahesana in north Gujarat. Sīmandhar is also worshipped by the Digambar followers of Kāñjī Svāmī. References to Sīmandhar abound in the post-canonical literature, but until recently he never became the focus of the religions cult, like Mahāvīra.
12. It seems that the Jaina *tīrthaṅkaras* in Mahāvideha play a similar role to the Buddhas in the pure lands of Mahāyāna Buddhism, while A.M. Paṭel, the Dādā Bhagavān, resembles the *bodhisattvas* in Buddhism, who are able to communicate with the Buddhas in the Buddha fields with supernatural means. Although outwardly human, he acts as a self-awakened enlightened being, and thus as a god on earth, for the benefit of others. However, this is not yet recognised in the scholarly literature. See Suzuko Ohira, *Study*, 204f.
13. For conceivable reasons for its creation see. Ohira, *Study*, 33, 168. The possibility of visiting the Mahāvidehas, where always 4–24 (the number varies from text to text) Jinas live due to the absence of the time cycle, is discussed already in the canon. See *Viyāhaṇnattī (Bhagavati)* 25.6.11 (=895b). On Mahāvideha and its *arhats* see in particular *Ṭhāṇa (Sthānāṅga)* 3.390, 4.137, 4.315, *Uvavāiya*

(*Aupapātika*) 101–116, *Viyāhapannatti* 20.8 (=791b); Willibald Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder nach Quellen dargestellt* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1920/1967), 229–42; Schubring, *Doctrine*, 220, 222. The possibility of achieving liberation in Mahāvideha is described in canonical narrative texts such as the *Nāyādharmakahāo* (*Jñātrdharmakathā*) I. 1, 19, 13, 16, 19, etc. and the *Uvāsagadasāo* (*Upāsakadaśāh*) 2, 7, etc.

14. See the commentary on the *Pravacanasāra* 1.3–5 by the twelfth century *ācārya*, Amṛtacandra, in Ācārya Kundakunda, *Pravacanasāra together with the Commentary, Tattva-dīpikā by Amṛtacandra Sūri* (=PS). Vol. I. Jain Literature Society Series. English translation by Barend Faddegon, edited with an Introduction by F.W. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1935), 3–4; Dundas, *The Jains*, 230.
15. Late-canonical mythological and cosmological texts such as the *Jambūdvīpaprajñāpti* do not refer to the conveyance of omniscience to Bhārata through an act of grace. Bhārata is invariably characterised as a *pratyeke buddha*, a self-enlightened being. He is however the only householder mentioned in the canon who gained omniscience spontaneously, without first having been initiated as a monk. See Schubring, *Doctrine*, 22, 225; Ācārya Hemacandra, *Triṣaṣṭiśalākā-puruṣa-caritra* (=TSPC), translated by Helen M. Johnson as *The Lives of Sixty-three Illustrious Persons*, Vol. 1, Verse 715–45 (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1931), 376–78.
16. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, edited by Khetsī Narsī Śāh, translated by V. Pathak and G. Śāh (Bombay: Saccidānanda Saṅgha, 1983), 11, cf. 70. Compare the original Gujarati text, *Āptavāṇī* (=AV), Vol. 1–12, compiled and edited by Nīrubahen Amīn (Amadāvād: Dādā Bhagavān Foundation, 1995–1999), Vol. 1, pp. 9, 57 (the first edition of Vol. 1 was compiled by Kanu Paṭel and Niru Amīn and published on 15 July 1973 by the Jay Saccidānanda Saṅgha in Bombay).
17. A.M. Paṭel, in Khetsī Narsī Śāh, ‘Foreword,’ in A.M. Paṭel, *Science of Liberation*, compiled by Āptaputra Dr. Shailesh P. Mehta, edited by K.N. Śāh (Bombay: Saccidānanda Saṅgha, 1995), iv. See the original passage AV I, 6f, and its English rendition in A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 7f.
18. Rājacandra’s original name was Lakṣmīnandan Mahetā. Although he rejected traditional *gurus* and his contemporary Jaina mendicants who acquired their charisma only *qua* position, he taught *bhakti* towards a truly enlightened *guru* as the principal path towards salvation. (See Emma Salter, ‘Unity and Diversity amongst the followers of Śrīmad Rājacandra,’ in *Jinamañjari* 23, 1 (2001): 32–51.) His emphasis on *ātmadharmā* derives from the tradition of Kundakunda.
19. Another word that he often used was *muktabhāva*, or freedom from the effects of feelings. See Nīrubahen Amīn, ‘Who is Dādā Bhagavān?’ in *Dādāvāṇī* (Ahmedabad: Dādā Bhagwan Foundation, n.d.), 30.

20. The only self-description I found was in a short discourse (translated?) in Hindi in A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 2nd edition, edited by Nīrubahen Amīn (Madras: Dādā Bhagavān Foundation, 1973/1995):
Prashna: Aṇjani kaise hue?
Dādā: Yah but natural ho gaya hai. 1958 mem Surat steshan par lakri ki bench par sham ko suryastakal ke samay andar achanak jnan prakash ho gaya. Sare brahmand ko ham ne dar asal vastu ke rup meim dekha. Tab se vah 'jnan' nirantar prakash deta hi rahata hai. Yah natural production hai. Khud prayatna karke prapta karna bahut hi mushkil hai. (215)
21. Amin, 'Who is Dādā Bhagavān?'³⁰.
22. A.M. Paṭel utilises the terminology of Digambara mysticism, which has parallels in the Vedantic tradition, in order to explain the relationship between soul and body; in particular, Kundakunda's distinction between three aspects of the soul: *jīva* (life), *ātmā* (individual self-consciousness), and *paramātmā* (supreme self or God), which is frequently equated with *śuddhātmā*. Instead of *ātmā*, he often uses the term *pratiṣṭhīt ātmā* to mark the difference between ego-centred erroneous (*vikalpa*) self-consciousness and the pure self. For *jīva* he often uses the word *bhāna*, or consciousness, stating: 'A "jīva" does not know "who am I"' (A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 115, cf. AV I, 94).
23. That is, a stepless or instant experience, not generated through specific religious practices.
24. See Nīrubahen Amīn, 'Who is "Dādā Bhagwan",' in A.M. Paṭel, *The Essence of All Religion*, edited by Nīrubahen Amīn (Ahmedabad: Dādā Bhagwan Foundation, 2000), iv, cf. Niṣpakṣpati Trimandir Saṅkul Mahāvīdeh Tīrthadhām (=NTS), editor, *Trimandir Paricay* (Surat: Mahāvīdeh Tīrthadhām, n.d.), 15.
25. Padmanabh, S. Jaini, 'On the *Sarvajñatva* (Omniscience) of Mahāvīra and the Buddha,' *Buddhist Studies in the Honour of I.B. Horner*, edited by L. Cousins et al. (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1974), 71f; and R.J. Singh, *Jaina Concept of Omniscience*, identified two different interpretations of 'omniscience' in the Jaina tradition, 'namely, omniscience as knowledge of essentials [the eternal self, P.F.] and omniscience as universal knowledge' (56). Kundakunda (*Niyamasāra* 158, in *ibid.*, 53) tried to combine both views. Consistent with Kundakunda's views, A.M. Paṭel claimed to know 'every atom of the soul and the non-soul, separating both of them' (*Āptavāṇī I*, 20, cf. AV I, 16).
26. The best discussion of *samyak darśana* is chapter 5 of Jaini's *Path of Purification*, 134–56.
27. 'Even a degree of *Keval Gyana*, "we" call *Pragna*...Absolute Omniscience of *Keval Gyana* is at the completion of 360° full' (A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 272).

‘A circle has 360°. The English are on 110°, the Muslims on 120°, the Paris on 140° and the Hindus on 220°; and all of them look at reality from their own points of view...But “We” are sitting at the centre-completing full circle of reality and so our vision is perfect. A Gnani [a realised soul] sitting at the centre has the right [true] perception of reality...But... “We” also could not digest 4° more and hence “we” are poised on 356°’ (ibid., 207).

28. ‘Knowing here means realising’ (Singh, *Jaina Concept of Omniscience*, 51). See also Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 238.
29. A.M. Paṭel sees the ‘superimposed’ or embodied self as a mixture of ego (I) and attachment (me): *ahaṃkāra (hūṃ) ane mamatā (marūṃ)* (AV I, 109, cf. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I, 134f).
30. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I, 7, 6. Compare the following analysis of A.M. Paṭel which uses techniques of reversal that are frequently found in Tantric literature. It is a good example of the way in which ‘the knowledge (sans intellect)’ is applied: ‘Nobody likes to be insulted. But “We” say that it is very “helping.” Respect and insult are the sweet-bitter juice of the ego. Let me tell you, he who insults you has come to squeeze the bitter taste out of you. When somebody said, “You are a fool”, he drew away that juice from you. The ego gets broken in proportion to the amount of juice extracted from it and this is done, without our labour, by someone else...We “Gnani Puruṣa” are “Abuddha” (sans intellect); but know that the “Gnani” possesses so many powers that he can easily squeeze all the juice of the ego. But you don’t have such powers’ (A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I, 119, cf. AVI, 97).
31. Amin, ‘Who is “Dādā Bhagavān”,’ v.
32. Interview with Kanu Paṭel, 1999.
33. The word *āpta* means also trustworthy, reliable, authoritative. For its use in Jainism, see Jayandra Soni, *The Notion of Āpta in Jaina Philosophy: The 1995 Roop Lal Jain Lecture* (University of Toronto, 1996).
34. Only the *mohanīya*, or delusion-producing *karmas* can be destroyed by the *Jñāni*. Thereafter, the aspirants are said to be able to prevent the influx of new *karmas* through the practice of passionlessness. However, the already accumulated *karmas* need to come to fruition naturally. If they are acted out dispassionately they will not bind new *karmas*.
35. It is believed that in the presence of a Jina or his immediate disciples, arhatship can be achieved within a few births through the annihilation of the *mohanīya karmas* via *kṣāyaka samyaktva*, insight through destruction, in the eighth *guṇasthāna*, or stage of purification (Jaini, *Path of Purification*, 146).
36. A doctrinal impossibility, which devotees explain was made possible by the intervention of the gods.

37. For a detailed description and analysis of the rite, see Peter Flügel, 'Beyond the Hindu Frontier: Jaina-Vaiṣṇava Syncretism in the Gujarātī Diaspora I-II, *International Journal of Tantrik Studies* 7', 1-2 (2005), Forthcoming.
38. Śrīmad Rājacandra, *Śrīmad Rājacandra*, edited by Manubhai B. Modi, 7th Edition (Agās: Śrīmad Rājacandra Āśram, 1951/1995), 679. Translated in U.K. Pungaliya, *Philosophy and Spirituality of Śrīmad Rājacandra* (Jaipur: Prakrit Bharati Academy, 1996), 204. For affirmative references to the example of Rājacandra, who is popularly called Kripalu Deva, or merciful god, see A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I, 207f. (cf. AV I, 97) and *Generation Gap*, 62: 'If you pray to Kripalu Dev (another *Gnani Purush*) or Dādā Bhagavān, it will be the same, because they both are the same in the sense of *Atma*. They are physically different in appearance, but in essence the same. Even if you invoke Lord Mahavir, it is one and the same.'
39. A.M. Paṭel declared that only three *jñānīs* ever existed in Bhārata (India) since the *nirvana* of the last *tīrthaṅkara*: Ācārya Kundakunda, Śrīmad Rājacandra and himself. He did not regard the neo-Digambara *brahmacārī*, Kāñji Svāmī (1889–1980), as a *jñānī*. For Kāñji Svāmī, see Dundas, *The Jains*, 227–32.
40. Kundakunda maintained the principle that the soul is active, though it can only transform itself. See Ācārya Kundakunda, *Samayasāra, with English Translation and Commentary based upon Amṛtacandra's Atmakhyati* (=SS), 3rd Edition, edited by A. Chakravarti (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jñānpith, 1925/1989), verse 340–41, 202f. See also A. Chakravarti, 'Introduction' 108, 157f; and Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 292–95, on Sāṃkhya and Vedānta influences on Kundakunda's philosophy.
41. Like Rājacandra (SR 238), A.M. Paṭel was strongly influenced by the Bhagavad Gītā, in which, in the words of J.A.B. van Buitenen, *The Bhagavad Gītā in the Mahābhārata: Text and Translation* (=BG) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), at least in certain passages, 'a three-order universe (God, *jīvas*, *prakṛti*) is superimposed on a Sāṃkhya two-order universe (*puruṣas*, *prakṛti*) with the implications not wholly thought through' (169, n. 2, commentary on BG 37).
42. The two-truth theory in a mature form was introduced into Jainism by Kundakunda, *Samayasāra*, Verse, 7, 14f.
43. Rājacandra writes in his famous text on the six principles (*ṣaṭpada*), that it is the activity of the soul itself that binds *karma*: '*ātmā che*,' '*te nitya che*,' '*che kartā nijakarma*,' '*che bhoktā*,' '*vaḷī mokṣa che*,' '*mokṣa upāya sudharma*' (*Ātmasiddhi* 43, in Rājacandra, *Śrīmad Rājacandra*, 538). In other words, 'the soul is the doer (*karta*).' A.M. Paṭel, on the other hand, insists that 'the soul is not the doer,' it is 'only the knower.' Accordingly, Rājacandra teaches a more traditional interpretation of Jainism, although he also writes: '*kartā bhoktā karmāno, vibhāva varte jyāmya; vṛtti vaḷī nijabhāvamāṃ, thayo akartā*

tyāmya’ (*Ātmasiddhi*, 121, 554): ‘In delusion one does the deeds, receives the fruits; but non-doer he is, when he sows the knowledge-seeds, and constantly remains the knower’ (*The Self-Realisation, Being a Translation of Atma-Siddhi of Śrīmad Rājacandra by Brahmacārī Govardhanadasajira*, Agas: Śrīmad Rājacandra Ashram, 1985/1994, 87). The principal difference between the teachings of Rājacandra and A.M. Paṭel is that the latter emphasises exclusively the religious value of the *niścaya* perspective, whereas Rājacandra combines, often in an unexplicated way, *niścaya naya* and *vyavahāra naya*. The classical Jaina view is that without taking into account the *vyavahāra* perspective, religion remains ethically impotent and salvation impossible. For Rājacandra, world-renunciation is ultimately indispensable. On this point, see Pungaliya, *Philosophy and Spirituality of Śrīmad Rājacandra*, 285f.

44. A.M. Paṭel, in N. Amin’s ‘Introduction’ to A.M. Paṭel, *Generation Gap*, ii.
45. These powers include mind-reading, *manahparyāya jñāna*. See A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 90, cf. AV I, 75.
46. *Ibid.*, 204, cf. AV I, 185.
47. *Ibid.*, 119, cf. AV I, 96f.
48. *Ibid.*, 55, cf. AV I, 45f.
49. *Ibid.*, 27, cf. AV I, 21f.
50. *Ibid.*, 58, cf. AV I, 47: ‘*Jyāre akram mārg maṃ jñānī puruṣ mathe hath muke to pote puruṣ thāi akhi prakṛti ne samajī jay.*’
51. *Ibid.*, 21f, cf. AV I, 15f.
52. God is, here, the soul and the boss is A.M. Paṭel, though the statement is deliberately ambiguous.
53. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 71, cf. AV I, 59.
54. Kundakunda also devaluates scriptural knowledge in favour of self-realisation, but he does not mention the possibility of a transfer of self-knowledge.
55. Kṛṣṇa Kumar Dixit, *Jaina Ontology* (Ahmedabad: L.D. Institute of Indology, 1971), 133, and Jaini, *Path of Purification*, explained that the common sense use of the term *pratyakṣa* for ‘ordinary, sense-mediated cognition’ is a specific historically development (*ibid.*, 122, n. 44).
56. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī I*, 72f, cf. AV I, 59f.
57. Although the term ‘astral body’ is occasionally used, this is apparently achieved without even utilising the so-called communication body, or *āhāraka śarīra*. See Schubring, *Doctrine*, 137–39, on the Jaina doctrine of the five bodies. A.M. Paṭel, *Vartamān Tīrthaṅkar Śrī Simandhar Svāmī*, edited by Nīrubahen Amīn (Chennai: Dādā Bhagavān Phaundeshan, 1994), said elsewhere that the grace of Simandhar operates only indirectly through *anumodana*, his empathy (13).

58. *Hum bījo mahāvīra chuṃ, em mane ātmika śakti vaḍe jaṇāyumu che* (SR 27, 165f).
59. Also Kanu Paṭel. Paul Dundas, ‘Somnolent Sūtras: Scriptural Commentary in Śvetāmbar Jainism,’ *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 24 (1996): 82f., also interprets Sīmandhar as a *tīrthāṅkara* of the future, comparable to the future Buddha Maitreya: ‘Śvetāmbara sources suggest that...only goddesses could have immediate access to Sīmandhar.’
60. The Akram Vijñān Mārg distinguishes between final *mokṣa* and living *mokṣa*. See Sharadaprasad Ramadevanahalli. See page 2 of <http://www.geocities.com/Atens/Acropolis/7591/gnani.html>. Two other websites contain useful conformation on the Akram Vijñān Mārg are: <http://www.dadabhagawan.org> and <http://www.dadashri.org>.
61. See Jaini, *Path of Purification*, 142f.
62. In other sources, rebirth after a strict monastic life is presented as the standard method for reaching Mahāvideha. See the story of Ambada in the *Uvavāya Suttam (Aupapātika Sūtra)* 101–116, which presents Mahāvideha without reference to Sīmandhar Svāmī, who seems to be a historically later invention.
63. The problem is that the realisation of old *karma* automatically binds new *karmas* of the same type. It is therefore assumed that the cycle of bondage cannot be interrupted merely by assuming ‘a good state of mind’ and waiting for the natural maturation (*udaya*) of *karma*, but only through a slow and painful process of purification of one’s old *karmas* (*apūrvā karaṇa*) through a logical sequence of stages of asceticism and meditation which cause the premature maturation (*udīraṇa*) of *karma* in a controlled way. See Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Die Lehre vom Karma in der Philosophie der Jainas* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1915) 81; and Schubring, *Doctrine*, 325, cf. 178f.
64. The Bhagavad Gītā follows the Sāṃkhya view. The following well-known passage must have influenced A.M. Paṭel: ‘At any rate, actions are performed by the three forces of nature, but deluded by self-attribution, one thinks: “I did it!” But he who knows the principles that govern the distribution of those forces and their actions knows that the forces are operating on the forces, and he takes no interest in actions’ (BG 3.27–3.33, 83f).
65. This technique is a major improvement over the schematic rites of repentance (*pratikramaṇa*) which are obligatory for Jaina mendicants. For a detailed analysis of the ethical principles and the rites of purification of the Akram Vijñān Mārg, see Flügel, ‘*Beyond the Hindu Frontier: Jaina-Vaiṣṇava Syncretism in the Gujarātī Diaspora*’.
66. Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 271, 281f, 293, etc. notes a similar ‘eclectic’ combination of gnosis and ethics in Kundakunda’s *Samayasāra*, and argues—*pace* Schubring, *Kundakunda*, 574, but with B. Bhatt,

Vyavahāra-Naya and Niścaya-Naya in Kundakunda's Works, 288, who attributes only the gnostic sections to Kundakunda—that the text, whose content appears to be inherently 'contradictory,' must be the product of more than one author and compiled with a social purpose in mind (265, 307). A similar theory could obviously not explain A.M. Paṭel's views.

67. A.M. Paṭel, *Who Am I*, edited by Amin, 34.
68. The idea that self-knowledge is the true form of renunciation, not the renunciation of physical objects, had been stated by Kundakunda (SS 34, translated by Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 288).
69. Nīrubahen Amīn, compiler, *Tirthankar of Today Shree Sīmandhar Swami*, translated by G.A. Shah (Bombay: Shri Dada Bhagvan Vitarag Trust, 1983), 22.
70. *Akram Vijñān* 20, August 1999, 35.
71. The great majority are Pāṭidārs, the dominant agricultural caste of Gujarat, who traditionally practice some form of Vaiṣṇavism. Most of them perform the emotive *Kṛṣṇa bhakti* worship of Vallabhācārya's *Puṣṭimārga*, the path seeking the grace of God, or the Svāmīnārāyaṇ tradition of Sahajānanda Svāmī (1781–1830). An excellent ethnography of the *Puṣṭimārga* is Peter Bennett's *The Path of Grace: Social Organisation and Temple Worship in a Vaiṣṇava Sect* (New Delhi: Hindustan Publications, 1993).
72. Both wings of the Akram Vijñān Mārg distinguish today three religious statuses: (1) The spiritual leader, Kanu Paṭel on Nīrubahen Amīn, who carries the title *pūjya ātmājñānī*, venerable knower of the soul, and who alone can perform initiations and the rite of knowledge, (2) the group of approximately fifty male and seven to ten female celibate disciples (*brahmacārī* or *brahmacārini*), called *āptaṭras* or *āptaṭrīs*, or true spiritual sons or daughters of the Dādā, the one with the speech of truth (*āptaṭvānī*), and (3) the common believers, who, after their initiation, are either called *mumuṣus*, seekers for salvation, like the followers of Rājacandra, or *mahātmās*, great souls. The leaders of the local or all-embracing lay associations are distinguished with the title *saṅghapati*.
73. The reason for this is that rebirth in Mahāvideha Kṣetra is believed to be achievable through the creation of a link of mutual indebtedness (*ṛṇānubandha*) with Sīmandhar generated by devotional practices (A.M. Paṭel, in Amin, *Tirthankar of Today*, 29f). Because Sīmandhar is a living *tirthaṅkara* he can indeed, if accessible, enter relationships of reciprocity, in contrast to the liberated 24 Jinas of our world. Sīmandhar thus plays a similar role in the religious imagination of his devotees as miracle-working Jaina ascetics or the deceased *dādā guru devas* of the Kharataragaccha described by Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw in their book *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual: A Theory of Ritual Illustrated by the Jain Rite of Worship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 50, etc.

74. See AV (1995–1999). In contrast to Rājacandra, who explained his teachings mainly in his letters to his closest friends, collected in the volume *Śrīmad Rājacandra*, A.M. Paṭel did not write tracts or letters on religious subjects. His discourses were informal conversations in Gujarati with the participants of his *satsaṅg*. Although he has not attempted to produce a work of systematic theology, his teachings are logically coherent. Only the first volume of his published discourses is available in translation. See A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I.
75. Naṭubhāi B. Paṭel, editor, *Svarūp Vijñān: Pūjya Dādā Bhagavān nī Jagatkalyāṇ nī Vāṇī Emnā Ja Śabdo maṃ*, Shreni 2-3 (Mumbai: Shri Dādā Bhagavān Vitarag Trust, 1989). Initially, A.M. Paṭel did not permit the taking of notes of his discourses, but Naṭubhāi Paṭel convinced him that otherwise he could not remember much.
76. Apart from the first sentence of part I, ‘(1) I bow before the unattached ones (*vītarāga*),’ the first part of the text is identical with the (Mūrtipūjaka) Jaina *Namaskāra Mantra*. However, part 2-3 is idiosyncratic: ‘(2) Om. I bow before Lord Vāsudeva [Kṛṣṇa]. (3) Om. I bow before Śiva. Hail to the eternal truth, knowledge and bliss [of the pure soul].’ In the original: (1) *namo vītarāgāya*,... (2) *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*. (3) *om namo śivāya, jay saccidānanda* (Nīrubahen Amīn, compiler, *Caran Vidhi*). 2nd Edition (Chennai: Dādā Bhagavān Phaundeshan, 1998).
77. A.M. Paṭel, in *Dādāvāṇī*, n.d., 13–16. For a rendering into English, see A.M. Paṭel, *Ultimate Knowledge*, edited by Rakesh M. Paṭel (London, 1994), 68–70. The key verse is no. 13: ‘The real self is god and therefore I see god in all living beings’ (70).
78. A.M. Paṭel, in *Dādāvāṇī*, 18–22. For a rendition into English, see A.M. Paṭel, *Ultimate Knowledge*, 73–76. The text is a variation on the theme of the five great vows (*mahāvratā*) of the Jainas: ‘(1) He Dādā Bhavagan! Give me the infinite inner strength not to hurt, cause someone to hurt, nor instigate anyone to hurt the ego of any living being, even in the slightest extent...’ (73).
79. See N. Amin, *Caran Vidhi*.
80. The devotional form of this rite which aims at the creation of a union between the worshipper and the worshipped was almost certainly inspired by Amṛtacandra’s depiction of Kundakunda’s legendary yogic travels to Mahāvideha in search for inspiration from Sīmandhar. See Amṛtacandra, *Tattva-dīpikā*, 3–4.
81. The original Gujarati text of the *mantra* is identical with the first verse of the *Namaskār Vidhi* text as reproduced in footnote 81. Cf. A.M. Paṭel, *Vartamān Tīrthankar Śrī Sīmandhar Svāmī*, 11.
82. N. Amin, in: N. Amin, *Tīrthankar of Today*, 24f.
83. A.M. Paṭel, *Āptavāṇī* I, 73, cf. AV I, 60.
84. A similar arrangement – the image of the *sadguru* placed in another room underneath the Jina image – can be found at the temple in Agas, the main centre of the Rājacandra cult.

85. Both Nīrubahen and Mīnā (Paṭel) taped all *satsaṅgs* of this tour, and Mīnā's tape-recorder went on recording the conversation which took place the *satsaṅg*. it was later discovered and excerpts printed in the magazine *Akram Vijñān*, June-July 1999, 5. (I had the opportunity to listen to a copy of the tape.)
86. In A.M. Paṭel, *Essence of All Religion*, 51.
87. NTS, 16.
88. These statements have been compiled from the author's interviews with Nīrubahen Amīn.
89. N. Amin, 'What is your spiritual state after "Gnan Ceremony"?,' 30.
90. Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 282f has introduced this term.
91. www. 7.1.1999 (the website does not exist anymore).
92. The followers of Nīrubahen always insist on the special status of Gujarati as the religious language of the Dādā.
93. Author's interview in 1999. However, the following critical report of a participant indicates that Kanu Paṭel's performance is not much different from Nīrubahen's: '*Samyak darśan* cannot be achieved through magical means, but only through self effort. I met Kanubhāi Paṭel and went through one of his sessions. Before shouting "*Hum śuddhātmā chum*" everyone was touching Kanubhāi's toe to get the power of enlightenment transferred from Sīmandhar while Kanubhāi, who was in touch with Sīmandhar through *ātmāsākṣātkar*, was muttering a *mantra*. It is impossible to get *samyak darśan* transferred this way. Even asceticism only prepares the ground. Important is only *ātmāsākṣātkar*, experiencing one's own soul' (Interview with Anupam R. Śāh, Mumbai).
94. Comment of an *āpta*putra.
95. Salter, *Unity and Diversity*, 44–49, observed three methods of tradition-building amongst the followers of Śrīmad Rājacandra which she analysed in terms of two types of 'true gurus': (1) present/living *gurus* (*pratyakṣa guru*): (a) *guru* lineages, (b) independent *gurus*; and (2) absent/dead *gurus* (*parokṣa guru*)—Rājacandra and his immediate disciples. Both the veneration of the independent *gurus* and the absent *gurus*, she writes, are based on Rājacandra's writings and, at least in the latter case, also on his image. As in the case of the Akram Vijñān movement, there are at least two types of *guru* lineages: (a) the line of Rājacandra's personal disciples which terminated with the death of his last disciple (direct contact with the founder: lineage of Agās), and (b) a lineage based on the transmission of a secret *mantra* authenticated by Rājacandra (indirect contact with the founder: lineage of Sāylā). On the Kānjī Panth see W.J. Johnson, forthcoming.
96. Bennett, *Path of Grace*, 35, sees the initiation *mantra* as the 'lifeblood' of the segmentary lineage structure of the Puṣṭimārgīs.

97. Richard Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Śrī Lankā* (Princeton University Press, 1988), 55. The authors define Tantra 'by the doctrine that the same observances may yield either material benefits (*bhukti*)—notably power—or salvation (*mukti*)' (56).
98. Schubring, *Doctrine*, emphasised that already Umasvati, the principal author of classical Jain doctrine, managed to 'incorporate the magical faculties' (*iddhi, laddhi, siddhi*) frequently mentioned in the Canon into the system (316). He interprets this as a 'concession made to the popular belief' (ibid).
99. P.S. Jaini, 'The Disappearance of Buddhism and the Survival of Jainism: A Study in Contrast,' in *Studies in the History of Buddhism*, edited by A.K. Narain (New Delhi: BR Publications, 1980), 88.
100. Jaini, *Path of Purification*, 254. The analytical literature on Jain *bhakti* is still sparse. Lawrence A. Babb, *Absent Lord: Ascetics and Kings in a Jain Ritual Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 177, *pace*, 93, tends to regard all types of Jaina Bhakti as variations of a 'common South Asian theme'; while Jaini, *Path of Purification*, writes that even though 'the Hindu concept of *iṣṭa* has exerted a certain amount of influence... Jain devotionalism is oriented not towards a chosen deity (*iṣṭa-devatā*) but toward an ideal, the attainment of *kevala jñāna*; thus reverence is given to all beings who have been or are actively engaged in pursuit of that ideal' (163, cf. 194f). John E. Cort, *Jains in the World: Religions Values and Ideology in India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), has emphasised the non-derivative nature of Jaina *bhakti* and proposed 'to conceive of *bhakti* as a style of religiosity, one that can be applied to almost any religions content' and suggested the 'term *enthusiasm*...as an alternative gloss' (John E. Cort, 'Singing the Glory of Asceticism: Devotion of Asceticism in Jainism,' in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70.4 (2002): 738; while M. Whitney Kelting, *Singing to the Jinas: Jain Laywomen, Mandal Singing and the Negotiation of Jain Devotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 113, emphasises the commitment to 'the right sentiment' and that in fact appeals to the 'grace and compassion of the Jinas are not seen as "un-Jain"' (13). The issue of the absence of the divine in Jainism has been extensively (and controversially) discussed by Sinclair Stevenson, *The Heart of Jainism* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1915/1984), 289–98.
101. Jaini, *Path of Purification*, 256.
102. John E. Cort, *Jains in the World*, 114.
103. Ibid., 116. For a similar verdict see Jaini, *Path of Purification*, 254.
104. Cf. Schubring, *Kundakunda*, 569, on SS 141–44.
105. Cf. the *tattvas*, or truths, of classical Jainism.
106. See the work of Klaus Bruhn on Jaina texts.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO JAINA STUDIES

107. Johnson, *Harmless Souls*, 282f. They are certainly also cognitively satisfying for the believer.
108. Johnson, "The Religious Function of Jaina Philosophy: *Anekāntavāda* Reconsidered", in *Religion* 25 (1995): 47.
109. References to the scant literature on Tantric practices in Jainism can be found in the David G. White (ed.) *Tantra in Practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).