



Guru Jambheshwar ji ka Prakrutik Prem: A Visionary Environmental Philosophy

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Abstract

Guru Jambheshwar, the 15th-century founder of the Bishnoi sect, exemplified "Prakrutik Prem" (love for nature) through his 29 principles that integrate spiritual devotion with ecological stewardship. This paper examines his life, Shabadwani teachings, and the sect's historical actions like the Khejarli Massacre, highlighting how his philosophy anticipated modern environmentalism by promoting non-violence toward flora, fauna, and ecosystems in arid Rajasthan.

Keywords

Guru Jambheshwar, Prakrutik Prem, Bishnoi sect, 29 principles, Shabadwani, environmental philosophy, Khejarli Massacre, nature worship, ecological harmony.

Introduction

Guru Jambheshwar's Prakrutik Prem represents a timeless synthesis of spirituality and ecology, born from Rajasthan's harsh deserts where famine revealed nature's fragility. His teachings, codified in 1485 as the Bishnoi Panth's 29 Niyamas, mandate compassion for all life forms, banning green tree felling and animal harm centuries before global conservation movements. This philosophy, rooted in Vaishnavite bhakti, views nature as divine manifestation, urging followers to protect it as sacred duty.

Guru Jambheshwar's Life

Guru Jambheshwar, born in 1451 in Pipasar village, Nagaur, Rajasthan, into a Panwar Rajput family, lived until 1536. As a child, he remained silent for seven years, then spent 27 years herding cows, observing arid Rajasthan's droughts that shaped his ecological awareness. At age 34 in 1485, amid severe famine, he founded the Bishnoi Panth at



Samrathal Dhora, renouncing worldly life under a Khejri tree. He preached for 51 years across India, composing 120 poetic verses called **Shabadwani**, which form the sect's core scripture. His life divided into childhood, herding, sect foundation, and preaching phases highlights miracles and travels promoting social reform, animal compassion, and tree protection. Sites like Mukam (his samadhi) and Peepasar (birthplace) remain pilgrimage centers.

Founding Bishnoi Panth

Inspired by drought's devastation, Jambheshwar established Bishnoi (from "bis" + "noi" meaning 29 principles) as a Vaishnavite sub-sect devoted to Vishnu, non-violence, and nature. In Vikram Samvat 1542 (1485 CE), at Samrathal Dhora, he installed a kalash, distributed pahal (holy water), and outlined 29 Niyamas. These span personal hygiene (10 rules), social behavior (7), worship (4), and biodiversity (8), banning animal killing and green tree felling. Shabadwani verses poetically urge harmony: protecting trees ensures animal and human survival. The Khejri tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) holds sacred status, symbolizing sustenance in deserts. Followers, estimated at 600,000 by 2010, span Rajasthan, Haryana, and beyond, with 360 gotras regulating equality.

The 29 Principles

Category	Key principles	Environmental focuses
Biodiversity (8)	Ban killing animals, birds. No cutting green trees. shelter strays avoid tobacco, alcohol, meat. No blue clothes (indigo harms shrubs).	Protects flora-fauna, promotes veganism, ethical dairy.
Social and personal (17)	Daily baths prayers forgiveness No laying stealing, fast on Amavasya self-sufficiency filtered water, milk, firewood.	Fosters hygiene, compassion, sustainability.
Worship (4)	Evening Vishnu aarti yajna for inner purity	Links devotion to ecological stewardship.

These rules anticipated biodiversity needs, with eight directly conserving nature amid 15th-century Rajasthan's scarcity. Followers filter resources to spare insects, embodying meticulous care.



Prakrutik Prem Philosophy

"Prakrutik Prem" reflects Jambheshwar's divine love for nature as life's foundation: "वन, वृक्ष और जीव ही जीवन का आधार हैं" (forests, trees, and creatures form life's base). Shabadwani warns of drought from human greed, urging compassion: "do not cut green trees" and "be merciful to all living beings." He viewed nature disruption as sin, weaving ecology into religion for mass adherence. This prem integrates ahimsa (non-violence) with Vishnu bhakti, seeing all life as interconnected. As a peasant-ecologist, he foresaw pollution/deforestation ills, promoting self-reliant lifestyles. Verses like those in Shabad 1 emphasize guru's nurturing role mirroring nature's.

Khejarli Massacre

The Khejarli Massacre unfolded over a few intense days in 1730 in the village of Khejarli (then Khejrli), near Jodhpur in Rajasthan, India, as Bishnoi villagers non-violently defended sacred Khejri trees from royal soldiers. This event stemmed from Guru Jambheshwar's (Jambhoji's) teachings on environmental protection, with 363 Bishnois sacrificing their lives. Maharaja Abhai Singh of Marwar ordered minister Giridhar Bhandari to fell Khejri trees from Bishnoi villages for palace construction or lime production. Soldiers first arrived in nearby areas, but strong villager resistance forced them to Khejarli, a lush Bishnoi grove embodying Jambhoji's vow against cutting green trees. The Massacre Begins **Amrita Devi Bishnoi**, upon seeing soldiers with axes, declared, "If a tree is to be cut, cut me first," and hugged a Khejri tree. Soldiers beheaded her and her three daughters, who followed suit. Older villagers then embraced trees, followed by youth, women, and children from Khejarli and 83 surrounding villages. By day's end, 363 Bishnois. their blood staining the soil red. News of the passive resistance shocked Maharaja Abhai Singh. He recalled Bhandari's forces, apologized in person at the site, and decreed permanent forest protection for Khejarli, renaming it after the Khejri trees. The massacre site became a Bishnoi pilgrimage center. This sacrifice inspired India's Chipko movement centuries later and reinforced Jambhoji's 29 principles, including jiiv daya (compassion for life) and tree protection.

Shabadwani on Nature

Shabadwani's 120 shabads poetically exalt nature-love. One verse: "जीवां जूनी पड़े परसा ॥ ज्यूं झींवर मच्छी मच्छा जालूँ" urges mercy before harm. Teachings stress purity: filtered water/milk to avoid killing microbes. Jambheshwar declared, "if trees are protected, animals and people will thrive," linking ecology to survival. His eco-vision banned wasteful debates, promoting filtered speech/thoughts for harmonious living. These remain recited daily, inspiring veganism and wildlife aid. Guru Jambho Ji taught in his sermons, "Practice compassion



toward all living beings and don't cut down trees." This highlights the crucial role of living organisms—animals and plants—in maintaining environmental balance. Whenever humans exploit animals and forests excessively in the name of progress and development, the consequences are devastating. If we want to preserve the world's forest culture, we must adopt Jambho Ji's principles. The unbreakable bond between wildlife and vegetation is well-known through the food chain, as every creature depends directly or indirectly on plants for survival. For pure air and climate, Jambho Ji prescribed daily havan (fire rituals) in his "Sabdvani." Humans rely on nature for their basic needs. In his "Sabdvani," Jambho Ji outlined a management system for environmental protection, emphasizing animal welfare and nature conservation as core principles, drawn from his own profound experiences.

Historical Impact

Bishnois demonstrated *Prakrutik Prem* in the 1730 Khejarli Massacre: 363, led by Amrita Devi, died hugging Khejri trees against Jodhpur Maharaja Abhai Singh's order for palace wood. Amrita proclaimed sacrifice for faith's honor, halting feeling. This "first eco-revolt" inspired Chipko (1970s). Modern echoes include blackbuck protection protests against Salman Khan (1998/2023). Activists like Khamu Ram Bishnoi fight plastic; sites like Jambholav pond embody conservation.

Modern Relevance

Today, amid climate crisis, Jambheshwar's principles offer sustainable models: biodiversity rules align with UN SDGs. Bishnois nurse wildlife, oppose poaching, maintaining Thar harmony—believing rebirth as deer. Guru Jambheshwar University (Hisar) honors him. His foresight—protecting Khejri for fodder, shade—counters desertification. Community shelters for calves, animals exemplify ethical husbandry. *Prakrutik Prem* urges global adoption: compassion over exploitation for balance.

Guru Jambhoji spent his entire life educating people about the vital role of trees, plants, animals, and the environment. He deeply appreciated nature's incredible contributions and explained to humanity how to use it wisely while warning against misuse. He made them aware of the dangers of animal cruelty. In today's world, where people are relentlessly exploiting nature and destroying themselves in the process, studying and reflecting on Guru Jambhoji's teachings has become absolutely essential.

Conclusion

Guru Jambheshwar's *Prakrutik Prem* endures as a blueprint for sustainable living, proven by Bishnoi sacrifices and modern activism against deforestation and poaching. In today's climate crisis, his emphasis on biodiversity, self-reliance, and non-violence offers



actionable wisdom, bridging ancient wisdom with UN Sustainable Development Goals for planetary harmony.

The main goal of this research paper is to remind humanity that if humans and nature work in harmony to support each other's survival, we can not only avoid many natural and man-made disasters today but also secure a safer future. During his lifetime, Guru Jambhoji traveled to various places and taught people from his experiences that human life, plants, animals, and more are indirectly interdependent. So, humans must protect and nurture them all to ensure their own well-being.

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