

SPECIAL FEATURES

A Minimalist Lifestyle and Aparigraha

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Despite all the demands of society to have and desire more, peace itself can only be a product of less. Aparigraha is one of the five mahāvratas in Jainism, putting emphasis on limiting material craving, representing detachment. Aparigraha is not only to be followed by munis, but also by those who live a regular lifestyle. It's important in today's day of consumerism to use aparigraha as a way to live an existence that will be more in tune with oneself, more sustainable.

Jain philosophy teaches that attachment to material possessions creates suffering and binds karmas to the soul in the birth-and-death cycle (saṃsāra). Aparigraha provides a way to create modest lifestyles where one lets go of things. The basic idea on which this concept rests goes well with the Modern Minimalist Movement, living by decluttering physical and mental spaces. I was exposed to aparigraha through routine actions by growing up in a Jain household. Every Sunday, I went to the temple, where we were instructed to take only what we could eat. At home, we had to be cautious and not waste anything. These practices, though rules to me while I was growing up, made a lot of sense later as they created a life of balance and sustainability.

In recent years, I have witnessed the power of living a minimalist lifestyle. As time went on, I began to realize how my surroundings had quietly filled up with notebooks and clothes I had forgotten about. I drew motivation from aparigraha to simplify space, keeping only what was needed. Getting rid of unwanted things was a relief to my mind, creating a lighter and sharper focus. That experience took the Jain values in my life to a deeper understanding that true satisfaction is not about filling up, but making room for what really counts.

Today, the relevance of minimalism cannot be overstated. Over-consumption is ruining the planet, and the importance put on material wealth fosters emotional distress since many people equate happiness with possession. On the other hand, aparigraha offers an alternative by providing the ability to feel content with less. This, in turn, contributes toward living a lifestyle that promotes both personal well-being and ecological balance.

Accommodating aparigraha in daily life does not require many changes, as small steps toward minimizing waste are effective. For example, I often ask myself before buying something if this thing aligns with my values or not. This approach has helped save money and furthered a sense of fulfillment. Aparigraha explains that true happiness does not come from

gaining possessions but from developing compassion toward all living beings. Embracing this principle means one can avoid material attachment and proceed to more desirable lives.

In the end, Jainism's belief of aparigraha stands as the light in today's consumer-based world. It has brought in an immense transition within me after adopting the lifestyle of minimal living and finding a root basis from the wisdom it carries. By living simply, we honor the planet, and nurture our souls.

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