

AᅇUVRATAS IN JAINISM: AN ANALYSIS

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Introduction: Jainism is one of the atheist schools of Indian philosophy which believes liberation as the ultimate goal of life and to attain such goal it prescribes the way which consists of Right Faith (*SamyakaDarśana*), Right Knowledge (*SamyakaJñāna*) and Right Conduct (*SamyakaCāritra*) which are known as Three Jewels (Triratna) in Jainism. These Three Jewels destroy ignorance which is the root cause of bondage. In the *Uttarādhyayana* Sutra, one of the Jaina's important texts, it is said: "All men who are ignorant of the Truth are subject to pain; in the endless *Samsāra* they suffer in many ways"ⁱ. We find the system advocates that all these Three Jewels are intertwined and interdependent. Right knowledge can be attained from Right Faith (the teachings of *Tirthankars*), and destroys false knowledge and ignorance. But Right knowledge is possible only after the destruction of all karmic obstacles through right conduct that constitutes of some Vows to be followed by the monks as well as householders. This article aims at to analyze the small-vows (Aᅇuvratas) prescribed by Jainism to show its significance, usefulness and relevance for building a sound and healthy society.

Vows: The term 'Vow' means to make promise for doing something. In Jaina Philosophy, 'Vows' actually are some specific duties suggested for the monks as well as householders for attaining liberation and higher stage of life i.e., ascetic life respectively. We find in the Right Conduct, there are mainly two types of vows, viz., Great-Vow (*Mahāvrata*) and Minor-Vow (*Aᅇuvrata*) The *Tattvārthasūtra*, Jaina's famous text, prescribes the following five vows for both monks as well as householders: "*Himsānᅇrtasteyābrahmaparigrahebhvyoviratirvratam*"ⁱⁱ viz., *Ahimsā* or Non-violence, *Satya* or Truth, *Asteya* or Non-stealing, *Brahmacharya* or refraining from self-indulgence and *Aparigraha* or Non-possessiveness. All these five vows when followed strictly by monks are known as Great-Vows (*Mahāvrata*) and when householders follow these five vows partially they are known as Small-Vows (*Aᅇuvrata*). Likewise, in Jaina System, we find two types of votaries (*vratī*) namely ascetic (*anagārī*) and householder (*agārī*). Ascetic are those who observe the five vows strictly and completely and those followers who practice these vows partially are known as householders. Thus, when these five vows are observed partially,

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they are considered as *Aṇuvratas* or small vows by the Jaina school. “*Aṇu* (minor) *vratas* (vows) consist in the avoidance of the gross forms of violence, falsehood, theft, unchastity and love of possession.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Non-Violence (*Ahiṃsā*): We know that Jainism is famous for its basic tenet that “*Ahiṃsā Paramo Dharmah*”, i.e., ‘non-violence is the final religion.’ The concept of *Ahiṃsā* is the unique feature of Jainism. In Jainas’ view, *Hiṃsā* or violence is the greatest sin or *pāpa* and the main obstruction to the attainment of liberation. Jaina scholar Umaswami defines violence as: ‘*pramattayogātprāṇauyaparopanaṃhiṃsā*’^{iv} i.e., taking life away out of “passionate disposition” (out of anger, pride, greed etc) is violence. Here the word “passionate disposition” is very significant as mere severance of life is not considered as the sin of *Hiṃsā* or injury, but any passionate attitude, even without killing, is considered as injury (*Hiṃsā*) at least in thought in Jainism. “A person following right conduct, due to the absence of passions like attachment, does not commit the slightest of injury (*Hiṃsā*) although he may have occasioned severance of vitalities. Infatuated by passions like attachment, when a person acts carelessly, he commits injury (*Hiṃsā*), whether the living being is killed or not.”^v Thus. In Jainism, *Hiṃsā* is prohibited in thought, word and deed.

In Jainism, Violence has been classified into three main head, namely, violence committed by himself (*kṛta*), got committed by others (*kārita*) and giving consent to do violence (*anumodanā*). All these kinds of violence is prohibited in words, thoughts and deeds. So, we find simply abstaining from killing is not non-violence (*Ahiṃsā*), it has a profounder implication in Jaina’s thought. The *ĀkārāṅgaSūtra*, another Jaina text observes: I renounce all killing of living beings, whether subtle or gross, whether movable or immovable. Nor shall I myself kill living beings (nor cause others to do it, nor consent to it). As long as I live, I confess and blame, repent and exempt myself of these sins, in the thrice threefold way (i.e., acting, commanding, consenting, either in the past or the present or the future.), in mind, speech, and body.^{vi}

Five Observances for the vow of Non-Violence (*Ahiṃsā*): In Jaina system, we notice to strengthen the vows, each vow is established on some observances (*bhāvanās*). The vow of Non-violence or *Ahiṃsā* is based on five observances (*bhāvanā*), namely, Control of speech, thought, care in movement, care in taking and placing objects and examining food and drink. All these observances are capable to prepare the ground for actual observance of the vow non-violence. Apart from these observances (*bhāvanās*), Jaina texts suggest some

other noble virtues for the observance of the vow nonviolence and these are ten noble virtues (*Daśalakṣaṇa* Dharma), twelve *anupekṣas* i.e., twelve ideas that must be kept in mind constantly and twenty-two types of *pariśahajaya*, i.e., victory over the consciousness of suffering. *AhiṃsāAṇuvrata*: We find that ‘*Aṇuvrata*’ means avoidance the gross form of injury, falsehood, theft, unchastity and love of possession. Thus, for householder, it is prescribed that one should desist oneself from injuring the two or more sensed beings with a deliberate act of body, mind and word in any of three means i.e., *kṛta*, *kārita* and *anumodanā*.^{vii}In fact, any intentional violation of the vow of *Ahiṃsā* is a defilement of the vow of *Ahiṃsā*. Transgressions (*Aticāra*) of *AhiṃsāAṇuvrata*: There are some transgressions of each small vow advocated by the Jaina philosophers to make enable a householder to practice the vow. In the case of *AhiṃsāAṇuvrata*, a householder should refrain himself from doing the five blemishes viz., binding up, beating, piercing, overloading living beings and not feeding them at proper times.^{viii}So, these five doings are the transgressions of *AhiṃsāAṇuvrata* which should be avoided by the householder for the purpose of following the *AhiṃsāAṇuvrata*. Relaxations for Householders: As householders have to choose a profession to run the family, it is almost impossible for them to observe complete non-violence vow. For them there are some considerations or relaxations viz., violence committed under the compulsion of professional situation, unintentional violence that is involved in daily life of a layman, as cooking, cleaning etc. and defensive injury, like defensive war. These three types of violence are allowed to a householder but only intentional violence (*samkalpihiṃsā*) should be absolutely avoided by a layman.

Truthfulness (Satya): Truthfulness is another fundamental value of Jainism and it is opposed to falsehood. In the Jaina text, we find *Ṛta* is truth and what is not *Ṛta* or commendable is falsehood. To explain what is not commendable the text believes: "that which causes pain and suffering to the living is not commendable, whether it refers to actual facts or not."^{ix}*Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya*, another Jaina text defines falsehood as "A statement, made out of passion that is not commendable, should certainly be known as falsehood"^x. In fact, Jainism considers those passionate words that cause injury constitute falsehood. Even the truth that causes affliction to others is not the vow of ‘Truth’ prescribed by the Jaina. Thus falsehood, according to Jainas, is a kind of *Hiṃsā*. Five Observations for the Vow of Truthfulness (Satya): Like *Ahiṃsā*, Jainas also advocate five observances^{xi}(*Bhāvanā*) to strengthen the vow of Truthfulness (Satya) and these are giving-

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up annoyance, greed, worriedness, jest and speaking only flawless words. Satya *Aṇuvrata*: For householders the Jaina text suggests that the layman should desist himself from indulging lies, affection, delusion and effective cause of the destruction of his home or village^{xii}. Transgressions of Satya *Aṇuvrata*: Five transgressions of the vow of Truthfulness of a householder are mentioned in the Jaina text^{xiii} and these are disseminating of false doctrines, disclosing the secrets and defects of others, back-biting, creating false documents and not returning in full a deposit made by another. All these are very common defects of householders that generate violence in its various forms. Hence, Jaina text advised householders to be refrained from all these flaws. Non-stealing (*Asteya*): Non-stealing is another important vow preached by Jainism for both monks and householders. The Jaina text defines stealing (*Asteya*) as “*adattādānaṃ Steyam*”^{xiv}, means, taking anything that has not been given is theft and as theft causes hurt, it is a kind of *hiṃsā*. So, non-stealing means not to take anything which is not given.

Five Observations for the Vow of Non-stealing (*Asteya*):

For the vow of non-stealing (*Asteya*), the following are five observances^{xv} that are required to reinforce this vow and these are residence in a solitary place, residence in a deserted habitation, causing no hindrance to others, acceptance of clean food and not backbiting with the fellow monks.

AsteyaAṇuvrata: The Jaina text advocates that out of the fear of punishment by the king or thinking that it may hurt someone, the layman should desist himself from accepting things not given to him and also his attachment for anything not given to him should be reduced.^{xvi}

Transgressions of the Vow of Non-stealing of householder (Transgressions of *AsteyaAṇuvrata*): Abetment of stealing, taking stolen property, violating state laws, adulteration and keeping of false weight and measures are five faults (*aticāras*) of a householder’s vow of non-stealing.^{xvii} All these are considered as punishable crimes in today’s world also and thus the prohibition of all these activities is not only useful, but are badly required.

Chastity (*Brahmacarya*): In the *Tattvārthasūtrait* it is said “*MaithunamAbrahma*”.^{xviii} Copulation is unchastity. So, chastity indicates mainly abstinence from sexual intercourse. Five Observations for the Vow of Chastity (*Brahmacarya*): For the vow of Chastity(*Brahmacarya*), the Jainas prescribe the following observances^{xix}:

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1. Refusal of listening to stories that rouse attachment for women
2. Watching at the beautiful women
3. Remembering previous sexual pleasures
4. Delicious food that incites passionate desire
5. Decoration of the body

BrahmacaryaAñuvrata: In the Jaina text, we find that the vow of *Brahmacarya* for the layman is described as the desire of sexual intercourse of a householder with other than his own wife should be destroyed.^{xx}

Transgressions of the vow of *BrahmacaryaAñuvrata*: Five transgressions (*Aticāra*) of the Vow of Chastity of householder as prescribed in the Jaina scripture^{xxi} are matchmaking, sexual union with impure married woman, living together with a harlot (woman without husband), perverted sexual practice and unbridled sexual desire.

Non-attachment (*Aparigraha*): In ĀchāryaUmasvami's Tattvārthsūtra, there we find *Parigraha* or possession has been defined in the following way: "Infatuation (*mūrcchā*) is attachment-to-possession (*parigraha*)^{xxii}" This verse indicates that *Aparigraha* means non-attachment to possessions. Attachment to possessions is of two types, viz., 1. Attachment to external possessions and 2. Attachment to internal possessions. Attachment to internal possession is again of fourteen types, namely^{xxiii} anger, pride, greed and deceit- these four passions; male sex-passion, female sex-passion and neuter sex-passion- these three sex-passions; laughter, fondness, hating, sorrow, fear, and aversion- these six defects and false-belief. Five Observances for the vow of Non-possessiveness: For the vow of non-attachment or non-possessiveness, giving up attachment and aversion for pleasant and unpleasant things of the five senses form five observances for the vow of non-attachment.^{xxiv}

AparigrahaAñuvrata: The householder should limit his possessions like riches, corn and land^{xxv}.

Transgressions of the vow of *AparigrahaAñuvrata*: Five transgressions of the Vow of Non-possessiveness of householder^{xxvi} are excessive desire of getting land and houses; excessive desire of acquiring gold, silver etc. unbridled desire of possessing cattle and corn, Unnecessary desire of possessing of servants both male and female and extreme desire of

possessing clothes and utensils. We find that householders or common people have a general tendency of acquiring excessive properties like land, houses, valuables etc. that actually is a disease which brings frustration. Such prohibition on all these things can reduce this unbridled desire of a householder and consequently bring tranquility.

Śīlavratas:

Two Jaina texts Upāsakadaśāṅga and Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra prescribe twelve vows or conduct^{xxvii} for a householder (without committing transgressions thereof) namely five partial vows viz. non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, celibacy and non-possession; three *Guṇavratas* viz. abstention from the action with respect to the direction (*digvrata*), abstention from the activity with regard to the country (*deśāvakāśīkavrata*) and avoidance of purposelessness (*anarthadaṇḍavrata*) which has five forms namely evil thinking, evil instruction, non-vigilant dealings, giving instruments of violence and wrong or evil reading and listening. Four *Śīkṣāvratas* are namely intermittent meditation (*sāmāyika*), fasting at fixed intervals (*proṣadhovavāsa*), limited use of consumable and non-consumable things (*bhogopabhogavrata*) and partaking of one's food after serving the ascetic (*ātithisamvibhāgavrata*). According to Jainas, the function of the *Guṇavratas* is to discipline the external movements of the householder whereas the *Śīkṣāvratas* bring the inner purity of heart of a householder in order to prepare a laity for the stage of an ascetic life. These seven supplementary *vratas* three *Guṇavratas* and four *Śīkṣāvratas*, collectively called as *Śīlavratas* in Jainism and the intention of including these *Śīlavratas* is to give protection to the first five *Anuvratas* and above all to make non-violence more comprehensive. Like the first five vows, each of these vows has certain transgressions which should be avoided by the householders. Transgressions of the vow of *digvrata* are Crossing the instructed limit relating to the direction of upwards, downwards, transverse, extending the boundaries relating to the direction out of greed and forgetting the limit. Transgressions of the vow of *deśāvakāśīkavrata* are asking someone to bring something from a country outside the limit, commanding someone to do work outside the limit, giving hint (through sound, like coughing, murmuring, etc.,) to those outside the limits to do certain work, ask someone outside the limits to do certain job using signs and gestures other than sound and ask someone outside the limits set to do certain work by throwing some article like chunk etc. The transgressions of the vow of *anarthadaṇḍa* are lewd speech, chattering senselessly, acting unthinkingly, indulging in excess luxuries and buffoonery.

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Transgressions of the vow of *sāmāyika* are misdirected the activities of body, mind, and speech; lack of interest in meditation or concentration and instability in thought during meditation. Transgressions of the vow of *proṣadhōpavāsa* are executing of three activities, namely, evacuating waste matter on a spot, handling articles required for worship and personal use and spreading mats and garments in the place without examining and cleaning; lack of interest in performing necessary duties ignoring hunger and other worldly enjoyments and lack of meditation. Transgressions of the vow of *bhogopabhogavrata* are taking food having life, in contact with having life, mixed with those having life, ill-cooked food and fermented food. Five transgressions of the vow of *ātithisāmvi bhāgavrata* are giving food on green leaf, using the green leaf to cover food, offering food that does not belong to one's own, jealousy at other host and offering food untimely. Along with all these vows, the householder is advised to accept his holy death by observing the vow of *Sallekhanā*.^{xxviii} Transgressions of the vow of *Sallekhanā* are wish to live, wish to die, affection to friends, remember of past pleasure and desire for future pleasure.

Conclusion:

We are living in the Modern, Scientific and technological world. Science and Technology have brought revolution in our lives. The amazing development of Science and Technology have enabled men to step into the space, to unravel most of the mysteries of the universe, to discover how to split atom and so forth on the one hand, on the other, a rapid erosion of human values have started throughout the world. We the modern men are becoming more and more selfish and cruel day by day and we hardly have any concern about others. As a result, holistic human values such as love, respect, sympathy, harmony, peace etc. are vanishing from our society.

So, it is a critical time in our civilization where every day we know from different types of media about the horrible stories of violence and crimes committed to humanity. It may be said that the modern educational system is responsible for this situation that lacks values and whose main goal is to make man as an instrument for making money. Modern men want material pleasures more and more which is far beyond their basic needs. This madness after material pleasures leads modern men chronically dissatisfied and consequently, they are getting frustrated, depressed. In this way the craving for enjoyment of material pleasures gives birth to hatred, anger, selfishness, jealousy and other detrimental qualities which are dangerous to peace and harmony.

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It is important to note that the modern youths do not know which ideals they should follow. They are getting prone to march on the way to destructiveness. So, the world is at stake. The signs are everywhere. Corruption, Climate change, environment pollution, deforestation, human rights violation, terrorism, wars, women and drug trafficking, discrimination between male and female, family breakdown etc. are the direct products of the degradation of human values.

Under such circumstances, the vows, which are nothing but some fundamental values advocated by the Jainism, are of a great social value and thereby very much relevant in today's society. These vows actually improve the moral behavior of common man on which a best society is founded.

It is true that the Jaina's vows in the strict sense is difficult to practice and it is almost impossible for a layman to observe these vows in the strict sense and the Jaina text Tattvārthasūtra also supports this view which states clearly that it is impossible for a householder to refrain himself from all kinds of sins completely^{xxix}. But we find that there are some relaxations for householders and not only that, the Jaina's texts have also mentioned the transgressions of each of these vows which express human weaknesses and by avoidance of which a laity can strengthen his practice and follow the vow with utmost care in their daily life. Moreover, we find in various texts of Jainism that all these are recommended to observe strictly by monks only and for householders they are advised to follow to the best of their capacity.

We find though Jainism prescribes twelve vows for a layman, we notice the most fundamental vow is the vow of *Ahimsā* because, it includes all other vows; all other vows are nothing but the detail manifestation of the vow *Ahimsā*. Though the last four vows are recommended as separate vows, but we find *Ahimsā* is essential for all these four vows and they can be deduced from the Great vow of Non-violence. Falsehood, stealing, unchastity, and attachment are also *Himsā* and they are mentioned separately only for the understanding of the followers through illustrations. They are suggested to safeguard the vow, *Ahimsā*. That's why Jainas advocate Non-violence is the first and foremost duty.

In fact, Jain's concept of *Ahimsā* intends to preach a life of love for all. *Ahimsā* is the reverence for all kinds of lives. Truthfulness puts a man in touch with his inner strength and capacities. We know that unbridled attachment to property is the main cause of

exploitation, injustice, division, conflict, war etc. Again, the person who is stick to specific ideology cannot accept others' views and thus unable to know the higher and perfect truth. Jaina's concept of non-possessiveness emphasizes on the limitation of the possessive tendency for householders and thereby helps in reasonable distribution of wealth, comforts etc., in the society. In this way the idea of non-possessiveness can play a great role in establishing socialism, economic stability and welfare across the globe. Likewise, Jainas concepts of celibacy is able to arrest the unbridled sensual pleasures and the idea of non-stealing can prevent not only the theft of material things, but another corruption that is taking and publishing the idea of others as one's own idea. We also know that all these activities under the transgressions of the Vow of Non-stealing are punishable under modern law in any country of this world.

Similarly, *Gunavratas* are meant to limit or avoid certain attitudes or behaviours required for a sound and peaceful society. The vows of digvrata and *deśāvakaśika* help to limit the householder's worldly activities to a smaller area within the restricted points of ten direction in order to minimize violence and greed and also prevents unnecessary travels. The vow of *anarthadaṇḍa* is included to restrain the householder from doing harmful activities. The vow of *Sallekhanā* that teaches to embrace one's own death with a sense of contentment, is able to prevent mental agony and the crime of suicide. The vow of *bhogopabhogavrata* limits food and material on the basis of necessity.

In fine, it may be said that though Jaina's main goal is to achieve liberation by following these vows, we find these vows are the bedrock of any sound and healthy society. Thus, the Jainas' concept of *Aṇuvratas* has pragmatic value in present day society as all these *vratas* can play important role in building peace and harmony in this age of violence, corruption and disharmony in almost all walks of life across the world.

ⁱThe UttarādhyayanaSūtra 6.1, in Jacobi, Jaina Sutras., p. 24

ⁱⁱTattvārthasūtra, 7.1, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī's Tattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda's Sarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: bikalp Printers, 2018, p. 264.

ⁱⁱⁱRatnakaraṇḍaśrāvakaścāra, translated into English with an introduction by Champat Rai Jain, India: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917, p. 27

^{iv}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.13, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018p. 276.

^vTattvārthasūtra, in Ibid, P. 277

^{vi}The ĀkārāṅgaSūtra, Book II, lecture 15, in JainaSūtras, Part I, trans. By Hermann Jacobi, Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 22, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884, p. 209.

^{vii}Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra, translated into English with an introduction by ChampatRai Jain, India: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917, p.27.

^{viii}Ibid.

^{ix}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.5, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: bikalp Printers, 2018, p. 278

^xPuruṣārthasiddhyupāya 91, English Translation, and Edited by: Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalpa Printers, 2012, p. 61.

^{xi}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.5, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018, p. 268

^{xii}Tattvārthasūtra, in Ibid.,p. 284

^{xiii}Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra, translated into English with an introduction by ChampatRai Jain, India: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917, pp., 28-29.

^{xiv}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.15, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018, p., 278

^{xv}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.6, in Ibid., p., 269

^{xvi}Tattvārthasūtra, In Ibid., p. 284

^{xvii}Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra, 59, translated into English with an introduction by ChampatRai Jain, India: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917, p. 29

^{xviii}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.16, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018, p., 279.

^{xix}Tattvārthasūtra,7.7, in Ibid., p., 270

^{xx}Tattvārthasūtra, in Ibid.p., 284.

^{xxi}Tattvārthasūtra 7.28, in Ibid., p., 294

^{xxii}Tattvārthasūtra, 7.17, in Ibid.,p., 280.

^{xxiii}Shri AmritchandraSuri'sPuruṣārthasiddhyupāya 116, English Translation, and Edited by: Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2012, p. 76.

^{xxiv}Tattvārthasūtra,7.8, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018, p., 271.

^{xxv}Tattvārthasūtra,7.8, in Ibid.,p., 284.

^{xxvi}Tattvārthasūtra,7.29, in Ibid.,p.296.

^{xxvii}Upāsakadaśāṅga, Rajakota, 1961, pp. 201-204; Ratnakaraṇḍaśrāvākācāra, translated into English with an introduction by ChampatRai Jain, India: The Central Jaina Publishing House, 1917, p. 26.

^{xxviii}Tattvārthasūtra,7.22, in ĀcāryaUmāsvāmī'sTattvārthasūtra – With Explanation in English from ĀcāryaPūjyapāda'sSarvārthasiddhi by Vijay K. Jain, India: Vikalp Printers, 2018, p., 288.

^{xxix}Tattvārthasūtra, in Ibid.,p. 284.