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JAIN DIGEST

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On the Cover:

Visualizing Devotion - *Chhod Patas* Exhibition in the Fowler Museum at UCLA

This *Chhod Pata* of Bhagwan Prashwanath is among the many on display at the Fowler Museum at UCLA in Los Angeles. With these *chhods* given a center stage and highlighted, we can all value better their importance in Jain material and religious culture.

Disclosure

The Editorial Team endeavors to publish all the materials that are submitted but reserves the right to reduce, revise, reject, or edit any article, letter, or abstract for clarity, space, or policy reasons. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Team. These articles are published with the authors names. The articles written or published by the Editorial Team are published as a joint contribution of the entire Editorial Team, and not necessarily represent the views of JAINA

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Editor's Note

Om Shri Veetragay Namah

Jai Jinendra,

On behalf of the Jain Digest Editorial Staff, I wish you a very Happy New Year! Wish you all a healthy, peaceful, prosperous and a spiritually uplifting 2023!

With blessing of Bhagwan, our Jain Digest family continues to grow with new writers and staff members. In this February 2023 issue, we have articles by 13 new authors, including three youngsters from Jain Society of Greater Detroit! We thank them for their contributions, which help us bring you varied and enriched content.

We are very happy to announce that Payal Seth from Delhi has joined our editorial staff as of November 2022. Payal is a PhD Scholar at Bennett University and an Economics researcher with Tata-Cornell Institute, Cornell University. She has published extensively in leading national and international newspapers. Please join us in welcoming Payal to the Jain Digest family!

After the publication of the October 2022 issue, we asked our advisors and well-wishers to suggest any improvements we can make to the magazine's content. We are implementing two of those suggestions starting with this issue. One suggestion to include essays written by Pathshala students came from our advisor Hema Pokharna. With help from our section editor Sanjay Bhandari and Hemesh Shah from Jain Society of Greater Detroit, we have included three mature, thought-provoking essays written by their pathshala students in the past few years. Our plan for the future issues of Jain Digest is to approach one of the Jain Centers from North America and have their students contribute winning entries from their past essay competitions.

The second suggestion to include "Letters to Editor" in the magazine came from Prakash Mody. In this issue, we are including a few of these letters as a sample. Starting from the June 2023 issue, we will share select letters that we receive during the two months after a new issue of the magazine is published. For this February issue, please send your candid feedback to jaindigestpublication@gmail.com before March 31, 2023. The Editorial team will contact the people whose letters are selected and request to send their picture to be published along with the letter. We hope that this will encourage you to tell us what you liked in the magazine, your ideas for

improvement and your suggestions for content that will help us all in our spiritual advancement.

On December 3, 2022, my wife Sushama and I were invited to a reception at the Fowler Museum at UCLA which included a gallery preview of the *Chhod Patas* exhibition. As we entered the gallery, we were surprised to see several of the *chhod patas* displayed on the walls with wonderful lighting that highlighted the beauty of the velvet and satin tapestry lavishly embroidered with gold and silver-gilt thread. Just like most of you, I had seen these *chhods* several times in temples & *upashrayas* in India and knew that they depicted pilgrimage sites and stories from Jain mythology. However, I never thought of them as symbols of devotion. It was an incredible feeling when I learned that the exhibition was titled "Visualizing Devotion." How appropriate!

During the event, we met many of our friends from Jain Center of Southern California, including former president Dr. Jayesh Shah, who had been working hard with the UCLA staff and many others over several months to make the exhibition a reality. We met with Amy Landau and Francesca Albrezzi of UCLA and Lynna Dhanani of UC Davis and asked them if they would be willing to write an article for us. They enthusiastically said "yes" and over the next two weeks we received two articles. Lynna's article is included in the *Devotion* section as it focuses on the exhibition itself and explains the story depicted on one of the *chhods*. My hope is that after reading that description, all of us will be encouraged to observe such tapestries closely and get a better appreciation of the details the artists have captured. Amy and Francesca's article is included in the *Information* section since it provides overview of the "Engaging Lived Religion" program which includes three spheres of activities: exhibitions, public programs, and digital learning. We are grateful to Amy, Francesca, and Lynna for working with us on the articles.

In addition to what I have covered above, there are many engaging articles in this issue that you will find educational and inspiring. My sincere thanks to all the writers and editors for their contribution and hard work. And thanks to all of you for your support.

If you would like to join our editorial team or write an article for our next issue to be published in June 2023, please write to us at:

jaindigestpublication@gmail.com or call or send a message at 310-721-5947. Stay safe. Stay healthy.

In Seva,
Dilip Parekh

JAINA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



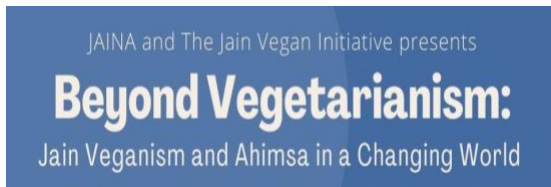
Jai Jinendra!

Hope you had a great start to the year 2023. On behalf of the JAINA Executive Committee and the Board of Directors, I wish you and your family a very Happy and Peaceful Year ahead and pray for everyone's well-being. With your support, we hope to continue imbibing and spreading the Jain way of life through various means to the Jains of North America and the world.

On behalf of the JAINA Convention Committee 2023, I invite you to JAINA Convention 2023 which will be held from June 30 - July 3, 2023, in Lakeland, Florida. Please register at www.jainaconvention.org.

With your love and support, JAINA has achieved the following during the past four months:

September 2022



1. JAINA and the Jain Vegan Initiative in association with Arihanta Academy presented an online learning course '**Beyond Vegetarianism: Jain Veganism and Ahimsa in a Changing World**' starting on September 25, 2022.



2. On September 17, JAINA had a successful virtual '**Tapasya Ni Sanji**' for the Tapasvis who performed Tap during the Paryushan and Das

Lakshana Parva 2022. 1000+ people had attended.



3. JAINA announced the **Telehealth** initiative to improve access to quality healthcare. The committee is currently inviting Physicians and Dentists from North America to join the JAINA Telehealth team to provide better healthcare to the community.

October 2022

1. JAINA and Veerayatan announced the plans/details of the proposed **Rajagiri School, JAINA Vidya Mandir**.
https://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/07102022_enewsletter/Jaina_Vidya_Mandir.pdf



Here are the links to the ground floor plan https://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/07102022_enewsletter/GROUND_FLOOR_PLAN_-_JAINA_VI.pdf and the first floor plan, https://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/07102022_enewsletter/FIRST_FLOOR_PLAN_-_JAINA_VID.pdf

These will be divided into three wings: 1. Junior Wing (Blue), 2 Senior Wing (Red), 3. Administrative Wing (Green). Here's link to the cost break-up for each wing:

https://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/07102022_enewsletter/PROJECT_COST_-_JAINA_VIDYA_MA.pdf

2. On October 15, JAINA had its second BOD meeting of 2022. This virtual meeting was attended by 55+ attendees where the latest updates of JAINA and various committees were shared.
3. Launched **JAINA Mobile App** to make the JAINA Convention registration process easy. Through this App, we aim to help the community connect in a better way as well as keep you posted on the latest convention updates.
4. On the pious day of Bhagwan Mahavir Nirvan, our goal of raising \$125,000 for the **Gurudev Chitrabhanu Memorial Panjarapole** was achieved. JAINA is immensely thankful to all the donors for their valuable contribution to this noble cause.

November 2022

1. JAINA Education Committee conducted a virtual event on November 5, 2022, where the committee showcased its past, present, and future projects. The committee also discussed about Pathshala, educational resources, interactive learning, and community reach during the event.
2. On November 16th, JAINA co-hosted the **Diwali celebration on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC** along with BAPS, HAF, and AAHOA. JAINA is proud to inform you that this was the first time the Namokar Mantra was recited LIVE at a Diwali program on Capitol Hill and a Diya was lit by a JAINA President.



3. We had a great response to the **Thanksgiving Meal Drive** to reduce the suffering of millions of turkeys by feeding plant-based food to the less fortunate. We are grateful for each one of you who came forward to contribute to this noble cause.

December 2022

1. JAINA India Foundation undertook a project of publishing a short booklet on **"Scientific Aspects of Jain Practices"**. This initiative, led by Dr. Bipin Doshi, aims to invoke the interest of a layman to explore Jain practices through logic & rationality, rather than rituals and tradition. We are inviting articles from scholars to contribute to this project, based on their own domain expertise and interest. Here is a link to the article submission guidelines:
https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/12092022_enewsletter/MJV_Book_Project_1.pdf
2. I led a delegation to South Florida to investigate the feasibility of creating a **three hundred home Jain senior citizen community** in Orlando, and also met with a few leaders of the Jain Society of South Florida at the home of Bindesh Shah, the first V. P. of JAINA.

YJA

Recently, YJA had an **'Earth to YJA'** campaign to educate ourselves on how taking care of the environment and practicing sustainability connects to Jainism. Work on regional retreats is in progress.

YJP

YJP had various interesting events in the past 3 months like golf, a bachata dance, a hike, and beach event, and more. Currently, elections for the 2023 Executive Board and Co-Chair positions are ongoing.

Thank you for your consistent support to make JAINA better each day.

Wishing you Peace, Love, and Happiness,

Haresh Shah

Importance of Charity in Various Religions

By Narendra C. Bhandari, Ph. D.



Narendra C. Bhandari retired as a Professor Emeritus from Pace University, New York in 2021. Before that, he taught at the University of Baltimore, and Virginia Commonwealth University. As a management professor, he has published a casebook and its instructor's notes, several articles, and edited a journal. He has been on the editorial board of journals. He has lectured at executive seminars sponsored by the American Management Associations, Canadian Management Center, University of New Orleans, and Indo-American Society. He is the author of two prayer books, "Katha Vir Bhagwan Ki" and "Laxmi Vishnu Saraswati Prathanayen."
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I don't exactly know why millions of people died from Covid all over the world; why hundreds of people died from the flood in Pakistan; why hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives from the Tsunami tidal wave; or why millions of people are starving all over the world? However, I do know that all the people who suffer due to circumstances beyond their control can use some help. Giving help to the needy is a matter of common sense. It has also been emphasized in many prominent religious publications, as presented below.

Charity in Jain Literature

One of the great classics of Tamil is the Four Hundred Quatrains (Naladinannurru), a collection of fine verses on morality written by a group of Jain monks, perhaps in the fifth or sixth century. These monks, during a time of famine, were sheltered and fed by a Tamil king. When these monks departed from his court, each left a quatrain as a blessing for his benevolence. The quatrain #170 reads as follows (Basham, Quoted in Entree 1988, pp. 72-74):

*The greatness of the great is humility.
The gain of the gainer is self-control.
Only those rich men are truly wealthy
Who relieve the need of their neighbors.*

The Lord Mahavira donated His entire wealth (one crore eight lakh gold coins every day, for a whole year) to the needy people, before He took Diksha, or renounced the world (Hastimalji 1971, p. 360). That was a lot of money. Just imagine how widespread poverty was during that period. With about six billion needy people in the world today and millions of them starving, they can also use your help. Millions of those are living all over India.

After finishing His Varshi Daan (year-long charity), after giving away all His worldly wealth, and after taking Diksha, a very poor Brahmin, who could not come to His Varshi Daan, approached the Lord, hoping to get something, anything, from Him. The

Lord had nothing left with Him except for His devadushya (a piece of cloth covering His body). The Lord tore up the devadushya and gave one-half of it to the old man, keeping the other half for Himself, barely covering a part of His body (Hastimalji 1971, p. 362). It is believed that the Lord let go even the remaining half a piece of devadushya when, later on, it got entangled in a bush. The Lord remained without any clothes on His body since then.

The Lord Mahavira also encouraged the general community to develop several qualities such as mercy, wisdom, modesty, kindness, moderation, reverence for old age, humility, gratitude, and benevolence (Nevaskar 1971, pp. 157-59; Caillat 1987, p. 509; quoted in Mohanadoss 1996, p. 83). Similarly, discussing the role of monks, the Acharanga Sutra says that "The saint, with true vision, conceives compassion for all the world ... and ... he will preach and spread and proclaim it" (Basham, in Entree 1988, p. 71).

Charity in Other Religious Literature

Many religious writings have discussed the significance of charitable activities in human life. For example, the obligation to give to the poor is a common requirement in all Christian communities (Walls, in Hinnells 1991, p. 88). "Institutions for education or healing, for the relief of famine or for assisting those on the margins of society have been prominent in one form or another in every phase of Christian history" (Walls, in Hinnells 1991, p. 89).

According to Quoran, "O believers, give in charity what is good of the things you have earned, and of what you produce from the earth; and do not choose to give what is bad as alms, that is, things you would not like to accept yourself" (Ahmad Ali 1988, p. 47). It goes on to say that "If you give alms openly, it is well; but if you do it secretly and give it to the poor, that is better" (Ahmad Ali 1988, p. 47).

According to the Shrimad-Bhagavatam, Lord Ramachandra gave everything in charity to Brahmanas. He retained “only His personal garments and ornaments, and similarly, the Queen, mother Sita, was left with only her nose ring, and nothing else” (Prabhupada 1982, p. 107).

Areas of Desperate Needs

One should select the charitable cause that one wants to support, and then support it in the manner he/she wants to. Here are some examples of worthy causes:

1. To help solve problems of poverty, hunger, homelessness, and unemployment.
2. To provide clean water, medicines, and medical care.
3. To provide scholarships, books, magazines, computers, furniture, and supplies.
4. To help in the construction/renovation of classrooms, bathrooms, playgrounds, etc.
5. To provide personal clothes, blankets, socks, shoes, and chappals.



Concluding Thoughts

We should make an effort to find worthy causes that we want to help. We should not wait for them to come to us. We should try to reconnect with and help them as soon as possible. Many of these people in need today would make the list of our next generation of leaders in various areas of life such as business, entertainment, mathematics, physics, social service, sports, and technology.

People often wonder, how much to give in donations. I say that do the best that you can. Some people say

that give to the worthy causes of your choice until it begins to hurt you.

Always remember this.

**HELPING OTHERS IS ..
EITHER A PAYBACK OR, A DEPOSIT**

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Not all of us
can do great
things. But
we can do
small things
with great
love.
- Mother
Teresa

Rekindling the Human Spirit through Compassion

By Khushi Patel



Khushi Patel is a 9th grade student from Houston, Texas. She volunteers for VOSAP's Ignite Program. She enjoys writing and learning more about the world around her. She is passionate about igniting change and spreading awareness about global issues. Khushi is thankful to have the opportunity to use her writing skills to help others.

Compassion is the ability to understand the experience of another and show an emotional response in an empathetic manner. In simpler terms, having compassion means caring about others and their struggles.

Exercising compassion has proven to reap several benefits for oneself. Science has shown that when we feel compassion for others, our brain releases a hormone called oxytocin that evokes feelings of happiness. It also lowers our blood pressure, increases generosity, and makes us more trusting and friendlier. The rewards of compassion are many as it is not just us, but also the people who receive our love, feel happier. Hence, compassion also fosters positive environment within our communities. By exercising compassion, acceptance and open-mindedness are facilitated. This creates a less judgmental society and encourages collaboration. It is especially important to address the specific role of compassion in improving the quality of life for minorities and other groups whose struggles are commonly disregarded. One such group is SAP.

Who are SAP and how does compassion benefit them?

SAP stands for Specially Abled People. Rather than using the term 'disabled people, which often has a negative connotation, using the term 'specially abled people' helps change the narrative around those who have special needs and facilitates a more positive and open discussion around them. In many instances, people are quick to judge and show a lack of compassion for those who have impairments. It is crucial that this changes so that SAP are able to gain access to the same opportunities and receive equitable opportunities that they need to achieve their goals.

It is important to not look down upon the SAP with pity. Looking at them with pity implies that their situation and circumstance are abnormal. It creates emotional distance which discourages empathy and compassion. Instead, we should

show empathy towards their circumstance and use our privilege and voice to both spread awareness and erase the negative connotation around special needs. When given the right tools and resources, SAP are just as capable of performing to the best of their abilities as the rest of us are. By encouraging compassion towards SAP, more people are motivated to lead and contribute to initiatives that aid SAP in gaining access to more opportunities to achieve their goals regardless of their circumstances. In this regard, let me share an inspiring story.

The story of Dr. Bhavesh Bhatia is one of perseverance and hope. Though he is visually impaired, he does not let this hinder him from achieving his goals. Bhavesh Bhatia lost his mother to cancer and treatment had taken up a major portion of his savings. To financially support himself and his family, he worked two jobs as a massage therapist and telephone operator. After saving up some money, with nothing more than a single dye and a mere 5 kgs of wax, Bhavesh started a small candle business.



Bhavesh went from selling candles in rented handcarts to establishing over 72 manufacturing units in 14 states. His business, Sunrise Candles, employs mostly visually impaired people. Not only did Bhavesh use this business to become self-dependent, but by having it run with the help of other visually impaired individuals, he empowers them to become independent as well. When offered money by the Vice President of

Reliance Industries, Bhavesh politely declined and stated, “I don't want money, I want work.” Rather than focusing on profit, Bhavesh exercises compassion and focuses on assisting other visually impaired individuals to lead their best lives. This story is just one of the countless inspiring lives through which we can see the importance of compassion. Remember that compassion is contagious! By showing compassion, you can motivate those around you to do the same! So how does one go about doing that?

Compassion through Art

We can exercise compassion through our hobbies. Mr. Chetan Phaliskar is an artist who was born deaf and mute. However, he does not let his impairments hinder his passion for art. He has over 105 awards and has traveled across India showcasing his artwork. He uses his art to convey social messages to make the world a more positive place. Chetan uses his hobby to exercise compassion towards those who may be suffering as a result of social causes.



Furthermore, he urges the message of positive social change. During his education, there was a particular teacher who recognized Chetan's talent and motivated him to pursue his artistic aspirations. This too is an example of compassion. Rather than being negative towards Chetan's situation, his teacher exercised compassion and understood his situation and how it may impact his mentality. Because she assured Chetan and motivated him, his mindset was not one that limited growth, but rather fostered it.

Compassion through Actions

Compassion can be shown through the actions we take to help improve the lives of those who are suffering around us. An example of this can be seen through the actions of the Jaya Rehab Center. Here, free treatment is provided to those left impaired by the 2001 Bhuj earthquake.

They are also given job opportunities at the center to financially provide for themselves and become independent. Compassion is prevalent at the Jaya Rehab Center. By providing free treatments and resources, the healthcare workers demonstrate that they understand and care about the situation of their impaired patients.

Compassion through Initiatives

VOSAP (Voice Of Specially Abled People) is one such organization that demonstrates compassion. VOSAP's mission is to bring awareness to the circumstances of specially-abled people, help them overcome obstacles, and give them tools to receive equal opportunity. VOSAP highlights the countless specially abled people who have not let their impairment hinder them and encourages others to exercise compassion. They have over 10,900 volunteers committed to the cause and have changed thousands of lives; all through the power of compassion.

Compassion has often been ranked as the greatest virtue of all. While the word compassion has often been misinterpreted as “pity for someone else”, its real definition is the response to the suffering of others and a sincere motivation to help and free them of their suffering. Extending our compassion to the otherwise neglected group of specially-abled people brings us an opportunity to enhance our values of empathy, compassion, and humanness. It is by seeing the world through a different lens, we realize the resilience of the human spirit.

Sources: <https://www.voiceofsap.org/inspirational-story/meet-dr-bhavesh-bhatia-visually-impaired-entrepreneur-that-owns-multi-crore-company/>

<https://www.voiceofsap.org/deaf-and-mute-artist-winner-of-afh2020-chetan-pashilkar/>

<https://www.voiceofsap.org/inspirational-story/bidda-sarvodaya-trust-implants-prosthetic-legs-for-patient-in-24-hours/>

A Small Act of Compassion

By Jitu Shah and Chandrakumar Jain - JAINA Directors at Jain Society of Greater Cleveland (JSGC)

*“In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self.”
- Bhagwan Mahavir*

Bhagwan Mahavir's message of Anukampa (Compassion) and Love is very relevant now when **89 million refugees** – Ukraine, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Congo – are facing hunger, lack of shelter and jobs to survive.

The Executive Committee at the **Jain Society of Greater Cleveland (JSGC)** under the leadership of President Meena Jain hosted a unique & impactful event on **Saturday August 6, 2022**, along with **'Rise Against Hunger'** - a non-profit international agency dedicated to reducing hunger worldwide. The event was promoted through multi-media in Jain, Hindu, and main stream American communities of Northern Ohio. USCRI (United States Committee for Refugees & Immigrants) also participated.



On August 6th, the Rise Against Hunger (RAH) truck rolled in at 8:20 am at the Jain Temple in Richfield Ohio. Joseph Kelly with two helpers started unloading 50# bags of Rice, Soybean, & Dry Veggies and vitamins packs. He also brought plastic bins, funnels, weighing machines and heating guns sealers, tapes, and cardboard boxes. It was a 100% turn-key operation. JSGC as a host, provided dining room, tables and electric outlets. More than 100 enthusiastic, smiling & happy volunteers between the ages of 6 years to 85 years participated. **In just 3 hours, they packed 10,000 meals, sealed, and packed in the boxes ready to be loaded in the truck!** Because of speed and extra volunteers in the morning, JSGC had to cancel afternoon shift disappointing a few volunteers!

The journey of the meal goes through 12 important steps: Harvesting, Transporting, Warehousing, Trucking, Packaging, Weighing, Sealing, Boxing,

Exporting, Distributing, Cooking & Nourishing. The cost of each meal sponsored was only 40 cents!



Ask Somebody in Hunger 'ICU' the real value of ONE meal? ONE meal may provide enough fuel for a person to go to work OR take their children to school; IT IS A LIFELINE!



Mayor M. Wheeler, USCRI Director-Darren Hamm & Meena Jain - JSGC President

Comments from Participants:

“Awesome, Incredible, WOW!” “Loved it, Enjoyed”
“Let us do it again in 6 months.”
“It broadened the mission of Jain Society”;
“Created More Awareness about Jain Principles in outside community”;
“Why NOT bring two trucks and make 20,000 packages next time”

A Delight to the Mind's Eye - Jain *Chhod Patas*

By Lynna Dhanani, Ph.D.



Lynna Dhanani is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies and a Chair Holder of the Mohini Jain Presidential Chair in Jain Studies at the University of California, Davis. She obtained her doctorate at Yale University. Lynna has a wide range of interests, including Jainism, Sanskrit, and Prakrit language and literature, medieval Indian alchemical traditions, yoga and tantra, Indian devotional movements, Indian philosophy, and especially South Asian religious art.

In celebration of the opening of **Visualizing Devotion: Jain Embroidered Shrine Hangings**, I had the great privilege of giving a talk on Saturday, December 3, 2022, introducing a selection of hangings or *chhod patas* from the exhibit in front of a diverse audience including many members of the Jain Center of Southern California. It was a celebration of the hard work of certain members of this community, particularly Dr. Jayesh Shah and his family, of the curators and staff at the UCLA Fowler museum working with the Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection (from which many of the *chhods* came), and of scholars in helping to bring together a stunning ensemble of Jain *chhod patas*—embroidered hangings on velvet or sateen cloth with gold and silver-gilt thread that visualize many aspects of Jain religious culture.

Delighting the eye, many of these *chhods* filled with sequins glittered in all of their glory in the special lighting of the exhibit hall. Many visitors walked the four corners of the room learning about the Jain tirthankaras, monks, pious nuns and laywomen, and stories found in Jain scriptures and narrative literature. Others enjoyed recognizing the objects of veneration that these *chhods* displayed in artful recollection of the actual pilgrimage places of Shatrujaya and Sammet Shikhara, for example, or of popular stories, such as that of Sripal and Maynasundari. Five categories organize the *chhods* currently on display: Knowledge and Scripture, Auspicious Life Events and Symbols, Modalities of Worship, Sacred Landscape and Pilgrimage, and Inspiring Stories. These hangings can creatively introduce and teach

Jainism to all ages as they gather together many important aspects of the religion in visual form.

Seeing these hangings directly and experiencing the awe that they inspire, several of us found a renewed sense of appreciation for these material forms grouped together in this thoughtful way. Often, they are found hanging separately in and around devotional spaces - whether in Jain temples, *upashrayas*, or homes - a presence accounted for in everyday life, but one often overlooked and perhaps undervalued. Some recollected having one as a family heirloom but never paying much attention to it, while others commented on the placement of *chhods* in their homes. As one *shravaka* said of a *chhod* hanging behind the main *murti* in her home shrine: "It often goes unnoticed, but if removed, it would be missed."

With these *chhods* given center stage and highlighted as they are in the exhibit, we can all value better their importance in Jain material and religious culture, especially as movable objects that continue to inhabit the spaces of the Jain diaspora outside of India. The *Chhods* delight the mind's eye, stimulating our memory to recall the many objects of veneration that we have honored in our rituals and festivals and the holy places that we have visited. They captivate the imagination with their retellings through the artistic reproduction of such images and the 3D-like quality of their characters often weaved in the traditional *zari* style that originated in Iran and entered India through trade several centuries ago. Part of a larger history of Indian textiles dating back to the 17th

century, they continue to be created and commissioned today in places such as Surat, Gujarat, where artisans work in large groups to produce individual pieces.

The Chhods delight the mind's eye, stimulating our memory to recall the many objects of veneration that we have honored in our rituals and festivals and the holy places that we have visited.

Although one familiar with the themes, stories, and places of the tradition may enjoy recollecting and recognizing them on these cloth hangings, there is always the unique piece that causes pause for reflection.



The Husband Bull and the Restorative Root
1936-1937
Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection

Take for example a story visualized on one *chhod pata* that I shared during my talk about the “Husband Bull and the Restorative Root.” Although there are many renditions of this story, the one I chose to tell (and write) comes from Haribhadra’s eighth century CE “Immortal Drop of Yoga” (*Yogabindu*) that defends the notion that all gods are worthy of worship until the correct one is found. If you visit the exhibit, you will read: “In the narrative, a woman feeling rejected by her husband told her best friend about the situation. The confidant advised her not to despair and offered a magic root that would turn the uncaring spouse into a bull. Indeed, the husband was changed into a beast and she took him out to graze with other cattle. One day, the bull sat beneath a banyan tree when two celestial figures riding in a flying vehicle (*vimana*) alighted on the tree to rest.

The divine couple immediately recognized the bull as a human transformed by magic and discussed another special root located somewhere underneath the banyan tree that would turn him back into a man. The remorseful wife overheard their conversation and, not knowing which plant they meant, had the bull graze on all the edible ones beneath the tree. Eventually, he ate the correct root, which instantly returned him to his original form.

The moral of the tale is that just as the dull-minded bull does not know one root from another and consumes everything, so a religious teacher faced with a similar-minded student encourages him to worship all gods until he finds the right one.” If you have or have not heard of this story before, please visit the exhibit if you are able, in order to gaze at the artistry and conceptualization of this story made alive and present by this *chhod*. Indeed, you will find, as shown in the picture to the left, the gods in the celestial chariot staring right back at you as the protagonist in the story sheepishly looks on at what she’s done!

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રનું આધ્યાત્મિક રહસ્ય લેખિકા: જેપલ બીજલ શાહ



જેપલ બીજલ શાહ, અમદાવાદના વતની છે. ગુજરાત વિદ્યાપીઠમાંથી જૈનીઝમ વિષયમાં એમ.એ., એમ. ફીલ. (ગોલ્ડ મેડાલીસ્ટ) કરેલું છે. હાલમાં ઈન્સ્ટીટ્યૂટ ઓફ જૈનોલોજી માં કાર્ય કરી રહ્યા છે. જૈન વિશ્વકોશમાં લેખ લખે છે. આ સાથે ગુજરાત યુનિવર્સિટીમાંથી “ઉત્તરાધ્યયન સૂત્ર અને ભગવદ્ ગીતાનો તુલનાત્મક અભ્યાસ” વિષયમાં પી.એચ.ડી. કરી રહ્યા છે.

આત્માનો પરમાત્મા સાથે, ઉપાસકનો ઉપાસ્ય સાથે અને ભક્તનો ભગવાન સાથે અનન્ય ભક્તિ અને પ્રેમપૂર્વકનો સંબંધ તે સ્તોત્ર. સ્તોત્ર એ હિંદુ ધર્મ તેમ જ જૈન ધર્મના લોકો માટેનું આધ્યાત્મિક પદ્ય સાહિત્ય છે. સામાન્ય રીતે પોતાના ઈષ્ટદેવની ગુણસ્તુતિરૂપ સ્તોત્રના અંતરાલમાં ગહન ભાવનાઓ રહેલી હોય છે. સ્તોત્રનો પ્રત્યેક શબ્દ અનેક અર્થછાયાઓ ધરાવે છે જે બાહ્ય ભક્તિની સાથોસાથ આંતરિક અધ્યાત્મ સાધનાને પ્રગટાવે છે.

જૈન પરંપરામાં આવા મહામંગલકારી સ્તોત્રો ઘણાં છે. નવકાર મંત્ર, ઉવસગ્ગહરં સ્તોત્ર, સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર, ચિંતામણિ સ્તોત્ર, ભક્તામર સ્તોત્ર વગેરે જેમાં તીર્થંકર ભગવાનની સ્તુતિ કરવામાં આવી છે અને મંત્રોની ગૂંથણી પણ કરવામાં આવી છે. આવા સ્તોત્રોની રચના મહાન આચાર્યો અને સાધકો દ્વારા થઈ છે. સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર આવા મહાન પ્રભાવશાળી સ્તોત્રોમાં મહત્વનું સ્થાન ધરાવે છે.

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર: રચના અને રચયિતા કાળ

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રના રચયિતા શ્રી મુનિસુંદરસૂરિ ગચ્છાધિપતિ શ્રી સોમસુંદરસૂરિના શિષ્ય હતા. શ્રી મુનિસુંદરસૂરિ સહસ્રાવધાની તરીકે પ્રસિધ્ધ હતા. તેઓ એકસાથે હજાર અવધાન કરી શકતા હતા. તેમણે સૂરિમંત્રની ચોવીસ વાર આરાધના કરી હતી અને છઠ્ઠા તેમ જ અઠ્ઠમ આદિ તપસ્યાને કારણે પદ્માવતી આદિ દેવીઓ તેમને પ્રત્યક્ષ થઈને સહાય કરતી હતી. વિ.સં. 1501 માં મેવાડ દેશ સ્થિત દેવકુલપાટક નગરમાં થયેલ મરકીના ઉપદ્રવને શાંત કરવા માટે તેમણે આ મહિમાપૂર્ણ સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રની રચના કરી હતી. આ જ સ્તોત્ર દ્વારા તેઓએ શીરોહી રાજ્યમાં ઉત્પન્ન થયેલા તીડના ઉપદ્રવને પણ શાંત કર્યો હતો.

શ્રી મુનિસુંદરસૂરિએ માત્ર વીસ વર્ષની ઉંમરે ન્યાય, વ્યાકરણ અને કાવ્ય એ ત્રણ વિષયોનો પરિચય આપતો ‘ત્રૈવિધ-ગોષ્ઠી’ નામનો ગ્રંથ રચ્યો હતો. તેમણે પોતાના મુખ્ય ગુરુ શ્રીદેવસુંદરસૂરિ પર ‘ત્રિદંડતરંહિણી’ નામનો એક વિજ્ઞાપિત્ર મોકલ્યો હતો, જે જગતભરના વિજ્ઞાપિત્રોમાં અજોડ ગણાય છે. આ વિજ્ઞાપિત્રનો એક ભાગ હાલ ઉપલબ્ધ છે, જે ‘ગુણાવલી’ તરીકે પ્રસિધ્ધ છે. આ ઉપરાંત તેમણે ‘અધ્યાત્મકલ્પદ્રુમ’, ‘ઉપદેશરત્નાકર’, જિનરત્નકોશ, જયાનંદચરિત્ર જેવા અનેક ગ્રંથોની રચના કરી છે. દક્ષિણ દેશના કવિઓએ તેમને ‘કાલી સરસ્વતી’ નું બિરુદ આપ્યું હતું અને ખંભાતના સૂબા દફરખાને તેમને ‘વાદિ-ગોકુલ-ખંઠ’ એટલે ‘વાદીઓરૂપ ગોકુલના પતિ’ એવું બિરુદ આપ્યું હતું.

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર પરિચય

જૈન સમાજમાં પરમાત્માની ભક્તિ માટેના નવ મહાન પ્રભાવક સ્તોત્રો તરીકે નવસ્મરણ પ્રસિધ્ધ છે. આ નવસ્મરણના પદો મંગલમય છે. મંત્રાક્ષર સ્વરૂપ છે. તેના રોજના પઠન-પાઠનથી જીવનમાં આવનારા વિઘ્નો, આધિ, વ્યાધિ, ઉપાધિનો નાશ થાય છે. મહામંગલકારી નવસ્મરણનું ત્રીજું સ્મરણ સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર છે. સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રનું મૂળ નામ ‘સંતિનાહ સમ્મ-દિદ્ધિ, રક્ષ્યં’ એટલે કે ‘શાંતિનાથ-સમ્યગ્દ્રષ્ટિ-રક્ષા’ છે, પરંતુ સ્તોત્રના પ્રથમપદ પરથી તે ‘સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર’ તરીકે પ્રચલિત છે.

સંતિકરં સંતિજિણં, જગસરણં જય સિરિઈ દાયારં;
સમરામિ ભત્ત-પાલગ, -નિવ્વાણી-ગરુડ-કય સેવં ૧

ઐ સનમો વિખોસહિ-પત્તાણં, -સંતિસામિ-પાયાણં;
ઐ-સ્વાહા-મંતેણં, સવ્વાસિવ-દુરિઅ-હરણાણં ૨

ઐ સંતિ નમુક્કારો, ખેલોસહિમાઈ-લદ્ધિ-પત્તાણં;
સૌ દ્વી નમો સવ્વોસહિ-પત્તાણં ચ દેઈસિરિ ૩

વાણી તિહુઅણ-સામિણિ, સિરિદેવી જકખરાયગણિ પિડગા;
ગહ-દિસિપાલ-સુરિદા, સયાવિ રકખંતુ જિણભત્તે ૪

રકખંતુ મમં રોહિણી, પન્નતી વજ્જસિંખલા ચ સયા;
વજ્જંકુસિ ચક્કેસરિ, નરદત્તા કાલી મહાકાલી ૫

ગોરી તહ ગંધારી, મહજાલા માણવિ અ વઈરુટ્ટા;
અચ્છુતા માણસિયા, મહામાણસિયાઉ દેવીઓ ૬

જકખા ગોમુહ મહજકખ, તિમુહ જકખેસ તુંબરુ કુસુમો;
માયંગ-વિજય-અજિયા, બંભો મણુઓ સુરકુમારોઅ ૭

છમ્મુહ પયાલ કિન્નર, ગરુલો ગંધવ્વ તહય જકખંદો;
કૂબેર વરુણો ભિઉડી, ગોમેહો પાસ-માયંગા ૮

દેવીઓ ચક્કેસરિ, અજિયા દુરિઆરિ કાલી મહાકાલી,
અચ્ચુઅ સંતા જાલા, સુતારયા-સોય સિરિવચ્છા ૯

ચંડાવિજયંકુસિ પન્નઠત્તિ નિવ્વાણિ અચ્ચુઆ ધરણી;
વઈરુટ્ટ-છુત્ત-ગંધારિ, અંબ પઉમાવઈ સિદ્ધા ૧૦

ઈઅ તિત્થ-રકખણરયા, અન્નેવિસુરાસુરી ચ ચઉહાવિ;
વંતર જોઈણિ પમુહા, કુણંતુ રકખં સયા અમહં ૧૧

એવં સુદિદ્ધિ સુરગણ, સહિઓ સંઘસ્સ સંતિ જિણચંદો;
મજ્ઝવિ કરેઉ રકખં, મુણિસુંદરસૂરિ-થુઅ-મહિમા ૧૨

ઈઅ સંતિનાહ સમ્મ-દિદ્ધિ, રકખં સરઈ તિકાલં જો;
સવ્વોવદ્ધ-રહિઓ, સ લહઈ સુહસંપયં પરમં ૧૩

[તવગચ્છ ગયણ-દિણયર, જુગવર-સિરિસોમસુંદરગુરુણં;
સુપસાય-લદ્ધ-ગણહર, વિજ્જાસિદ્ધી ભણઈ સીસો ૧૪]

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રની પ્રથમ ગાથામાં શ્રી શાંતિનાથ ભગવાનના વિશિષ્ટ ગુણો વર્ણવીને તેમનું સ્મરણ કરવામાં આવ્યું છે. તેમાં નિર્વાણીદેવી અને ગરુડ યક્ષને વિશેષણરૂપે આવરી લઈ ગર્ભિત રીતે તેમનું પણ સ્મરણ કરવામાં આવ્યું છે. આ ગાથામાં વર્ણવેલ 'જયશ્રી' એ શ્રીમુનિસુંદરસૂરિનો સાંકેતિક શબ્દ છે અને તે પ્રાય:

આપનારા બે મંત્રો બતાવ્યા છે. આ મંત્રપદો દ્વારા જ સાધક કેવળજ્ઞાનરૂપી લક્ષ્મીને પ્રાપ્ત કરે છે. યોથી ગાથામાં સૂરિમંત્રની પાંચ પીઠની અધિષ્ઠાયિક દેવીઓ, યક્ષરાજ ગણિપિટક, તેમજ ગ્રહો, દિક્ષાલો અને ઇન્દ્રોનું સ્મરણ છે. ગુરુભગવંત દ્વારા જે ગીતાર્થ સાધુઓને આચાર્યપદની પદવી આપવામાં આવી હોય તેવા સૂરિભગવંતો આ સૂરિમંત્રની વિશેષ આરાધના કરી સૂરિમંત્રના અધિષ્ઠાયક દેવ-દેવીઓને જિનભક્તોની રક્ષા કરવા માટે પ્રાર્થના કરે છે. પછીની ગાથાઓમાં ક્રમશઃસોળ વિદ્યાદેવીઓ, ચોવીસ શાસનદેવો (યક્ષો), શાસનદેવીઓ (યક્ષિણીઓ) તથા તીર્થકરના શાસનનું રક્ષણ કરવામાં તત્પર એવા ચારે નિકાયના દેવ-દેવીઓ, વ્યંતરો અને યોગિનીઓનું સ્મરણ કરવામાં આવ્યું છે. આ સર્વે શ્રી ચતુર્વિધ સંઘની તથા આ સ્તોત્રનું પઠન કરનાર સાધકની રક્ષા કરે છે. સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રની બારમી ગાથામાં સમ્યગ્દૃષ્ટિ દેવોથી યુક્ત શ્રી શાંતિનાથ ભગવાન પાસે રક્ષાની માંગણી કરવામાં આવી છે. તેરમી ગાથામાં સ્તોત્રનું મૂળ નામ દર્શાવી તેના સ્મરણથી પ્રાપ્ત થતા ફળને દર્શાવ્યું છે. આ સ્તોત્રની ચૌદમી ગાથા પ્રક્ષિપ્ત હોવાથી બોલાતી નથી. પાક્ષિક, ચાતુર્માસિક તથા સાંવત્સરિક પ્રતિક્રમણના અંતમાં તથા સાધુ-સાધ્વી જ્યારે એક મુકામથી બીજા સ્થળે જાય ત્યારે માંગલિક પ્રતિક્રમણમાં સ્તવનરૂપે આ સ્તોત્રનું પઠન થાય છે.

સંતિકરં સ્તોત્ર: આધ્યાત્મિક રહસ્ય

શ્રી સંઘની રક્ષા માટે રચાયેલા આ મંત્રમય સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રને રક્ષા કે કવચ પણ કહેવાય છે. આ સ્તોત્રમાં જે મંત્રાક્ષરો લેવામાં આવ્યા છે તે સૂરિમંત્રામ્નાયમાંથી લેવામાં આવ્યા છે. સ્તોત્રકારશ્રી આ સ્તોત્રની બીજી અને ત્રીજી ગાથાઓમાં ત્રણ મંત્રો બતાવે છે. “ૐ નમઃ, ઐ-સ્વાહા અને સૌં હ્રીં નમઃ” ઐ-સ્વાહા - પલ્લવ છે. ઐ-બીજ શાકિનીકૃત ઉપદ્રવનું નિવારણ કરનાર છે. સૌં હ્રીંનમઃ એ મંત્રમાં સૌં એ મંત્રબીજ છે અને ભક્તામરસ્તોત્રના ચંત્રોમાં વપરાયેલું છે. હ્રીં એ સિદ્ધવિદ્યાનું બીજ છે. મંત્રવિશારદોએ તેને માયાબીજ કહ્યું છે. અહીં માયા શબ્દથી પ્રકૃતિ કે શક્તિ સમજવામાં આવે છે. આ મંત્ર પદોના જાપ દ્વારા સાધકોમાં બાહ્ય અને અંતરંગ શત્રુઓ પર વિજય મેળવવાની શક્તિ પ્રગટે છે. શ્રી શાંતિનાથ જિનેશ્વરના નામસ્મરણ અને મંત્રજાપ કરી બાહ્ય અને અંતરંગ શત્રુઓ પર વિજય પ્રાપ્ત કરી મોક્ષમાર્ગરૂપી લક્ષ્મીની પ્રાપ્તિ થાય છે. આ સ્તોત્રની અસર ઘણી જ ત્વરાથી થાય અને તેની સિદ્ધિ બહુ જ સરળતાથી થાય તેવા મંત્રાક્ષરો આ સ્તોત્રમાં ગોઠવાયેલા છે. આ મંત્રશક્તિ સાધકને પરમાત્મા સાથે તાદાત્મ્ય સાધવામાં અને એકાકાર થવામાં મદદ કરે છે.

શ્રી શાંતિનાથ જિનેશ્વરની સમ્યક્ આરાધના માટે આ મંત્રમય સ્તોત્રનું પૂજન પણ ભણાવવામાં આવે છે. આ પૂજનમાં શ્રી શાંતિનાથ ભગવાનની સિંહાસન પર સ્થાપના કરી તેમને સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રની તેર ગાથા પ્રમાણે તેર અષ્ટપ્રકારી અભિષેક કરવામાં આવે છે. સંતિકરં સ્તોત્રના નિત્ય પઠન-પાઠનથી ચિત્તમાં એકાગ્રતા આવે છે, આત્મિક સુખની અનુભૂતિ પમાય છે અને સાધક આધ્યાત્મિક માર્ગની સોપાનશ્રેણીઓ સર કરે છે. આ સ્તોત્રના ત્રિકાળ સ્મરણથી વ્યક્તિના બાહ્ય અને અંતરંગ ઉપદ્રવો શાંત થાય છે. સાધક આ ઉપદ્રવોનું શમન કરી કર્મોથી મુક્ત થઈને સર્વોત્કૃષ્ટ મોક્ષ સુખ પામે છે.

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Kshullak Ganesh Prasad Varni

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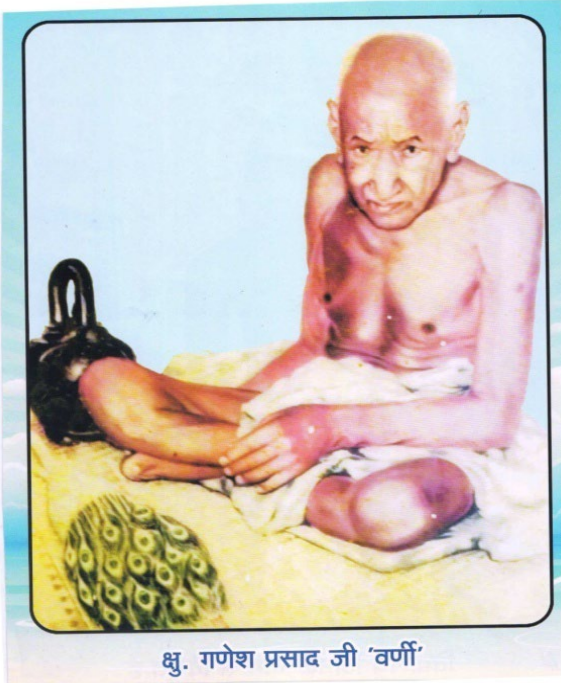
Very few people can match the degree of commitment, determination, and leadership qualities that Ganesh Prasad Varni showed in executing his lifelong mission of bringing about an educational and social renaissance in the Jain community of the Bundelkhand region. This fact becomes even more inspiring as he began his arduous mission as an ordinary and young convert to Jainism.. In the end of it, not only did he succeed in his efforts but also rose

he was inducted into the Digambar Jain monastic order as a *Kshullaka* (a Jain *Shrawak* who has adopted 11th Pratima - a junior monk). He died as a Digambar Jain ascetic 108 Muni Ganesh Keertiji Maharaj after observing *Sallekhana* at Isri's Udasin Ashram near the foothills of the famous Jain pilgrimage place of Sammed Shikhar.

It is in the Bundelkhand region that Ganesh Prasad Varni left a lasting impression. The region consists of 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The overwhelming majority of the Jain population belongs to the Terapanth sub-sect of Digambar Jainism. A majority of the Jain population in Bundelkhand has been engaged in trade, commerce, banking, and moneylending. Lately, an increasing number of them are entering into modern professions. Nevertheless, the degree of religiosity among the Jains of Bundelkhand has been very high for centuries. The region has also been rich in cultural heritage and is dotted with a large number of Jain pilgrimage places including Deogarh, Sonagiri, Drongiri, and Kundalpur (Jain 2020).

Ganesh Prasad was greatly influenced by Jainism since his childhood. He expressed his feelings about Jainism in Part I of his autobiography *Meri Jeevan Gatha (My Life Saga)* published in 1949. Commenting on the religious activities of the Jains of Bundelkhand, he writes: "Why am I not born to a Jain family? Where drinking strained water, giving up night food, not eating food prepared by a person of another religion, continuously praying and worshipping Jinendra Dev by singing, self-study, organizing *Shashtra sabhas* in which men and women of the neighborhood assemble, preaching of *vratas* and other codes of conduct, etc. are regarded as religious activities" (Varni 1949: 10-11; Jain 2020: 6).

At another place in the autobiography, he writes about the daily routine (*dincharya*) of the Bundelkhand Jains in the following words:



to prominence as a revered spiritual guru of the community.

Ganesh Prasad Varni (1874-1961) was born in a Hindu Vaishnav Bania caste named Asati in Hansera village of district Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh. Following his voluntary self-conversion into Jainism early in his youth, he aspired to learn, practice and preach Jainism. That explains his Jain traditional honorific title of Varni – a preacher of religion and morals. He gradually adopted a life of a Jain *tyagi* (renouncer). In 1913 at Kundalpur, he took the bow of celibacy from Baba Gokuldas. In 1947,

“Followers of this religion (Jainism) practice compassion, use only filtered water, do not eat after sunset, maintain cleanliness, visit temples everyday.....there is a daily discourse in the temple and carefully scrutinize all food materials before use” (Varni 1949: 27; Jain 1999: 68-69; Jain 2020: 119). As already mentioned, it was with this kind of mindset that Ganesh Prasad got converted to Jainism.

Ganesh Prasad had no aptitude for his family business of shopkeeping and opted to become a school teacher. Early in his life, he briefly taught at Madanpur, Agra, Jaipur, Indore, and Baruasagar. In his early and mid-20s, he again turned to studies of Sanskrit and Jainism at Jaipur and later on at Khurja, Bombay, and Mathura. Ganesh Prasad’s studies in Sanskrit and particularly in Jain Logic continued for over two decades, first at Banaras Hindu University and later at Navadweep/Calcutta and then again at Varanasi. While at Navadweep, he earned his Nyayacharya degree - a Master’s degree in Logic. In Varanasi, with the help of Pt. Motilal Nehru, was able to get Jain Studies introduced at Banaras Hindu University,



During his stay in Varanasi, he experienced discrimination from a Brahmin scholar on the ground that Ganesh Prasad was a follower of Jainism, a religion that does not believe in the authority of Vedas and therefore is a *nastic* (non-believer). Subsequently, Ganesh Prasad was able to get another tutor to teach him Indological subjects, particularly Grammar and Logic, but was determined to establish a Digambar Jain Sanskrit school and was eventually successful in his efforts. This was the beginning of the celebrated Shri Syadvad Digambar Jain Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya at Varanasi in 1905. Its first student as well as the founder was Ganesh Prasad Varni himself.



Syadvad Digambar Jain Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya, Varanasi

The story behind the establishment of this college is quite interesting. As detailed in his autobiography, with the first donation of one rupee from one of his friends towards the cause, Ganesh Prasad purchased 64 postcards and posted them the next day to a number of well-to-do co-religionists with the request to help set up a Jain school at Varanasi. The responses were very encouraging and the *pathshala* got started with four students and as many teachers.

In 1910, the small *pathshala* transformed into Shri Syadvad Digambar Jain Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya (college). In December 1913, it celebrated its annual day with great fanfare that made it famous overnight. The function was attended by a number of Indian and foreign Jain scholars, namely Pt. Gopaldas Varaiya, Nyayacharya Pt. Manikchand, Kunwar Digvijay Singh, Seth Surajbhan, Pt. Jugalkishor Mukhtar, Lala Bhagwandin, Jugmandirdas Jaini, Barrister Ajit Prasad Jain, German scholar Dr. Herman Jaicobi, Dr. Strauss of Calcutta, Dr. Satish Chandra

Vidyabhushan, (Principal of Sanskrit College of Calcutta), and Theosophist Mrs. Anne Beasant. Jain representatives from all the provinces and major cities and towns of India were also present at the function. By then, the number of students had risen to about 40, and Sanskrit studies up to the Acharya level also started.

Ganesh Prasad Varni opened another Jain Pathshala at Sagar. It was later named Ganesh Varni Digambar Jain Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya. The main buildings of the Vidyalay located at Moraji were constructed with generous donations of two wealthy Jains named Rajji Lal Kamarya and Sukhlal Pannalal Kamarya and their family members. Quite a few other members of the Jain community of Sagar had been deeply involved in the affairs of the Vidyalay. The Vidyalaya has produced many Jain pandits, scholars, teachers, and *pratishtacharyas* (Jain pandits who specialize in *vedi pratishtha* - idol installation in a temple) in the past, and continues to serve the community.

A third major Jain Sanskrit school inspired by Ganesh Prasad Varni was founded in 1917 at the Sadumal village of Lalitpur district by Seth Shri Laxmi Chand Jain of Bamrana/Sadumal. It was named Shree Mahavir Digambar Jain Sanskrit Vidyalaya. Presently the School has about 200 students on its rolls. Of these, about 40 students stay in a hostel named after Shri Ganesh Prasad Varni which provides free boarding and lodging. It has been instrumental in shaping the early career of the following pandits and scholars: Pt. Phoolchandra Siddhantacharya; Pt. Hiralal Siddhantshastri; Prof. Khushal Chandra Gorawala; Pt. Darwarilal Kothia, Nyayacharya; Pt. Amritlal Shastri, Jain Darshanacharya, and many others.

Besides setting up these Jain vidyalayas, Ganesh Prasad Varni and his disciples were instrumental in getting established about three dozen Jain *pathshalas*, gurukuls, vidyalayas at different places in Bundelkhand and elsewhere. Some of these include Shri Kund Kund Jain (PG) College, Khatauli (1926), Shri Varni Jain Inter College, Lalitpur (1946), Shri Ganesh Prasad Varni Snatak Mahavidyalaya, Ghuwara, Chhatarpur, Shri Varni Jain Gurukul, Jabalpur, Digambar Jain Mahila Ashram, Sagar, and Digambar Jain Udasin Ashram,

Isri. Many more schools and other educational institutions, both sacred and secular, were named after Ganesh Prasad Varni during and after his lifetime.

Historically, for more than a century now, Sanskrit Jain vidyalayas have been an important avenue of getting education and employment in the Bundelkhand region. Given the significant level of poverty among the Jain families in the region about two-three generations ago, many of them used to send their wards for getting educated to various Sanskrit Jain vidhyalayas located regionally (e.g. Sadhumal, Papaura, Sagar, Morena), or as far away as Banaras, Arrah, Mathura, Jaipur, Mahavirji, and Delhi. These *vidyalayas* provide free boarding, lodging, and tuition as they are run by the community's donations. It was also these *vidyalayas* that produced several generations of traditional Jain scholars (Pandits) as well as the modern ones who have been researching and teaching Jainism, Buddhism, Indology, Philosophy and Religion, Sanskrit, Hindi, Prakrit and Pali.

Varni was not appreciative of the wasteful and rituals-oriented religiosity of those well-to-do Bundelkhand Jains who organized *panch-kalyanaka* (a ceremony that involves five auspicious events in the life of a Tirthankar) and *vedi-pratishtha* (idol installation ceremony), and indulged in construction of new temples, etc. as he thought that the money spent on such activities could have been better utilized for educational and social purposes. Time and again he laments the fact that the Jains of Bundelkhand would spend thousands of rupees on *jal-vihar* and *panch-kalyanaka*, etc, but would not like to give even five rupees for an educational cause.

As a social reformer, Ganesh Prasad Varni wanted to get rid of a number of problems prevailing in the region at that time. One major problem that attempted to address was the social status of an out-caste group within the Jain community called "Vinekabar", or "Vinekabal" (meaning "without unity" or deserters) – families who had gone against the customary norms and values, and rules and regulations of the mainstream Jain community, particularly regarding the sexual alliance and/or marriage. This group included people who married a Jain widow, or a non-Jain woman, disobeyed community panchayat's

rulings, etc. Vinekabals were divided into two three sub-groups in terms of the duration of their separation, the nature and severity of their offenses, etc.



As out-castes, they were not allowed to enter the temple and worship or any other religious activity inside the temple, in addition to a complete ban on their “*roti-beti vyavahar*” (inter-dining and inter-marriage relations). Eventually, this resulted in the construction of their separate temples by *Vinekabals*. Thanks to the Varni’s efforts, the ban on the temple entry no longer exists, and the *roti-beti vyavahar* is also increasingly gaining acceptance within the wider Jain community.

Other social problems that prevailed in the Bundelkhand Jain community in those days included *Bisa-Dassa* issue (within the same caste, *Bisa* literally meaning twenty considered themselves of a higher status to the *Dassa* meaning ten), child marriage, age-incompatible marriage, polygamy, and the taboo on widow remarriage, to name only the most important ones. Ganesh Prasad Varni was quite opposed to most of these social evils, except the restriction on widow marriage which he justified as ordained by the Jain *shastras*. It must be pointed out here that in Digambar Jain tradition of North India, remarriage of widows/divorcees is not allowed; instead, they are required to live an austere life and perform religious duties involving daily temple visits, scripture readings, listening to religious discourses, etc. This is however now changing, though the change is more visible in educated service-class families located in big cities and towns.

Ganesh Prasad Varni traveled far and wide throughout north India and particularly in the Bundelkhand region. He often stayed overnight in rural areas where he conducted religious discourses and attended Jain caste panchayats, solving caste and family disputes. It was during these travels that he identified and tried to ameliorate the community’s social problems mentioned above. Not surprisingly, he knew the Jain community of the region very intimately. A large number of Jain Seths and other notables who helped finance his educational and temple-upkeep projects were personally known to him and he was in regular touch with them through correspondence. Some of those who figure frequently in his autobiography include Sir Seth Hulm Chand Kashliwal of Indore, brothers-trio Braj Lal, Chandra Bhan and Laxmi Chand Jain of Bamrana/Sadumal, Shrimant Seth Bhag Chandra Shobha Lal Jain of Sagar, Singhai Kundan Lal Jain of Sagar, Seth Balchandra Malaiya of Sagar, Raibahadur Shrimant Seth Mohan Lal of Khurai, Seth Mathuradas Tadaiya and Seth Parmeshthi Das Tadaiya of Lalitpur, and Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain of Dalmianagar/Calcutta, to name only a few.

To sum up, Ganesh Prasad Varni’s life offers a fascinating journey of a lifelong learner, a student, a scholar, and an author, a social and educational reformer, an activist, a volunteer and a leader, a spiritual seeker, and practitioner of the Jain ethical principles. Not surprisingly, in the entire greater Bundelkhand area Ganesh Prasad Varni is fondly remembered with great reverence. On account of his uncanny resemblance in appearance to Mahatma Gandhi and his selfless service to the community, many people called him “Mahatma Gandhi of the Bundelkhand.”

(The article is based on the author’s book “*Jain Community of Bundelkhand*” (2020))

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How to Create a Blissful Life

Practical Lessons from Karma Theory (Part 2)

By Dr. Palakh Jain and Payal Seth



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This is the second article in the series discussing *karma* theory from the teachings of a revered Jain monk, Muni Shri Kshama Sagar Ji. We thank him for conveying the words of wisdom that can change people's lives for the better.

This series of two articles touch upon the difficulties of modern life where we seem to be stuck in the same cycle of experiencing happiness and sadness. In the quest to seek the answer for an end to this cycle, we elaborate on how *karma* theory gives the reigns of designing your life to YOU.

The previous article introduced the concept of *karmas*, importance of being in the present, the right manner of reacting to unfavorable situations in life, reacting to negative emotions, and the importance of controlling our minds. In this article we go deeper in understanding what actions bring us good karma,

Having understood the importance of controlling thoughts, you may wonder why there is still so much suffering in the world. Why is the world so unfair? So many good people are suffering, and the bad ones thriving. How does one explain that?

What should we think when good people suffer and bad people progress?

Whenever you see an honest person in trouble, then realize that they are simply dispensing off the fruition of their past bad karmas. Observe their present reaction. Truly good people will never speak ill of others, take all the blame upon themselves, and remain equanimous. If they do, then you can be assured of greater happiness for them in the future.

Similarly, a dishonest person might be enjoying the fruits of his past *karma* now. Don't measure the

meaning of life in riches. The goal of a spiritual journey is not to accumulate wealth but to have abundance of peace. The parameter to gauge who is more spiritual is to see who has more peace within. If you dig in deeply, you will realize that the person employing immoral methods will lose their peace of mind. Even the richest person who has earned his wealth through immoral means will know from the bottom of his heart that he doesn't deserve this wealth. He will never be able to enjoy it or find peace in it. If you carefully observe, you will realize that their mental state will be reflected in ailments and afflictions in the body. They will suffer and will have to bear the fruits of bad *karmas* in the future with much higher intensity.



Keep in mind that it is only good that begets good. Bad *karmas* cannot bring a happy life. It is the simple law of causation.

So how does one get good karmas? We now impart the most important lessons for paving your destiny.

What actions of body, mind and speech bring us good *karmas*?

1. Never be the reason for someone else's pain. The more aware you become, the more you realize how destructive it is for your own life. Being unaware of the consequences of your actions is the biggest sin. Always assess if your actions have caused pain to someone else and try to remedy it.
2. Always remember you are the reason for your own pain. Never blame others. We obtain partial fruit of our *karmas* in the short run and partly in the long run. So, by the time we face a challenging time, we forget that it originated from our past actions itself. Once this awareness sets in, it becomes impossible to blame anyone but oneself for the suffering. Remember that whatever you faced in the present is because of your past *karmas*.
3. Always look for the good qualities in people. Anytime you look at even the minutest fault in a person, it's disrespect. You will never be able to look at good qualities in another person again. And in return, you will get this disrespect.
4. Never get angry. Anger is the most dangerous of all emotions. It has been scientifically shown to turn your blood toxic. So, the other party comes in later. You, yourself become toxic in the process. Remember the feeling one wants to allay an itch? If you act on this desire and itch a scab, then for a moment it will feel good, but later, you will discover that you have only harmed yourself by itching. This is anger.
5. Introspect if you are one of the people who are unhappy because others are unhappy, or because you are unhappy, or because others are happy. If you are unhappy because of yourself or others' happiness, then even if God comes on this earth and grants your wishes, you can never be happy. Being unhappy is not our true nature, no one can change it, but yourself.
6. Don't become too arrogant when you are bearing the fruits of good *karmas*. Remember that "this too shall pass". Never be so arrogant that you are unable to see the sadness in other people. Be aware that you are in this position because you would have done an innumerable number of good deeds. Imagine the amount of love and prayers that you must have received. Be grateful for that.
7. Always be grateful for what you have. For this, you need to practice detachment.

Importance of Detachment

When you are attached to a particular thing, you lose the value of other things that you have. For instance, you may not value your family as much when you are in a new relationship. And when you don't have the thing that you want, you may do whatever it takes to get it. Both are equally bad.

Attachment deters satisfaction, which is of prime importance in life. Don't be worried about the things that you did not get in life. Even if you get everything that you want, you will not be satisfied. When you can find contentment even when you don't receive what your heart desires, then you will finally be able to experience peace. Learn to be content with what you have. Do make efforts to get the next goal in your life, but while making efforts for it, train yourself to remain equanimous on whether you get it or not. According to another Jain monk, Muni Praman Sagar Ji, "Satisfaction is the biggest wealth".



You don't get anything in life from your efforts that are rooted in ego or expectations. You get it plainly from the purity of your heart. That's why first learn to be truly grateful for what you have, and then move forward to achieve your goals with detachment.

Is there a way to negate the effects of the past bad *karmas*?

No, one has to suffer the consequences of bad karma. Nothing can change the law of causation. But one can significantly lower the intensity of the past bad *karmas*. *Karmas* often return with different intensities. Consider an example, someone begins talking to us rudely or slandering our character. The *karma* theory tells us that this person's behavior is the fruition of one's past *karmas*. One must have behaved in a similar manner with someone else previously.

Now the difference lies in how you respond. You can either react strongly or respond with similar rudeness

to the inmate's cell and discovered that he was sick and unable to get up. Gandhi Ji catered to his health. He stayed up for nights until the inmate was completely recovered. After this, the inmate was a transformed man! He bid Gandhi Ji adieu when the jail term ended and was said to always be ready to be available whenever Gandhi Ji needed him. Such is the power of love, such as the power of compassion. It can change people.

Making others happy is the only way to become happy yourself.

The opposite also holds true. When you are jealous of the success of other people, or when you cause pain to someone, then you will accumulate bad karma. So, become a good person, and realize that compassion is your nature. Let it be showered on everyone.

On our journey to becoming a good person, what is the one quality that we should aspire to attain?

A definite quality of a good person is that they will never speak ill of others. Any person who says anything bad about others is not a good person. As a principle, no good person can say anything bad about the other person. A good person will never say ill about others, no matter how the person is.

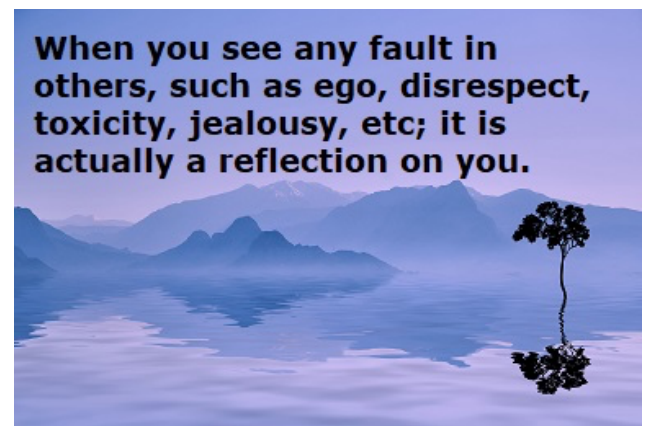
When you criticize others (whether with a valid reason or not), hide their true good qualities, and praise yourselves (exaggerating qualities that don't even exist), then it leads to such deep mental conditioning that you are unable to absorb the goodness in anyone else. This sets you on a path of achieving a lower form of birth (an animal) in the next life, or simply an extremely troubled present life. This behavior destroys the compassionate nature of our soul and should never be practiced.

As a corollary, any person who finds good in others, even in the presence of their faults, can attain a higher form in the next life (godhood), or a really peaceful life.

What is the logic behind this? We illustrate it through a story. A long time ago, a temperamental king had a wise advisor. One of the sages once entered the king's courtroom to complain that his fellow sage kept his eyes open during the special prayer that they were performing for the king. The king immediately demanded the execution of the fellow sage. Upon hearing this, the advisor approached the king and

asked him to think. If the sage in his courtroom is convinced that his fellow sage's eyes were open, then isn't it true that his eyes were also open? The king realized his folly.

When you see any fault in others such as ego, disrespect, toxicity, jealousy, etc; it is actually a reflection on you. You can see these faults because you yourself have these faults. You are their mirror. When you stop looking at others' positive qualities, then the ego develops, and your spiritual journey comes to a halt. A good person will not just always praise others (even when they are at fault), but will also be able to adeptly find faults in oneself.



Another anecdote explains this point in detail. Hanuman ji's (an Indian God) mother, Anjana's husband did not speak with her for 22 years. It was a simple misunderstanding with no fault of Anjana. Anjana spent those years in tears, longing for love and always praying to God to hear a word from her husband's mouth. One day he was preparing for a battle, and she stood at the door to send him away. He said, "Go away, I don't want to see your face". To this, she prayed, "Thank you, God, that he spoke to me after 22 years. You truly are kind. What he spoke to me is my *karma*. I am truly blessed.". In scripture, it is mentioned that for 22 years, Anjana didn't blame anyone but her own *karmas*.

Such is the power of good people. Being completely devoid of ego, they will only see good in others, even when they are being hurt.

We end this series of articles with the hope that your improved understanding of *karma* theory will make your life more blissful and fulfilling. The responsibility of making your life a peaceful and blissful one is entirely in your hands.

Prerequisites for achieving Samyak Darshan

By Anop R. Vora, Fort Myers, FL



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Naysar - son of a woodcutter - is a famous character in the Jain Scriptures for having started the spiritual journey towards liberation by offering food to the wandering Jain monks and showing them a way out of the forest. The monks were impressed by his humility, and innocence and planted a spiritual seed of Samyak Darshan in his mind, the seed that eventually blossomed into a full-blown tree in the life of Lord Mahavir. From the life of Naysar to that of Lord Mahavir, he went through many life forms before he achieved Moksha. Although the journey was long and arduous, he showed us that liberation was indeed possible, and Samyak Darshan was the key. I have made a humble attempt to summarize the entire process based on my limited comprehension of a complex topic. It is based upon the YouTube talks by the eminent monk in India - Acharya Arun Vijay Ji Maharaj. We are truly blessed to have a person of his stature amongst us. *Koti Koti Vandan!*

Deep Mithyatva

Jain scriptures maintain that a vast majority of souls are wandering around the universe through the cycle of death and birth due to wrong perception (Beliefs) and ignorance. They take birth, live life based upon operative karmas, react with attachment, aversion, and toxic emotions (Kashayas) blindly, bind new karmas, suffer the consequences, and go from one life form to another endlessly. This phenomenon has been prevailing since time immemorial but there is a ray of hope. When we are born as a human - especially in a Jain family, we are given a huge opportunity in the form of a conducive environment to break up this vicious cycle. However, this is only possible if we recognize our blessings, understand the Lord's teachings, believe in them, and mold our life accordingly under the guidance of a Sadguru.

Prerequisites for Samyak Darshan

1) Right Direction

The very first step we need to take is to start moving in the right direction! This starts with the development of basic virtues such as fairness, civility, law abidance, staying in the company of good friends, and many others, and living like a

civil, peaceful human being in society. Jainism recommends making an organized beginning by focusing on 35 virtues (*Marganusari na 35 Bol*) and staying away from 18 major sins (*Papsthanak*) to the extent possible. At this stage, there is no talk of pursuing any religion. The idea is to aim for a good, honest, and moral life. This is a very important ethical preparatory step to build a solid foundation; without which rituals, fasting, temple worship, and other practices that are done blindly yielding to limited benefits. This step is akin to the first step of Maharshi Patanjali's *Ashtang Yoga* and is very important because even the people who are at the top in terms of power, prestige, and money could still be going in the wrong direction during their entire life! The history of mankind is replete with examples of such individuals who fall into this category.

2) Yatha Pravratī Karan

It means directing our efforts to understand with full vigor the teachings of the Lord from a Sadguru, develop the innate virtues of the soul, and lower attachment and aversion. As we learn these basic steps preferably from a Guru, our inner vision starts unfolding accompanied by better receptivity toward spirituality. The day-to-day reactions start getting milder than before, resulting in less intense emotions of anger, ego, deceit, and greed (*Kashays*). Concurrently, we also start developing humility, forgiveness, contentment, compassion, and other virtues when faced with real-life events every day. Sustaining this type of mindset and behavior is critical to reducing the cycle of death and birth substantially. However, maintaining this type of behavior consistently is difficult because the old conditioning (*Sanskars*) keeps erupting as a volcano does. As a result, we go through a roller coaster ride multiple times. However, if we keep trying, eventually we can become stable and get ready for the next step called *Granthi Bhed*.

3) Granthi Bhed

It is a Gordian knot of a wrong belief system (*Mithyatva Mohaniy Karma*). Although we may have acquired some knowledge in the previous step, we still suffer from a distorted interpretation of the Lord's teachings and a lack of discrimination

between what is right and what is wrong. We still have incorrect notions about the nine fundamentals (*Tatvas*) described in the scriptures. In addition to the wrong beliefs, we suffer from bouts of intense *Kashayas* on and off. Jainism says that to cut the knot, the aspirant must put in gigantic efforts to change his/her belief system and lower the intensity of toxic emotions significantly. To do this correctly, we need to get help from a live Sadguru who can lift us up, guide us, and monitor our progress. If we make goal-oriented and determined efforts, our vision (*drasti*) and thought processes will take a sharp turn for the better. We will become a bit more refined and reasoned, start changing internally, and stop reacting blindly. Now our response to any situation will be accompanied by reason, deep thought, and calm. We have now reached a stage when liberation is certain in fewer lives compared to where we started, but we need to keep moving and go through more steps identified below before achieving Samyak Darshan. Remember Granthi Bhed is an important step toward getting Samyak Darshan, but it is not the eventual goal. It is still a work in progress!

Jainism outlines 8 more steps of the journey toward Samyak Darshan:

- **ADWESH:** meaning no disinterest or animosity towards religion, Guru, Dev, and scriptures which acts as a barrier to knowledge acquisition.
- **JIGNASHA:** Genuine curiosity to know the spiritual teachings continually.
- **SUSHUSHTHA:** Showing utmost respect towards the Sadguru and offering service to enable him to propagate the teachings of the Lord.
- **SHRAVAN:** Actively listening to the precepts uttered by the Sadguru and taking them to heart.
- **BODH:** Developing full understanding and wisdom from what was heard.
- **MIMANSA:** Digesting what has been learned and going through intense introspection to bridge the gap between the knowledge and actual behavior. Unfortunately, this is a very critical step that most aspirants miss.
- **PRATIPATI:** Acceptance of the teachings of the lord denoting a shift in the belief system. Unless one accepts what came from the scriptures or a guru, all the prior steps are a waste of time. Behavior change cannot happen prior to full acceptance.

- **PRAVARTI:** Now the aspirant is ready to engage in activities with a full understanding of what is right and what is wrong for the benefit of his own soul. He has developed the right attitude, vision, and mindset and acts with caution without triggering intense reactions. He has gone through a spiritual transformation.

Patrank 135 by Shrimad Rajchandra Ji

In Patrank 135 Shrimadji has provided 5 attributes of Samyak Darshan. They are (a) **SHAM:** Lowering the intensity of *Kashayas* (b) **SAMVEG:** Intense desire to achieve liberation (c) **NIRVED:** Dislike towards the cycle of birth and death (d) **ASTHA:** Strong faith in the words of the spiritual guides (e) **ANUKAMPA:** Compassion towards all souls. These steps are consistent with the content described above.

We need to remember that Samyak Darshan requires us to have a better vision, the right attitude, an open mind, a sea change in the belief system, and the absence of Intense *Kashayas*. It requires us to improve the way we think. It focuses on our internal state (*Adhyavasay*), our feelings (*Bhav*), and awareness of our reactions. The prerequisites outlined above are structured to help us achieve it.

Nothing in life is as important as achieving this important goal. That is the reason why our seers keep asking us to keep striving for this goal without wasting even a single moment. Judging from the width and depth of thought that has been given to this topic by them over many centuries, they have held it in high esteem and treated it as the most important goal of human life. They have asserted very emphatically that since it puts the soul on the path of liberation for the first time, it must be looked upon as a very valuable spiritual achievement. Because of its very high significance, they have described it in metaphors such as dawn before sunrise, lightning, a sudden glimpse of self-realization, a swift flash of insight, and spiritual awakening.

Another important point to remember is that to achieve the level of Samyak Darshan expected at the 4th *gunsthanak*, we do not have to have an in-depth knowledge of the scriptures, nor does it require living a perfect life. But it does require a pure heart, total faith in the basic teachings, and a dramatic shift in the quality of our motives, thoughts, emotions, and feelings. This is indeed a giant step towards achieving liberation (*Moksha*).

Deepak Chopra and Eckhart Tolle: Insights into Our True Selves

By Reena Shah



Reena is the section editor of the Inspiration section of Jain Digest. She has a Ph. D. in English literature and a USC grad. She currently teaches English to high school students. Teaching has always been a passion and she loves to read and write. She is dedicated to lifelong learning and continuing education. Her industry experience includes Market Research, Non-Profit, and educational institutions. She practices deeper aspects of spirituality and is a follower of Param Pujya Pappaji at Shrimad Rajchandra Research Centre, Mumbai.

How do you keep stillness inside of you? What does that even mean? It means to keep yourself calm and centered. It includes accepting what is, which helps us make better decisions. One way to achieve stillness inside of you is to meditate and *go with the flow*. The state of mind known as “flow” happens when you become so absorbed in something that it almost feels like you lost time. This can be an intellectual, professional, or physical pursuit; anything that puts you in the zone. Paying attention to what you are doing when this happens will help you figure out what you are passionate about.

It was a fascinating and calming experience to enter the worlds of Deepak Chopra and Eckhart Tolle while reading about how they have discovered silence to be powerful in their lives. They both believe in living in the moment while silencing the audible clutter in our minds because we are “continuously absorbed by thinking which is not relevant to anything important and is negative.” (Tolle). Following these thoughts can lead us to the mercy of what is in our minds. “For joy to come into your life – a moment of joy – you might not realize it, but at that moment there is a space that opens up inside you where you are not thinking,” Tolle explains. “To recognize beauty anywhere, the thinking mind needs to subside, and a little bit of space opens up ... you might not recognize it, but you are not thinking. If you are thinking, you are not really seeing it. To really see it, there has to be a moment of alert presence where thinking subsides.”

Deepak Chopra – Advocate of Alternate Medicine

Deepak Chopra, the doctor and self-help guru, who will turn seventy-six this year, has written more than one book for every year he has been alive. Chopra was born in New Delhi and studied medicine in India before moving to the United States, in 1970. After practicing as an endocrinologist in Massachusetts, he became involved in the Transcendental Meditation movement. He eventually relocated to the West Coast, left T.M. behind, and became a spiritual adviser to Michael Jackson and other celebrities. A quarter century later, his books have sold millions of copies, and his television appearances—especially alongside Oprah Winfrey—have made him perhaps

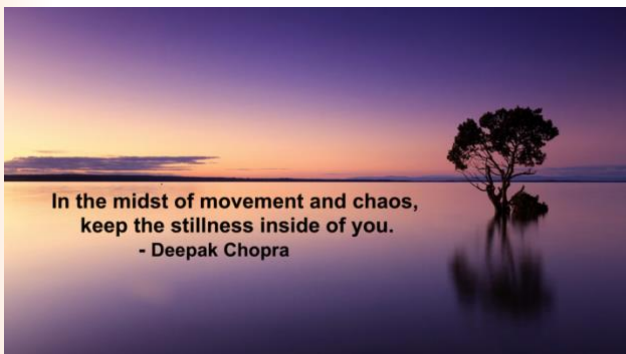
the most prominent advocate for alternative medicine in the world. His inspirational journey from internist to an internal healer is incredible, something that inspired me to dig deeper to understand his philosophy of life. He believes that to define oneself is to limit oneself. But he believes that he has had various roles throughout his life. He is an internist, an endocrinologist, a neuro-endocrinologist; a teacher of integrative medicine, and an author; a husband, a son, a father, and a child. Calling himself a doctor seems limiting to him and he prefers to be called a healer. Because, when he looks at healing and the origins of the word “healing,” it is related to the word “whole.” So, wholeness means everything, including body, mind, spirit, and the environment. He is a doctor who is not only interested in the physical body, but also in all aspects of human life, human emotions, human thinking, human experience, and, ultimately, in understanding ourselves beyond the conditioned mind. This to me in a true sense is a true healer because he not only cures the body but cures the source of stress (which is the mind) for complete and permanent healing of the body.



He believes that our minds can determine reality as there's a connection between our minds and reality. According to him, our experience of the world, and of our body, is a projection of our conditioned mind. So, when we're born, we have no human constructs. We look at the world as a messy, gooey experience of color, form, shapes, sounds, and pictures. He strongly believes in meditation and often uses sciences such as metaphysics to support his practice. Many of his findings are backed by scientific and medical literature.

Practicing a Higher Level of Consciousness

Chopra's theory that health starts in the brain sounds fascinating and convincing to me. The brain controls the body. He believes that a higher level of consciousness can alleviate or even eliminate many medical conditions. Notably, he still believes in the power of traditional medicine, but he believes natural practice can act as a great alternative or supplement to traditional medical practice. We can trigger the activity of certain genes and decrease the activity of certain other genes. So, when people practice self-reflection or mindful awareness, or they have the experience of transcendence, we can actually see which genes get activated and which genes get deactivated. There's a mechanism to that. So, one can actually activate the genes that cause self-regulation or homeostasis, and actually decrease the activity of the genes that cause inflammation. So, what is healing? It is nothing but self-regulation or homeostasis. And what is disease is mostly linked to chronic inflammation. He believes that only five per cent of disease-related gene mutations are fully penetrant, which means they guarantee the disease. That includes everything from Alzheimer's to cancer to autoimmune disease. Only five percent is related to genetic determinism. The rest is influenced by life style, how we think, and what we think. Chopra practices being aware by choosing the experiences he wants. He only focuses on love, compassion, joy, and equanimity. He is beyond the fear of death because he does not focus on that aspect of our identity.



Eckhart Tolle – Advocate of Present Moment Awareness

To the uninitiated, Eckhart Tolle might be mistaken for a nature photographer. His persona - a soft German-accented voice, a boyish visage, his love of vests - doesn't exactly make him look like a Guru. Yet Tolle is one of the world's most popular spiritual teachers and a literary powerhouse whose best-selling books *The Power of Now* and *A New Earth* have influenced millions. Born in Germany, educated at the

universities of London and Cambridge, and now a resident of Vancouver, Canada, Tolle writes and lectures on the evolution of human consciousness. His work synthesizes many world views and spiritual teachings, including those of Buddhism, the New Testament, the Bhagavad Gita, and the German mystic Bo Yin Ra - all delivered with wry, gentle insights.

Living in the Moment

According to Tolle, if people are focused on enlightenment, they've realized that the answer does not lie in external things. They have realized that the answer lies within rather than in obtaining more possessions, or achieving this or that, or changing the world out there. It's a transitional stage from the normal state of consciousness, where all the solutions and problems are seen as external, to realizing that whatever we experience as our external reality reflects our inner state of consciousness.



The people who are looking for enlightenment are indeed a minority. He believes that in ordinary human existence, people want to find the ideal partner, acquire more things, gain power, or acquire a better body. And in ordinary consciousness, people look to those things for salvation, fulfillment, and happiness. As people begin to awaken, they realize it's not there. But even for those who are beginning to awaken, the old mind pattern - the deeply ingrained pattern that always looks to the future for fulfillment and salvation - still tends to operate. So, even when people are "searching," they are still looking toward the future. He believes that this mind pattern assumes that the future is going to be more important than the present. It ignores the present moment and does not honor it.

He has met people who have been spiritual seekers for 20 years, have read hundreds of books, attended workshops, gone to ashrams in India—and they are getting frustrated, asking, "When am I going to get it?"

When am I going to get enlightened?" He suggests that the actual experience of awakening can only be in the present moment. The future does not exist, because nobody has ever experienced it. He adds that we can only ever experience "a present moment". The future is a mental projection that we are having in the present moment. He is not referring to the practical aspects of the future, like booking a flight or planning what you want to do this year, but the psychological future. That's where everyone can get trapped. If one is always focused on the future, one misses the reality of life, which is the present moment.

When people get very old, there isn't much future left, so they tend to focus mainly on the past. But they are still not in the present moment. Life is *now*. According to Tolle, whenever people get drawn back into the mind and into the future, they'll notice it because usually, they don't feel so good anymore. They become upset, discontented, irritated, and depressed. It means they lost the present moment, they lost the vertical dimension, and they lost awareness of themselves as consciousness. They are back to being a mind-created "little me," the ego, which is never satisfied for long. They can only break through to a deeper level of one's self in the vertical dimension of the present moment. They can use whatever the circumstances are, and instead of working against them, see if they can align themselves with the present moment internally.



Tolle suggests that the difference between being aware and being unaware of negative feelings is that when there's a lack of awareness, you get completely taken over by those negative feelings. There's no inner space anymore, and you think, say, and do things that are controlled by that negative energy inside you. Often, people get taken over by that temporarily, and then when they become more conscious again, they say, "Oh, how could I have done that?" or, "How could I have said that?" So, the difference between being aware and being unaware is, when the same thing happens again and you become irritated, you become angry, whatever it is - reactive in some way - sad or depressed, there's an

awareness that this is happening to you. You have the observing presence in the background that's more who you are rather than the emotion. You are still there as it happens.

Tolle asks us to imagine a world where we could all choose our own life circumstances. "Everyone would say, 'I want love. I want to have absolute financial security. I would like to have perfect health. I would like to have a wonderful and happy relationship with no conflict, and children who are no problem. A good job, a fulfilling job.'" But if you had that ideal life, he says, "it would not contribute to your awakening. It's the very things that we don't want that provide the motivation for becoming more conscious."

Powerhouses of Inspiration

These two men are incredible powerhouses and have made the world a more positive and loving place to live. Their teachings go beyond any specific age, gender, or demographic. While some of the concepts they discuss might be a little hard to understand, Chopra gives one example that might resonate with most people: "A dog is in the now; he does not think about what happened last week when you didn't give him a treat and he's not worried about next year when you might go on vacation. He is here now, to be loved and give love."

That is how simple becoming more conscious truly is! We don't need to fret over having a bad childhood, our boss getting mad yesterday, or stress that we might not be able to afford our dream car in two years. All we need to do is be present right here, right now. That is what life truly is about and no amount of stress, worry, or over analyzing of events will change it.

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Tribute to Shri Mansukhlal Doshi

By Dilip V. Shah



Dilip V Shah of Philadelphia is the past president of JAINA. He is currently serving as chairman of JAINA's Overseas Relations Committee and a member of the Academic Liaison Committee. In addition to being an advisor for Jain Digest, he is also the publisher and General Editor of Jain Avenue magazine – a publication of JAINA India Foundation.

On June 22, 2019, JCMC, the Jain Center at Bartlet, Illinois, celebrated the Birth Centennial of a citizen scholar – an educator, and an author Manubhai Doshi. At the age of 100, he was full of vigor, and presence of mind and delivered a rousing speech. Over 800 people attended the celebration consisting of friends from all over the US, UK, India, and Dubai. His family had created a 30' long scroll depicting milestones of his life. A table was dedicated to a pile of 17 books he had written/translated. As a joke for the diabetic patriarch, the family had prepared a cake with 100 Laddus! The Jains of Chicago were treated to a joyous celebration that must have tempted many friends to live for 100 years!



But the good times don't last forever. Shri Manubhai Doshi, the gem of the Jain Society of Chicago passed away on November 30, 2022, at the age of 102. This is a tribute to a life well-lived by a humble man - one who gave much to society quietly, and with grace!

Mansukhlal Doshi, was born in Mahuva in 1919 in a deeply religious family. His father, a distant cousin of Sassan Samrat Nemisuri Maharaj, observed acute austerities, including Athai during Paryushan, and frequently observed fasts from 15 to 45 days. During his primary and secondary school days, Mansukhlal studied Panch Pratikraman. He earned a bachelor's degree in 1941 from Mumbai University. He led the Jain student community at Mahavir Jain Vidhyalay during his college days. Later, he was exposed to Tattvartha Sutra. He continued his studies even after getting married to Indiraben in 1943 and obtained

M.A. in Economics and Political Science from the University of Bombay in 1953. From 1953 until 1957, while in Vadodara, he was associated with Paryushan Vyakhyanmala. It was also during this time that he first got introduced to Kanjishwami's writings.

In his professional life, he was a Gujarat State Govt. employee as the inspector of industries from 1948 to 1976 and retired as Asst. Commissioner of Industries.

In the 1970's he was introduced to the works of Shrimad Rajchandraji. Shrimadji's writings, in particular Atmasiddhi Shastra, greatly influenced Manubhai's life and work. Later on, he translated Shrimadji's Chha Padono Patra, Apoorva Avsar, Bhakti Rahasya, Amulya Tattvavichar, Atmasiddhi Shastra, etc. into the English language.

The couple moved to the US in late 1970 to Chicago where all his children - three sons and a daughter had settled. His eldest son Ashok is a cardiothoracic surgeon, daughter Niranjana is an internist, and son Chetan is an Electronics engineer. Dipak Doshi, the youngest son is an industrial Microbiologist and an entrepreneur in the pharmaceutical industry. Soon after arriving in the US, Mansukhlal began taking a keen interest in the local Jain society and became a very active and well-respected member of the Jain community in Chicago. He wrote extensively on Unity of all Jains, Meditation, and Tattvarth Sutra.

He was a life-long learner and passionate about truth – always hungry for knowledge. He never stopped learning all his life. In his fifties, he learned to drive and play bridge. He also began visiting the local library, where he studied the income tax code and immigration rules and quickly became the 'go-to person' among friends and family for help on these complex matters.

His contributions to the Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago (JSMC) and JAINA are immense, including sponsorship of breaking ground and laying the foundation stone for the construction of the Jain Center in Bartlett, Illinois in 1991. He was a member

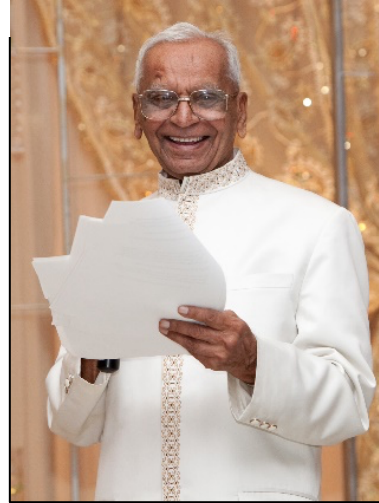
of the JSMC Executive Committee from 1987 to 1993, including serving as JSMC's Secretary of Education and Youth from 1990 to 1993. He had the honor of installing Laghurajswami's portrait and the idol of Lord Mallinathji in the Temple. He set up the Center's library, including purchasing some of its books at his own cost. He served as a Secretary of Education and youth for the society and in 1984, he was the founding father of the JSMC's Pathshala (Religious school). He has been organizing the collection and transportation of usable clothes for charity. He was one of the first promoters of Jain Academic Bowl in Chicago and served as a Judge for the Declamation contests. He also started the Mahavir Senior Center, the first senior center for Jains in Chicago area. through which he has led the seniors to Chaityapariapati.

Manubhai was one of the pioneers and advisors in the establishment of JAINA in 1981. associated with the JAINA Education Committee in preparing educational materials, Pathshala conferences, and Jain Encyclopedia work, staying in Texas with Dr. Gada for months preparing Pathshala Books. In 1995, he was appointed as regional editor of Jain Digest - a position he held for many years.

Furthering his reach, Manubhai has given numerous talks throughout the United States and India. In 1999, he prepared and conducted the Paryushan celebration in St. Louis.

Manubhai's wife Indiraben passed away in 1982 at the age of 59 years. Losing his wife became a turning point for him and he committed himself to dedicate his time and efforts to researching and promoting a Jain way of life. He learned to use computer along with new languages Sanskrit, Bali, and Ardhamaghadhi. To honor his late wife, he founded the Indira Mansukhlal Doshi Memorial Trust in 1987. The trust aids in educational, medical, religious, and economic well-being. It has conducted eye camps at Savarkundala, Una, Mahuva, and Petlad, and provided relief to the earthquake-stricken people in Gujarat. In addition, the trust has provided educational scholarships to deserving Jain youth and multiple school-supplies drives in poor communities of the Chicago area.

From 1984 to mid-1990, Manubhai used to conduct a monthly class (pathshala) to teach Jainism. To reach even more people, in 1990 the trust started a monthly



8-page newsletter JAIN DARSHAN. For the next twenty-nine years, until his health permitted, he was the sole author and publisher of the only monthly Jain journal in the US. He wrote at length on many topics in Jainism, including Six Dravyas, the nature of the soul,

Karma, Austerities, Anuvrats, Meditation, Eight Drasthies, Tatvarth Sutra, and works of Shrimad Rajchandraji. The aim of the publication was to arouse and satisfy the curiosity for knowledge in consistence with pure Jainism, irrespective of divisions within its fold. Each issue included a children's corner. Initially a couple of sub-editors - Dilip Shah and Rajnikant Shah - provided assistance by editing, and typing the material. The magazine was mailed free to hundreds of readers throughout the USA. Later, others – Neha Shah and Sagar Shah joined as junior sub-editors along with Chandrakant Shah and Indrjit Shah. At the suggestion of many readers, he combined many articles in an anthology format resulting in some of his early books. The first of his books was Essence of Jainism. He went on to publish a dozen more books including Dev Vandana, Samayika, Spiritual code and restraints, Rajgeeta, Mokshkala, Tatvarth Sutra, Pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya, Jivankala, Atmasiddhi, etc. He has prepared a translation and transliteration of Samvatsari Pratikraman in English along with their explanations. All his writings are available free of charge to everyone, both in book format and online.

Manubhai also prepared translation and transliteration of Jain wedding ceremonies in English and has conducted several ceremonies using this script.

For all of his contributions to the advancement of Jainism, Manubhai was awarded the JAINA Ratna award in 2005. At the age of 100, he attributed his mental and physical health to his disciplined Jain lifestyle and a habit of daily meditation.



JAINA Convention 2023

June 30th – July 3rd Lakeland, Florida

Every two years, JAINA, in partnership with a group of local sanghs, hosts a unique socio-religious event for the entire Jain community of North America. The JAINA convention brings together over 4000 delegates from over 70 Jain centers across the United States and around the world. The 4-day convention showcases a variety of sessions with a mission to preserve, practice, and promote Jain Dharma and Jain Way of Life.

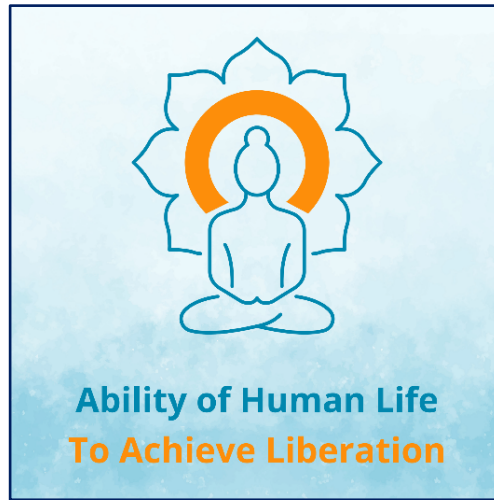
The next JAINA convention in 2023 will be hosted in Lakeland (FL), conveniently located between Orlando & Tampa. At this gathering, Jain monks, spiritual scholars and dignitaries will elaborate upon how Jainism can help human beings progress to their highest potential by conditioning one's body, mind, and spirit to perpetually strive to achieve lasting inner peace and to impact our world in positive ways.



Images from past JAINA Conventions

The Biennial JAINA Convention has grown over the years and now incorporates diverse programming suitable for multiple age-groups. Incorporating lessons learned and best practices from past conventions, the 2023 Convention Board, Committee Chairs, leaders and members from Tampa, Orlando, and Miami Sanghs, and volunteers from all over the country are working tirelessly to bring you one of the best conventions that JAINA has hosted! We are sure that all attendees will get the most out of the Convention and will feel educated, entertained, and inspired to maximize their potential – the Jain way!

Convention Theme: Maximize Human Potential – The Jain Way



According to Jainism, human life is the only form of jiva to obtain liberation directly. As human beings, we are endowed with the ability to think; we can differentiate right from wrong. We can decide what is good for us and what is not. We also can control our minds and activities. As humans, we can help ourselves and those around us. We are also capable of assisting the lower life forms. How then can we maximize our potential to improve, influence, and inspire others, to address the problem of modern times using the modern-day tools available to us?

At JAINA Convention 2023, the learned scholars & presenters will attempt to help us answer these questions. We will learn to use Jain principles and practices to maximize their potential, enhance their lives, and create a broader positive impact.

Next-Gen Programming

At the Convention, attendees of all ages will have age-appropriate activities and sessions.

Young Jain Professionals (YJP) focuses on cultivating and fostering future leaders. Furthering that objective at the Convention, YJP will organize sessions professional development, networking, and social programming.

Youth Activities led by Young Jains of America (YJA) will include engaging sessions and workshops for our youth (ages 14 and over) from Jain education to social awareness in addition to social events.

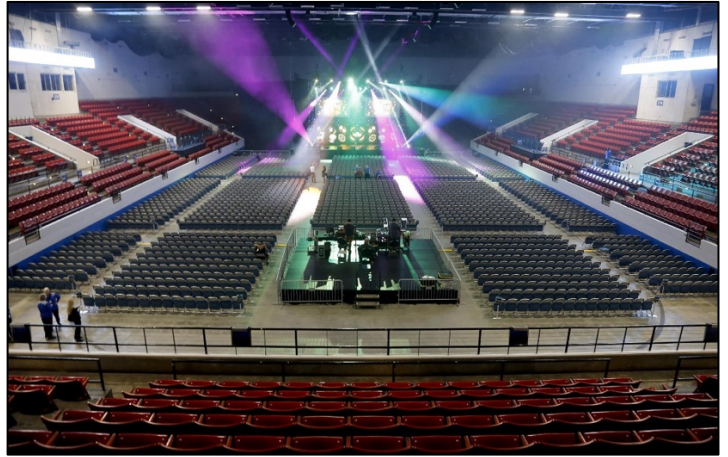
Kids' Club for our younger guests (ages 6-14) will feature interactive games, educational sessions, and other fun/entertainment programs.

Convention Schedule

JAINA Convention 2023 is spread over four days with programming scheduled every day. The Convention will kick off on Friday, June 30th with registration and daytime programming and end the day with evening entertainment and social programming. Saturday and Sunday are packed with sessions and evening programming. Last day will include half a day of sessions and conclude with a closing ceremony and lunch.

The Sunshine State is Calling

JAINA and Tampa, Orlando, and Miami Sanghs cannot wait to welcome you to the Sunshine State! The Convention will be hosted in the beautiful cozy and rustic town of Lakeland, Florida located centrally between Tampa (40 miles) and Orlando (55 miles.) The convention will be hosted in the magnificent RP Funding Center, which is Central Florida's premier entertainment and sports complex with large spaces adequate for a convention of our size.

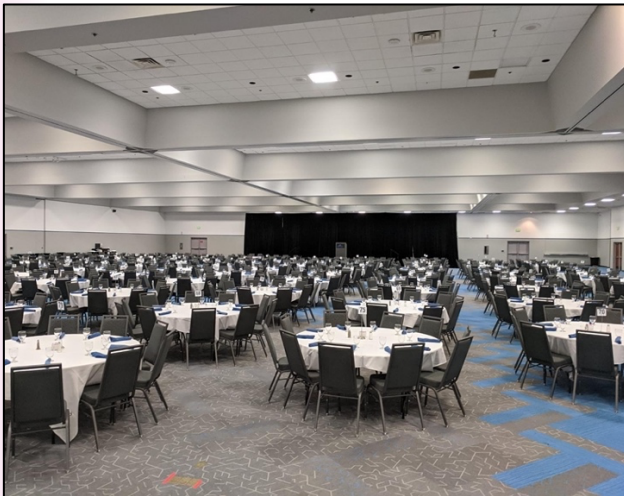


RP Funding Center Theatre and Arena

Hotels and Transportation

Lakeland offers smaller & distributed hotel properties, which is atypical for a large convention like ours. All hotels offered by JAINA Convention will provide good complimentary transport service. JAINA will provide airport transfers from Orlando and Tampa airports at a reasonable cost; more information will be provided online for booking the airport transfers closer to the event date.

Visit our hotels page online for more information: <https://www.jainaconvention.org/hotel-details/>.



RP Funding Center Conference Center

Extend Your Vacation

Florida theme parks trade in fantasy for all ages. It seems no one is too old, or too young, to wear a hat of Mickey ears, especially if their name is embroidered on the front. Theme parks in Florida draw visitors from around the world and keen ears pick up the many languages spoken by the guests roaming the parks. Fun is an international language and Florida's theme parks certainly prove that. Orlando International Airport welcomes flights from more than 50 international destinations.

It is not just theme parks though. Florida beaches are ranked the among best in the world. Take a trip down to Florida's southernmost tip, Key West or engage in watersports, or just explore the wide-open beauty of Florida.



Florida attractions

Volunteers Make It Happen

Hosting a Convention requires tremendous effort by several committees, each comprising of an exceptionally large number of volunteers for an extended period. We acknowledge and thank each and all committee members and volunteers for their valuable contributions.

We have special early registration pricing available for you. Please visit us online to review the pricing and registration at www.jainaconvention.org. We look forward to seeing you at the Convention!

BECOME A SPONSOR

Sponsorship Opportunities

Maha Sanghpati	\$125,001
Sanghpati (4 Opportunities)	\$65,001
Corporate (5 Opportunities)	\$25,001
Maharathi (5 Opportunities)	\$11,001
Jain Academic Bowl (5 Opportunities)	\$2,501
Parade Float (10 Opportunities)	\$5,001
Swamivatsalya	
Breakfast (5 Opportunities)	\$7,501
Lunch (5 Opportunities)	\$11,001
Dinner (5 Opportunities)	\$15,001
Souvenir Gift and Book	
Souvenir Bag	\$25,001
Souvenir Water Bottle	\$15,001
Souvenir Book Back Cover	\$21,001
Inside Front & Back Covers(ea)	\$15,001
Feature Pages(ea)	\$5,001
Double Full Page	\$2,501
Full Page	\$1,501
Half Page	\$751
Temple	
Temple Dwar Opening	\$10,001
Tirthdham Darshan (3 Opportunities)	\$7,501
Aarti (18 Opportunities)	\$1,501
Mangal Divo (6 Opportunities)	\$2,001

Become a Sponsor!
Support Your Convention

Entertainment

Bollywood Night (5 Opportunities)	\$5,001
Cultural Show / Drama (5 Opportunities)	\$4,501
Parasnath Nrutya Natika (5 Opportunities)	\$3,501
Raas Garba (5 Opportunities)	\$3,501
Jains Got Talant (5 Opportunities)	\$2,501

NextGen Activities

Jain Connect (5 Opportunities)	\$3,001
YJA/Youth Activities (5 Opportunities)	\$2,501
Young Jain Professionals (5 Opportunities)	\$2,501
Kids Club (5 Opportunities)	\$2,001

Speaker

Keynote Speaker (3 Opportunities)	\$7,501
Sadhu/Sadhvi Sessions (10 Opportunities)	\$3,001
Session Speakers (25 Opportunities)	\$1,501

Booths (Non-Profit - Profit)

Arena Booth	\$1,501 - \$3,501
Theater Booth	\$1,101 - \$3,001
Sessions Lobby Table	\$751 - \$1,801

To sponsor, please contact JAINA Convention Fundraising Committee at conventionfundraising@jaina.org

On behalf of JAINA Convention Committee, **wishing you a happy new year!**

Rahul Jain, JAINA Convention 2023 Marketing Chair

Vital Matters: Engaging Lived Religion in the 21st Century Museum

By Amy Landau, Ph.D. and Francesca Albrezzi, Ph.D.



Amy Landau is the director of education and interpretation and a co-director of *Engaging Lived Religion in the 21st-Century Museum* at the Fowler Museum at UCLA. She received her Ph.D. from the Department of Islamic Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford. Amy lectures and publishes on the arts of early modern Iran and her curatorial work has been generously funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Francesca Albrezzi is a Digital Research Consultant at UCLA's Office of Advanced Research Computing and Director of Vital Matters Digital Development. She works on the Research Technology Group's GIS, Visualization, XR & Modeling team, assisting faculty with their digital research needs, from ideation to execution and publication. She is currently affiliated with the College Art Association's educational committee as Co-Chair, of Art History Teaching Resources, and the Digital Art History Journal, where she serves as an Editor-in-Chief and Director of the virtual gallery.

Introduction

Engaging Lived Religion is a three-year project (2021–2023) generously funded by Lilly Endowment Inc.'s Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative that expands the Fowler Museum's engagement with the religious and spiritual traditions in Los Angeles and around the world. Co-Directed by the museum's Director of Education and Interpretation Amy Landau and Patrick A Polk, Senior Curator of Caribbean and Latin American popular Arts, the project furthers the Fowler's decades-long, multidisciplinary exploration of the artistic dimensions of religion and spirituality, as well as the lived experiences of belief. Prioritizing community participation, this undertaking has three spheres of activities: exhibitions, public programs, and digital learning. This article focuses specifically on the work being done in partnership with the Jain Center of Southern California and scholars dedicated to Jain artistic, cultural, and religious traditions.

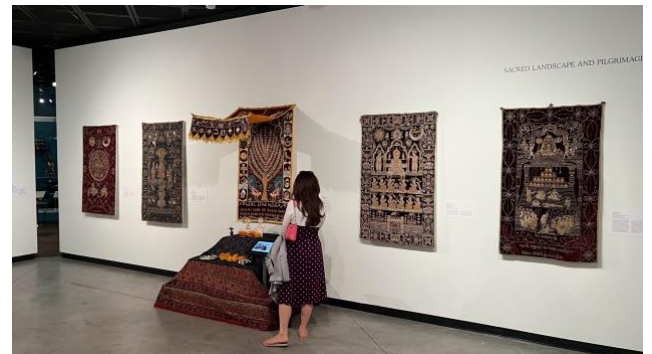
Exhibition

The first of the Fowler's *Engaging Lived Religion* exhibitions is **Visualizing Devotion: Jain Embroidered Shrine Hangings**. The exhibition opened on November 20, 2022, and will stay open until March 26, 2023.

(<https://fowler.ucla.edu/exhibitions/visualizing-devotion/>)

In this exhibition, visitors have the opportunity to learn about Jain shrine hangings (*chhod patas*) from the western Indian states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, embroidered with gold and silver-gilt

thread, and replete with visual references to Jain mythology, influential spiritual teachers, sacred sites, ritual traditions, and other religious themes. The *chhod patas* on display are from the Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection and are a promised gift to UCLA and the Fowler Museum. The Fowler is also fortunate to have the opportunity to present a *chhod pata* from the home of Dr. Jayesh Shah of the Jain Center of Southern California.



[Photos by John Glover taken during an event related to the exhibition *Visualizing Devotion: Jain Embroidered Shrine Hangings* on December 3, 2022]

The exhibition was curated by a collective of individuals that included: Syona Puliady, curatorial assistant, and Patrick A. Polk, senior curator of Latin American and Caribbean popular arts—both at the Fowler Museum; members of the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC), namely Dr. Jayesh Shah, Dr. Mahendra Shah, Padma Shah, and Hemendra Doshi; Lynna Dhanani, assistant professor, Department of Religious Studies at UC Davis; and Steven Vose of the University of Colorado.

Teacher Institute

The teacher institute “Engaging Lived Religion: Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim Communities” accompanies the Fowler’s exhibition *Visualizing Devotion: Jain Embroidered Shrine Hangings*. It is organized by Fowler’s Amy Landau and Jeniffer Perales Garcia in collaboration with UCLA colleagues at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, the Center for Near Eastern Studies, and the Islamic Studies Program. Vikas Malhotra of California State University, Northridge is also playing a key role in shaping the program. The teacher institute is designed as a free opportunity for educators teaching grades 6-12 to focus on Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim traditions from South and Southeast Asia and their diasporas in Los Angeles in historical and contemporary contexts. The goal is to support teachers in moving beyond the “dates and doctrines” approach and equip them with knowledge, resources, and pedagogies to explore how religion is lived and experienced in people’s everyday lives. The Institute will also help teachers gain a richer understanding of religious diversity in Southern California.

Drawing on recent scholarship, as well as a wealth of Los Angeles resources—museums, murals, religious sites, and community and spiritual leaders—this teacher institute will explore the ways individuals and communities express their key beliefs and practices. Educators will be introduced to strategies for integrating art, oral histories, music, and site visits into their curricula. They will work with scholars of religion, community leaders, and curators, as well as K-12 educators versed in experiential learning. In 2022, the institute will convene on January 28th, February 1st, and February 4th.

Public Programs

Since February of 2021, Landau and former Curator of Public Programs Bianca Collins have organized and hosted five public programs that have been

dedicated to expanding their understandings of Jainism. The first of which was part of the Fowler’s Lunch & Learn series, which offers easily digestible explorations of charismatic objects from around the world that are part of the permanent collection. Joanna Barrkman, the Fowler’s Senior Curator of Southeast Asia, and Pacific Arts led a program exploring embroidered Jain temple and shrine hangings that offer insights into the religious beliefs and imagery of the Jain faith.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSLYAXIAZMM>)

Associated with the Svetambara (the white-clad) sect of Jainism, these textiles once formed backdrops to stone sculptures of gods—the 24 Jina or “victors”—in Jain temples.

The second public program was a panel of speakers gathered to discuss the application of Jain ethics as part of a global Earth Day celebration on April 22nd.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wed6bEyJCpk>)

In a recorded session the panelists highlighted Jain philosophical approaches that prioritize reducing harm to living things, including plants and animals, and they offered invaluable insights into the links between animal welfare, pollution, education, and public health. With the launch of the exhibition in November, the Fowler has also prepared two walk-throughs, and hosted a lecture by Lynna Dhanani, Assistant Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at UC Davis, with a reception.

Digital Learning Initiative

In addition to the exhibition and public programs, the Fowler team is building the digital platform *Vital Matters: Stories of Belief*. Using technology, *Vital Matters* represents different perspectives on artistic works at the Fowler that arouse devotion, awe, and serenity; mediate relationships between human and spiritual realms; and are of vital importance to the cultural heritage of individuals and communities. In a digital landscape, *Vital Matters* brings together academic knowledge produced in universities and museums with the knowledge embedded in the practice of spiritually-based leaders, artists, community organizers, and teachers in K-12 classrooms. The combined insights of these knowledge producers shed light not only on the

materiality of belief but also on vital matters of today-social justice, education, and the environment.

Using technology, Vital Matters represents different perspectives on artistic works at the Fowler that arouse devotion, awe, and serenity; mediate relationships between human and spiritual realms; and are of vital importance to the cultural heritage of individuals and communities.

In addition to Landau, the Vital Matters team includes Francesca Albrezzi, Director of Vital Matters Digital Development, Frank Lopez, Head of Digital Learning and Innovation, Jeniffer Perales Garcia, Manager of K-12 and Family Programming and Bilingual Educator, and Leigh Carter, Program Coordinator, and Educator. This education team has been advised by Bakhtiar Mikhak at Harvard Extension School. The team is also collaborating across the UCLA campus with the Office of Advanced Research Computing, the Digital Library Program, and Social Sciences Center for Education Research and Technology, as well as faculty and staff technical and content experts in numerous departments and well-known specialists.

For the online module dedicated to the Jain shrine hangings in the Ronald and Maxine Linde Collection, the education team consults with the Fowler curatorial team, along with K-12 Pathshala teachers at the JCSC, Professors Lynna Dhanani, Steven Vose, Vikas Malhotra, and Co-founder and Vice President of Academic Affairs of Arihanta Academy Christopher Jain Miller.

In consultation with these scholars and community members, the Vital Matters team will build a digitally immersive experience to introduce a wide audience to Jainism through a three-dimensional tour of a *chhoda* from the Linde Collection, which is generously promised to the Fowler and UCLA. In the fall of 2022, scans were taken of *Guatama's Pilgrimage to Ashtapada* (1960-1961), a Jain textile from Maharashtra, India, by UCLA's Emerging Technologies Librarian Doug Daniels and Francesca Albrezzi. The textile is made of velvet, silk cloth, gold and silver thread, plated metal sequins, cotton thread, wire, and glass.

An example of these early scanning results is currently viewable on the UCLA LuxLab Sketchfab account, a platform that is used to share 3D content. (<https://skfb.ly/oBDr9>)

The team is exploring the use of different types of 3D scanning to consider which technologies work best for each object in order to produce a result that provides the most insight into the materiality of each specific work, including mobile applications such as Polycam.

(<https://poly.cam/capture/5418B62B-2E55-43DA-9548-E4DEA90CA131>)

In each of these samples of 3D scanning, users can click and drag on the textile to see it from different angles and also use a mouse wheel to zoom in to see more details.

The final platform will layer these 3D materials with images, text, and video created in collaboration with content specialists and community members to provide a rich and diverse context for every selected work. An example of the digital content being produced includes Professor Lynna Dhanani from the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Davis, speaking about Jain pilgrimage. (<https://vimeo.com/771333973>)

The project's principles are to:

- (1) Honor the animacy and efficacy of materialities in service of belief (i.e. religious, sacred, and ritual objects)
- (2) Highlight heterogeneous actors in the object's interactive field, past and present, including original makers, users, as well as the individuals and communities for whom the object continues to have significance
- (3) Expand traditional museum practices of interpretation by allowing competing narratives to be offered side by side
- (4) Inspire curiosity and respect for different worldviews and build ongoing relationships with represented communities through a participatory practice
- (5) Promote a sense of joy through the aesthetics and technology of the digital designs we co-develop with the project's stakeholders.

Param Krupalu Dev: A Spiritual Revolutionary and a Social Reformer

By Reena Shah



Reena is the section editor of the Inspiration section of Jain Digest. She has a Ph. D. in English literature and a USC grad. She currently teaches English to high school students. Teaching has always been a passion and she loves to read and write. She is dedicated to lifelong learning and continuing education. Her industry experience includes Market Research, Non-Profit, and educational institutions. She practices deeper aspects of spirituality and is a follower of Param Pujya Pappaji at Shrimad Rajchandra Research Centre, Mumbai.

Shrimad Rajchandra, lovingly known as Param Krupalu Dev among his followers was born in 1867. He was a gyani, poet, mystic, philosopher, and a reformer. Not many people know him as a reformer in society. He lived during a time when India was plagued with social evils like gender inequality, child marriage, lack of proper education (especially in women), and adherence to caste system. Through his writings, Param Krupalu Dev dispelled the darkness of such thoughts and played an instrumental role in revolutionizing the then thought process of the society. He wrote *Stri Niti Bodhaka* (The Nature of Ideal Moral Life for Women, 1884) when he was only 16 years old. In this book he advocated women's education as essential to national freedom. On its title page below is the first verse of the poem written there:

थवा देश आबाद सौ होश धारो,
मरावी गरावी वनिता सुधारो;
थती आर्य-भूमि विषे जेह हानि,
करो दूर तेने तमे हित मानी.

Meaning:

To make country prosperous, let's be enthusiastic. Improve the condition of women by educating and empowering them. The adverse effect on this earth that continues; remove it by considering it as welfare.

It is truly inspirational to read his views on women that hold true even today. He understood that a woman plays a pivotal role in her family and her upliftment is the cornerstone for development of society. He therefore wrote this book in the verse form using easy language to reach out to women of all ages. This book is divided into four parts.

(1) The first part includes poems to God, devotion (bhakti), short lived body, teachings from a mother to daughter, value of time and hard work and things that can be accomplished through it.

(2) The second part deals with learning, advantages of education, select reading of good books & acceptance of good & useful lessons.

(3) The third part includes poems on improving oneself, developing virtues, improving one's conduct, staying truthful, and abandoning thoughts of other men.

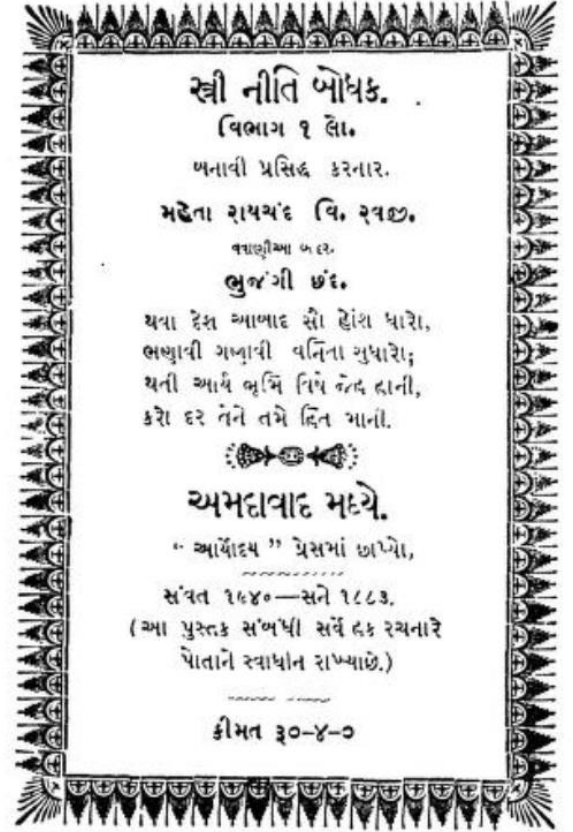
(4) The fourth part includes poems on a virtuous lady and hundred good teachings.

The common, less privileged women in India were and are still subjected to high poverty, low education, and poor health. Women in rural areas were denied opportunities and rights due to their financial dependency. For rural households, the pattern of finance involved day-to-day earning and spending and borrowing at high interest rates for health issues, social events, emergencies etc., driving families into debt traps. Low nutrition level was another challenge, which resulted in hidden hunger, malnutrition, and anemia, leading to physical weakness, poor immunity, sickness and even death. It was important for rural women to have a financial vision to be able to take steps for the health and well-being of their families. He therefore proposed in this book that educating a woman and teaching them the right code of conduct was the foundation of a happy home. In order for women to get educated, he appealed to the scholars asking at that time to write appropriate books for women and removed the allegations (by backward mentality people) against woman education as he believed if women would get educated, their love for reading will increase. He analyzed the causes of backwardness in women, such as child-marriage, forced marriage of the unequal, endless superstitions and ignorance and therefore appealed to people to think about the disadvantages of child marriage. He also advocated the cause of women's education. In a time where narrow-minded perception of women

was the norm, Param Krupalu Dev advanced the cause for their equal treatment. He stressed the importance of education by showing that right education leads to development of virtues and hence it is imperative to ensure children are given right education. Instead of spending excess money on extravagant marriage ceremonies or functions, Param Krupalu Dev advised individuals to rather spend for causes that would benefit the society like building hospitals, schools etc.

In Kavitha, Param Krupalu Dev was seated under a tree engaged in spiritual discussion. Babradeva, a criminal passed by. He called Babradeva and asked him to sit. When he bowed at Param Krupalu Dev's Lotus Feet and requested Him several times to bless him with some teachings, Param Krupalu Dev advised him to take care of mothers, sisters, and daughters and not to loot or steal from anyone. Babradeva adhered to this and spent the rest of his life serving others.

From a very young age, Param Krupalu Dev's views on marriage were extremely mature, respectful, and profound. He elaborated upon how to live a married life in a harmonious manner. Param Krupalu Dev tied the knot with Smt. Jhabakbai at Morbi on Maha Sud 12, V.S. 1944 at the age of twenty. In those times, gender equality was unheard of, and the traditional society was conservative and narrow minded in its approach towards treating women. During such times, he advocated respect for wife. After being married for about a year, he had written 'My views on women' (in Patrank 78), in which he states his heartfelt beliefs in a straightforward manner with crystal clear transparency. He writes: "One must try to forget the sensual pleasure one gets through her as to believe in that is *asat*. On must refrain from talking about passion to her. A woman must be considered an aspirant and should maintain the relation of a spiritual sister with her" (Patrank 78). He could see the woman as a soul and not just as an embodiment of desirable object. His soul brimmed with dispassion. In V.S.1956, Param Krupaludev had expressed that the quantum of attachment that ordinary beings experience for their wife in one day, has not been experienced by Him in His entire lifetime.



One would wonder as to why would Krupaludev care to write about the right code of conduct for women and men? Why didn't he straightaway start writing about his experiences of his soul or write in depth about the foundation of religion? He says in Patrank 496: "A mumukshu who is living the life of a householder (gruhasth), must first establish the basics of code of conduct in their soul. Without that in place, religious teachings would result in no fruits." How inspirational, logical, and truthful his views!

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Find Your Guides to Ignite Your Spirit

By Chintav Shah



Chintav received his education at the University of Pennsylvania and currently works as a strategy and technology consultant with a background in marketing, operations, and systems engineering. Based in New York City, Chintav is also committed to his personal interests in Jainism, spirituality, and philosophy. He has served in leadership roles within YJA for several years and continues to be involved with the community in NYC and across the country.

In Jainism, the Navkar Mantra is a general chant to venerate and seek blessings of all gods, sages, and saints that highlights the importance of learning from them. These spiritual beings, known as Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyays, and Sadhus, serve as role models and guides on the path of spiritual purification. The prayer venerates the qualities, attainments and characteristics of the noble souls who descended on this earth, lived nobles lives and showed the path to enlightenment for all the beings. In the past, these figures were often priests, shamans, sages, monks, and nuns, and they played a crucial role in providing spiritual guidance and inspiration to their communities. In today's globally connected community, we **need to realign ourselves** to learn from a wide range of spiritual leaders, including Jain leaders/Acharyas, online personalities, and figures from other religious traditions such as Sadhguru, the Dalai Lama and others.

The **most important** message in Jainism is to remind us that we must uncover self-realized mentors, role models, and guides in our lives that will inspire us to become better at maintaining, living, and embodying a Jain way of life. These guides have the ability to inspire us to move away from greed, materialism, and ego, and towards the path of awakening, non-attachment, and self-realization. Their sermons can show us the dangers of getting caught up in the hedonistic treadmill of chasing pleasure and avoiding pain - leading to greed, control, fear, and selfishness. Thriving communities and civilizations have long relied on these guides who help individuals awaken and live from a place of freedom, discipline, collaboration, and love.

Even Shrimad Rajchandra, in Atma Siddhi Shashtra, underscores the significance of having a living guru as **crucial to one's spiritual growth**. In recent years, living spiritual leaders like Late Guruji Chitrabhanu, Gurudevshri Rakeshji, and Acharya Chandanaji have exemplified the qualities of a true guru, providing guidance and support to their communities through challenging times. Through their teachings and discussions, they have helped their followers overcome doubts and ego, gain a deeper understanding of the nature of suffering, and learn to find growth in even the most difficult experiences. Here are a few things we can do to benefit from the guidance and wisdom of living gurus:

1. **Seek out** spiritual guides and Gurus by attending religious or spiritual events in your community and speaking about these topics with friends and family
2. **Spend time** listening to these figures in sermons and discussions (online or in person), until you trust their judgment and have understood their worldview
3. **Remember their point of view** and keep it top of mind during your daily decisions and actions
4. **Commit to learning** from these spiritual teachers for at least a few hours each week or month
5. **Take on practices** that they recommend, such as daily meditation, reading, intermittent fasting, and reflection, in order to ignite your own spiritual progression

In this way, we can draw upon the wisdom of spiritual teachers to inspire our own spiritual growth and awaken the power within us. The many Gurus and guides I have learned from and grown with in the past decade have largely transformed my life, enabling my own spiritual purification and upliftment. I look forward to seeing all the spiritual teachers and seekers congregate in Lakeland, Florida, this summer for JAINA 2023, as we learn and grow together towards creating a better individual and collective community.

Two Keys to a Calmer Emotional Life

By Kira M. Newman



Kira M. Newman is the managing editor of Greater Good. Her work has been published in outlets including the Washington Post, Mindful magazine, Social Media Monthly, and Tech.co, and she is the co-editor of The Gratitude Project.

(This article was originally published in Greater Good Magazine by Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley on July 19, 2022. A few pictures have been added to the article.)

New studies are investigating why life is such an emotional rollercoaster for certain people, and how to cultivate more stable happiness.

Life can feel like an emotional rollercoaster sometimes, swinging from highs of joy and love to lows of grief and betrayal. Yet we all probably know someone who seems to be less jostled by the turbulence of it all.

While psychologists like to study the emotions people feel, they also look at emotional stability as a clue to our mental health and well-being. In fact, some research has found that people whose positive feelings fluctuate more are less satisfied with life and more depressed and anxious, no matter what their overall levels of happiness are.



But how do we create more stability in our emotional lives? Two new studies have uncovered some potential answers.

Purpose keeps you steady

In the first study, nearly 2,000 adults were asked about their sense of purpose and direction in life. Then, for eight days, they received a phone call in the evening and answered questions about

how the day went. They reported on the positive emotions they experienced that day (like cheerfulness, calm, belonging, and confidence) and whether any positive events happened at home, at work, or in their social life, like a successful meeting or a good conversation.



People who were more purposeful had more positive events in their lives, and they also felt more positive emotions. And yet their well-being was less dependent on good things happening. While everyone tended to feel good after happy events, this was less true for people with a greater sense of purpose. In fact, something good happening one day didn't have any lingering effects the day after for them.

"Purposeful individuals experience more positive events in general, and thus may feel that more are likely to come. Therefore, they don't get as overwhelmed by the positive," explains lead author Patrick L. Hill, an associate professor at Washington University in St. Louis.

While this might not seem like a benefit, it actually indicates that their emotions were more stable and less swayed by the caprices of daily life. This coincides with other research on purpose, which suggests it can buffer us from the effects of stress and help us recover better from unpleasant experiences. Plus, not getting too excited about an achievement will help you maintain the motivation to seek out the next one, Hill says.

In short, it seems like having a long-term, meaningful goal may give us a sense of stability and equanimity that transcends everyday concerns.

For stability, try fluidity

Another recent study uncovered a second key to more stable happiness: a fluid sense of self. In this experiment, researchers pinged 74 people seven times a day for five days, asking them about their happiness (their sense of satisfaction and inner peace), as well as their “selflessness.”

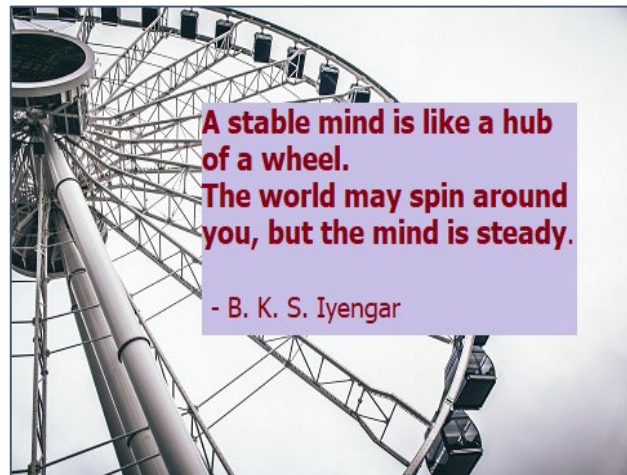
Here, what they meant by selflessness wasn’t altruism or kindness, but rather how separate and permanent (or interdependent and changing) they saw the self. This was measured in three ways: how much they felt “unity with everything,” how much overlap they saw between self and others, and how strong they perceived the boundaries of their own bodies.



By those standards, more selfless people tended to be happier, and people were also more likely to be happy in more selfless moments of the day. But more importantly, being less self-centered seemed to stabilize happiness. The more selfless someone was on average, the more stable their happiness was from one day to the

next. And after a particularly selfless day, their happiness was more stable the next day.

The researchers believe that when we’re less self-centered and more focused on our connection with others and the world, the events of daily life don’t have as much influence over us. We don’t need everything to be just so in order to feel good because we experience a background sense of calm.



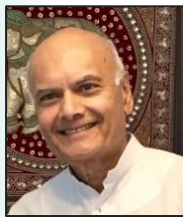
“We believe that the benefits of selflessness come from the sense of harmony that naturally arises from this state, and manifests as feelings of inner peace and contentment,” explain Nicolas Pellerin and his coauthors. If you’re wondering how to cultivate this zen-like approach to life, you might try meditation, getting into a state of flow, or seeking out awe, they say.

These findings don’t mean we should try to smooth out all the rough edges of our feelings and aim for 24/7 serenity. Other research has found that people who experience more variety in their emotions—not different levels of emotions, but different types of emotions, including negative ones—are actually healthier and less depressed. “The key is that [you] don’t overreact to [your] positive or negative events,” says Hill.

Our emotional lives are complex, and we want to experience the full range of our humanity—so long as the ride doesn’t get too rocky!

Intuition: A Resource that leads to Self-Realization

By Ramesh Kantilal Khandhar

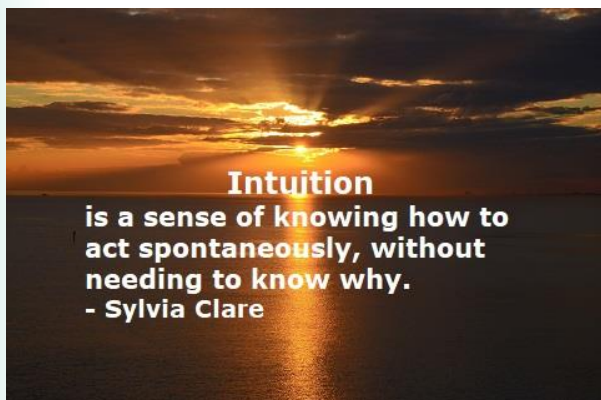


Ramesh Khandhar is a former secretary of executive board and past head teacher of pathshala at Jain Center of Southern California. He travels around to deliver spiritual discourses and continues to do intense introspection and contemplation. In addition, his special interest is reading and contemplating Jain scriptures, listening to spiritual discourses, enjoying solitude, and writing spiritual articles in 'Divya Dhvani' and in Jain Digest magazines. Currently, he is serving as Section Editor and Advisor of Jain Digest. (ramesh.khandhar@gmail.com)

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift. - Albert Einstein

What is Intuition?

Instincts, gut feeling, hunches, premonitions, sixth sense, inkling - all these words point to a deep capacity that we all carry inside known as intuition. Intuition is a sudden and inexplicable feeling that arises within us. It is the mysterious force that guides, protects, and informs us. It is considered the highest form of intelligence we have access to. Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Western philosophy have all connected intuition with planes of higher consciousness or the soul. It can be viewed as the "Soul's GPS" which can help us to discover our life purpose, make wise decisions, and lead fulfilling lives.



From the perspective of the mind, there are three levels of the mind: the subconscious, the conscious, and the superconscious mind. The superconscious mind gives rise to the intuitive voice in line with pure soul attributes. It is cosmic love and cosmic knowledge - the purest form of consciousness.

Intuition means exactly what it sounds like, in-tuition! An inner tutor or teaching and learning mechanism

that takes us forward daily. It is a resource that, when recognized, has infinite potential. The word intuition originally came from the Latin word *intueri*, which meant "to contemplate" or "to look within."

Everyone has the capacity to be intuitive. It's just a matter of learning how to tap into the resources hidden within us. While intuition might come more easily to some, it's ultimately a skill that needs to be honed and developed. It is a powerful survival instinct. An open mind, practice, and stillness can strengthen our ability to discern it.

How does intuition arise?

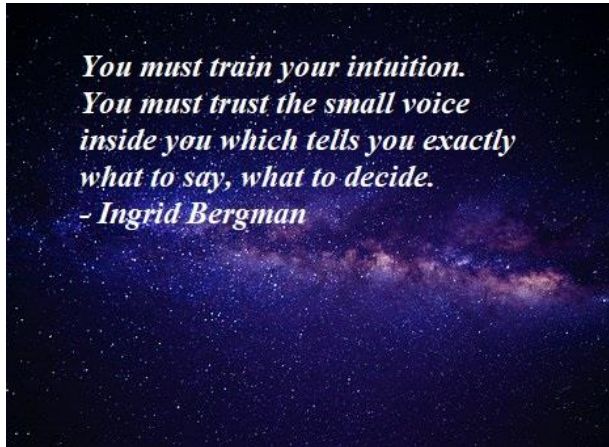
Intuition is associated with the right side of the brain which is responsible for creativity, imagination, musical and artistic aptitude, and emotions. The information we receive from our intuition is not usually available from our conscious mind. The information within the conscious mind is limited. Because the messages of intuition tend to be subtle, many conditions can interfere with our ability to pick them up. Addiction, drug use, stress, and poor diet, are some of the most common factors that block our intuition.

How is it received?

Usually, intuition emerges as a quiet inner voice or feeling that tells us to take this chance, go down that path, accept that opportunity, open this door, and so on. It is a small glimpse into the enormous magnitude of wisdom and intelligence possessed by our largely secret and untapped resources - the attributes of the true self.

Why should we develop intuition?

There are a lot of reasons why people need to develop their intuition. In this time of global awakening and transformation, connection to our Intuition is paramount. Spiritual traditions for thousands of years have all known and revered the powers of intuition.



1. Intuition guides us and helps us to make wise decisions

Sometimes, making important decisions is hard. The mind often comes with 'what if' imaginary scenarios that hold us back, such as - "What if I fail? Or it doesn't work out? Or do I look incompetent or stupid?" We need to connect with our inner guides, pick up good vibes, and know that the intuitive voice is speaking to us.

Clearly, we want to get that guidance for our highest good or be able to recognize our intuition and know that we are on the right path. We don't have to reject logic to benefit from intuition. When we combine intellect with intuition, we are simply using all the information available. We are not limited to only our conscious thought processes. With the logical brain, we can identify our purpose, set long-term goals, and make plans to achieve them. When we also tap into our intuition, it becomes much easier to make decisions in alignment with our purpose, leading us toward those conscious goals.

2. Intuition reveals deep truths in our lives

Intuition helps us develop a deeper level of understanding and insight about ourselves, other

people, and life at large. The result is that we feel more intelligently and intentionally guided in our thoughts, feelings, and decisions.

3. Intuition opens new paths for us

By helping us to tune into fresh opportunities and positive signs in our lives, intuition opens new doors when we least expect it. Also, in case of failure, financial collapse, death, or emotional threat – intuition gives some signal before any setback takes place. It will help us to prepare ourselves to face adversities.

4. Intuition helps us to live fulfilling lives

Truth hurts, but it also helps us to wake up to false, corrupted, and delusional lives. Ultimately, intuition reveals the truth and provides an opportunity for change and transformation. When we listen to it, we make decisions that ultimately help our lives to be genuine and fulfilling. Successful intuitive people know that their success is always dependent on intuitively supported decisions. These people make intuition a part of their life, all day, every day.

How to develop intuition?

1. Meditate

It is very difficult to listen to our intuition when we are in a stressed-out state of mind! When our energy is scattered, it's harder to get in touch with our intuition. Because it arises during quieter times when we are close to our consciousness, the true self. Quietness is an incredible condition to develop intuition. Within the quietness of mind, we hear the inner voice arising from deeper processes, a connection to cosmic or universal wisdom. Spending time in silence can help us to get more in tune.

It helps to train and calm our mind to notice the intuitive quieter thoughts, images, and sounds. Only when our active thinking mind is quieter do we become more aware of the passive intuitive inner voice. During meditation, we just witness the thoughts and experiences in our minds rather than being compelled to follow them. Gradually we go into a meditative state and be able to receive intuitive messages or images or even thoughts that may pop up beyond our control. As we practice more

and more, we get our intuitive insights. During simple meditation, we can focus our mind on a word, mantra, prayer, or even breathing. A more advanced meditation would be to focus on just the pause between our breaths.



Regularly meditate every morning and before going to bed at night. Then sit quietly after meditation, feeling a calm peace that causes us to enjoy the peace felt during and after meditation. It helps to solve a problem intuitively during a state of perfect calmness. The deepest enjoyment will come at that time. Intuition is developed by continuously deepening that enjoyment and holding on to its calm after-effects. It helps if we concentrate simultaneously at the point between the eyebrows and the heart. Spiritually advanced people use their intuition in everything they do and thus accomplish the seemingly impossible.

One can opt for a guided meditation or put on some quiet music or nature sounds in the background. It offers time for our mind to quiet down so we can hear those little intuitive voices come through. The bottom line is any kind of meditation and mindfulness practice will make us naturally intuitive and increase our awareness and stillness.

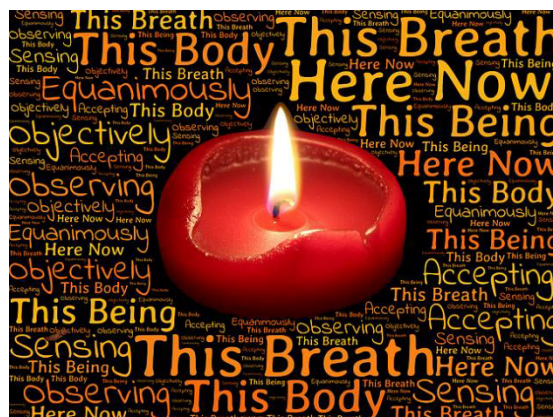
2. Perform daily spiritual practice

Our minds float to the past or the future. We're frequently lost in maelstroms of thoughts, worries, plans, memories, or stories. A few minutes of introspection, conscious deep breathing, self-reflection, and prayer will help develop the intuitive power of listening to the inner voice coming out of the true self within. During spiritual practice we are tuned in with ourselves and away from material and social activities. Mindfulness has also been proven to calm the mind, ground the body, and increase overall well-being and good health. Mindfulness as

well as any spiritual practice helps us focus to pay attention to what's happening right now and accurately access our intuitive power.

3. Focus on the sensations in our body

Intuition is a learning process from the inside out. Our real, authentic Self communicates with words, energy, and vibration, and the signs we are getting in our body. Most people can feel it like a physical tingling sensation in their stomach or chest or throat. Others can sense it in their eyes. No matter how it manifests through body sensations, this voice is never wrong. It's for this reason that connecting with our body is a powerful way to learn how to trust our intuition. It establishes the connection to inner knowing through the physical body. It opens the doorway for alignment with our deepest knowing. The following simple grounding practice will connect to inner knowing through the physical body.



Taking a few minutes in the morning to consciously breathe — five to seven deep in and out breaths create awareness within our body. Connect the feet to the floor as we roll out of bed. This provides the opportunity for us to ground into and prepare for the day ahead in partnership with our bodies. Simply draw attention to one area of your body, such as your hand, foot, chest, or head. Allow yourselves to feel the life force energy in that one area. For example, let your attention settle fully on your hand. What does the inner body feel like there? Is it *heavy*, *tingly*, *warm*, *tight*, *buzzing*? Eventually, we can draw awareness to other areas of our body until we can feel our entire inner body. With practice, we will be able to become aware of our inner body even while talking with others. The more we practice using our internal GPS, the more easily we will be

able to sort through the messiness of both the spiritual awakening process and the ups and downs in our social and financial world.

4. Spend more time in nature and outdoors

If we are in a place like a river, quiet lake, oceanfront beach, rainforest, beautiful sunrise, sunset, or mountain, our attention becomes really heightened. It sets up the right kind of attention and mindset to listen to the inner voice coming out from the true self. It helps to develop a heightened sense of attention. If we can keep our attention like this every moment of our life, then we will become more and more spiritually intuitive.

Spend more time outdoors. Living indoors all day tends to restrict the mind immensely. Go for a morning walk by the beach or in the neighborhood. Even 30 minutes a day spent outside without distractions can do so much for our minds. *Be sure to walk without distraction or 'to-do list', as silence can help us hear our inner dialogue even louder.*

5. Take a break from social media

As much as social media has the power to bring people together worldwide, there's also a dark side to constant scrolling. By constantly watching other people's activities we can get stuck in the toxic comparison mindset. It will obstruct our intuitive power. We should take some time to focus on only what *our* body and mind are telling us, it will help us reconnect with our inner self.

6. Be in the present moment

Intuition is paramount to the spiritual path. The big thing here is that intuition comes most clearly about something when we are grounded in the present moment. We will be in the present moment only when our awareness is not hijacked by past conditioning or future expectation. Equanimous attitude - witnessing the happening (i.e. *sakshibhav*, the spiritual awareness) will prevent any reaction arising from ego stuff harbored in the subconscious mind. In the absence of awareness, the egoic mind takes over and reacts to the external happening. We should not go on judging everything around us from the limited data that we have gathered. The judgemental reaction prevents intuition and witnessing or conscious

response (which are vital activities of the spiritual path) opens the door to intuition.

7. A few other ideas

Several other steps or activities can help tune in with the inner voice coming from a deeper level.

- When we are overly busy, it's hard to be sensitive to the quiet voices of intuition. Going on a retreat or just spending a day in new surroundings with nothing planned will increase our sensitivity to listening to the inner voice.
- Engage in repetitive movement. Run, Dance, or Play the piano. These physical actions can calm the cognitive mind and open up our intuition.
- Listen carefully and intently to any intuitive hunch. Often, the cognitive mind argues with intuition rather than trusting it and ignores intuitive knowing.
- Small prayer to the higher self is a powerful way to enhance our intuitive prowess.
- Avoid pressure to make "quick decisions" as it tends to inhibit the flow of intuition. Slowing down or putting the 'decision making' on the back burner will help us relax, and perceive new perspectives and intuitive knowing may flow easily to us.
- Self-awareness makes us aware of our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. The more aware we are of what goes on inside of ourselves, the easier it will be to identify the quiet voice of our intuition in the first place.

We should use the logical brain to identify our purpose, set long-term goals, and make plans to achieve them. When we also tap into our intuition, we make better decisions in alignment with our purpose, leading us toward those conscious goals. Success is dependent on intuitively supported decisions. Successful intuitive people make intuition a part of their life, all day, every day.

Meditation, spiritual practice, nature, and outdoor activities, self-awareness, and mindfulness, all of them help reprogram our subconscious and even conscious mind for intuitive voice to flow through without any ego interference. Intuition comes from pure consciousness - the true self. Intuitively supported spiritual process will lead us to self-realization

Awareness: An Essential Tool for Self-Realization

By Palakh Jain and Aditi Jain



Aditi Jain is a certified Project Management Professional (PMP)[®] with 20 years of experience across fortune 500 companies, the development sector, international universities, and global start-ups in India and abroad. Presently, as Head of the International Relations and Corporate Outreach Office, she provides strategic direction for setting up and expansion of Bennett University's (BU's) social responsibility vertical and international office.

(Note: Due to space limitation Palakh Jain's bio is not included here. Her bio is included in another article in this magazine titled "How to Create a Blissful Life")

Awareness is the common essence of all religions. We get involved in rituals such as chanting mantras, doing prayers, meditation, etc., however, we are not aware of the purpose behind all these acts. The purpose of all rituals is to purify ourselves, connect with the higher powers such as God and realize that we are not the body but an eternal soul. Awareness, in its simplest form, is just being aware of the purpose behind all our religious and spiritual activities. The highest form of awareness is being aware that I am not the body but an eternal soul which can either be experienced in a blissful meditation or by being in a meditative state 24x7. One can be in the meditative state of awareness with eyes open and doing all worldly tasks.

In this article, we wish to share some insights from ancient wisdom about how to reach that state of awareness:

1) Conserve Energy

We are all born for a higher purpose but most of us fail to see it. We are not aware of the people or tasks that matter most and what will help us achieve that divine goal of life. We are preoccupied with our thoughts and there is clutter everywhere. Chalk out a daily plan for yourself and instead of dwelling on mindless activities, focus your energy on activities that matter to you the most. Sit down in a quiet place, regularize your breathing, and focus on the most important tasks of the day. Once you master the daily plan, start planning on an hourly basis. You will feel that ray of warm light entering your life that will re-energize you, declutter your thoughts and along the way help you to find a good balance between work, rest, and leisure.

2) Discover Your Values

Most of us have forgotten our core values and we try to be what others perceive of us. The idea is to identify your own values and be aware of who you are as a person. It's an insightful process that involves self-reflection. Make a master list of all your values and align them with your experience and the people you value the most. Categorize overlapping values under one group and finalize the top 4 to 5 values that resonate with you. The beauty of this routine is that it gives you a direction in your

life and you can consciously take actions that align with your values that lead to a blissful journey.

3) Be Mindful

Live in the moment to enhance your awareness of thoughts, beliefs, and sensations as they happen from moment to moment. We forget to pause and pay attention to our feelings let alone our surroundings. For a few people, it may be a strategy to avoid the truth while others are so busy with their daily hustle to take notice. Practice counting your breath without trying to control it. You can do it anytime and from anywhere, start with at least 20 counts and go up to 100 or more. Another method would be to hold your breath, inhale for a count of three, hold it for a count of three, and exhale at a count of three. Once you are aware of yourself and your eco-system, you will discover happiness all around you

4) Look Inside

Generally, we identify ourselves with our body, fame, power, money, name etc. We need to look beyond and treat our soul and body as separate entities, and this can be achieved by practicing "Bhed Gyan". One way to practice it while eating is to be aware that the body is eating, and the soul is just a witness. It does not have any likes or dislikes about the food the body is consuming. There are various tools which helps us to focus, be in the present which can be useful in the practice of Bhed Gyan. For example, while sleeping realize that the body is sleeping and the Soul (which resides inside the body) is awake. People who master this art experience a plethora of experiences and may start living in the state of awareness where their soul is witnessing each bodily act that the body is doing. The beauty is that each experience is unique and cannot be expressed in words alone.

Awareness is not something that can be attained overnight, it comes every moment by observing our surroundings, respecting others, and valuing life. It helps us achieve that inner peace and find our soul. There is no right or wrong way of doing it, one has to find his own path that echoes with him; but once you tread on it you have achieved your purpose in life!

Essays by Pathshala Students in North America

The Jain Digest Editorial Team is pleased to bring you a new series of articles – essays written by the Pathshala students in North America. Many Jain Centers in USA and Canada have been conducting Pathshala classes for several years. Many volunteers provide selfless service to the Jain communities by teaching the students about Jain principles, values, rituals, culture, Indian languages, etc. Essay competitions are held to motivate the students to stimulate their thinking and analytical skills about what they have learned in Pathshala. We plan to showcase the winning entries from one Jain Center in each issue of Jain Digest; beginning with **Jain Society of Greater Detroit**. We hope that you will enjoy reading these essays and be pleased with the talent these students exhibit. We would love to hear from you. Write us note at jaindigestpublication@gmail.com (Please note that a few minor changes have been made to these essays due to space limitations and to make grammatical corrections.)



With the blessings of Shashan Dev/Devis, the initiative of late “Guruji” Mahendrabhai Shah continues at the Jain Society of Greater Detroit. What started with about 10 students and a few teachers in 1981, comprises more than 100 students and 25 teachers and volunteers today. The pathshala is structured as about 8 classes by age group ranging from Pre-K to High school. The curriculum also includes a variety of annual events such as Jain Academic Bowl, the Annual day performance event, the Sutra Stavan Recital, and an Essay Competition.

Every year the students from elementary to high school compete in an essay competition that challenges them to hone their writing and analytical skills on a variety of prompts relating Jain principles or topics related to their everyday life. The high school students compete for the Late Linda Kapadia Memorial Prize of \$500 awarded to the winning essay. The society is fortunate to have a lot of sponsors who support this event, as well as a variety of alumni and members at large who step up to help judge the event. As part of this edition, you are invited to engage in the winning entries from the past three years.

We remind the readers that essays are the ideas and opinions expressed by young writers. If the ideas expressed may go against the teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir, please forgive. Michchhami Dukkaddam!

Winning Essays from the competitions held in 2018, 2019 and 2020

Essay 1 (2020)

Essay Prompt /Topic:

Do you believe silence is a powerful way in today’s world with Jain perspective – with examples from today’s world?

Winner – Yash Mehta



Yash was attending Northville High School in Michigan when he wrote this essay. He has been a Pathshala student for over 10 years. He was a President of Jain Youth Organization and was involved in temple activities. He is currently a freshman at Stanford University in California.

Moral of Mailboxes, Maun Vrat, and Mahavira

When I was six, I explained to my neighbors that their orange and brown mailbox was ugly. I wasn’t lying, just stating facts. My mom reprimanded me, “If you don’t have something nice to say, don’t say it.” Later, in Jain study class, my friends and I listened to a story that illustrated the same idea: the delicate balance between truth and nonviolence. It started with a monk walking alone in a jungle, who suddenly crossed paths with a man sprinting for his life. A short while later, an axe murderer (or a man with similar intent) paused upon reaching the monk and asked him where the man had gone. To protect the man’s life, the monk went silent at the price of withstanding physical and verbal abuse from the axe murderer. I must have truly grasped the moral of this story because I never called another person’s mailbox

“ugly” thereafter. Most people, I daresay, have not come across axe murderers requesting information that would cause another man to die, but we have all been confronted before by a profound choice—to speak or not to speak. By applying Jain principles to our world today, it becomes clear that silence, which signals either ignorance or nonviolence depending on the circumstance, is a powerful force.

Silence As Nonviolence

Maun Vrat is a vow of silence monks take with the intention of controlling their emotions, and it is widely effective. As one represses their urge to say negative words, they are compelled to examine their four *kashays*, or passions: anger, ego, deceit, and greed. Oftentimes, this causes them to understand their emotion, making them dissipate. This transformative effect on one’s state of mind is not limited to monks, however. Once, years ago, I kept my mouth shut while another person tried in vain to taunt me and hurt my ego. I had not taken the vow of silence, but in that moment, I realized that nothing I spoke would improve my situation. When my blood began to boil, I scrutinized my emotions and soon realized that assuming Jainism was accurate, the person who I felt anger toward was simply a medium of my past karma coming to fruition. Thus, in a roundabout way, I had done this to myself. While I was still unsure of the validity of the intangible karma theory, this revelation comforted me. Due to staying quiet, I understood that it was not necessary to elevate any of my four passions.

In today’s environment, too, silence can deter violent activities of the body and mind. On January 6, 2021, President Donald Trump, knowingly or unknowingly, incited domestic terrorism through the power of his words. At his rally, he instructed supporters to enter the capitol building under false pretenses and to not be silent about the counting of electoral votes. The right-wing extremists proceeded to angrily storm the capitol, rioting and shooting their way to Congress. The terrible insurrection that resulted from his encouragement illustrates the potential for speech to cause far-reaching damage.

Paradox of Silence

While observing *Maun Vrat* guards against violence, there are times when breaking silence is helpful. Last summer, many people on social media, including myself, had positive intentions to help the Black Lives Matter movement spread in order to fight for justice. Our nation has a tragic history of racism and violence toward African-Americans, and healthy doses of social media activity help increase awareness of the

critical issue of police brutality towards African-Americans. To the delight of many, incremental albeit tiny changes in public opinion and policy resulted, which will hopefully work to reduce hate and violence. In situations like this, remaining in *Maun Vrat* or hesitating to combat the issue reinforces hate, which paradoxically undermines the core of Jainism—thus warranting the use of words.

Unfortunately, in the midst of the movement, some hard-core activists defamed people who hesitated to repost every infographic, deeming them “racists” or “bigots.” Someone I know personally called out specific people that had been inactive on social media, which further reinforced an “us vs. them” mentality. What had begun as a movement that connected those who wished to see a change in our nation arguably turned into one that divided it. Rather than convincing more people to recognize racism as a problem that needed to be solved, many activists lashed out at individuals who were simply uneducated. This fueled minor support for the false notion that racial discrimination need not be solved and that fixing it was inconsistent with protecting the lives of police officers. Upon seeing this unexpected, unwanted turn of events, I felt confused: I had been sure that breaking silence for advocacy was justified, but perhaps the consequences that ensued told a different story. Maybe, it was a lose-lose situation. I asked myself, “Is it even possible to speak out in order to end the violence without it occurring anyway?”

Way of the Tirthankar

As it turns out, Bhagavan Mahavira illustrated over 2.5 thousand years ago that it is possible to speak out and remain nonviolent simultaneously. After attaining omniscience, he preached for 30 years in an attempt to share the ultimate truth of the universe. Of course, he spoke for a different reason than activists did in the year 2020, educating other living creatures on how to achieve self-realization. However, activists are essentially educating the public on one specific application of nonviolence, combating racism, and they can learn from Bhagavan Mahavira in order to do so without sparking violence of their own. After all, even though Mahavira spoke of many ideas foreign to people at the time, he did not face aggressive pushback.

This brings us to what kept our last Tirthankara from elevating his four *kashays* during speech. The key attributes of his sermons that differentiated them from much of our current political activism were non-judgment and detachment. He did not denounce those that did not follow him as unscrupulous, nor did he attempt to convert anybody; he preached purely

for the purpose of educating others without being attached to the outcome. We can apply this practice to activism by transforming it into an informational form of communication rather than a hypercritical one. By keeping a non-judgmental attitude, we can subdue our egos by not thinking of ourselves as superior to the ignorant simply because we practice more equality or nonviolence. One way I do this is by reminding myself that if I had been exposed to the same information and experiences, or lack thereof, that the insensitive individuals were, then I would likely have an opinion no different than theirs. Furthermore, we should not speak with the aim to force an opinion upon someone even in the context of advocating against police brutality. Like Bhagavan Mahavira, we can use speech as a tool to expose others to a different perspective, namely ours. In accordance with our principle of non-absolutism or *anekantavada*, none of us are certain that we understand the whole truth, so we must simply share the truth as we know it instead of declaring our opinion as a definite reality. Appealing to reason and morality is also far more potent in convincing an ignorant person than laying down our opinion as incontrovertibly true. As such, it is paramount that we exercise open-mindedness in addition to non-judgment if we decide to break the silence.

Power of Silence

If we examine the role of silence in the past year, it is apparent that shutting one's mouth can have devastating consequences or wholesome advantages. The domestic terrorism of 2021 that could have been avoided through the use of silence stands in stark contrast to the judgmental nature of activism in 2020 which could have been more effective provided the correct use of speech. In either case, silence, or a lack thereof, is a tremendously potent instrument with far-reaching capabilities.

This leaves many of us bewildered as to what role silence embodies overall. Following our Tirthankara's example, we can navigate the correct path during these disconcerting times. We should attempt not to speak to fight our internal *kashays*, and keep our *kashays* at bay when we break the silence to fight hate or ignorance. Ideally, we should take the vow of *Maun Vrat* and make exceptions solely when absolutely necessary, but since most of us are far from being monks, we must follow a practical approach. Where possible, we should cease communication with others if any of our four passions arise until they subside. However, especially for those of us that have much to say in general, selective silence on politics relating to racism demonstrates an unwillingness to preserve and cultivate equality.

During these times, it is necessary to break the silence without judgment of the person we are speaking to or attachment to the outcome of the exchange. In short, the lesson my mom taught me long ago prevails - we must speak the harmless truth, or not at all.

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Essay 2 (2019)

Essay Prompt /Topic:

How Jain principles addresses Global warming?

Winner - Dhairya Shah



Dhairya was attending Novi High School in Michigan when he wrote this essay. He has been an active Pathshala student for over 10 years and has been engaged in various social and volunteering activities at Temple. He is currently Sophomore at Nova Sothern University in Florida.

It is common knowledge that climate change is a massive problem in our current society. However, most of us are still ignorant of the massive detrimental effects it can have on our earth. Due to the massive industry and technological boom in the past 200 years, one of the deadliest factors of climate change has increased exponentially: greenhouse gasses. This increase has led to some shocking and dangerous outcomes for our planet. According to NASA, these include warming temperatures, melting ice caps, and an increasing sea level. In order to combat these potential results from occurring, the world has started to fight and limit them as much as possible. America like many so far has taken extremely small number of measures against this problem due to an ongoing debate about the financial implications of

implementing a solution. However, before implementing a complicated and expensive solution to this problem, one should definitely consider some cultural and social solutions. Specifically, one religion that stands out from the rest is Jainism. Through Jainism's great values of Ahimsa or non-violence, and Aparigraha, or non-possessiveness one can see two possible reasons why Jainism is so compatible with limiting the dangers of global warming.

Let's first take a look at Ahimsa, or non-violence, one of the most, if not the biggest, values of Jainism. As aforementioned, Ahimsa is all about non-violence and limiting the amount of destruction we go about as humans every day. However, we as Jains understand that we cannot completely remove violence from our lives due to the fact that is happening every second we are alive. We kill microbes while we talk, walk, and even breathe and it is basically impossible to stop that. Instead, we try to focus on limiting our acts of violence as much that's physically possible. Wearing cotton clothes, eating a vegetarian diet, and avoiding care products tested on animals are just a few of the actions we take. The one in particular interest in this situation is the vegetarian diet. As stated before, greenhouse gases are majorly the reason why global warming occurs. One of the biggest culprits in this category of gases is actually methane. Methane, or CH₄ in chemical nomenclature, is a hydrocarbon that is found in fossil fuels and specifically cow flatulence. In fact, cows produce a massive 200 litres of methane daily. This creates a severe problem due to the worldwide reliance on cows as a resource of food. However, following a strict Jain diet of vegetarianism can reduce this problem immensely. Not only do we not eat the cows, but many Jains who follow vegan diet refuse to partake in any consumption of dairy due to the harm caused to the cows during the production being the same, if not worse, to the meat production. This diet and ultimately the practice of Ahimsa provide a natural counter to the cause of global warming.

Subsequently, another important Jain principle, the principle of Aparigraha, is also extremely important to consider. Aparigraha, or non-possessiveness, is the concept of being as simple as possible and focusing on needs instead of wants. Basically, it focuses on the great social value of conservatism. In today's current world, the energy and gas wastage that occurs every day in America is outstanding. According to James Bryant, energy expert, and journalist, a total of almost \$500 million are wasted daily. Hence, a change in lifestyle is extremely necessary, particularly one expressing Aparigraha. Not only would this stop the needless expenditure, it would also allow for citizens to learn an extremely valuable lesson: saving. Small

things such as turning off the tap while brushing, not relying on the thermostat, installing a greener shower cap could show how little changes in their lives could help conserve a whole lot later when needed. By this reasoning, one can clearly see the effective nature of implementing the principle of Aparigraha in our daily lives.

With the evidence presented above, both the Jain principles of Ahimsa and Aparigraha are two great examples of ideas that can help with the concept of global warming. However, the question still remains on how should these concepts be introduced at a massive scale to communities other than Jain? The answer I believe is by implementing a green taxation model provided by Singapore. The basic idea behind it is to implement a carbon tax. A carbon tax is basically defined by Singapore as a tax on any item, material, or process that ends up increasing the amount of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere. This includes cars, bikes, public modes of transportation, factories, farms, and more. The idea of a carbon tax fits in perfectly with both Ahimsa and Aparigraha. Due to the tax placed on farms, farms will start limiting the amount of beef and dairy production due to the cows producing such massive emissions. This in turn will reduce the amount of meat and dairy selections causing people to shop for more vegan and vegetarian selections. As for the principle of Aparigraha, a carbon tax will allow organizations to switch to more simple and efficient energy forms. Conservatism will become a key idea due to the factor of limiting the amount of carbon dioxide released in the air and will force them to make little changes in the workplace such as a green policy or adding a solar panel. The general public will also be affected and will make those minute changes in their lives as I mentioned before. This implementation has done wonders for Singapore for it allows the country to stay greener and economically positive simultaneously. In fact, Singapore's cash flow increased by almost 15% after implementing this amazing policy. If America is also able to take advantage of this policy, they can also reap the same benefits if not more through the switch. Ultimately following Singapore's model is the best solution for the country to implement and utilize both the Jain methods of Aparigraha and Ahimsa.

When taking the final analysis of all of these factors together, it can clearly be seen that both non-violence and non-possessiveness are key ideas in the fight against climate change. Not only do they help with the massive problems of cow flatulence, it also instills the extremely important social value of conservatism into citizens. In today's world of rapidly increasing temperatures and sea levels, it is important to consider these philosophies for the entire planet's

fate relies on the hands of the people of the world. If America is able to lead the path along with countries who have already implemented such ideas into solutions such as a carbon tax, the whole world can come together to delay the problem of Climate Change as much as possible. In the end, Aparigraha and Ahimsa are some of Jainism's most important values and their implementation in our lives is integral to the fight against global warming.

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Essay 3 (2018)

Essay Prompt/Topic:

"Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye" – Gautam, never cease to be vigilant: Research and interpretation.

Winner – Vandan Shah



Vandan was attending Novi High School in Michigan when he wrote this essay. He was President of Jain Youth Organization (JOY) at the Temple participating in various religious and volunteering activities. He has been an active

student at Pathshala for more than 12 years. He is currently attending University of Michigan.

"Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye"- the following was a statement - one of many - was uttered by Lord Mahavir and recorded in the Uttaradhyayana Sutra. The Uttaradhyayana sutra was the set of the final

sermons delivered by Lord Mahavir, right before he attained nirvana-or ultimate salvation. This statement was directed to Gautama Swami, his chief disciple. The statement became a motto or a mantra of sorts for Gautam Swami, as Lord Mahavir constantly reminded him of this. The statement was originally spoken in Prakrit, the common language of the people at the time.

The nature of Lord Mahavir and Gautam Swami's relationship was truly unique and extraordinary. Lord Mahavira is believed to be the 24th and final tirthankar in the current time cycle. Modern-day Jainism is predominantly based on his teachings and philosophies. His ideas have influenced many and helped thousands of souls achieve salvation. During his spiritual journey-he was wandering city to city to spread the message of Jainism. Recently having attained ultimate knowledge, Lord Mahavir came across the town of Gautam Swami. Born Indrabhuti Gautam, Gautam Swami was the eldest of three Brahmin scholar brothers. All of them were exceptionally intelligent and talented. Before Lord Mahavir arrived in the city, Gautama Swami was the undisputed scholar. Gautam Swami confronted Lord Mahavir to debate against him expecting to win. Instead, Gautama Swami was humbled by him and immediately became a student of Lord Mahavir. From that moment on, Gautama accompanied Lord Mahavir everywhere and possessed a love for his teacher that few have ever matched throughout history.

Gautam Swami is not praised for his knowledge or his brilliance specifically, even though he was one of the brightest individuals of his generation instead, he is remembered for his diligence and work ethic. Before meeting Lord Mahavir, Gautam was already a gifted scholar, yet he chose to bow down and accept the teachings of the Lord without failure. Although we might not be in the same position, we can all adopt this mindset for constant self-improvement.

The statement "Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye" means, "Gautam, never cease to be vigilant. Don't waste even a fraction of a second."

When I think of this quote in my personal life, it applies to nearly all aspects. When I am in the classroom, this quote reminds me to constantly strive for higher and never settle. Whether I'm taking a test or writing an essay for school. This quote inspires me to give 110% in whatever I am doing, to keep me on the path of success. When I am running on the track, this quote motivates me to run as fast as I can. Whatever I might be doing, I am always looking to improve and get better.

An important concept to keep in mind when being in this mind state is to never settle. Often times we get so engrossed in our personal lives, which takes a toll on us. As a result, we lose that drive and settle for "good enough". Personally, this could not be truer. Many times, I procrastinate and do the bare minimum, simply to get by. Although this will not have a big impact at the moment, over time it will make one lazy and unmotivated. If not fixed these dangerous habits can slowly make even the most talented individuals gradually become mediocre and average.

I myself can relate to this quote on a much deeper level. Although this quote was intended for Gautam Swami-who was gifted with an incredible talent-I can envision me in his place. Seldom do I actually sit down and actually acknowledge my blessings. Growing up in America, I am privileged compared to many of my peers around the world. In addition to ample food, water, and shelter; I have countless resources at my disposal. Resources with which I could do anything I imagine. This quote reminds me to use this privilege for the benefit of others and contribute positively to society.

One of the fundamental pillars of Jainism is Anekantavada or multiplicity of views. Jainism believes in different perspectives and interpretations a principle known as Syadvada. One other interpretation of "Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye", is to be more vigilant and aware in everyday life. This is another way of Lord Mahavir reminding Gautam Swami to be alert and conscious.

Understanding this requires us to put our lives in context. Often is the case that we get entirely too engaged in our everyday lives. In the grand scheme of things, our personal problems are minuscule in terms of the entire universe. It may not seem like it-especially in the heat of the moment-but minor discrepancies are insignificant, and that is why we should approach each encounter with a peaceful outward attitude. A great way to apply this principle is to take a step back and envision yourself in the position of an outsider. Putting your feet in others' shoes will help you understand the other person's point of view. Practicing this concept will hopefully lead to superior and more efficient solutions to everyday problems. Mastering this will help guide one to salvation.

In addition to understanding other viewpoints, self-introspection is also the key idea behind the quote. Analyzing our lifestyle and our own actions will ultimately lead to self-improvement. As humans, we belong to the most advanced biological classification category: Panchendriya. But even compared to other

five-sensed living beings, humans possess the intelligence to compute, process, and communicate complex ideas. We were able to recognize patterns found in nature, which was the reason for evolution. As humans, we are able to understand our mistakes and fix them. Lord Mahavir stated that we should be alert to our actions and the impact that they have on the world. In order for us to grow, it is vital that we identify our mistakes and build upon them.

Gautam Swami was truly an exceptional soul, one which the world might never see again. Some even go as far as to argue that his pure talent and work ethic outmatched Lord Mahavir himself. Yet for the longest time Gautam Swami-himself could not attain Keval Gyan (complete omniscience). This troubled him constantly, a topic that he would often question Lord Mahavir with. The reason was his attachment to his teacher. His teacher, from whom he had learned so much, had been placed of such high importance. But in order to attain salvation, one needs to be completely detached from everything and everyone-even beloved family members and friends. Prior to his Nirvana, Lord Mahavir purposely sent Gautam Swami elsewhere with another task. The day that Lord Mahavira attained moksha, was Diwali. Upon hearing the news of his teacher's passing - Gautam Swami wept. He cried into the night, and through the tears, he became self-aware of his bond with Lord Mahavir. Early morning the next day, Gautam Swami let go of his attachment, and as soon as he did he attained Keval Gyan. That day became known as New Year's Day.

The motto of "Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye", guided Gautam Swami throughout his life, and it led him to salvation. All Gautam Swami had to do was listen to the Lord and apply his teachings to every aspect of his life. Thousands of years have passed since Lord Mahavir's liberation, yet his words, ideas, and philosophies continue to guide and shape modern Jainism. They are the base of the structure upon which others have built upon.

It can be difficult for a Jain youth living in America to navigate in the twenty-first century. Often it can be confusing and many times we find ourselves questioning our decisions and morals. Adopting this motto as a lifestyle, helps one find their purpose and helps us better make decisions that suit our needs, complying with traditional values. As time progressed, Jainism has evolved. But the morals and values entrusted to us by our elders passed down from generation to generation will lead us to the path of achieving greatness. "Samayam Goyam Ma Pamayaye" is more than simply a quote it is a way to live your life.

Letters to Editor

The Jain Digest editorial team is happy to announce a new feature in the magazine titled “**Letters to Editor.**” In the past seven years we have received very valuable feedback from many of you, showering words of appreciation as well as ideas on how to make the magazine better. In fact, the suggestion to include “Letters to Editor” came from Prakash Mody from Toronto, Canada. In this issue, we are including a few of these letters to share with you as a sample. (Please note that due to space limitation, only part of each letter received is included below.)

Starting from the June issue, we will start sharing few such letters that we receive during the two months after a new issue of the magazine is published. Hence for this February issue, **please send your feedback to jaindigestpublication@gmail.com before March 31, 2023.** The editorial team will contact the people whose letters are selected and request to send their picture to be published along with the letter. We hope that this will encourage you to tell us what you liked in the magazine, ideas for improvement and suggestions for any content that will help us all in our spiritual advancement.

Jayesh Sanghvi, Houston, TX (Comments on the February 2022 issue)



Thank you so much for sending the link and sharing Jain Digest with a wonderful set of messages/articles. As always, I find Jain Digest very informative and helpful. My hats off to you and the writers taking time to share their views/articles.

Sometimes, you catch a simple phrase that makes you think. In the Transformation section in particular, Rameshbhai shared a simple message: “**Did you smile today?**” .. getting submerged into so many things, busy in the surrounding environment and people forget to smile! I did smile when the Jain Digest link came into my email since it brings wonderful topics and views of many scholars. I always look forward to receiving it.

Professor Atul K. Shah, PhD, UK (Past Editor of the Jain Spirit magazine) (Feedback received in August 2019)



I think it is a good magazine, with a variety of articles and writers, and good pictures and design. Given that it is volunteer run, this effort is truly commendable as it is very hard work to put all these materials together and

also to convince people to write articles and send them. In the US, you have built a very good spirit of unity, and the big success stories of YJA, Patshala and Jain Centres is worthy of reporting on and celebrating.

In my opinion, as JAINA is essentially a volunteer run national organisation, with local chapters who are members, there should be a clear focus on the purpose of Jain Digest, and communications more generally. For me, special issues which give detailed

articles on specific aspects of Jain philosophy, like Samyak Darshan in the latest issue, should be a theme for an education journal rather than a community magazine.

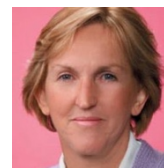
Prakash Mody, Toronto, Canada (Comments on the October 2021 issue containing articles about the 2021 JAINA Convention)



With this issue, you shared what we would not have even known if it was in-person live attending! Very good thought and thanks to all writers, attendees, viewers, and readers, for expressing their experiences. Now

we know, the whole picture of the Convention, not just bits and pieces. Maybe in the next issue, if you can share the economic viability & financial picture for the future of the Convention. Once again sincere heartfelt thank you to all who worked for this mega event.

Ingrid Newkirk, President of PETA (Feedback received on the February 2022 issue)



It's a very good mix of facts, philosophy, news, and more. I always feel stories, real stories, are important. People seem to love to learn from each other's experiences.

Feedback on the article about Gratitude written by Sanjay Bhandari, published in October 2022 issue

Very well written article. I truly believe the best way to show and practice gratitude is a simple act of bringing a smile to everyone you meet even for a fleeting second! That might be the best moment of their life on that day! They feel grateful and it is contagious. I agree with all your valuable pointers! Nicely done.

- Satish Subramanian



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HIGHLIGHTS

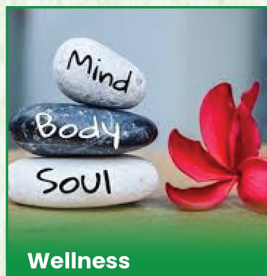
- Matrimony / Jain Connect
- Low Registration Fees
- Spiritual, Educational, and Inspirational Speakers
- Talented Performers at Cultural Show, Dandiya Raas
- Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) and Jains Got Talent (JGT)
- Exhibitor Booths
- Fun Location to Extend Your Vacation

SESSIONS

- Sessions by Renowned Scholars and Spiritual Masters
- Parallel Tracks – Human Values, Wellness and Relationships
Women and Youth Sessions
- Workshops on JWOL, Healthy Living
- Meditation and Yoga
- Ecology and Sustainability Sessions



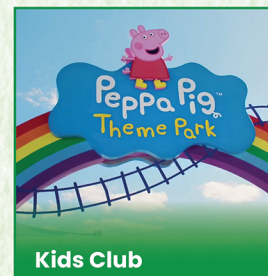
Theme Parks



Wellness



Entertainment Programs



Kids Club



Vacation Opportunities