

## LESSON 12

## JAIN SANGH

The Jain Sangh or congregation is formed of four groups of people. They are: 1) Sadhus (Monks), 2) Sadhvis (Nuns), 3) Shrawakas (Male householders), and 4) Shrawikas (Female householders). Jain sangh is reestablished by each Tirthankaras. Tirthankara Mahavira was the last and 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara who reestablished our current sangh on 11<sup>th</sup> day of bright half of the month of Vaishakh in 557 B.C. at Madhyam Pava.

The Sadhus and Sadhvis renounce worldly life. They live a simple life and bear the hardships as they come along. They have accepted a life of austerity and discipline. They study religion and live their life strictly according the principles laid down in Jain scriptures and thus, they keep moving up the path of spiritual achievement. They give us the guidance in respect of moral, religious and spiritual values that would help us to develop the proper way of life. They teach us through lectures, discourses, discussions, training programs, meditations, celebrations, devotional festivals, and writing articles, etc.

The Shrawakas and Shrawikas live family life. They take care of their children and elders. They carry out their family, social and worldly duties as per the Jain principles. Simultaneously they follow religious life and pursue spiritual elevation as per their capacity.

In most every town and city in India are Jain temples (mandir), religious places (upashrayas), Jain religious schools (pathshalas), Jain libraries, shelter for animals and birds (panjarapol), Jain Kitchen (ayambilshala), Jain guest house (choultries - dharmashala) and other such institutions. These institutions are under the management of the local Jain sanghas or organizations and ran by shrawakas. The Jain communities render the services with devotion to Sadhus and Sadhvis.

The members of the Jain Communities not only help in various ways to each other but also help other community members in good and bad times. The Jains are known for their charity work to support for religious, social, health care and educational activities including hospitals and schools of the community