

Arihant Bhagwans established the Jain Sangh and they also showed us the religious path to attain the ultimate goal of being liberated and live in ultimate bliss. Jain Sangh is formed of two groups based on Jain practices in their lifetime. They are 1) householders and 2) Sadhus and Sadhvis. Both of these groups practice Jain religion in the same pattern but to a different extent. These two practices are:

- 1) Deshvirti followed by Householders and
- 2) Sarvavirti followed by Sadhus and Sadhvis

1) DESHVIRTI

Deshvirti is formed of two words. i) Desh means some part or to some extent, and ii) Virti means to give up. That means giving up of harmful or sinful activities to some extent.

As householders, there are family, economical, social, state and national obligations and responsibilities and it gets harder to follow the Jain practices to the fullest extent. Arihant Bhagwans knew it and that is why they established minor vows, which householders must practice for slow but steady spiritual pursuit. They prescribed 12 minor (Anuvrat) vows for householders to follow. They are:

1. Limited Non-Violence Vow
2. Limited Truthfulness Vow
3. Limited Non-Stealing Vow
4. Limited Celibacy Vow
5. Limited Non-Possessiveness Vow
6. Geographic Limitation Vow
7. Consumption and Occupation Limitation Vow
8. Purposeless Violence Limitation Vow
9. Self-control and Equanimity Vow
10. Day to Day Additional Limitation Vow
11. Monkshood Exposure Vow
12. Selfless Offerings to Unexpected Guests Vow

As householders we need to follow these vows to the best of our abilities in a given situation. We may take one, two or all-12 vows as per our situation and capacity. They will ensure that our life style would have minimal sinful or harmful activities. This will also make us realize that we still have to rise above to practice Sarvavirti, which will ultimately lead us to the liberation. We must remember that practicing just deshvirti will take much longer time before we can achieve liberation but would be better than not practicing any vows.

2) SARVAVIRTI

Sarvavirti is also formed of two words. i) Sarva means total and ii) Virti means to give up. This means totally giving up of all sinful or harmful activities. This kind of practice is easily carried out by sadhu or sadhvi because they have given up all their family, economical, society, state and national responsibilities and obligations. They now look after their own souls. They also guide householders to spiritual path. They take five major vows. They are:

1. Absolute Non-Violence Vow
2. Absolute Truthfulness Vow
3. Absolute Non-Stealing Vow
4. Absolute Celibacy Vow
5. Absolute Non-Possessiveness Vow

Sadhus and sādhis live very strict life and follow these vows to the fullest extent. Since they do not subject their life to any harmful or sinful activities they do not collect karmas or collect very minimal karmas. From ordinary sadhu they rise to be Upadhyay, Acharya, Arihant and even Siddha. Their life becomes purer and purer which ultimately leads to faster liberation.