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TRIBUTE TO THE EMBODIMENTS OF DIVINITY

JAIN DIGEST

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On the Cover:

Tribute to the Embodiments of Divinity

In this issue of Jain Digest we are paying tribute to three extraordinary women – Pujya Acharya Shri Chandanaji, Lata Mangeshkar and Sindhutai Sapkal – whose contribution to the society and their Divine virtues are an inspiration to millions of people around the world.

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

CONTENTS

Jain Digest Editor's Note.....	4
JAINA President's Message	5
Section: Compassion	
How Biology Prepares Us for Love and Connection	By Summer Allen 7
Let's Be Great Ahimsa Ambassadors	By Ingrid Newkirk 10
Section: Devotion	
10 Commandments of a Guru (Part - 2)	By Reena Shah 13
Acharya Samrat Dr. Shiv Muni Ji – A Pious Soul	By Savita Jain 15
Characteristics of a Devotee	By Anop Vora 17
Section: Education	
Tyag Dharma Hai Aur Daan Punya	By Mrs. Pallavi Manjeet Bagi 19
An Essential Primer on Ahimsa	By Ishita Chordia 22
Section: Information	
International Jain Conference on Forgiveness	By Dilip V. Shah 24
Review of "Kahani" - an Art Exhibition by Deshna Shah	By Professor Atul K. Shah 26
Our Journey with the Bhaktamar Stotra	By Archana Jain 29
Section: Inspiration	
Acharyashri Chandanaji - My Tribute to a Living Legend	By Dilip V. Shah 32
Lata Mangeshkar - Divinity Personified	By Sanjay Bhandari 36
Sindhutai Sapkal - An Embodiment of Love, Divinity and Resilience	By Hema Pokharna 40
Section: Transformation	
Understanding the Subconscious Mind	By Dilip Parekh 44
Section: Young Generation	
I survived without eating anything for 10 days straight!	By Ananya Jain 46
My Exploration with the Truth	By Aarthy Shah 49
Community Corner	
Life Lessons Learned	52
World's First 48 Dome Bhaktamar Divine Shrine	By Dr. Manju Jain 55



Om Shri Veetragay Namah

Jai Jinendra,

The past four months have been challenging for most of us. When I wrote the Editor's Note for the February issue, Omicron had started to fade away and the promise of being able to attend public gatherings without a mask was on the horizon. Along with this feeling of relief, came the anxiety of war in Ukraine, inflation, and the roller coaster ride of the stock market. Although it was nice to be able to travel and see friends and relatives with less fear of catching COVID, the underlying current of unease of the past two years is still there for many people.

At Jain Digest, we find that one way to keep our emotional balance is to look for inspirational stories. We always find many stories in the most ordinary places; if we are willing to look. However, for the Inspiration section of the June issue, we found three Divine, extraordinary personalities!

With immense pleasure we give tribute to Pujya Acharya Shri Chandanaji for the Padma Shri award she has received from the Government of India. In the article about Chandanaji, our past JAINA President, Dilipbhai Shah, has eloquently narrated his visit to Rajgir 21 years ago and also given us information about Chandanaji's many humanitarian projects. This article is an abridged version of the one published in Jain Avenue earlier this year.

The second person is an international phenomenon – Lata Mangeshkar. Writing about our beloved singer Lata ji was really beyond our capability. Lataji's voice was a manifestation of the many virtues she possessed in abundance. Sanjay Bhandari has spent long hours exploring some of the important aspects of her life that exhibit these virtues which we must remember – every time we listen to her songs.

The third person we offer tribute to is a powerful, compassionate woman – Sindhutai Sapkal – who was considered as Mother Teresa of Maharashtra state in India. She was a social worker and social activist known particularly for her work in raising orphaned children in India. In addition to the other 750 awards, she was awarded the Padma Shri in 2021 in the Social Work category. The author, Hema Pokharna, brings to us the story of Sindhutai's ability to overcome unimaginable pain & struggle, her compassion & devotion, her ability to forgive & be grateful, and her humility & detachment. A must read!

In addition to these inspirational articles, we are fortunate to have an article by Ingrid Newkirk, the founder and president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). In her article about Ahimsa, she motivates us to be Ahimsa ambassadors by eating right, dressing right, and doing the right thing for Mother Earth.

We are also very grateful to Professor Atul K. Shah (UK) for his guidance on a regular basis and for allowing us to publish his article about a unique art exhibit by Deshna Shah, promoting compassionate self-healing.

We have several new young authors that have contributed to the magazine. In her article written in Hindi, Pallavi Bagi, a PhD student from Kolhapur, India, tells us about the difference between त्याग and दान. Another student, Ishita Chordia, doing PhD at the University of Washington, gives us a primer on Ahimsa by using many references from Jain scriptures. A young biomedical engineer from Boston, Aarthy Shah, tells us about her transformational experience of attending Updhaan in the *sanidhya* of Rashtrasant Param Gurudev Shree Namaramuni Maharaj Saheb. We are also grateful to YJA for allowing us to include an article by Ananya Jain – previously published in *Young Minds*. Ananya gives us a very detailed day to day description of his 10-day fast during Das Lakshan.

Another new author, Archana Jain, from Sacramento, CA, tells a story about how she and her family got involved in arranging several educational events teaching many aspects of Bhaktamar Stotra and how that has changed her life's purpose. We also have a note from Dr. Manju Jain describing the proposed 48 Dome Bhaktamar Divine Shrine. Among other articles, Savita Jain introduces us to Acharya Samrat Dr. Shiv Muni Ji Maharajsaheb, Anop Vora elaborates on the characteristics of a devotee, and Reena Shah explains the commandments of a Guru - part 2 of the article from February issue.

My sincere thanks to all authors for their timely submissions and to Reena Shah for her diligence in editing the articles. Thanks to Jayanaben Shah for designing the wonderful cover page and bringing the magazine to life by her creative design. If you would like to join our editorial team or write an article for our next issue, please write to us at: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com or call us at 310-721-5947. The next issue will be published in October 2022. Stay safe. Stay healthy.

In Seva,
Dilip Parekh

JAINA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

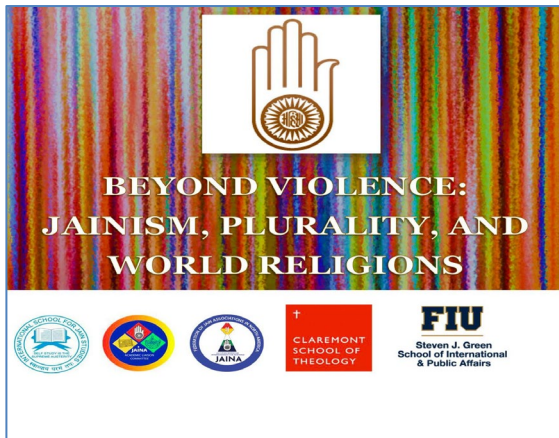


Jai Jinendra!

Hope you and your family are healthy and had a wonderful Ayambil Oli and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations at your Jain Center. JAINA is grateful to you for your valuable support in promoting Jain principles, helping community, educating Jains and non-Jains to create a stronger North American Jain community, and creating awareness of Jainism as we spread the message of Tirthankar Mahavir. We hope to have your continued support as always. It is my privilege to share a number of major accomplishments JAINA made over the past 3 months.

February 2022

- JAINA EC unanimously approved the 12 new chairmanships of the JAINA committees.

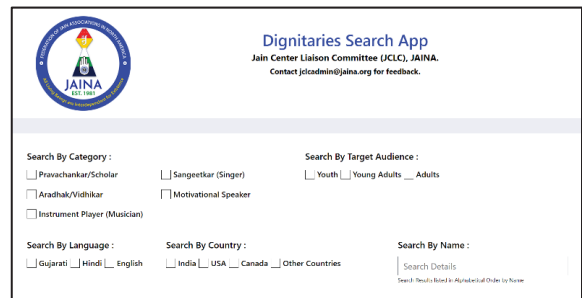


- JAINA Academic Liaison Committee and International School for Jain Studies co-sponsored a 2-day Virtual International Conference, 'Beyond Violence: Jainism, Plurality, and World Religions'. The conference was co-organized by Claremont School of Theology Jain Studies Program, Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, and Florida International University.
- JAINA got an amazing opportunity to be the official Anumodak of Shree Bhagwati Jain Diksha Mahotsav in Param Sharan of Rashttrasant Param Gurudev Shree Namramuni Maharaj Saheb, where 9 young souls began a search within the self, to discover the self.



March 2022

- JAINA Women's Committee celebrated Women's Day by organizing an exciting, educational seminar, Cryptocurrency Myths vs. Facts, on Zoom.



- Jain Center of Liaison Committee launched Dignitaries Search App to have one centralized database of all dignitaries that local Jain Centers and JAINA could invite for their events. Please check this new app <https://dignitaries.jaina.org>.



- In December 2021, the JAINA Vaiyavach committee had committed \$40,000 to Shantiniketan Sadhana Kendra and Perna Prakashan Trust, Tithal, Valsad for acquiring and renovating a place to be used as an additional Upashray for our Sadhviji and Mahasatiji.

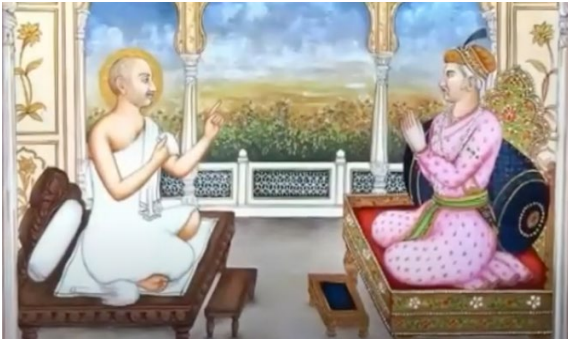
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In February 2022, the new Upashray was inaugurated for all the Sadhviji Maharaj of all Jain Sampradays for their Vihar while passing through the town of Valsad. JAINA is grateful to Pujya Shri Jinchandraji Maharaj for giving us this opportunity of Vaiyavach of Guru Bhagwants and all the donors who could make this possible.

- JAINA and JAINA India Foundation along with other organizations had co-organized a special program 'Let's Grow Together' by Leena Doshi.
- JAINA started supporting the noble project, Arihanta Academy which has created an advanced technology platform with logistical provisions to enable a rich learning experience conducive to modern living and learning styles. The project is started by Dr. Parveen Jain of the Jain Center of Northern California. Know more about the academy at: <https://www.arihanta-academy.com/>
- JAINA World Community Service launched a [Ukraine Relief Fund](#) drive to help the victims of this war. JAINA does not charge any administrative fee to the relief fund so 100% of the donations will go towards the relief effort.



April 2022



- The Vaiyavach Committee of JAINA in cooperation with Shrut Ratnakar, Jain Center of Southern California, and Jain Temple of Los Angeles presented a wonderful and original Drama in Gujarati, "Surishvar and Samrat" on April 30, 2022, with an intention of fundraising.

It was attended online by over 500 households from the US and India, where we managed to

raise over 75% of the set goal due to generous donors and the efforts of the team. If you missed watching this drama, please watch it at: <https://youtu.be/D9ZdTOpzB4E>

- The JAINA Women's Committee presented the Financial Literacy Education Seminars that started on April 20th. This series of seminars covers all practical topics in finance. Sessions are held on the third Wednesday of every month on Zoom, open to all and are free. Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83343064735?pwd=Hl4Z1FQd1gyeDhnVmlNMmgvRUdVZz09>
Time – 7:30 PM – 9:00 PM EST
Next seminar is on 15th June 2022.



- Dr. Nitin Shah, during his trip to India in March 2022, was able to connect with the 8 out of 15 hospitals where JAINA donated Oxygen Generator plants in 2021. JAINA and many donors were led by three donors 1) Sarva Mangal Family Trust - Manu & Rika Shah, 2) Drs. Jasvant, and Meera Modi & 3) Wadher Family Foundation - Mahesh & Usha Wadher, who matched others' funds and made these donations possible.

Save the Date!

Bindesh Shah, the first V. P. of JAINA and Convener of the 2023 JAINA Convention invites everyone to the 4-day Convention in Lakeland, Florida from June 30th to July 3rd, 2023.

The convention team recently held a Convention logo competition and is working around the clock on various convention programs, logistics, transportation, and more.

How Biology Prepares Us for Love and Connection

By Summer Allen (February 24, 2022)



Summer Allen, Ph.D., is a Research/Writing Fellow with the Greater Good Science Center. A graduate of Carleton College and Brown University, Summer now writes for a variety of publications including weekly blog posts for the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

(This article originally appeared on “Greater Good”, the online magazine of Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley)

Our brains and bodies are wired for empathy, cooperation, generosity, and connection.

Humans are social creatures with a propensity to connect with others and to form relationships. Our relationships can be sources of fun, gratification, peace, well-being, obsession, love, pain, and grief. They inform the rhythms of our days, the work that we do, and how we feel about ourselves—and they add meaning to our lives.



But our social nature isn't just a product of the way we are raised or the culture we live in. It's actually visible in the design and function of our brains and the inner workings of our bodies, which have evolved to support our complex social lives.

“To the extent that we can characterize evolution as designing our modern brains, this is what our brains were wired for: reaching out to and interacting with others,” writes neuroscientist Matthew Lieberman in his book *Social: Why Our Brains Are Wired to Connect*.

We are each equipped with biological mechanisms that underlie our ability to empathize, cooperate, give, and love. These neural circuits underpin all of our relationships, beginning at birth—and maybe even before.

Wired for Empathy

Anyone who's winced when they've watched a child skin their knee or witnessed a loved one's intense grief knows how visceral empathy can feel. Our ability to empathize, to resonate with people's pain and emotions, is an important driver of how we relate to others.

In fact, a study by neuroscientist Tor Wager and his colleagues found that we have a brain circuit dedicated specifically to empathic care—the positive, motivating feelings that drive us to help others in order to relieve their suffering. This circuit includes the nucleus accumbens and the medial orbitofrontal cortex, brain areas involved in rewarding activities like eating and sex.

By incentivizing our ability to feel warmth and care in the face of another person's suffering, activation of this circuit encourages acts of selflessness and compassion.

Wired for Cooperation and Generosity

Indeed, our brains are hardwired to encourage us to behave socially—even with strangers.

This is exemplified in a study by anthropologist James Rilling and his colleagues. They used functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to scan the brains of 36 women while they each played a game based on the prisoner's dilemma with one other woman. In this game, a player behaving selfishly could win \$60 and their partner would win nothing. If both players cooperated, they both would win \$40.

While participants stood to gain more through making selfish choices, mutual cooperation was the most popular outcome. When partners had mutually cooperative interactions, brain regions involved in

COMMPASSION

reward processing were activated. The researchers propose that this pattern of brain activation is “involved in sustaining cooperative social relationships, perhaps by labeling cooperative social interactions as rewarding, and/or by inhibiting the selfish impulse to accept but not reciprocate an act of altruism.”

The reward system is also activated when people make anonymous charitable donations, according to another study. This suggests that human brains are wired to be able to extend altruism beyond people we know into a more abstract sense of care toward a group of strangers or a moral cause—and feel good doing it.

Wired for Love

Relationships are key to our health and happiness and likely were essential for the survival of our ancestors. As such, it makes sense that our brains are well-equipped to begin forming bonds with others as soon as we are born.

In fact, researcher Martha Welch’s “calming cycle theory” hypothesizes that the earliest relationship—between mother and infant—actually begins before birth via the co-conditioning of mother’s and baby’s autonomic nervous systems.

According to this theory, through dynamic changes in hormone release and heart rate, mother and infant can influence each other’s physiology while the baby is in utero. After the baby is born, sensory information from the mother such as scent, touch, voice, or eye contact can initiate this autonomic response, calming both baby and mother. This is important because infants cannot regulate their emotions on their own and rely on their mothers and other caregivers to help them through periods of distress. The early formation of autonomic co-regulation between mother and baby may help lay the groundwork for a mother’s ability to help calm her infant after periods of separation.

Studies of rats, primates, and other mammals have also identified cortical brain circuits that are involved in forming and maintaining bonds between parents and their offspring. For example, activity in an area of the brain called the orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) appears to be involved in maternal love. OFC activity increases in human mothers viewing their own babies and in infants viewing movies of their smiling mothers.

Some of these same biological mechanisms that underlie the parent-child bond are also important for

our other relationships. The brain’s reward system, for example, is similarly activated by maternal and romantic love. A study by Andreas Bartels and Semir Zeki used fMRI to measure brain activity in mothers viewing photos of their own child, another child they knew, their best friend, and other adult acquaintances. The findings suggest that viewing a photo of their child or their best friend activated overlapping regions of the mother’s reward system (as well as some distinct brain areas). It also led to decreased activity in brain areas involved in social judgment and negative emotions, compared to viewing photos of people they merely knew.



Social Capital Quiz

How strong are your social connections, online and off? Try It Now
https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/social_capital

The researchers conclude, “Human attachment employs a push-pull mechanism that overcomes social distance by deactivating networks used for critical social assessment and negative emotions, while it bonds individuals through the involvement of the reward circuitry, explaining the power of love to motivate and exhilarate.”

The areas of the reward system activated by love also contain receptors for oxytocin, a naturally occurring hormone that plays an important role in attachment. Research suggests that its release decreases stress and anxiety, increases well-being and trust, and may be a biological mechanism that underlies bonding between parent and child, between friends, and between romantic partners.

Another thing that happens in our bodies when we’re bonding is biobehavioral synchrony, where our behavior and biology begin to mirror those of a social contact. When a mother and infant interact, for instance, their heart rhythms, brain activity, and hormone release become matched. Studies suggest that this process prepares babies to be able to

synchronize in future relationships, too. And other studies have found elements of biobehavioral synchrony between romantic partners, friends, and even strangers.

In fact, purposefully synchronizing behavior may be one way to increase intimacy. In one study, strangers who pedaled bicycles in synchrony and romantic partners who imagined walking synchronously with their partner both reported greater feelings of intimacy and closeness than did those asked to pedal asynchronously or to imagine walking out of step with their partner. This suggests that joint movement—whether it occurs naturally or by design—may help people feel more socially connected.

Wired for Touch

Sometimes synchronized activities—such as dancing—can involve touch. Whether it be a kiss, a hug, or a pat on the back, touch can convey comfort, emotion, and affection to the people we care about. Research over the past two decades has found that there is a special pathway in our nervous system that is particularly sensitive to these forms of “social touch.”

In particular, our skin contains a special type of touch receptor that responds to pleasant touch, like the soft brushing of an arm at a medium velocity. These “C-tactile afferents” (also called CT fibers) project to a part of the brain called the insular cortex, which is involved in processing information about emotions and interpersonal experiences. Researchers hypothesize that the social touch pathway conveys

important information to the brain that helps facilitate bonding.

Remarkably, a study found that the insular cortex can also be activated by watching other people have their arms pleasantly stroked. This could represent a form of “neural empathy” that helps us understand the nature of the relationships between the people who surround us, and better allow us to integrate into groups.

Wired for Social Connection

The studies mentioned thus far, along with a rich body of other work, support the social baseline theory (SBT) by psychologists James Coan and David Sbarra. This theory suggests that the human brain operates under the assumption that our interactions with others are a vital resource that helps us stay safe and meet our goals. “At its simplest, SBT suggests that proximity to social resources decreases the cost of climbing both the literal and figurative hills we face, because the brain construes social resources as bioenergetic resources, much like oxygen or glucose,” write Coan and Sbarra.

This suggests that when we don’t have access to social connections, we shift our cognitive and biological resources to focus more on ourselves, leading to distress, ill health, and limited achievement. When our lives are rich in social connection, however, we can move mountains—and, indeed, we are happier, healthier, and more successful.

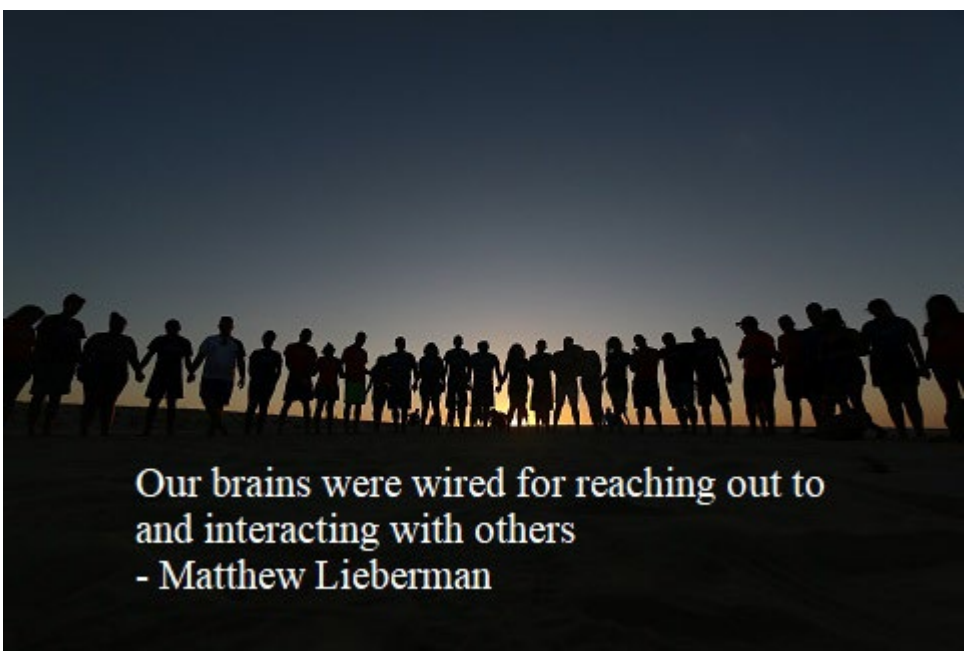
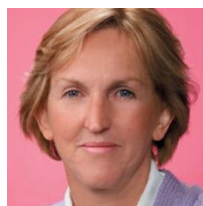


Image by Josephredfield at Pixabay.com

Let's Be Great Ahimsa Ambassadors

By Ingrid Newkirk



Ingrid E. Newkirk is the founder and president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, the largest animal rights organization in the world. Ms. Newkirk speaks internationally on animal rights issues spreading the concepts of animal liberation to the public and teaching activists how to eliminate animal suffering in their own neighborhoods. She is the author of several books, including Animalkind and Free the Animals (30th Anniversary Edition, available May 2022), and has initiated many groundbreaking campaigns against animal abuse in slaughterhouses, circuses, and laboratories around the world.

One of my favorite things to tell people about is this memory: When I was a child growing up in India, my classmates and I would talk about what we aspired to be. Some of the children said film stars or astronauts—I just wished to be a Jain.

Imagine how much kinder our world would be if *everyone*, including Jains who forget the teachings of Jainism, follow Jain values. The true foundations and tenets of Jainism are the world's key to peaceful coexistence and respect, and the practice of ahimsa is perhaps the simplest yet most transformative moral view.

Even with so many competing demands on our time, our daily lives are filled with endless opportunities to make compassionate choices and so spread ahimsa. We can do this by being aware of exactly what we are supporting when we shop; by choosing a nonviolent diet, which means rejecting the separation of beloved calves from their mothers and the shoes and bags made of their skin; and by conducting day-to-day business with high ethics and a determination to avoid the infliction of suffering. We can make every day an example of Bhagwan Mahavir's teachings of respect for life.

From Exploitation to Innovation

The type of Jain I strive to be does not turn a blind eye to the suffering of animals in science education and in laboratories, of course. You may know that not long ago, pregnancy tests were performed by injecting a urine sample into a frog, rabbit, or mouse and waiting to see whether the animal died. That was when experimenters studying HIV seemed to think that injecting hundreds of super-smart chimpanzees with the virus could somehow lead to new AIDS treatments or that blowtorching squealing pigs could advance the study of burns. Horrible experiments on animals like these are still being done—often just to satisfy experimenters' curiosity and only because not enough of us say, "Stop it!"

But scientific and ethical advances have been made at the urging of PETA and others pushing for progress

and because decent people have objected to crude and cruel test methods. Forward-thinking scientists are now using *in vitro* techniques to grow and study human cells and even organs, including skin, hearts, lungs, and stomachs. We have organs-on-chips, which mimic the way the human body responds to genes, drugs, germs, and more. To speed up the development of vital vaccines for COVID-19, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health greenlit landmark human clinical vaccine trials without first requiring time-consuming—and often misleading—tests on animals. PETA members' contributions have allowed us to fund many advancements in this area.

We can all be part of the change. It's easy to start by shopping cruelty-free. (Check out PETA's Beauty Without Bunnies list at PETA.org for thousands of personal-care and household product brands that never test on animals.) If your favorite brands still test on animals, let them know that you won't be buying their products again until they stop. Support only charities and colleges that never fund or conduct experiments on animals. If you're not sure whether they do, ask—and never contribute until you've received a written assurance that animals aren't being used. Oh, and if your child's science class plans to dissect animals, ask the instructor to switch to SynFrog, a hyper-realistic synthetic frog that features removable and anatomically correct organs, is free of formaldehyde, and doesn't involve killing.

Eating Right

In India, images of happy cows are everywhere. The cows who wander the streets sometimes wear garlands, symbols of respect placed around their necks by Hindus or Jains, and people offer them fresh green grass on occasion. Despite their tremendous size, they are as gentle and tame as family dogs. One day, I saw a bullock standing at the entrance of a hut, his head inside the doorway, watching the family do their daily chores or listening to their conversations. Twenty minutes later when I returned down the same street, he was still there, blocking the entire entrance, enjoying the company of his people.

While Jains have made vegetable foods the staples of their diets for millennia, no one can honestly declare that cow's milk is a vegetarian food. I say this because there is, figuratively, a piece of a calf in every glass of milk or dish of yogurt. On today's modern dairy farms in Europe, in the U.S., and yes, now all over India, workers forcibly impregnate (in other words, rape) cows with a syringe and a stick. Shortly



after birth, the terrified calves are taken from their loving mothers so that humans can steal the milk they need. Female calves are turned into milk-making slaves like their mothers, while males are either suffocated or starved and their straw-stuffed bodies tied near their mother, just to try to fool her into continuing to lactate, or some such other horror. What on Earth?! Not very Jain, is it?

As we know, Mahavir taught, "Non-violence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself"—and this is especially true when it comes to dairy. Most of the world's population is lactose intolerant and cannot digest dairy well, resulting in sinus problems and upset stomachs. Doctors also warn that consuming dairy contributes to heart disease, cancer of the reproductive organs, obesity, and other serious and fatal ailments.

Doing Right by the Earth

A report by the United Nations—which has identified animal-based agriculture as a leading cause of greenhouse-gas emissions—says that a global move

toward vegan eating is necessary to combat the climate catastrophe, and University of Oxford researchers found that ditching meat and dairy can slash one's food carbon footprint by 73%.

Dumping dairy is a breeze. When I first went vegan in the 1970s, if you wanted soy milk, you had to find a co-op, buy powder, and hand-mix it. It lumped up and was as awful as it sounds. Now there are no excuses, as you can go to any supermarket and stand there, staring, for 10 minutes just deciding which variety of vegan milk to pick—almond, oat, cashew, hemp, coconut, rice—and which flavor. It's the same with nondairy yogurt, cheese, and ice cream. You can even find vegan ghee! For every cruel thing, there are always kinder options that don't subsidize violence and misery.

Dressing Right

If we are appalled by the idea of eating a cow, we definitely shouldn't wear one, either. Investigative journalist Manfred Karremann and I documented the grueling death marches that cows endure in India as they're taken from one state to another. Forced to trudge 50 to 100 miles, many cows collapse from exhaustion, hunger, or lameness. Herders mercilessly break their tails, smear chili peppers and tobacco into their delicate eyes, and beat them severely to make them keep moving.

More recently, Karremann revealed how, after being shipped halfway around the globe in the leather trade, some cows are so weak and sick that they no longer have the strength to stand up. They're treated as inanimate cargo, not thinking, feeling beings—hoisted off docked ships by one leg using a crane (which can cause excruciatingly painful joint dislocations and broken legs) and then dropped onto a slaughterhouse-bound truck. Having stood on a slaughterhouse floor, I cherish fabrics like cotton, corduroy, and satin and welcome the wonderful leathers made of discarded temple flowers, recycled plastics, even apple peels.

Sheep are such gentle individuals that children sing nursery rhymes about them, and adults count them to help us fall asleep. But in the global wool industry, shearers drag sheep by the legs, punch and kick them, slam them to the floor, and more. Angora rabbits scream in pain as workers violently rip out their fur. Snakes are beaten with hammers, cut open with razorblades, and even skinned alive.

But there's good news here, too: As the momentum against animal skins, feathers, and fleece grows, so do consumers' choices. Innovative options—like

cashmere made from milkweed and soybeans, wool made from recycled plastic bottles and hemp, and down made from eucalyptus—are on the rise and are being embraced by brands big and small. There are many innovative ways people around the world are making plant based leather. A company in Mexico, “Adriano Di Marti” creates “Desserto”, leather made from prickly pear cactus, is meeting the growing demand for ethical fashions. The international retail giant H&M featured it in a collection showcasing sustainable materials.



An Italian designer is creating leather labelled as Vegea, from wine. Everything from the stalks to the seeds of grapes are used to create the leather. (www.vegeacompany.com)



India’s Kanpur Flower cycling company “phool.co” created Fleather, biodegradable leather made from discarded temple flowers that would otherwise end up in the Ganges! (www.phool.co)

Another company “Malai.eco” in Kerala in South India is creating leather from coconut. (www.malai.eco)

The global demand for humane, sustainable materials is so strong that companies now have tools to verify that their clothing is 100% animal-free. The latest addition to AMSlab’s vegan testing kit even looks for carmine, a red dye made from crushed insects. Whether you’re shopping for clothes or cushions, always choose something vegan—not someone. Vote with your wallet and use the power of your purse.

“Ahimsa Up” Every Aspect of Life

Opportunities to make a difference for animals abound. You can incorporate helping animals into your work life by starting a 30-day vegan challenge in your office or raving about cruelty-free products to coworkers. Educators can use PETA’s TeachKind lessons and activities in the classroom to help shape a new generation into caring individuals who treat animals with respect. Each of us can be a good neighbor by offering to take “forgotten” dogs—those kept chained or penned—for walks and visiting them regularly. If you live in India, street dogs and cats ache for our love and sustenance.

We can shun cruel entertainment by never buying tickets to attractions that feature animal performances or use animals as living props, including circuses, temples where elephants are used for begging (even some Jain temples!), or marine parks. If you see elephants, camels, horses, or other animals in ceremonies or being forced to give rides, steer clear. These animals are often lame from standing on concrete, often chained in place, and are smacked with bullhooks—heavy batons with a sharp steel hook on one end—to keep them plodding in endless circles. Horses used in weddings are outfitted with spiked bits that are extremely painful so that they won’t bolt or buck when the trumpets and drums start.

To be kind, we must *do*. So in everything we do, let’s try to educate others, stop cruel behavior, and bring about a revolution in the way humans treat other animals. In short, be an ahimsa ambassador. For more ways to put compassion into action, visit PETA.org. And to find out who animals are, please read my latest book, *Animalkind: Remarkable Discoveries About Animals and Revolutionary New Ways to Show Them Compassion*.

आत्मीय संत की दस आज्ञाएं (भाग - २)

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.

इस लेख के पहले भाग में - जो फरवरी २०२२ के जैन डाइजैस्ट में प्रस्तुत किया था - आत्मीय संत की चार आज्ञाओं का निवेदन किया था. वो चार आज्ञाएं इस प्रकार थी:

- १) योग्यता/पात्रता बढ़नी चाहिए
- २) सद्गुरु के प्रति भक्ति बढ़ाओ
- ३) वांचन के साथ विचार
- ४) सत्संग करना चाहिए

अब इस लेख के दूसरे और आखिरी भाग में बाकी छह आज्ञाओं का विवेचन प्रस्तुत है.

५) व्यवहार शुद्धि करो

व्यवहार शुद्धि यानी दुनियादारी के कामकाज की पवित्रता. व्यवहार में शुद्धिकरण अथवा व्यवहार की पवित्रता. जितनी व्यवहार में शुद्धता होगी आत्माको उतना ही लाभ होगा. सांसारिक व्यवहार और पारमार्थिक व्यवहार दोनों में शुद्धिकरण होता है. उदाहारण के तौर पर व्यवहार में शुद्धता आएगी तो पति के लिए भक्ति अपने आप उपजेगी क्योंकि पति एक दूसरा आत्मस्वरूप दिखेगा, गुणों का भंडार दिखेगा, उसकी बात उसके समझ में आएगी, मान भाव टूटेगा और हूँ पना जाएगा. बहुत बार मुझे तकलीफ होती थी यह निति पूर्वक जीवन जीने में; खासकर जब सामने वाले मेरा फायदा उठा जाते थे. जब यही बात मैंने पूज्यश्री से बोली तो उन्होंने कहा, " तुम्हारा है ही क्या की कोई लेकर कुछ जाएगा ? तुम्हारे पास सिर्फ तुम्हारी आत्मा है और यह अच्छी बात है की अगर लोग unwanted चीज़ें ले जाएँ हमारे पास से." पूज्यश्री के इस बोध और करुणा ने मुझे हिला दिया और आँखें खोल दी. इस पर से मुझे तीन बातें समझ में आयी 1) मेरा स्वछंद 2) मेरा मिथ्यात्व की 'सुब कुछ मेरा है' 3) गुरु आज्ञा. पूज्यश्री का मार्गदर्शन नीति पर मेरे हर काम या decision का आधार है.

६) विनय गुण को विकसाओ

मान और मताग्रह बहुत ही आड़े आते हैं विनय को विकसित करनेमें; परन्तु मेरे captain की आज्ञा आराधने से बहुत फरक आया जीवन में. विनय भक्ति मुमुक्षु का धर्म है. विनय सिर्फ सद्गुरु के प्रति नहीं परन्तु विनय स्व के साथ -अपनी आत्मा के साथ, पर के साथ, अपनी पुस्तक के साथ, पारमार्थिक मार्ग के साथ, और हर जीव के प्रति विनय आने से धर्म सच्चे अर्थ में ग्रहण होता है. पूज्यश्री ने आज्ञा दी है की घर में अपने से बड़ो के चरण स्पर्श करो सुबह उठकर. उससे मान भाव टूटा और सम्बन्धों में फरक आया. इस ही विनय से आज्ञा आराधन में भी बहुत फरक पड़ा. इस ही विनयसे स्व के दोष और पर के गुण नज़र आने लगे.

७) बारह अभ्यंतर और चार बाह्यांतर भावनाओं का मनन और चिंतन करो

स्व के आध्यात्मिक और वैराग्य वृत्ति के विकास के लिए बारह अभ्यंतर भावना अत्यंत महत्त्वपूर्ण हैं और चार बाह्यांतर भावनाओं का स्मरण नित्य अपने आस पास सब जीवों के प्रति शुभ भाव रखवाता है. 12 भावना हर जीव के चिंतन (contemplation) करने के लिए बताई है जिससे बुद्धि अपने आपको धार्मिक, शांति, आध्यात्मिक विकास, और कर्म रहित विचारों में व्यस्त रखे. यह भावनाएं परमार्थ में सहायक होती हैं जिससे विचारों में शुद्धता आती है. सरलता और शुद्ध भावों से परमार्थ हो पाता है. पारमार्थिक ज़िन्दगी का मूल है यह भावनाएं और इनका मनन करके वैराग्य प्रगट होता है. जब हम उपयोग और लक्ष्य को

याद रखते हैं तब चार बाह्यांतर भावनाएं बहुत काम आती हैं। इन चारों से स्व का दुसरे जीवों के साथ आचरण बदलता है और आत्मा का विकास होता है। प्रमोद और मैत्री भावना का स्मरण और उपयोग करने से मुझे बहुतही लाभ हुआ है।

८) संसार भाव कम करो और वैराग्य बढ़ाओ

“वैराग्य” संसार के प्रति अरुचिभाव और संसार सुख के लिए वासना का मंद होना कहते हैं। सद्गुरु स्वयं गृहस्थाश्रम में रहकर भी अखंड त्याग, वैराग्य, योग दशा में रहते हैं जो एक अद्भुत दशा है। इस अद्भुत वैराग्य को देखकर वह योग्यता प्राप्त मुमुक्षु के लिए वैराग्य और भक्ति बढ़ने के निमित्त बनते हैं। अंतरंग से वैराग्य भाव आएगा तब उसे विवेक भी प्रगटेगा, उससे जड़ और चेतन (सत और असत) की समझ पक्की होती है। अंतरंग सुख मिलता है और बाह्य पदार्थ में आकर्षण कम होता है। विचार शक्ति बढ़ती है। आकर्षण कम होता है तो देहाध्यास कम हो जाता है और कर्मबंधन नहीं होता।

९) नव तत्त्व और ६ द्रव्य को समझो और विचार करो

6 द्रव्य और 9 तत्त्व पढ़ने और जानने की आज्ञा मिली तो इस जगत में अपना अस्तित्व समझ में आया और विवेक जागृत हुआ। सम्यकत्व और आत्मज्ञान पाने की कशिश जागृत हुई। हेय, ज्ञेय और उपाधेय की समझ आयी, मोक्ष मार्ग की समझ आयी। जीव तत्त्व को क्या पुरुषार्थ करना होगा उसको जानने की अभिलाषा जागी। 6 द्रव्य को जानने से एक अनोखा सुख प्राप्त हुआ। मृत्यु का भय कम हुआ। आत्मा है और नित्य है उसकी समझ आयी। इस लोकाकाश के 6 द्रव्यों में से जीव नाम के द्रव्य के बारे में सुनकर एक आश्चर्य प्रद अनुभूति हुई। सद्गुरु की इस आज्ञा से स्व को जानने की यात्रा शुरू हुई। मान भाव और कषायों की श्रृंखला का टूटना शुरू हुआ। यह आज्ञा तो बहुत ही महत्व पूर्ण थी स्व से परिचय करवाने के लिए। मैं कौन हूँ, क्या स्वरूप है मेरा, मैं यहाँ क्यों हूँ, कहाँ जाऊँगी इत्यादि जैसे प्रश्नों का खुलासा हुआ।

१०) विवेक से हर काम करो

अटूट श्रद्धा बढ़ने पर विवेक हाजिर होगा। स्व और पर, सत और असत का भेद, श्रद्धा बढ़ने से समझ आएगा क्योंकि अभी तक सत को असत समझा था और असत को सत समझा था। विवेक ही धर्म का मूल है और आत्मस्वरूप को तो बिना विवेक के समझ ही नहीं सकते। इस ही विवेक के कारण ही जगत के प्रति वैराग्य की शुरुआत होती है। हर पदार्थ को अत्यंत विवेक से पांचों इन्द्रियों के बल से देख कर समझना की 'यह तो पर पदार्थ है और इसमें रूचि रखना योग्य नहीं' यह सद्गुरु के योग बल से विवेक प्रगट होने का प्रताप है। यह शरीर भी मेरा नहीं है इस सत्य को समझने की शक्ति भी सद्गुरु के बोध से हुई। सद्गुरु की उच्च दशा होने के कारण वह बता सकते हैं जो शिष्य अज्ञानवश नहीं समझ सकता/सकती।

जीवन जीने की कला इन दस आज्ञाओं को अपने जीवन में उतारने से आती है। जैसे की पहले कहा है की शिष्य यह आज्ञाएं अकेले नहीं पालता, गुरु उसके साथ हर पग पर रहते हैं। पर इस आज्ञा को पालने में अगर चूके तो गुरु की डांट भी पड़ सकती है। गुरु की डांट का प्रहार अपने ऊपर पड़े तो अपने आपको भाग्यशाली समझना चाहिए। जिसको मारनहार मिल गया है तो समझो उसको तारणहार मिल गया है। और जिसको तारणहार मिल गया है तो वह मोक्ष की कतार में खड़ा है। जब हम गुरु की आज्ञा अपने जीवन में उतारते हैं अपना सर्व समर्पण करके सद्गुरु के सामने, तो वह हमें अपने से अलग नहीं देखते। तब गुरु बस निकल पड़ते हैं अपने शिष्य को ऐसा सुधारने में जैसे की खुद ही को सुधार रहे हों। हम सबको ज़रूरत है की हम अपने करुणाशील पूज्यश्री की शरण में जाकर अपनी भक्ति को शुद्ध करें। इन दस आज्ञाओं को पालने का परिणाम क्या होगा? हमारा मान कटेगा, विवेक आएगा, प्रेम और विनय खिलेंगे, संसार भाव कटेगा और हम वैराग्य की तरफ प्रयाणशील होंगे। गुरु की आज्ञा संसार से ज़्यादा अच्छी लगने लगेगी। जीवन जीने की कला समझ में आ जायेगी। गुरु के साथ प्रेम सगाई और प्रेम लगनी की शुरुआत हो जायेगी। कबीरदासजी ने कहा है:

गुरु को सिर राखिये, चलिये आज्ञा माहिं।

कहैं कबीर ता दास को, तीन लोकों भय नाहिं ॥

अर्थ: गुरु को अपना सिर मुकुट मानकर, उसकी आज्ञा मैं चलो। कबीरदास कहते हैं, ऐसे शिष्य को तीनों लोकों से भय नहीं है।

Acharya Samrat Dr. Shiv Muni Ji – A Pious Soul

By Savita Jain



Savita Jain is a multi-talented individual who has dedicated herself to the community through many volunteer activities locally, nationally, and internationally. She volunteers her time to teach the proper pronunciation and meaning of Jain sutras to students all around the world and has taught over 60 adults and 25 kids more than 18 sutras. She is humbled, and considers herself very fortunate to be able to write about the exemplary life of Pujya Shri Acharya Samrat ji



Dr. Shiv Kumar, popularly known and reverentially addressed by the Jain followers as the Acharya Samrat Dr. Shiv Muni Ji Maharajsaheb, the spiritual head of the Jains, is a pious soul whose inner piety and goodness gets reflected in the divine resplendence on his face.

Early Years

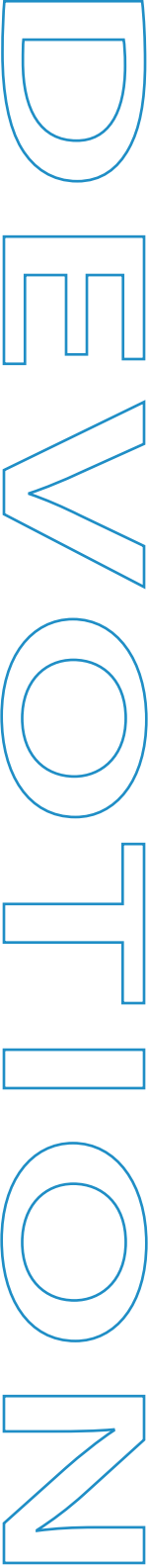
Born in Punjab in 1942 in an affluent and respected Oswal family to his mother, Vidhya Devi, and father, Chiranjiv Lal Ji, he was the middle of 7 children. He grew up learning about Jainism from his parents and grandparents. At the young age of seven, during a visit to his maternal grandparents, he met Upadhyay Pravartak Parampujya Shri Fulchandji Maharajsaheb and under his guidance learned *Samayik* and *Pratikraman*. He was always eager to

serve Sadhu-Sadhvis in any way he could. It was then that the seed of diksha was planted in his mind at such a young age.

From his early years, he would often wonder “*What kind of meditation Bhagwan Mahavir Swami had engaged in that allowed him to connect with his soul to such a great extent?*”

Student Life – Punjab to USA and Back

He did his Master’s in Philosophy from Punjab University, and Master’s in English Literature from J.V. Jain College, Saharanpur. His education, however, could not satiate his hunger for truth. Rather the acquisition of higher academic knowledge further intensified his desire for high spiritual knowledge. During his student life, he visited various countries including America, Canada, England, Switzerland,



and several others. His family was sure that he would change, and perhaps even give up on the idea of taking Diksha. However, the material comforts and wealth he saw abroad failed to tempt and bind him. Upon returning home, he began living as a Sadhu in his own home, and firmly but respectfully declined getting into the institution of marriage.

Diksha and Yuvacharya

He entered the sadhu-jeevan on 17th May 1972 as a disciple of Gyan Muni Ji, a well-known Jain scholar. All along the question about Bhagwan Mahavir's method of meditation never left his mind. To further gain insight into this question, he began an intensive study of Jain philosophy and theology. He completed his Ph.D. on the topic "Doctrine of Liberation in Indian Religions, with special reference to Jainism." Later, he completed his D.Litt. on "Concept And Practice of Meditation among Indian Religions, especially Jainism."

Within a few years, he started delivering sermons to Jain tenets throughout India. He was welcomed and liked by the people for his personal piety and simplicity. It was during this sojourn that the *Sraman Sangh* selected him as its first Yuva Acharya in 1987 at a conclave at Pune, Maharashtra. He was also given permission to teach *Shravaks* and *Shravikas* Dhyana-Sadhana (meditation).

While enhancing his knowledge of the Jain religion, he also vowed to do *Varshitap* - and has continued doing so ceaselessly for the past 35 years.

Becoming Acharya

On 9th June 1999, he was declared *Acharya*, the spiritual head of the *Sraman Sangh*, and leader of more than 1200 *sadhus* and *sadhvis* and millions of followers. On the day of declaration, at Lal Kila, New Delhi, it had seemed like the entire Delhi population - from *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis* to politicians to everyday people had come out to see him become an *Acharya*.

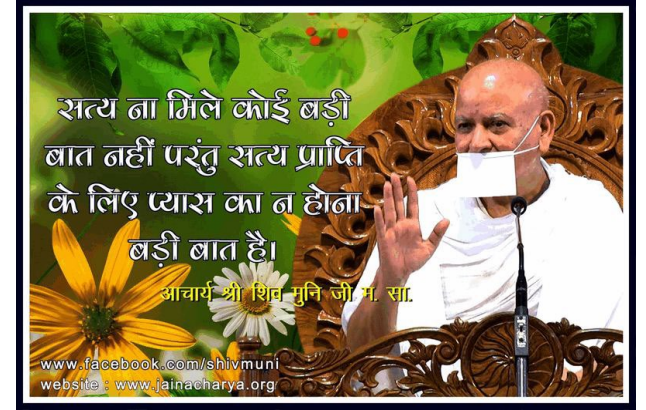
Searching for Truth through Dhyana Sadhana (Meditation)

Even while fulfilling his duties as Acharya, he never lost sight of his main guiding purpose - meditation. He invented 5 vidhis:

- 1) *Prarthana Dhyana* 2) *Sohum Dhyana* 3) *Kohum Dhyana* 4) *Yoga Nidra* 5) *Me aur Mera*

These vidhis provide a framework for meditation for us all. Details of these vidhis are found on Jainacharya.org.

Under his guidance, a Dhyana Sadhana Kendra has been constructed near Nasik. Thousands of people visit this site each day and experience the life-changing impacts of these types of Dhyana. Meditation awakens the inner potential of the people for fulfillment, bringing forth an effortless, joyous, and ecstatic life.



Today, due to Acharya Ji's tireless efforts, the *Sraman Sangh* has 1400 *Sadhus* and *Sadhvis*, who are advancing Bhagwan Mahavir's teachings in today's modern world. At the age of 80 years old, he is continuing to follow *Dhyana Sadhna*, *Dharma Aradhna*, and *Varshitap Sadhana*. Whoever comes close to him experiences a feeling of instant calm in the face of his sheer tranquility. With utmost respect and gratitude, we wish for Pujya Maharajsaheb's long life and wish that he finds the ultimate truth that he has spent years searching.

References:

<https://jainacharya.org/>

हम आपके दीर्घायु की, तपस्या की, संयम यात्रा की सुख साता पूछते हैं।

आपश्री सभी गुणस्थानो को पार करते हुए अपने - लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करे यही सहृदय मंगल भावना भाते है।

सद्गुरु की महिमा अनंत, अनंत किया उपकार।
लोचन अनंत उघाड़िया, अनंत दिखावन हार।।

Characteristics of a Devotee

Anop R. Vora, Fort Myers, FI



Anop Vora is involved in Community services and Promotion of Professional Education in the Jain Community. His current interests include listening to the Spiritual Discourses, Meditation, Reading and Writing on the religious topics. e-mail: vora5000@yahoo.com

My mother had no education, but she was a strong devotee of Lord Dharmanath in a small village located in Vallabhipur/Bhavnagar area. There was a midsize, nice temple in our village where the statue of this lord was designated as “Mul Nayak” meaning the Primary Idol. She grew up in the Mehta family in another village near Shatrunjay where devotion and Jain way of life were practiced every day. When she came to the Vora family, she taught all of her 11 children the value of temple worship and the importance of behaving like a true Jain. She made sure we went to the temple 3 times a day and worshiped the Lord. She would not serve us any meal before making sure we had gone to the temple. I feel that although she did not know any scriptures, her insight and conduct came from her strong devotion to the core Jain values. Her faith was boundless and unshakeable. She did not have any doubts. Just the strong faith steered her life despite the challenges of raising a large family. Her deep devotion towards the Lord was well recognized and respected by all the family members. She gave spiritual wings and a strong foundation to the family members - all of whom benefited immensely later in life.

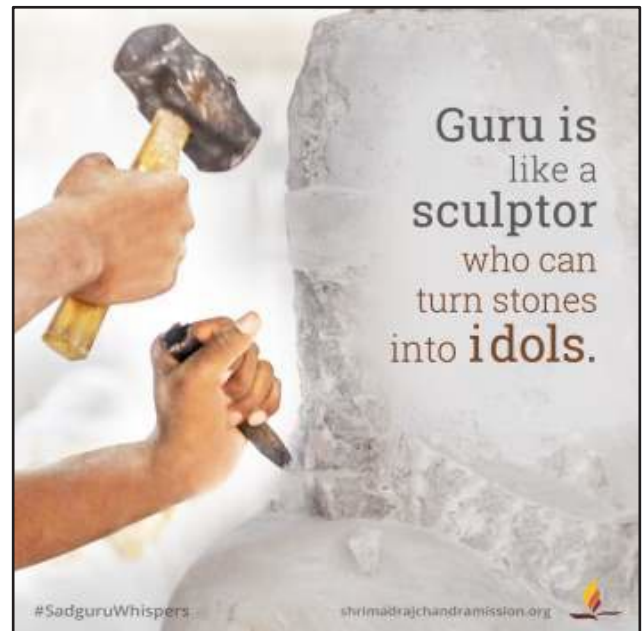
Path of Devotion (Bhakti Marg) Vs. Path of Knowledge (Gyan Marg)

Before we review the characteristics of a devotee, let us look at the age-old debate surrounding devotion and knowledge. Some of us feel that devotion is old fashioned and is based upon blind faith and therefore we - “The Civilized People” need to shy away from it. The truth is that Jainism is not asking us to accept anything blindly. In fact, it is encouraging us to expand our knowledge base by getting help from the spiritually enlightened and selfless people. However, many of us do not take the time to acquire spiritual knowledge with full focus and therefore we lack in understanding the essence of religion and keep holding the wrong notions. We do not seem to recognize the limitations arising from our own lifestyle such as deep conditioning, limited intellectual capacity, narrow attention span, and impure mind and therefore we fail to recognize the value of Gyan Marg. We claim we have understood but in many cases, we don't. This being the case, it seems logical that we should accept our own shortcomings and show

respect and devotion to those who have expounded the deeper meaning of spirituality based upon their knowledge and personal experience. Devotion makes it easy for us to accept the teachings of the Lord even when we do not understand and mold our life accordingly. This phenomenon is no different than how we rebelled when our parents gave us a piece of advice that we did not like at the time but realized its real value after we grew up. The two different paths of devotion and knowledge both need to have a place in our hearts to derive benefits from each. True devotees are aware of this approach. They think, speak, and act accordingly.

How the devotees are different from others

The devotees who walk on the path of devotion are different from most of us. They operate at a different wavelength compared to the non-devotees. Not that they do not have questions; but at some point they discard the mental gymnastics and develop full faith in the Lord's (Sadguru's) teachings and start practicing them every moment of their awakening.



They transcend the intellect. They start believing that neither the Lord nor the Sadguru had any intention of

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misleading the people. They are convinced that if they followed the path shown by them, it would definitely accelerate their spiritual progress and eventually achieve liberation. Due to their unflinching faith, they surrender themselves totally to either or both of the two spiritual entities (*Dev and Sadguru*) and use them as divine support (*Avlamban*) to bring about a transformation in their thoughts, speech, and action. Their inner self is focused on them around the clock. This becomes their primary focus away from the worldly mundane activities.

The devotees develop a pure heart and get fully absorbed in the Lord's teachings leading to love for the Lord. This absorption eventually takes them to the state of pure soul-state of Lord.



If we study Indian history, we will come to know that Mirabai and Narsinh Mehta had these attributes. Their devotion for Lord Krishna showed up in their hymns, popular songs, relationship with the worldly souls and daily activities. Mahatma Gandhi also had total faith in God as he fought with British rule for over 30 years for India's independence. In fact, he once said " Without the deep faith in God, I would have gone totally insane." The devotion of these great individuals showed up in their flawless, praiseworthy, and pure character. They did not have any hidden agendas. Unfavorable situations did not perturb them. They remained calm, peaceful and their lives have become a constant source of inspiration to mankind.

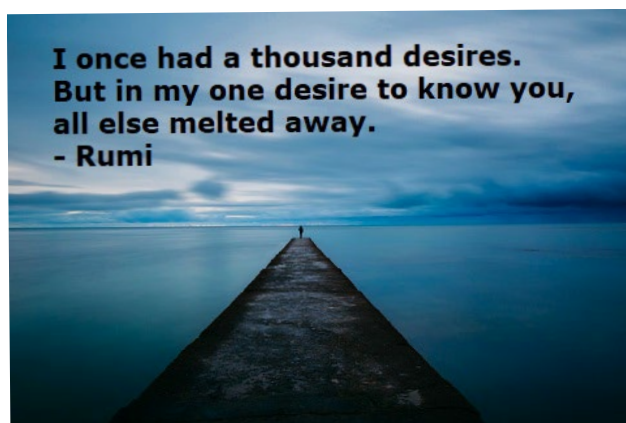
Devotees are in a non-reactive mode

The devotees are full of humility, display no trace of ego in daily conduct, and consider themselves a non-entity like a peck of dirt in the vast universe. They have no interest in seeking a worldly status. Nor do

they have a sense of doer-ship; knowing and believing deeply that life events occurring every moment are driven by Karmic fruition. They have formed a firm conviction that their main duty is not to react with toxic emotions arising from attachment and aversion (*Raag and Dwesh*) to the happenings of daily life. They have come to believe that one independent substance (*Dravya*) cannot bring about a change in another independent substance and that is the reason they never blame anyone else for their unfavorable situations. Their lives are driven by deep belief in and continual reflection on these core concepts. They do not get swayed by the daily vicissitudes of life, take everything in stride and remain peaceful and serene.

Devotees are on a path to achieve full potential

As devotees make further progress in their pious journey, their deep faith at some point turns into pure and selfless love towards *Dev* and/or *Guru*. They immerse themselves into the ocean of love and get a huge spiritual uplift. Their minds lose negativity and acquire positive vibrations. They become totally innocent like a young child and harbor no bad feelings towards anyone. They stop wasting their time in future imaginations and brooding about past events and spend every available moment not just in remembering but also put into action the powerful teachings of the Lord. They are forever grateful to the spiritual entities and can't stop praising their virtues. Their perspective and outlook puts their lives on a visionary path.



(Image by 12019 at Pixabay.com)

Blessed are those who have benefited greatly by recognizing the power of devotion and redirecting their lives accordingly. Let us all hope that we can follow their footsteps and make our lives more serene, tranquil, and meaningful.

त्याग धर्म है और दान पुण्य

By Mrs. Pallavi Manjeet Bagi



Mrs. Pallavi Bagi is from Kolhapur, India. She received her master's degree (M.A.) in Jainology and Prakrit from Shivaji University, Kolhapur in 2014. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. degree in Jainology and Prakrit at Shivaji University.

मानव समाज की विशेषताएं संस्कृति से स्पष्ट होती हैं। ताकि वह संस्कृति सभ्यता के माध्यम से पूरी दुनिया में सबके आगे आए। इस दुनिया में ऐसी कई संस्कृतियां उभरी हैं। उसमें जैन संस्कृति सबसे प्राचीन है। यह अक्षुण्ण (अखंडित), समृद्ध, सुशिक्षित, सुसंस्कृत, विभिन्न कलात्मक विशेषताओं से परिपूर्ण, आर्थिक रूप से आत्मनिर्भर है।

भारतीय संस्कृति में हमारे धर्माचार्य-सन्त-महन्तों ने धर्म की परिभाषा अपने अपने विचारों द्वारा कहने का प्रयास किया है। जैसे कि जैनाचार्यों के शब्दों में -

“धम्मो वत्थुसहावो खमादिभावो य दसविहोधम्मो । रयणत्तयं च धम्मो, जीवाणं रक्खणं धम्मो” ॥ ४७६ ॥
- कार्तिकेयानुप्रेक्षा

वस्तु का जो स्वभाव है वही धर्म है, धर्म का मूल दर्शन है, उत्तम क्षमादि लक्षण वाला दशप्रकार का धर्म, जीवोंकी रक्षा करना धर्म है। रत्नत्रय ही धर्म है। वस्तुतः कहा जाए तो, धर्म को किसी जाति या मत/पंथ से नहीं जोड़ा जा सकता। क्योंकि धर्म तो वस्तु का स्वभाव है। अतः वह एक ही है, अनेक नहीं हो सकते। व्यवहार में उसको पालने वाले तथा, अपने अपने ढंग से जाननेवाले अनेक हो सकते हैं। माया - मोह में पड़ा हुआ यह मानव सांसारिक क्षणिक सुख में ही जीना इसलिए पसंद करता है कि इसे वस्तुस्वरूप के प्रति श्रद्धा और ज्ञान का न होना कारण है।

**सर्वस्व को त्यागने का नाम त्याग है और अंश को छोड़ने का नाम दान है।
सद्पात्र को दान देना ही गृहस्थ का धर्म है...
दाणं पूया मुख्खं, सावयधम्मे ण सावया तेण विणा...।११। रयणसार पा.न.११**

सुपात्र में चार प्रकार का दान (आहारदान, औषधिदान, ज्ञानदान, अभयदान) देना और श्री- देवशास्त्र - गुरु की पूजा करना श्रावक का मुख्य धर्म है। नित्य इन दोनों को जो अपना मुख्य कर्तव्य मानकर पालन करता है वही श्रावक है। धर्मात्मा दानरूप त्याग के द्वारा जो आनंद-सुख को प्राप्त होता है, वह केवल स्व को ही नहीं, पर को भी होता है। पर की प्रीति के लिए अपनी वस्तु को देना त्याग या दान कहलाता है।

जब हम जिस चीज का त्याग कर रहे हैं या दान दे रहे हैं, उसके प्रति हमारे मन में किसी प्रकार का मोह - ममता - मान - सम्मान पाने का लोभ न हो। क्योंकि जिस वस्तु के प्रति मोह के सद्भाव में कर्मों का बंध होता है, वही वस्तु मोह के अभाव में निर्जरा का कारण बन जाती है। बंधन से मुक्ति की ओर जाने का सरलतम उपाय यदि कोई है तो वह दान देना और त्याग करना है। इसीलिये आगम में गृहस्थ धर्म में दान की प्रधानता मानी गई है। आहार दान, औषध दान, उपकरण दान और आवासदान, इन चार की आवश्यकताओं पर यह संसार टिका हुआ है। किसको क्या आवश्यकता है? और कितनी आवश्यक है? कब, किसको, क्या देना, यह सब दाताका विवेक गुण कहलाता है। त्याग दान है। वह तीन प्रकार का है आहारदान, अभयदान और ज्ञानदान। उसे शक्तिके अनुसार विधिपूर्वक देना यथाशक्ति त्याग है।



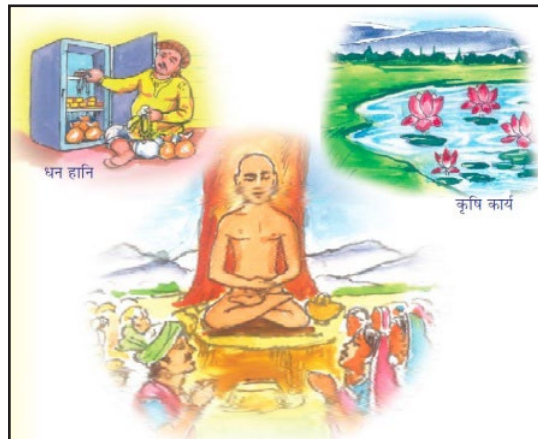
भोजन दान देने पर तीनों दान दिये जाते हैं। क्योंकि प्राणियों को भूख और प्यास रूपी व्याधि प्रतिदिन होती है। भोजन के बल से ही साधु रात दिन शास्त्र का अभ्यास करते हैं और भोजन दान देने पर प्राणों की भी रक्षा होती है। आहार दान देने से विद्या, धर्म, तप, ज्ञान, मोक्ष सभी नियम से दिया हुआ समझना चाहिए। मुनियों के लिए योग्य ऐसे आहारादि चीजें देना सो त्यागधर्म है।

जिस पर अनुग्रह करना आवश्यक है ऐसे दुखी प्राणियों को दयापूर्वक मन, वचन, काय की शुद्धता से **अभयदान** देना दयादत्ति है। मरणभय से भयमुक्त सब जीवों को जो अभय दान है वही दान सब दानों में उत्तम है और वह दान सब आचरणों में प्रधान आचरण है।

शास्त्रज्ञान के बिना मनुष्य को हित -अहित ,पाप -पुण्य का विवेक नहीं होता, इसलिए उत्तम तत्त्वों को प्रकट करने के लिए शास्त्रदान देना चाहिए। ज्ञानवृद्धि के निमित्त मुनि एवम आर्यिकाओं को शास्त्रदान प्रदान करना ज्ञानदान है। सदाचारी पुरुष के द्वारा मुनि के लिए जो प्रेमपूर्वक आगम का व्याख्यान किया जाता है, पुस्तक दी जाती है, तथा संयम की साधनभूत पीछी आदि भी दी जाती है उसे त्यागधर्म कहा जाता है।



औषधिदान - यह शरीर यद्यपि व्याधियों का घर भी है। यदि किसी कारण वह किसी भी तरह की अस्वस्थता, रोग होने की जानकारी हो तो उसके निवारणार्थ शुद्ध औषधि दान करना, औषध दान है। औषध दान करने से निरोग शरीर प्राप्त होता है। इसलिए विवेकवान गृहस्थ इस बात का विशेष ध्यान रखता है। वह उचित रीति से औषध दान करता है। वीतराग श्रेयस मार्ग में त्याग का महत्त्व सर्वोपरि है। इसीलिये इसका निर्देश गृहस्थों के लिये दान के रूप में तथा साधुओं के लिये परिग्रहत्याग व्रत व त्यागधर्म के रूप में किया गया है। आगम में तो यहाँ तक कहा गया है कि अपनी शक्ति को न छिपाकर इस धर्म की भावना करने वाला तीर्थंकर प्रकृति का बंध करता है। त्याग धर्म हमें यही सिखाता है, कि मन को संतोषी बनाकर ही इच्छाओं और भावनाओं का त्याग करना मुमकिन है। त्याग की भावना भीतरी आत्मा को शुद्ध बनाने पर ही होती है।



दान के लिए धन की इच्छा अज्ञान है

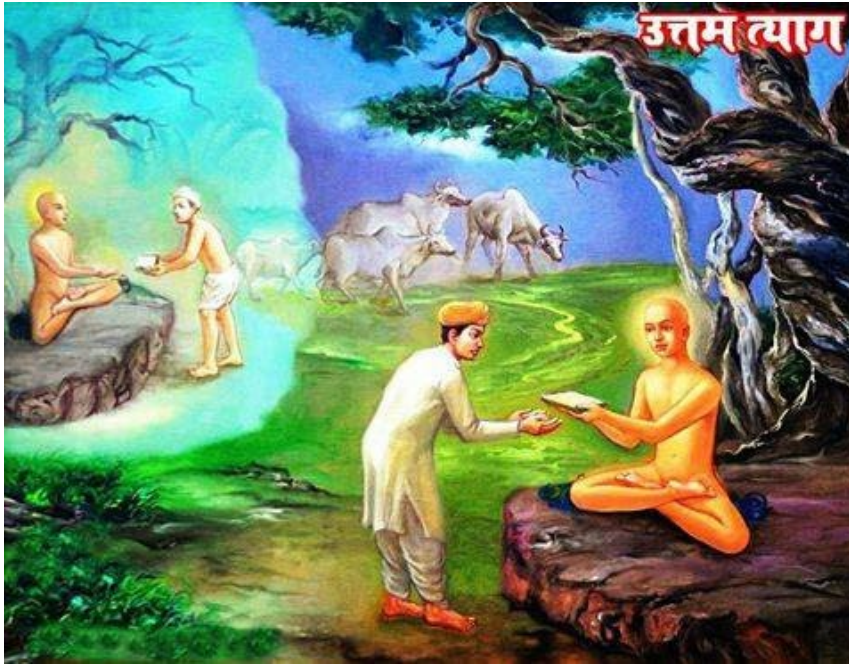
त्यागाय श्रेयसे वित्तमवित्तः संचिनोति यः। स्वशरीरं स पंकेन स्यास्यामीति विलिम्पति ।१६।

- इष्टोपदेश पा.न.२७

जो निर्धन मनुष्य पात्रदान, देवपूजा आदि प्रशस्त कार्यों के लिए अपूर्व पुण्य प्राप्ति और पाप विनाश की आशा से सेवा, कृषि और वाणिज्य आदि कार्यों के द्वारा धन उपार्जन करता है वह मनुष्य अपने निर्मल शरीर में 'स्नान कर लूँगा' इस आशा से कीचड़ लपेटता है। इसलिए आचार्यों ने कहा है, दान देने के लिए धन की इच्छा करना अज्ञान है।

पर की प्रीति के लिए अपनी वस्तु को देना त्याग है। आहार देने से पात्र को उस दिन प्रीति होती है। अभयदान से उस भव का दुःख छूटता है, अतः पात्र को संतोष होता है। ज्ञानदान तो अनेक सहस्र भवों के दुःख से छुटकारा दिलाने वाला है। ये तीनों दान यथाविधि दिये गये त्याग कहलाते हैं।

भोग विलास की चीजों और क्रोध, मान, माया, लोभ का त्याग सबसे बड़ा माना गया है और महत्वपूर्ण भी। त्याग करने से लोभ और मोह कम होता है। दान और त्याग में फर्क यह है, कि दान अपने लिये थोड़ा रख कर, थोड़ा दिया जाता है, जबकि त्याग में पूरा का पूरा छोड़ा जाता है। दान दूसरे की अपेक्षा से दिया जाता है, त्याग किसी की अपेक्षा से नहीं सिर्फ वस्तु को छोड़ा जाता है। त्याग अप्रिय चीजों का जैसे – कमजोरियाँ, बुराईयाँ इनका भी होता है। त्याग और दान, अहंकार और बदले की भावना से नहीं करना चाहिये।



त्याग की परिभाषा श्री प्रवचनसार की तात्पर्यवृत्ति नामक टीका (गाथा २३९/१)में आचार्य जयसेन ने इसप्रकार दी है – निज शुद्धात्मा के ग्रहणपूर्वक बाह्य और अभ्यन्तर परिग्रह से निवृत्ति त्याग है। रत्नत्रय से युक्त जीवों के लिए अपने वित्त का त्याग करने या, रत्नत्रय के योग्य साधनों के प्रदान करने की इच्छा का नाम दान है। बंधन से मुक्ति की ओर जाने का सरलतम उपाय यदि कोई है तो वह यही कि दान देना और त्याग करना। अहंकार का त्याग करने से आत्मा को बल मिलता है। त्याग धर्म हमें यही सिखाता है, कि मन को संतोषी बनाकर ही इच्छाओं और भावनाओं का त्याग करना मुमकिन है। त्याग की भावना भीतरी आत्मा को शुद्ध बनाने पर ही होती है। 'दान व्यवहारधर्म है और 'त्याग' निश्चयधर्म।

गहराई से विचार करें तो त्याग, मोह - राग - द्वेष का ही होता है; पर - पदार्थ तो मोह - राग - द्वेष के छूटने से स्वयं छूट जाते हैं। वे छूटे हुये ही हैं। इसीलिये भगवान को 'राग - द्वेष - परित्यागी' कहा गया है। 'दान' व्यवहारधर्म है, अतः वह परोपकार सम्बन्धी विकल्पपूर्वक ही होता है। यही कारण है कि वह पुण्यबंध का कारण होता है। इसलिए **त्याग को धर्म और दान को पुण्य** कहा गया है।

An Essential Primer on Ahimsa

By Ishita Chordia



Ishita Chordia is a PhD student at the University of Washington Information School. She leverages the principles of nonviolence to evaluate the potential for technology to inflict harm, particularly towards historically marginalized populations. She and her fiancé live in Atlanta, Georgia where she spends her free time biking, gardening, doing DIY projects, and spending quality time with friends and family.

My maternal great-grandfather, A.L. Sancheti, was a renowned scholar of Jainism. In his book, *The First Steps to Jainism*, he writes that the entirety of Jain ethics can be described by *ahimsa* or nonviolence, an “*attitude of the mind*” that seeks to avoid injury to all living organisms (Sancheti, 1984, p.46). His belief is echoed in Jain temples all over the world where you can find the phrase “*ahimsa paramo dharma*” which means ahimsa is the highest law, the supreme duty (Easwaran, 2011). With this piece, I hope to distill the fundamental principles of ahimsa, and offer a way for interested readers to start exploring these principles for themselves.

Jainism is an ancient Indian religion founded on the premise that all living organisms have a soul, and that all organisms are bound in the cycle of birth and rebirth until they attain *moksha*, or liberation. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, a widely revered text from the Jain canon, explains that not only humans, but animals, plants, micro-organisms such as bacteria, and even earth, air, fire, and water are considered living organisms with a soul (TS, 1994, 2.13–2.14)¹. A soul is defined as an entity with consciousness that has the potential of attaining liberation; the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* explains that “*sentience is the defining characteristic of the soul*” (TS, 1994, 2.8). All souls are continuously birthed into an existence that is characterized by suffering due to the karma they have accrued over countless lifetimes. Karma is described as a sticky, colorful, physical substance composed of atoms that weighs down the soul and prevents its liberation (Jaini quoting *Gommata-sāra*, 1916)². Souls acquire karma due to positive and negative actions they undertake, and those actions produce positive and negative consequences accordingly (TS, 1994, 6.3–6.4). Once karmic matter has produced its consequence, the karma is shed. Only when one has shed all karma can one attain liberation.

Nonviolence emerges as the logical and natural way of being for those who believe that all unliberated organisms have a soul and share the same experience of suffering because of their karma. To understand nonviolence, it is best to start with violence. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* defines *himsa*, or violence, as injury to any life due to anger, pride, deceit, or greed

(TS, 1994, 7.8). Injury is defined broadly as destroying, ruling over, subjugating, harming, or depriving life of its potential (AS, 1999, 1.4.1)³. Ahimsa, then, is the absence of anger, pride, deceit, and greed which motivate injury or harm. It is critical here to note that harm to life, in and of itself, does not result in karmic attachment, rather the *intention* is key. Injury caused by a surgeon with an intention to heal does not produce the karmic attachments that injury caused by a hunter motivated by greed does (Tatia, 1967). Furthermore, simply an intention, even without resulting in any physical harm, is enough to produce karmic attachments; “*a soul under the sway of passions [anger, pride, deceit, and greed] kills itself even if nothing is killed*” (TS, 1994, 7.8). The intention to harm can manifest in many ways. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra* expands that an intention can look like anger, pride, deceit, or greed which motivate thought, speech, or mind to plan, prepare, or perpetrate an act of violence by oneself, through others, or approval of someone else’s initiative in acting (TS, 1994, 6.9). Furthermore, even injury caused by carelessness is a source of karmic bondage because carelessness implies a lack of intention to remain nonviolent (TS, 1994, 8.1).



Jain monks wear muhapattis or mouth-coverings to avoid injuring insects and microorganisms in the air (picture credit: <http://www.jainpedia.org/resources/jainism-faqs/contentpage7.html>)

Violence then is defined very expansively, and the practice of ahimsa is a practice of self-restraint to help

those on the path of liberation remain nonviolent in every aspect of life. It requires a follower to be mindful at all times and cultivate an attitude of renunciation so that desires, which fuel anger, pride, deceit, and greed, are subdued. The vow of ahimsa is the first vow taken by those who seek liberation. There are five practices of self-restraint and mindfulness to help stabilize the vow of ahimsa: the practices of “controlling speech, controlling the mind, moving about carefully, handling implements carefully, [and] inspecting food and drink properly to ensure they are acceptable” (TS, 1994, 7.4). Additionally, to strengthen the vow of ahimsa, the observer “should cultivate friendliness towards all living beings, delight in the distinction and honour of others, compassion for the miserable, lowly creatures and equanimity to the vainglorious” (TS, 1994, 7.6). The cultivation of these positive attributes strengthens the ability to practice nonviolence by corroding anger, pride, deceit, and greed (TS, 1994, 7.6). These positive qualities, although essential in the material world, do not offer a pathway to liberation. Living compassionately produces positive karmas which can result in benefits such as wealth and respect, but it is nevertheless karma that must be shed for the complete liberation of the soul (TS, 1994, 7.1).

Jainism views all beings as both independent and interdependent. Each soul has agency and is responsible for its own liberation. The vow of ahimsa is taken first and foremost to shed one’s own karma (Jaini, 1979). At the same time, Jainism is based on the belief that all organisms have a soul and that we all share the experience of suffering and the wish to be liberated from it. Our suffering co-arises; when we injure another, we bring about our own suffering, both because we have incurred new karmas but also because we have injured other organisms who contribute in myriad ways to our ability to survive and thrive. Additionally, the theory of rebirth posits that we have been born into uncountable bodies and those we injure may have at some point been or will be our parents, our partners, our children (Jaini, 1979). The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* from the 4th century BCE is a Śvētāmbara text, which is greatly revered because it is the oldest canonical Jain text still in existence. It describes the nature of our interdependence:

“To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself. ‘Thou art he whom thou intendest to kill! Thou art he whom thou intendest to tyrannize over!’ We corrupt ourselves as soon as we intend to corrupt others. We kill ourselves as soon as we intend to kill others” (Chapple quoting the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* I.5.5, 1993). The practice of ahimsa is not a rule or prescription to be followed blindly; it does not need to feel burdensome, nor should it inspire guilt. Rather, it is a practice that emerges and is strengthened as you

deepen your understanding of both your own agency as well as your enmeshment within the larger net of life. For interested readers, the following reflection questions can help you explore that relationship for yourself:

- 1) Do you believe all organisms share the same experience of suffering? Why or why not?
- 2) Do you believe that suffering co-arises? Why or why not?

Footnotes

- 1) *Tattvārthadhigama Sūtra*, which is also known as the *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, means *A Manual for Understanding All That Is*. It is culturally regarded as “the book of books in the Jaina tradition” (Chapple quoting Dr. L.M. Singhvi, 1993, p.xi). I rely most heavily on this text not only because it synthesizes the entirety of the Jain canon in one text, but also because it is the only extant canonical text that is recognized as authoritative by both Digambara and Śvētāmbara Jains, the two sects of Jainism (Jaini, 1979; Chapple, 1993).
- 2) The *Gommata-sāra* is a Digambara text which details the nature of karma.
- 3) The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* is a Śvētāmbara text from the 4th century BCE, which is greatly revered because it is the oldest canonical Jain text still in existence. It describes the code of conduct for monks.

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International Jain Conference on Forgiveness

Dilip V. Shah, Philadelphia



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 publisher and General Editor of Jain Avenue magazine – a publication of JAINA India Foundation.

JAINA will organize the second International Jain Conference in Ahmadabad in January 2023. The first International Jain Conference organized by JAINA in 2020 was well received and was attended by over 400 attendees. Due to the Covid pandemic, in 2021 and 2022 the Second International Jain Conference did not take place. The 2023 conference will be a three-day conference and the theme of the conference will be Forgiveness. National and international scholars will be invited to discuss various aspects of forgiveness.

All Jains, firmly believe in Forgiveness or . Svetambars consider the last day of Paryushan – Samvatsari – as a Kshamapana day. Samvatsari Pratikraman is considered so important that even less observing Jains look forward to participating in Samvatsari Pratikraman. Digambara celebrate Kshamapana on the first day of Das Lakshana – Uttam Kshama. It is inscribed in Tatvartha Sutra, chapter nine, sixth stanza. For Jains, Kshamapana is the essence of being a Jain. You might wonder about a three day discussion on Kshamapana.

This article explains why JAINA is proposing a three-day conference. Let us start by understanding the depth and breadth of the concept of forgiveness in Jain literature, history and in our daily religious practices.

There is plenty of Jain literature on . Uttarādhyana Sutra (29:17-18) states:

“By practicing prāyaścitta, the soul gets rid of sins, and commits no transgressions; he who correctly practices prāyaścitta gains the path and the reward of the path, he wins the reward of good conduct. By begging for forgiveness, he obtains happiness of mind; thereby he acquires a kind disposition towards all kinds of living beings, by this kind of disposition he obtains purity of character and freedom from fear.”

In our daily prayers and Samayika or Pratikraman, we recite the *Iryavahi sutra* seeking forgiveness from all while involved in routine activities.

Jain teachings categorize Kshama into five categories which shows us how to contemplate about anger in various ways.

- 1) **UPKAR Kshama** – When someone like a parent or teacher get angry at us we have to realize that they are doing so for our own good. They don't mean to do any harm to us and hence we need to forgive them with a feeling of gratitude. That is Upkar Kshama.
- 2) **APKAR Kshama** – “If I get angry at this person, he/she will retaliate with anger which will then cause me more harm”; such contemplation is Apkar Kshama.
- 3) **VIPAK Kshama** – When we contemplate upon the harmful effects of anger - physical, mental, and emotional – and then decide to forgive others, that is Vipak Kshama.
- 4) **VACHAN Kshama** – Forgiving others by contemplating upon the teachings of Tirthankars (Jinvachan) that we need to develop the virtue of forgiveness, is Vachan Kshama.
- 5) **DHARMA Kshama** – Forgiving others by remembering that forgiveness is an intrinsic virtue of the soul, is Dharma Kshama.

Forgiveness is also described as the adoration of the brave. (*Kshama Virasya Bhushanam*). One of the reasons the 24th Tirthankara Vardhman is called “Mahavir” is not because he was victorious in battles, but he forgave those who transgressed towards him. He was an embodiment of Kshamapana.

A famous Gujarati poem some of us might have read in primary school describes repentance as a stream from heaven that has landed on the earth wherein sinners can bathe and attain *punya*!

હા પસ્તાવો વિપુલ ઝરણું સ્વર્ગથી ઉતર્યું છે;

પાપી તેમાં ડૂબકી દઈને પુણ્યશાળી બને છે.





Forgiveness is considered such an important virtue in Jain religion that the editorial team of Jain Digest wanted to publish a special issue using that as a theme. However, in their research they realized that it is an important concept in all the major religions of the world. Most world religions include teachings on the nature of forgiveness, and many of these teachings provide an underlying basis for many varying modern day traditions and practices of forgiveness. The customs, rituals, and beliefs are different, but intention is same; live and let live, forgive everyone, and live a soulful and peaceful life. In most religions, the practice of forgiveness is observed and emphasized during religious festivals.

This issue of Jain Digest published December 2016 is titled as "Forgiveness – A Virtue Every Religion Celebrates." It contains articles on Forgiveness of Bhagwan Mahavir, highlights the power of forgiveness, enumerates forgiveness festivals in various religions, explores challenges with practicing forgiveness, and other attributes of forgiveness.

Of late, many Western and European philosophers, academicians, and psychologists are discussing forgiveness as a desirable quality. They present forgiveness as a cure for physical or emotional health. They preach that we can be free of resentment by letting go. Physicians are labeling chronic anger as a cause of high blood pressure. Psychologists

advocating forgiveness reassure their patients that forgiveness doesn't mean reconciliation or returning to the same relationship. A lot of emphases are put on *Self forgiving*. And some professionals talk about unforgivable sins. There are seminars on forgiveness and many books are published on the subject. Hollywood has presented a movie named "Forgiveness". There is a charity named "The Forgiveness Project" with regularly scheduled podcasts. There are organizations and projects championing the virtues of forgiveness.

But it is surprising that in all their discussions and presentations, Jainism is not even mentioned. Perhaps this is because many scholars either have not heard much about Jainism or because they associate Jainism only with non-violence and following vegetarian diet. The Jain principles of Anekantvad, Non-possessiveness, Jain practices of meditation, Jain views on Ecology, and Forgiveness have not reached the western world. Our hope is that with the annual international conferences with the western scholars, we can make them aware of the wealth of wisdom in Jainism.

As stated above, forgiveness is important in all religions. However, when it comes to asking for forgiveness most western religions focus on asking for forgiveness from God. And as far as living beings are concerned, saying "I am sorry" seems to be limited to other human beings. But Jainism goes further and asks for forgiveness from "all living beings", including the smallest insects! This is evident in the prayer many Jains say on a daily basis.

खामेमि सव्वे जीवा, सव्वे जीवा खमंतु मे

मिती मे सव्व भूएसु, वेरम मज्झम न केणइ

Meaning: I ask pardon from all living beings, may all living beings pardon me. May I have friendship with all living beings and enmity with none.

This prayer affirms our commitment to forgive all living beings and seek forgiveness from all living beings. We call it "Kshamayachana". In seeking forgiveness, we undertake introspection, and we humble ourselves. Admitting our mistakes implies that we will not repeat it which is essential for spiritual progress.

Holding an international conference on Forgiveness will help us reach out to the western audience. This will hopefully enrich the discussion on forgiveness. A deeper understanding of Jain views may lead to a more peaceful world. If you are planning a trip to India in January of 2023, please consider attending the international conference. Details of the venue and exact dates will be announced soon. Registration will be required but it will be free.

FORGIVENESS

Review of “Kahani” - an Art Exhibition by Deshna Shah

By Professor Atul K. Shah



Dr. Atul Shah has a PhD from the London School of Economics and is a Professor at City University, London. He is founder of the Young Jains global movement and the Jain Spirit global magazine and led the first international Jain Youth Exchange between the UK and USA in 1993. He is author of 'Jainism and Ethical Finance' published by Routledge and an occasional broadcaster on BBC and has travelled all over the world to give lectures on Ethical Business and Jainism

The famous writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said in her viral TED talk – there is no single story, and it is dangerous to think so. Each of us have a unique story of childhood, upbringing, migration, assimilation, and adaptation. However, very rarely is this story reflected in our school textbooks, or University lectures and readings, which often try to generalize and standardize, or only reflect stories from particular cultures and languages. Race is something etched into our skin, and we cannot escape the presumptions and prejudices it creates. Children have been known to want to whiten their skin, or change their parents and food choices, just to fit in and be accepted. We also have our own very personal and intimate set of experiences, memories and music which has made us who we are, warts and all.



Born in Manchester to a practicing Jain family, Deshna experienced the richness of the culture in the foods, the hospitality to visitors, the joint family of living with grandparents, and an open house of art, beauty, and tolerance. She soaked all these experiences, eventually deciding to pursue a most

unusual career for a young Indian – Fine Art. In spite of the vast ocean of art in the Jain tradition, there are hardly any living young Jain artists, dedicated to continuing it as a full-time profession, and willing to break the boundaries of race, gender and sheer ignorance that surrounds us. *Deshna, how do you spell the word Jain?*

Graduating from Oxford University in 2021 with a First class degree in Fine Art she won the prestigious Emery Prize and was given the rare opportunity to exhibit her art over a two week period at Pembroke College, Oxford. She tackled the most fascinating and personal of subjects, communicating the unspoken between relations using the method of letter writing. Having been dyslexic from childhood, words were strange and a challenge, but in this artwork, she has decided to make words central to her expression, but on her own terms.

Dyslexia Made Deshna Creative with Words and Language

For her homework for this exhibition, she asked people to write intimate personal letters to their friends and relatives, expressing that which they wanted to say but could not in person. Lots of emotion and intimacy poured out, allowing people to deal with their conflicts, without bottling it up – a compassionate self-healing, through language and communication. The letters were never sent to the recipient, but they allowed the sender to offload their stress, maybe even anger and frustration. Nelson Mandela said, *'bitterness is the poison pill you swallow, and expect the other person to die'*. Family and friends create bondage, and at times frustration too. We need to deal with it somehow, as without those relationships, there is no joy in life.

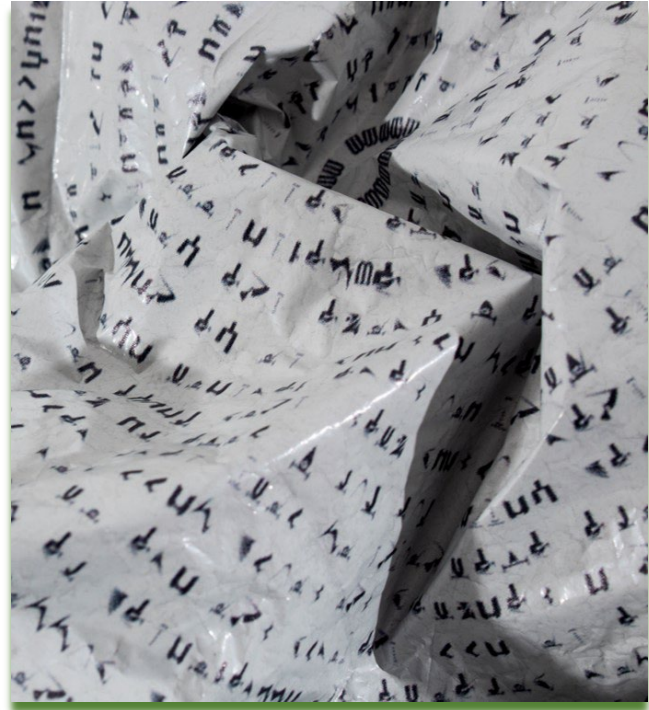
For the installation, Deshna anonymized the real stories and converted them into art using her designed 'Twilight Language'. She invited visitors to break the code and access the messages. At the same time, she welcomed visitors to share their own stories over cups of chai & mithai and encouraged

them to take pride in their own narratives. Yes that is right, the hospitality she experienced was now extended to all the visitors – I have been a fortunate beneficiary of that hospitality in my visits to Manchester over many years. Her mother Monica is the kindest, most creative, and generous host.



The installation was interactive, helping audience members to ‘experience’ the journey, rather than be dictated by it. And no-one wanted to leave – they came as individuals or in groups but were sparked to unravel and share their own personal life journeys too.

In Britain, art motivated by faith, which is such a significant part of the history of migrants, is rarely celebrated due to the deep suspicion of creative elites about religion, painting all religions with the same brush of dogma and fundamentalism. However, world art history is dominated by faith, and this view is very regressive and also diminishing of people’s lived experiences and beliefs. It also means that diversity is often given lip service, where a few celebrity minorities, become poster gals for the Arts. The Jains are one of the oldest and most creative living cultures of the world, yet they do not have their own creative arts community in Britain precisely because no-one has sought to encourage and support it.



Visitors Mesmerized by the Language of Rice curated by Deshna, and her Ripples of Language and Hospitality

INFORMATION



“Deshna is an exciting young artist, offering a deeply considered perspective and beautiful works that come directly from her very personal perspectives. It’s really important that the UK art scene embrace and celebrate artists like Deshna”

- Dr. Hedley Swain, CEO, Royal Pavilion and Museums Brighton & Hove

Jain Dharmic science and philosophy embraces respect for all living beings, something very prescient for our inequality and climate crisis of today. Deshna’s pioneering boldness forces us to reflect on our definitions of art and artists, and how pluralism and diverse stories can be given bigger platforms to reach those audiences and communities hitherto distant and marginalized.

Here are some comments from visitors:

‘The concept of creating your own language to show someone’s most intimate letters is beautiful’

‘Extremely beautiful and emotional’

‘Amazing work, Really enjoyed deciphering your letter’

‘The most deconstructed, post-colonial and personal way to come to term with yourself’



The written word does not do justice to what Deshna has curated. You have to come and experience it for yourself – the chances are it will linger long after the visit. **Deshna is open to invitations to exhibit. Her email address is deshna1shah@hotmail.co.uk Checkout her current projects at [@deshnaart](https://www.instagram.com/deshnaart) on Instagram**

Link to a view of the exhibition from a curatorial expert :
<https://www.tundraexhibitions.com/deshna-shah-kahani>

Link to interview by me of Deshna’s life story and creative journey
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94861JqetTo>

Interested in learning how to decode the “Twilight Language”? Here are some clues and some text for you to try out.

𑀓𑀠𑀡𑀣

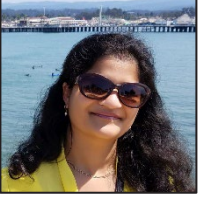
𑀣 𑀓𑀠𑀡𑀣 𑀠𑀡𑀢 𑀣𑀤𑀥𑀦𑀧 𑀨𑀩𑀪 𑀫𑀬𑀭
𑀮𑀯𑀰 𑀱! 𑀲𑀳𑀴𑀵𑀶𑀷 𑀸𑀹 𑀺𑀻𑀼 𑀽𑀾𑀿
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Our Journey with the Bhaktamar Stotra

By Aparna Jain



Mrs. Aparna Jain came to Sacramento, California in 2006. In 2019, her husband was diagnosed with leukemia. Through a combination of Western medicine and the power of the Bhaktamar Stotra, he made a full recovery later that year. Her devotion to the Bhaktamar Stotra began during this time and has flourished unabated. She says, "After experiencing numerous success stories in my own family, I feel the purpose of my life has changed. My soul just reaches out to people needing help and I encourage and guide them as best as I can. Various Universal connections have brought people into our lives and helping and guiding them has made us grow emotionally, spiritually, and as people." She can be reached at 916-708-6472 jainaparna19@gmail.com

From Medical Emergency Through Lockdown and Beyond

If someone had told us a few years ago that we would be conducting Bhaktamar Stotra related webinars and classes and interacting with experts in the field of drugless therapy from all around the world, we would never have believed it. My husband, my family, and I have always been moderately religious. However, an unfortunate medical emergency in January 2019, greatly affected us and re-shaped our views on life, religion, and spirituality.

At that time, we did not know much about the Bhaktamar Stotra. Then, a chance encounter with Drs. Pradeep and Priya Jain, while trying to contact Dr. Manju Jain, (a spiritual healer from India who specializes in utilizing the healing power of Bhaktamar Stotra to cure patients), started us on this journey of discovery. Shortly after that, we were able to connect with Dr. Manju Jain herself, and that changed our lives completely.

From that point on, we became immersed in the Bhaktamar Stotra and started chanting daily. Along with that, we started a daily prayer program which drew in people (including some non-Jains) who were looking for healing and wellness while dealing with a similar situation as ours. The non-Jains in particular, were very impressed with our devotion and success and tried to emulate it by chanting and even giving up non-vegetarian food.

As things were starting to get back to normal after a tumultuous 2019, COVID-19 began affecting people all over the world in 2020. Somehow, through the grace of God, we were tasked with hosting a JITO event over Zoom and started working together with Dr. Manju Jain. She eventually came up with an idea: an 8-day global Bhaktamar Stotra event that would teach everyone the power and significance of these 48 magical shlokas. We agreed to host these workshops without much familiarity of the topic.

While Covid-19 took away many loved ones, it did bring people closer at a global level through online

platforms like Zoom. Because of lockdowns and quarantines, hosting online seminars (or webinars) became a very common practice.

Thus began our 8-day *Foundation Level-1 Bhaktamar Stotra Series* wherein each session was 180 minutes long and covered the significance of the 48 shlokas. We invited scholars, healers, and those with first-hand experience to talk, teach, and make people generally aware of the usefulness of the Bhaktamar Stotra. However, towards the end of the 8th-day, attendees showed interest in continuing the learning and repeatedly requested us to continue the program as they were benefiting in numerous positive ways. For example, one young participant who had been gripped with suicidal thoughts for some time told us that for the first time in a long-time, he did not have such thoughts after listening to the first 8 classes.

People wanted more and we continued offering daily 180-minute-long classes and ended with 23 additional sessions on May 20, 2020.

To this day, it still amazes us how we joined this pious campaign. Ultimately, we thank God and the Universe for putting us on this path and connecting us with these amazing people. In addition to the 3 mentioned above, the following healers/medical professionals/guests participated in this series: Dr. Amreesh Jain, Mr. Jigar H. Mehtalia, Dr. Archana Jain, Mr. Manoj Jain, Mr. Anand Jain, Dr. Jeevan Lal Jain, Dr. Anish Jain, Dr. Anita Anil Agarkar, Ms. Arohi Anil Agarkar, Ms. Rageshree Anil Agarkar, Dr. Rita Mahajan, Mr. Jaiwin Jain, Om Shanti (Tej Pal Ji), Ms. Neha Modasiya, Mr. Zubin Vevaina, Dr. Aparna Kale Jain, Dr. Charu Jain, Ms. Priyanka Jain, Ms. Shika Jain, Ms. Sameeksha Jain, and many others.

Following the success of this initial endeavor, we wanted to keep the knowledge and learning going. After some more thinking, we came up with an educational series geared towards kids and youth across North America and India. Starting May 16,

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2020, along with a team member, we introduced the *Kids and Youth Bhaktamar Stotra Learning series*. This program, taught by Ms. Aashi Jain, and Dr. Nilam Shah, was designed to reach a younger audience. We started teaching them the significance of the Bhaktamar Stotra along with the pronunciation, meaning, and related stories of each shloka. We completed 26 sessions and the work that the kids and youth did was amazing. Many implemented the learnings in their life and wrote the shlokas in Sanskrit and English, drew the shlokas, recited them from memory, and even performed water experiments. Their dedication and desire to learn was truly humbling.

Concurrent to this class, we started a similar program geared towards adults: *Global Bhaktamar Stotra Learning Series*. This is *Foundation Level-2* class, and its goal was to educate adults on the theory and practical aspects of the Bhaktamar Stotra. This immersive curriculum covered all 48 shlokas, their pronunciation, meaning, riddhis, mantras, and related stories. Adults from all over the world participated in the class that was led by Dr. Anita Agarkar, Ms. Neha Modasiya and Dr. Charu Jain. We started this series on May 23, 2020, and ended it on August 8, after hosting 24 sessions. The next day we held a Vidhan in celebration of completing this amazingly successful program.

Our Daily Chanting Session also grew during this time. What started as a WhatsApp session among 3 families, soon grew into a Zoom session with 10, then 20, then 40, and now currently over 70 participants, through word-of-mouth and an announcement from Dr. Manju Jain in one of the webinars. We hosted a Bhaktamar Stotra Vidhan post completion of a 21-day Daily Chanting Session, a first for many of our attendees. This gave each attendee an exposure to the practical training and chanting of Vidhan that included symbols, shlokas, riddhis, mantras, arghs, and ended with a jai-mala. This 21-day session attracted over 150 people daily and many of those people did a lot of tapasya (penance) during this time. Since then, we are continuing with our daily chanting sessions each day without fail. In addition to chanting the Bhaktamar Stotra daily, we have held multiple learning classes on the explanation of each shloka and qualities of Riddhi Dhari Muniraj.

Anyone can join this session at 5:30 PM PST / 8:30 PM EST / 06:00 AM IST via the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83210626362?pwd=MkFZU0R2d0Y2M2JJanVzMnVrN0YrZz09> (Meeting Id: 832 1062 6362; Password: 4848).

We were also fortunate to coordinate for a Bhaktamar musical class. 34 students globally learned to recite Bhaktamar Stotra over 2 sessions (one in the fall of 2020 and one in the spring of 2021) in Charukeshi Raag by 3 extremely talented teachers from India: Mrs. Anita Anil Agarkar, Mrs. Arohi Anil Agarkar and Ms. Raageshree Anil Agarkar. The focus was to learn and sing/recite the Bhaktamar Stotra with musical tracks, pronounce clearly, and apply rhythm & pitch. These classes concluded with a concert at the end of each session.

In Feb 2021, we conducted another Bhaktamar Stotra learning session in English through Jain Vishwa Bharati (New Jersey). These classes were taught by Acharya Maha Shramanniji's disciples, Samani Malay Pragya ji and Samaniji Neeti Pragya Ji and the goal was clear pronunciation, meaning and bhav of each shloka.

Like I said before, this path to the discovery of Bhaktamar Stotra is truly remarkable. We feel that at times we are on a boat and some cosmic energy from the universe is just pushing us along from task to task. We feel blessed to be given this unique responsibility and recognize the trust put into us by so many learned individuals, especially Dr. Manju Jain. Our goal is to continue doing everything we can to spread the message of Shri Acharya Manatunga Ji and the immense power of the Bhaktamar Stotra worldwide!

Adinath Bhagwan Ji Ki Jai! Mantunga Suri Maharaj Ji Ki Jai! Bhaktamar Stotra Ji Ki Jai! Jain Dharam Ki Jai!

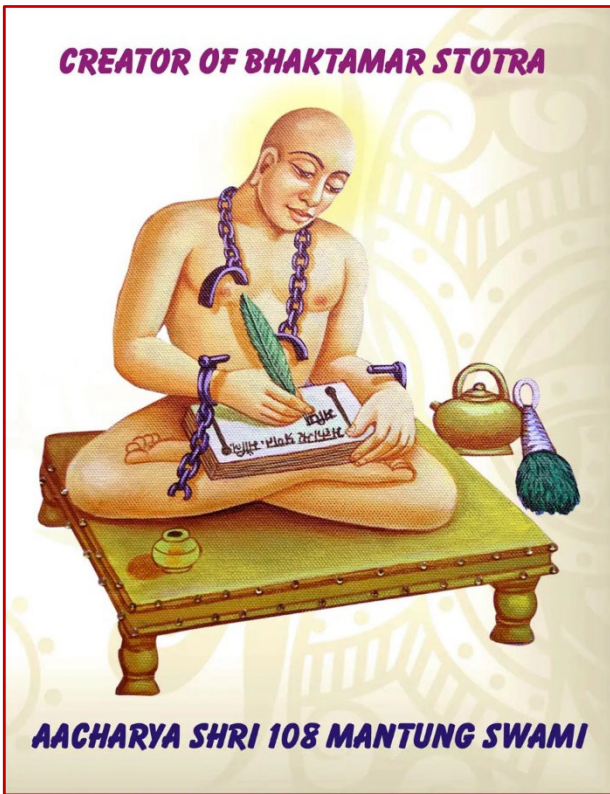
Resources

- <http://www.drmanujain25.com> (Dr. Manju Jain's website)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/event-recordings.html> (23 sessions: April 27 to May 20, 2020)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/adults.html> (24 sessions: from May 23 to Aug 8, 2020)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/kids.html> (Sessions of Kids/Youth from May 16, 2020)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/e-book.html> (E-Book of Bhaktamar Mantras)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/shlokas.html> (48 Shlokas, Riddhis & Mantras)
- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.wishCraft.bhaktamarstotra&hl=en_US (Bhaktamar Stotra Android app)
- <http://www.drmanujain25.com/helpline.html> (Global Bhaktamar Helpline with all day sessions)

The author of this article, Mrs. Aparna Jain, believes in the following:

- Mantra chanting and sound vibrations
- Positive mindsets
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude
- Writing positive affirmations
- Keeping other peoples' spirits and morale high
- Visualization
- Energy around us

What is Bhaktamar Stotra?



Bhaktamar Stotra is a famous Jain Sanskrit prayer. It was composed by Acharya Manatunga (seventh century CE). The name Bhaktamara comes from a combination of two Sanskrit names, "Bhakta" (Devotee) and "Amar" (Immortal).

The prayer praises Bhagwan Rishabhanatha (a.k.a. Bhagwan Adinath), the first Tirthankara of Jainism in this time cycle. There are forty-eight Stotras (shlokas/verses/stanzas) in total. Every Stotra (prayer) has four parts and every part has 14 letters. The last Stotra gives the name of the author Acharya Manatunga Ji. Bhaktamar Stotras have been recited, and sung as a stavan (hymn), somewhat interchangeably.

It is said that King Bhoj had chained and imprisoned the Acharya out of curiosity to witness some miracle. He was kept in a dark cell. It was possible to come out of the cell only after crossing 48 doors. Each door was chained and locked. He was told by the King, if he had enough faith in Lord Adinath then he should use his power of faith to come out of it. The Acharya remained in meditation for three days and on the fourth morning composed this panegyric in honor of Lord Adinath. The moment he chanted the first couplet the chains and shackles of the first door were gone. Likewise, he chanted 48 couplets and all the 48 doors opened one by one. After chanting 48 couplets he walked out of the prison as a

free man. The incident astounded the king. He became a staunch devotee of the Acharya and Lord Adinath. Indeed, shraddha/devotion can work wonders.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhaktamara_Stotra

What is Bhaktamar Stotra Vidhan?

Bhaktamar Stotra Vidhan is simply a puja (akin to a graduation ceremony) performed after chanting the 48 Stotras over either 7-days, 21-days or 48-days. The Vidhan vidhi (process) includes 48 offerings in either a circular format or atop a Swastik.

Acharyashri Chandanaji – My Tribute to a Living Legend

Dilip V. Shah, Philadelphia

We were all delighted to hear the announcement of Acharya Shri Chandanaji, fondly called *Tai Ma*, receiving Padmashri on 26th January 2022, a day of her 86th birthday. Traditionally, every January 26 over a thousand people would gather around *Tai Ma* wherever she may be - at Rajgir, Kutch, Palitana, or Nepal.



Acharya Chandana, founder of Veerayatan, has been conferred with Padma Shri awards for 2022.

How did Acharya Shri Chandanaji's Veerayatan in a remote part of Bihar become a global oasis for Jain values? How did an organization made up of a small group of Sadhvijis become a household word in hundreds of thousands of homes not just in India but globally? How did Acharyashri become *Tai Ma*? What was the turning point for the organization? The story below has answers to all these questions.

Twenty-one years ago, I was at Rajgir along with 125 other JAINA Yatris from the USA on our way to Shri Samed Shikharji. Our previous stop was Lachhuar – land of the three *kalyanaks* of Bhagwan Mahavir. Most of the yatris were saddened by the poor facilities at the only Dharmshala in Lachhuar. Even more disturbing was a visit to the local school requested by the principal of the school. Some of the yatris returned from the visit somber and sad. One yatri had tears in her eyes describing a dilapidated school building that was even missing a roof! Students were required to stand under the trees when it rained. Yatris decided

that JAINA should build a school in Lachhuar - *Chayanbhoomi*, *Janmabhumi* and *Dikshabhumi* of our Bhagwan. As a group leader, I assured the yatris that we shall discuss the subject further once we get to Veerayatan.

Upon arriving at Veerayatan the yatri's mood improved dramatically. Compared to Lachhuar, Veerayatan was a heavenly place. The rooms were clean, the food was wholesome, and our host - Acharyashriji was extremely gracious. At night, in a meeting with Acharyashriji, we asked her if JAINA were prepared to fund the building of a school in Lachhuar, can Veerayatan manage it? We had no idea how wide and open-ended our request was or the fact Veerayatan had never really worked outside of Rajgir or ever operated a school. But the answer was unambiguous. "Yes, if JAINA funds it, we will certainly run it". We thanked Acharyashriji for her magnanimity and called it a night being tired after a 16-hour day including road journey from Lachhuar. We were told to assemble bright and early next morning after breakfast for the flag hoisting ceremony.

The next day, January 26, was designated as that of dual celebration – marking Republic Day and the Sixty-fifth birthday of Acharya Shri Chandanaji. The weather was cooperating, offering up a cool sunny day and a light breeze. There was an air of anticipation for the festivities to begin. The plan was for everyone to assemble at 10 in the morning in the courtyard around the flagpole. A marching band consisting of nearby school students in their cute and crisp uniform was on hand for the hoisting of the *Tiranga* by Acharya Shriji. After the solemn flag-raising ceremony, there was going to be a brief celebration of her birthday with some singing and speeches. Next, everyone was going to be treated to a royal feast. And a week later, Acharyashriji was to go to Rajkot to grant Diksha to a local lady.

On the morning of January 26, everyone was in position at 10:30; except Acharyashriji was nowhere to be seen. There was an unexplained delay, and some grumbling was afoot. Finally, around 11:30 Acharyashriji entered the crowd solemnly and swiftly proceeded to raise the flag. Next, she took the microphone and in an exceptionally soft trembling voice made the shocking announcement. A massive earthquake had hit Bhuj, Kutch a couple of hours earlier and mass casualties were feared. The festive mood became a somber tone. No further details were available of the conditions in Kutch as Rajgir did not

have a good cell phone reception and the landlines to Bhuj were not functioning.

Before the crowd could digest or make sense of the catastrophic events of Kutch, Acharyashriji made another announcement. I was standing right next to her under the flying flag of the nation when she declared that she and a few other Sadhvis of Veerayatan will travel to Kutch in a few days to take part in relief operations. "What about the Diksha ceremony in Rajkot?" I asked. With a spark in her eyes and a steely resolve, "**Diksha can wait, Kutch cannot**" was her answer. We were told she had never been to Kutch before, but she was determined to answer the call of the land, the need of humanity.



The two decisions within a span of twenty-four hours – to build a school in Lachhwar and to launch a relief operation in far away Kutch must be considered watershed events for the Veerayatan organization. The rest is history. Following up on those two decisions, Veerayatan metamorphosed into a true incarnation of its moto: Seva, Shiksha, and Sadhana. Veerayatan was no longer just a Rajgir entity. It was entering a new phase of activism and national visibility. From local, it was jumping into a global arena. The educational and humanitarian projects that materialized over the next twenty years are there for everyone to see and admire. But what I saw up-close in Acharyashriji was the inner resolve and a deep-seated stream of compassion. After all, the guiding principle of Veerayatan is "**Compassion in Action.**"

What a far-reaching beneficent vision of Acharya Shriji! The past twenty years have been a transformative and positive force for the scores of thousands of needy poor people in the most remote

parts of the country. It has educated tens of thousands of students and pulled their families out of the cycle of perennial poverty. Recognizing the value of education along with an urgent need to protect our Tirthdhams, Acharyashriji has given us a slogan that is the guiding principle of Veerayatan now: "*Jaha Jinalaya, Vaha Vidyalaya*". Acharyashriji believes that instead of building temples in the villages, we must make villages the temples. With schools, environmental campaigns, vocational training, health and hygiene initiatives, villages can indeed be transformed into temples. Veerayatan initiatives in Lachhwar, Pawapuri, Rudrani, Jhakhania and Osiaji etc, have proven the wisdom of Acharyashriji's vision. It has also seen Veerayatan expanding in the UK, USA, and Kenya.

Seva, Shiksha and Sadhana. To *Tai ma*, these are not empty words. They are the marching orders for all the Veerayatan Sadhvijis, volunteers, and donors. If you were ever fascinated by the attentive skills of the ringmaster of a three-ring circus, you will be absolutely floored to learn that she is presently shepherding all the Veerayatan projects underway. During the last 30 months, – the Covid period, Acharyashriji was in residence at Rajgir. That unusual extended stay of Acharyashriji has been a tremendous boon to Rajgir as several new philanthropic and educational projects have spawned at Rajgir. **Here is a glimpse of 6 projects underway at Rajgir alone.**

1) Veerayatan Diagnostic Center: A modern diagnostic center with state-of-the-art equipment and facilities budgeted at Rs 200 million is expected to be completed during the current year. The diagnostic center will initially comprise of two sections: Pathology and Radiology. The Radiology section will have X-ray machines, Ultra-sonography, CT scans, and MRI equipment. Findings of the tests conducted here will be shared electronically with the large center in Pune, where expert Doctors will analyze them and send back their recommendations to the diagnostic center. As part of the diagnostic center, there will be a telemedicine facility so the local population of Rajgir and its adjoining towns and villages can consult expert doctors for proper medication or further treatment. A full-fledged pharmacy will also be set up next to the diagnostic center.

2) JAINA Vidya Mandir: A high school of the international standard affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is being planned for 1100 students. The two hundred million Rs. project is being partially funded by JAINA of USA. Land for the project has been identified and land development and construction of the boundary wall has commenced.

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The construction of the school is expected to begin later this year and will be completed in 24 months.



3) Gautam Gurukul: A free school for extremely underprivileged children up to class V with a capacity of three hundred students is under construction with a budget of Rs 12 million. The classes are expected to commence next year.

4) Ayurvedic Research Center: Rajgir is blessed by nature with surrounding mountains where many rare herbs and plants are found. Veerayatan is setting up an Ayurvedic Research center to study the properties of various herbs and plants found in the region. The project is in a very initial stage but is close to the heart of Acharyashriji, who has always believed in Nature Cure.

5) Upasak Center: 25 independent residential villas facing the mountain ranges are proposed to be built within Veerayatan Complex. Acharyashri thinks that if a few interested members have their second home at Rajgir, it will implore them to contribute greater time and resources for all the philanthropic work being carried out by Veerayatan. The layout of the complex and plans for individual villas are in the final stages.

6) Prachin Bihar: An exhibit with a model train passing by replicas of number of historic towns, temples, and landmarks of Bihar was inaugurated in the first week of February by Acharyashriji and members of the Firodia family. Every landmark was painstakingly handcrafted with exquisite details by Acharyashriji and it will surely be a supplemental attraction for the visitors of Bramhi Kala Mandiram.

Education Centers:

Besides Rajgiri, there are several educational centers in Bihar, Kutch, Gujarat and Rajasthan. **Lachhuar and Pawapuri** in Bihar are important Veerayatan education centers where Veerayatan built TMVM – Tirthankar Mahavir Vidya Mandir - schools from Primary up to high school level. Lachhuar is where

the first school for Adivasi children by Veerayatan was started in 2002 with cooperation from JAINA. Today, there are a thousand students learning here. Pawapuri School was started in 2005 and has 1400 students. In 2007, a B.Ed. college was started where one hundred students are admitted every year.



(Tirthankar Mahavir Vidya Mandir (TMVM) schools of Lachhuar and Pawapuri)

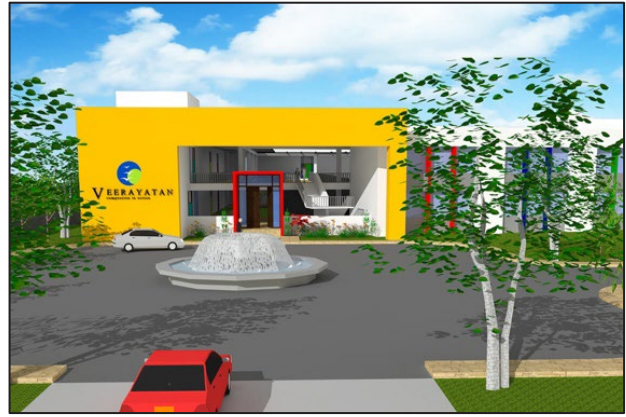
Primary and secondary schools at Jakhania and Rudrani, Kutch were the first relief works launched by Veerayatan in the aftermath of the disastrous earthquake in 2001. The Primary school of Rudrani has 375 students. The Jakhania school from Jr. KG to class 12 has a student strength of eight hundred in both Arts and Commerce streams. Jakhania campus is so beautiful that a visitor may think it is a resort!

Veerayatan Vidyapeeth, Kutch is a 150 acres of Eco-friendly campuses comprising of: Technical and Professional institute of Veerayatan, Veerayatan Institute of Pharmacy, Veerayatan Institute of Business Administration and Computer Applications and Veerayatan Institute of Engineering

Additionally, Veerayatan, under the supervision of Sadhvi Shri Shilapiji is working on three new and ambitious projects:

1. **Project Samosaran:** Acharyashriji envisions an incredible and inspirational creation “Samosaran”, The World of Harmony in 45 acres of Veerayatan Kutch campus.
2. **Multipurpose Hall** An ultra-modern, air-conditioned multipurpose hall over a 20,000 sq ft area is under construction at Engineering Campus, Haripur with a seating capacity of 750 persons.
3. **Skill India Program** Providing opportunities to the students to catapult them into skilled employees or as an entrepreneur.

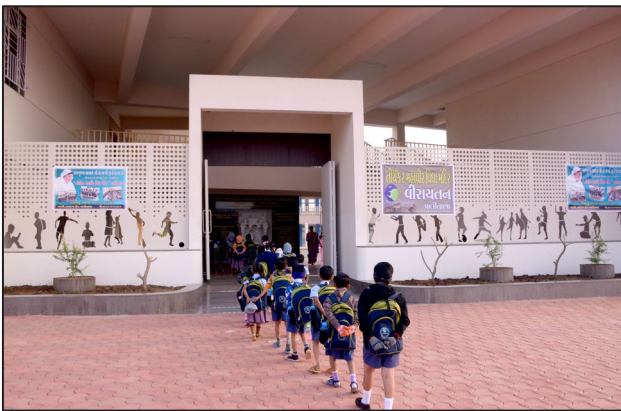
Veerayatan Palitana: Sadhvi Shri Sanghmitraji supervises the TMVM school of Palitana that opened in June of 2016. Presently, it has classes up to 8th standard and student strength is 315. The picturesque school is located just four miles from the foothills of the Palitana mountain near the Shatrunjay river dam on Palitana – Talaja road.



Shri Adinath Netralaya – Palitana Eye Hospital brings high-quality Cataract and Retina surgeries and other specialized eye care into the Bhavnagar district, so that the pilgrims, Sadhu- Sadhvijs, and the local populace can avail themselves of the joy of clear eyesight. On an annual basis, there are 12,000 outpatients including 400 emergency patients. The hospital performed 1529 surgeries in the last year despite the Covid restrictions in place.



In closing, the life of Acharyashriji is a precious gift to all who have the good fortune of meeting her. Just look at these pictures and rejoice.



TMVM Schools of Osiaji and Sanchore, Rajasthan: These are the two newest schools built by Veerayatan. The Osian school is from KG to standard seven with 142 students. The Sanchore School is from KG to standard eight with 270 Students.

Lata Mangeshkar – Divinity Personified

By Sanjay Bhandari



Sanjay Bhandari is a section editor of the Young Generation section of Jain Digest. He is an international Ambassador with Jains Got Talent team of JAINA and has held various positions at Jain Society of Greater Detroit. He has two master's degrees MBA and MCA. He works as an Integration Manager at Marathon Petroleum. Sanjay enjoys traveling, music, movies, cricket, singing, socializing, and writing movie reviews on social platforms.

February 6, 2022. The fateful day when the Nightingale of India, Lata Mangeshkar's soul left the body. I will remember this day forever. The media, kept playing this song while covering her funeral:

**Naam Gum Jayega
Chehra Yeh Badal Jayega
Meri Awaj hee Pehchaan Hai
Gar Yaad Rahe**

(Name may be lost, face may change, but my voice will show my identity, if you remember it)



This heart-wrenching song brings tears to my eyes every time I listen to it as I feel the void left in me since her passing. I am comforted knowing that Lataji's voice will remain immortal. And I am sure many of you feel the same way.

Rahul Deodhar in a blog written in 2014, gives his interpretation of the deeper meaning of this song. (<http://rahul-deodhar.blogspot.com/2014/07/song-analysis-naam-gum-jayega-film.html>) He says, "If you interpret the song in the context of the movie you will end up with a simple meaning (as shown above) and

it will remain with you. Who we love, their face, their name and such superficial things are immaterial; it is their voice that we remember. Here voice has broader meaning – expression, genuine acts from their hearts, etc. It is that "voice" that you will know from within your heart. But only if these acts, expressions really touched you, you will remember them. Not if they are superficial."

Such an amazing insight! Lataji's voice was manifestation of the many virtues she possessed in abundance. Her voice and personality was an amalgamation of divinity, compassion, humility, devotion, generosity, etc. She had an ability to unite people through her voice.

There is much more to the life of this Indian icon, who was referred to as *Ma Saraswati*. This article is an attempt to explore some of such important aspects of her life that we must remember – every time we listen to her songs.

Taking Responsibility

After her father's death, while Lataji was just 13, she took on the responsibility of her entire family, as the eldest of all the siblings. She worked hard and sacrificed a lot to give a better life to her family members. This early struggle ingrained a sense of discipline in her and a guarded approach towards the world. About her struggles, Lataji says, "Nothing affects me. I've been through so much; I have faced so many hurdles in life. At an age when other girls played with dolls, I was out of the house trying to find work as a singer. I learnt at a very young age that work is the only thing that matters."

Determination, Persistence, and Striving for Perfection

Lataji was determined and was always ready to take on any challenge. When producer Sashadhar Mukherjee called her voice too thin, she worked on her timbre. When Dilip Kumar offhandedly remarked that her voice smelt of *dal bhaat*, she made sure that she got the nuances of Urdu right. The song "Bekas Pe Karam Kijiye", from the movie *Mughal-e-Azam*, is a testimony to her command over the Urdu language.

Lataji has recorded an album of bhajans and chants for the Jain community and she got herself a linguistic teacher to guide her through all of the traditional devotional chants. She says, *"Somewhere they felt that their religious teachings and mantras have so far not been properly articulated. I am happy and relieved that they think my rendition does justice to their sacred teachings."* Her melodious rendition of the Navkar Mantra has been very popular. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqD-nyNdW3o>)



Source: <https://rishikajain.com/>

The longevity of her career and singing 30,000 songs in more than 36 languages is a hallmark of her great career that rose from her dedication, hard work, discipline, and commitment. With her singing career of 70 years (a record in itself), she has motivated millions of people that even though age may slow down a person, it need not stop them from achieving their goals.

When she was given a life-time achievement award, she said that a life-time achievement award should not stop you from working harder in future. She felt that there are always new destinations to be reached and that an artist's goal and achievements can never have a full stop.

Standing up for herself and others

There was a time when playback singers were paid very little money for singing in movies while music directors and producers were making a large amounts of money, capitalizing on the popularity of those songs. Lataji convinced many producers to award singers a royalty in addition to their payment for the songs.

Earlier, only the names of the actors and actresses in the movie were published with the soundtrack information and/or in the movie credits. Lataji was the

first person whose name as a singer was recognized in a movie's song, starting with the movie Mahal.

Another change Lataji brought to the industry was to have separate categories for the best male and female playback singers. She raised her voice to make this change since male and female voices cannot be compared objectively and both deserved a chance to be awarded for their abilities fairly.

Appreciation for Fellow Artists

There is no doubt that Lata Mangeshkar is one of the finest singers in India, but few knew that she was also very modest. In 1994, she released an album, *Shraddhanjali – My Tribute to the Immortals*, giving tributes to immortal singers of that time by rendering a few of their songs in her own voice. There are songs of K. L. Saigal, Kishore Kumar, Mohammed Rafi, Hemant Kumar, Mukesh, Pankaj Mallick, Geeta Dutt, Zohrabai, Amirbai, Parul Ghosh and Kanan Devi in that album.

Inspiration and a Role Model for other Artists

She has always been an inspiration for many contemporary Bollywood playback singers. From Alisha Chinai, Alka Yagnik, to Shreya Ghoshal, Sunidhi Chauhan, Shilpa Rao, every female playback singer who entered the film industry has looked up to Lataji as one of the greatest.

Even fellow male singers learned from her as she was very inspiring to them: When Kishore Kumar was asked to sing the classical song *"Mere Naina Sawan Bhadon"*, he asked RD Burman to record the Lataji's version first and hand its audio to him. He listened to it few times and rehearsed for a week to get the right notes and nuances.

Talented playback singer Manna Dey once said, *"When Lataji sang with me, I was aware I had to improve my own singing because she was a perfect sort of singer."*

Talking about his inspiration for making music, the celebrated music composer S.D. Burman had once allegedly said, *"Give me a harmonium, give me Lata (Mangeshkar) and I will make music."*

Music director, singer AR Rahman had said *"My father used to see Lataji's picture in the morning before starting his music."*

Many actresses have commented that Lataji's singing is so perfect to the situations in movies that it is very easy for them to act and lip sing. Actress Jaya

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N Bachchan's comments, "No heroine feels she has arrived until Lataji sings for her." Her versatility to sing in various language was also inspiring to many singers.

O Many artists that specialize in singing Indian classical music also adore Lataji. In a program titled "Tum Jiyo Hajaroo Saal" held as a tribute to Lataji on her 90th birthday, three well known singers expressed their feelings of devotion towards Lataji. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZU888KpMTZo&t=1s>)

I Gazal singer Radhika Chopra said "I am hesitant to even take the name of the grand personality, an institution like Lataji because I am too small a person. To me she is not like Ma Saraswati; she is Ma Saraswati! I always try to listen to her very carefully and learn something new every time. Whenever I go to Mumbai, I stop by to bow down at Siddhi Vinayak temple, Haji Ali and at Lataji's home Prabhu Kunj, because it is like a temple to me."

A Classical singer Kaushiki Chakraborty said "We have worshipped her. She is a phenomenon. Lataji is our Guru in many ways, as we connect to God through her voice and music. Talking about her is like adding a glory to yourself as a listener and worshipper. We are blessed that she is part of our everyday life. Every time I have met her, I feel I have met my Goddess."

Generosity

P Lataji gave a helping hand to people whenever they needed it. After winning the World Cup in 1983, the Indian cricket board wanted to award all the players, but they did not have enough money. They requested Lataji to sing in a concert to raise money and she graciously accepted and performed without asking for any remuneration.

S In November 2001, Lataji financed construction of the Deenanath Mangeshkar Hospital in Pune in memory of her father. Lataji was involved in the work herself and the vision of the family was to provide ethical medical services of the highest quality to patients at an affordable cost without discrimination.

N Recently she donated generously to COVID-19 relief efforts in 2020 and 2021. Throughout her life she frequently donated to many charitable organizations.

Ability to Touch the Hearts of Millions

I On January 27th, 1963, against the backdrop of the Sino-Indian War, Lataji sang the patriotic song "Aye Mere Watan Ke Logo" in the presence of Jawaharlal

Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. The song, composed by C. Ramchandra and written by Kavi Pradeep, is said to have brought the Prime Minister to tears. To this day, this song is considered as one of the classic patriotic songs of India. The music and Lataji's voice brings each word of the song to life and touches listener's heart as they visualize the tragic scenes of the war.

And this is just one example. If one were to look at comments written by the fans in any of Lataji's song on YouTube, one will see how she had touched their hearts.

Humility/Modesty

Lata Mangeshkar's towering personality was also the embodiment of humility. Apart from her immense talent and a strong command over her craft, Lataji was also known for her kindness and humility. In public appearances and media interactions, she came across as a warm and loving person who never allowed her national and international fame to get to her head.

She says, "I feel God has sent me to Earth to sing. I started singing when I was five, but I don't think I've worked as hard as many other people."

In an interview with Filmfare, Lataji's brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar said "I learnt sangeet from my gurus but how to preserve one's swabhimaan (self-respect), how to kill pride and arrogance, all this I learnt from her. I have watched her closely for all these years. She has been on the top yet believes that she has achieved nothing; rather it's the energy that has made it all possible."

In a 2009 interview with The Indian Express, when asked about her biggest achievement, she said that there might be many singers better than her, but she was so fortunate to get so much love from the people of India and it was the love of the people that was her biggest achievement.

In her touching speech after getting the Bharat Ratna award she said, "I never sang to get an award", and gave credit of her success to the love bestowed upon her by people and the talented musicians, lyricist, technicians, co-singers from the Indian film industry. Expressing her gratitude she said, "The film industry had turned a stone in to a Bharat Ratna."

Sources: Articles from DNA India, Outlook India, Indian Express, The Hindu, Enter Tales, Daily India, CSR Journal, Woman's era, Catch News, Many other websites, and YouTube videos.



Sentiments by various actors, directors, and musicians

Dilip Kumar: *I would say that her voice is a miracle of nature.*

Ramesh Sippy: *Lata ji is a true Nightingale of India.*

Dev Anand: *Her voice breaks all barriers of sound and music.*

Gulzar: *Whatever she speaks or sings, she looks real and we do not see any pretention in that. Her personality is purely an abstract element. She is very generous in giving and that reflects in her singing too.*

Sonu Nigan: *Lata ji can take 2.5 Taans in one breadth. Her Manmohana sing is an amazing peace of her breath control.*

SD Burman: *As long as there is Lata, I am safe.*

OP Nayar: *Lata is an undisputed Melody Queen of this world.*

Pt Anil Biswas: *Lata was a god send to us composers. With her around there was absolutely no limitation placed on our range. Such was her vocal artistry that we could explore the most complex reaches of composition in the knowledge and confidence; and she could take it all in her stride.*

Madhuri Dixit: *Our acting, art and beauty is because of Lata Ji's voice in our movies.*

Rekha: *Lata Ji is a feeling that cannot be described in words. Her name brings peace in my mind and smile on my face.*

Shah Rukh Khan: *I wish I was a woman, so that Lata ji could have sung for me, and I could act on her songs.*

Smita Patil: *Her voice has given a peace to the people in their sad moments.*

Kishore Kumar: *Talking about Lata ji is like showing candle to the Sun.*

Kumar Sanu: *There was none like you, no one is like you, and no one can become like you.*

Jagjit Singh: *Lata Ji is an institution, phenomenon, and a Heavenly gift.*

Kavita Krishnamurthy: *I think I know her personally because of her songs even without meeting her.*

Noor Jahan: *I love her because she also loves me, and she thinks a lot about the song before singing it.*

Hridayanath Mangeshkar: *If Didi touches any Sur or even average looking song, then it becomes immortal or Paras. She knows all 28 Surs of 4 taar Saptak,*

Nargis: *Listening to her voice is like going to any Dargah or temple.*

Hemant Kumar: *Lata ji is a blessings and gift or wish of God for the Film Industry.*

Sindhutai Sapkal: An Embodiment of Love, Divinity, and Resilience

Hema Pokharna, PhD



Dr. Hema Pokharna is a Certified Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Trainer. As an Executive Coach and Consultant, she works with leaders and their teams to improve personal and organizational collaborative leadership. Through coaching, she helps leaders who feel stuck, unfulfilled, and overwhelmed to start living an authentic and meaningful life. Hema is also an interfaith peacemaker and mediator.

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Sindhutai Sapkal, also known as mother of orphans, was an Indian social worker and social activist known particularly for her work for raising orphan children. She was born as an unwanted child and nicknamed 'Chindhi' (torn piece of cloth). Her father who valued education sent her to school in spite of her mother's opposition to educate her. She managed to pass 4th grade in spite of abject poverty, responsibilities of cattle grazing and other household work.



At the tender age of 12, she got married to a man twice her age. She had 3 sons by the time she turned 20. With no roadmap to the future but a vision that change is possible, she proposed that the villagers who collected the cow dung for fuel, which was then sold, pay the villagers for their labor. Her agitation brought the district collector to her village and made the necessary payment arrangements. Having rocked the boat and gone against the grain had consequences. Her husband abandoned her when she was beyond 9 months pregnant. He thrashed and kicked her and threw her in a cowshed. While lying unconscious in the cowshed, she gave birth to a baby girl. The husband, other family members and even

her mother closed the doors on her. She had nowhere to go.

All alone in the world with a newborn baby to look after, Sindhutai wandered from one place to another; begging and singing heart rendering songs in trains and temples, which was also her source of income. She would often feed the hungry orphan children who would gather around her. Her compassion and love for these orphan children turned into her life's mission. She took them under her wings and built a community around her and built orphanages. Sindhutai did not let the struggles of her own life dampen her spirits. She was able to face adversity, build resilience, find joy and inspired others to overcome adversity.

Sindhutai travelled extensively sharing her heart breaking experiences with rare honesty and affection inspiring and instructing that a loving and kind world is possible. Her speeches were thoughtful, insightful, and compelling. She raised funds to nurture more than 1500 children. She took thousands of homeless children under her wings and enabled them to become doctors, lawyers, and bureaucrats, among others. She was fondly known as "Mai" (mother). Sindhutai was honored with 750 awards, including 4 President's awards, honored with D. Litt degree and the highest honor being the Padma Shri Award in 2021. A Marathi film 'Mee Sindhutai Sapkal' released in 2010, is a biopic inspired by the true story of Sindhutai. The film was selected for world premiere at the 54th London Film Festival.

Sindhutai's story is a story of unimaginable pain and loss. Not many human beings have the capacity to endure and succeed. In this article I have summarized my learnings from Sindhutai's life. The information is based on various online articles, YouTube videos and interviews of Sindhutai with high profile companies. I have also included various quotes by Sindhutai from her interviews which I am sure you will find inspiring. I encourage you to check out the links below to the movie on her life and several links to her interviews.



Overcoming Obstacles

Sindhutai's heartbreaking life story of unimaginable violence and abuse is a message full of insights, pathways, and possibilities to reweave our human fabric. In spite of many obstacles, she moved forward with courage and determination to make a difference and liberate herself and others from poverty, abuse, domestic violence, and abandonment. The following quotes from Sindhutai's interviews show her wisdom that can help us to rise above any of life's obstacles.

"While walking on a bed of flowers, if the thorns hurt you, learn to tolerate it. After all, the thorns only know about hurting others; they do not know about the pain it causes to others. Hence be friends with the thorns. Make your feet so strong that one day the thorns will welcome you. Accepting thorns along with others will make you strong."

"Through every setback I got from each person, I got more strength. I continued to advance. I did not look back. When obstacles cause you pain, learn to rise above them. That will minimize the intensity of the obstacle; you will be able to breathe easily. Decide to move forward and the pain will lead you to wisdom."

Devotion and Determination

As a young girl, Sindhutai heard and witnessed her father's bhakti and connection with the divine. She learned to sing by listening to her father's divine voice. Her father believed in her potential and encouraged her. She earned her living singing devotional songs on the trains and temples. By sustaining the connection to faith and devotion, she leaped forward through many challenges of life.

Sindhutai reclaimed her power and did not give the social system any power to decide her destiny to freedom. She did not submit to or rebel against the abuse and setbacks but made choices to speak up and face consequences of abandonment and being ostracized by her own family and society. Instead, she was able to be in choice and advocate for her cause. She found her way to the podium and spoke on the stage of Balgandarva Rangmandir in Pune, India, while she was still in rags and advocated for her cause, offered solutions, invited those in power to choose differently and support her in resolution of her plight of fearless leadership.

Sindhutai in her suffering did not lose her composure or connection to her vision for liberation from poverty and violence. She did it with the determination of a mother, not with anger or resentment. She did not give in or give up to the utmost violent and abusive people and circumstances. She kept her heart open to the horrors of poverty and violence instead of becoming paralyzed.

Purposeful Education

I love Yeats' quote, "Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire." The ultimate purpose of education is to build a progressive society through all rounded growth of individual potential. Sindhutai had a passion for learning. Although educated only till 4th grade, she took every opportunity to learn from any printed material she could find and narrated poems & quotes from famous personalities in her speeches. Not only did she enable orphaned children to get an education and successfully become contributing members of society, but she extended this to the next generation, their children, as well.



Sindhutai advocated women about Education. She said *“Education does not mean you consider motherhood as secondary. It does not mean that you drop everything else and borrow some other quality or qualification. Education means being able to understand other people’s pain, to understand the world around you, to stand on your own feet and teach others to live this way because you are a mother to all.”*

“Why are you striving to attain the same position as men? Is that even necessary? If you take out the woman from worldly life, is that a real life? What women have is so amazing; her power, ability to create life and nurture. A Woman needs to follow certain rules so that people see a mother in her.”

Finding Your Own Freedom

Outwardly we may appear free. Yet our own thought processes of judgments, right/wrong thinking, revenge, and victim mentalities are engraved deep within us. Sindhutai’s life inspires us to closely examine our freedom and take responsibility to be accountable for our actions that liberate others and us, without imprisoning anyone. She spoke fearlessly and treated her calling with sacredness. In the midst of swings between engagement and life-threatening despair, Sindhutai demonstrates a radically new practical perspective of healing and hope.

Thriving by Forgiveness and Attitude of Gratitude

Sindhutai lived a life full of gratitude with a capacity to thrive. She was able to construe the events of her life and became a stronger and a wiser woman. She held no animosity or grudges towards anyone from her past. Instead, she felt grateful for all the events in her life. She was able to forgive all the people who caused her harm.

She says, *“My husband rejected me and that is why I achieved what I did. If he had not thrown me out, I would have been content with what I had. My mother did not support me. If she had, I would have just stayed with her. I took shelter in temples and was thrown out that as well. All these things helped me to grow.”*

At the age of 70, her husband came back to her apologetically. She accepted him as her child stating she is only a mother now! Affectionately introducing him as her oldest child. Sindhutai welcomed her husband to the orphanage in his old age, she told everyone to take care of him. She told them *“If he had not thrown me out, you would not have me as a mother. So be grateful.”*

Divine Inspiration

In an interview with Sindhutai, an Indian lifestyle coach and motivational speaker Gaur Gopal Das asks her to describe her whole life in one word and without a moment’s hesitation, she says DAIVATVA meaning Divinity! Generally speaking, one would expect that she would choose a word related to her work, passion, or achievements. Her response “Divinity” highlights how her detachment to the known allowed her to step into the unknown and create a field of possibilities. And this unquestioning belief in the true self (divinity) releases the attachment to people, wealth, and power. Instead, she envisioned and committed to build orphanages that would revolutionize the lives of the abandoned children.

Sindhutai tried to take her own life a couple of times. When helping a poor man who wanted to kill himself, she realized that *“instead of committing suicide, I should live for those who want to die.”* A turning point came in her life when she narrowly escaped being killed. She felt that this was a divine calling and decided to devote rest of her life to help others and never looked back. She says, *“Living well – a purposeful life – breeds divinity and Divine comes to your aid. Wake up to the divine within you. Look for divinity in your heart.”*

Power of Empathy

As Pema Chodron says, “When we see difficult circumstances as a chance to grow in bravery and wisdom, in patience and kindness, when we become more conscious of being hooked and we don’t escalate it, then our personal distress can connect us with the discomfort and unhappiness of others. What we usually consider a problem becomes a source of empathy.”

Sindhutai says *“I was hungry and saw other people hungry. My motivation was to see that others don't suffer from the hunger I had felt. And if they do suffer from hunger, I should feel it. My relationship is with hunger, the bread, the pain. I don't know anything else. Hunger taught me to recognize hunger when I see it.”* Her own hunger became a source of empathy for the 1500 children she was able to feed, clothe and educate. By keeping her connection with her inner source of energy, she was able to free herself from physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual obstacles. All her actions and decisions appear to come from her inner source of being.

Organizational Acumen

Sindhutai's life and work is prophetic, passionate, and original. She had the passion and vision to help as many children as she could. She used her painful experiences to tell people about what her mission is and touch their hearts. She travelled tirelessly to raise funds to support the children she had adopted. She chose not to associate with any other institution and depend on their support. She felt that such setup does not last long, and an organization has to work on raising fund on their own. She says that an organization should never ignore their main goal, purpose, and values.

Her decision-making prowess, exceptional wisdom and discrimination had immense power to contribute to her imagination of how to change our world. The several orphanages she created based on a vision of possibility for the lives of abandoned children is so practical and wise, and powerful innovation in the lineage of Mother Teresa

Taking on Responsibility with Detachment, Humility and Contentment

Early on she realized the responsibility she was taking on. This sense of responsibility gave her the

courage to make a strategic detachment to put her daughter in for adoption so she could give her undivided, impartial care and attention to the children she was taking care of.

With all the hundreds of awards and many more honors she was very down to earth, humble woman. Conversations and interviews with her reflect her divine purpose, authenticity, simplicity, humor, kindness, and her unconditional love. Sindhutai's passion was to help others and share with others. She was content with what she had. All her efforts in raising funds were to make sure the children she was taking care of did not go hungry. She did not want anything for herself.

Sindhutai brings vulnerable, visionary wisdom with lessons to embrace the fullness of what it means to be human – especially in a world of polarity and violence – and what the world could be like if we made it fully human. Her work earned her the sobriquet “anathanchee aai” (mother of the orphans).

References:

Sindhutai Sapkal Foundation
<https://www.sindhutaisapkal.org>

An Exclusive Conversation Between Gaur Gopal Das & Late Padmashri Dr. Sindhutai Sapkal (In Marathi with English Subtitles)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U8_2A_N6T44

शमशान की चिता पर रोटी पका कर हज़ारो अनाथ बच्चों को पाला | Sindhu Tai | Dr Vivek Bindra (in Hindi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VntsaBnBU0Y>

The movie “Mee Sindhutai Sapkal” (in Marathi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hrv9UjmaqPk>

Q&A on Maaza Katta (In Marathi)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuhmFVI7BDI>



This response was given by your subconscious mind. You are not even aware of the intensity of your words, your tone, and your emotions!

However, your partner is startled. He/She has not seen this side of you and says, "What's the matter with you? Why are you behaving this way?"

And your response is, "What did I do? I am just busy right now. Why are you so sensitive?" and so on.

Sounds familiar? Now realize that your partner's comment about your behavior could also be coming from his/her subconscious mind! This example tells us that when two people are in a relationship there are 4 minds interacting with each other! However, with awareness and being in the present during a conversation, they can improve their relationship.

During 95% of our waking hours our conscious mind is in thinking mode, and this means that 95% of the time our behavior is controlled by our subconscious mind which is a result of our programs. These programs may be from our childhood, from our habits or from our past karmas. Irrespective of its source, we must realize that these do not define who we are and what our conscious mind is all about. Some of our subconscious behavior may be completely opposite that of how we will act if we were fully conscious. That is why we hear sentences such as "I am sorry for saying that; I don't know what came over me." Awareness of such patterns in each other allows us to explain & correct them, be understanding and tolerant. Your awareness allows you to change the undesired programming and to align the subconscious mind with who you really are.

When crucified, Lord Jesus said "Father, please forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." We need to cultivate similar understanding for the uncharacteristic behavior of our loved ones; we need to realize that such behavior was a result of their programming and be supportive in helping them change their programs.

Changing the programs is possible by observing the life we have created for ourselves. *Since 95% of the time, we are living by these programs, we can look at all the undesirable things we have created for ourselves.* For example, if you are consistently having problems creating meaningful relationships, look at how that may be a result of a program in your subconscious. If you have difficulties accepting people's suggestions, look at your early life and see if there was someone always telling you what to do. If you are having problems learning new things, see if any external influences have lowered your self-

confidence. We need to be careful here. This exercise is not for blaming others and use it as an excuse for continuing our undesired behavior. It is for us to understand our behavioral patterns, analyze the reason and then be aware of it. As stated earlier, such awareness will help us change the programmed behavior.

Let us now examine another daily life example. Let us say one day before going to work you decide that "I am going to have a great day today. Everything is going to work out well and I am going to enjoy working with everyone." Then you go to work, work all day, and come home in the evening. You then realize that none of the things that you had thought of in the morning happened. This is because your subconscious mind had taken over and sabotaged your wishes. However, you tend to think that this happened because of other people, events, and things not under your control.

In such instances, learn to examine how your mind may be working. Don't berate yourself and others. Be gentle with your programs. Treat your subconscious mind as a child; be gentle with it, love it, embrace it and most important of all, love yourself. Know that you can reprogram your subconscious. You can rewrite the negative ones and only have positive programs. And that is how you will transform your relationships with your loved ones and create your own Heaven on Earth!

Credits:

Dr. Shamini Jain is a psychologist, scientist, and social entrepreneur. She is the founder and CEO of the Consciousness and Healing Initiative (CHI), a nonprofit collaborative accelerator that connects scientists, health practitioners, educators, and artists to help lead humanity to heal ourselves.

Dr, Shamini Jain was one of the speakers at the 2019 and 2021 JAINA Conventions. She was the organizer of the *Science of Healing Summit*.

Bruce H. Lipton, PhD is an internationally recognized leader in bridging science and spirit. Stem cell biologist, bestselling author of *The Biology of Belief* and recipient of the 2009 Goi Peace Award, he has been a guest speaker on hundreds of TV and radio shows, as well as keynote presenter for national and international conferences.

In the discussion with Dr. Shamini Jain at the *Science of Healing Summit* he was talking with reference to the content of his new book "The Honeymoon Effect".

I survived without eating anything for 10 days straight!

By Ananya Jain

(Source: <https://youngminds.yja.org/i-survived-without-eating-anything-for-10-days-straight-8518297f474d>)

I first penned these thoughts in December of 2020 as a reflection on my journey toward my inner-self. Earlier that year, I completed a 10-day fast. I drank water only once per day and avoided all food during [Das Lakshan](#), the Digambar Jain festival of spiritual introspection (akin to Lent or Ramadan). As the festival approached, I started looking at articles and materials online to see how others accomplished this feat. I had fundamental concerns: would I die without food for ten days? How would I feel — would I be too weak to work? What would the recovery feel like?



In my search, I found various articles motivating me to fast. However, these articles were limited to the benefits of fasting, surrounding its religious value. None, unfortunately, explained to me how I would feel and what the journey would be like. So, I promised myself that if I successfully completed the 10-day fast, I would write an article reflecting my journey to give clear insight, alleviate fears, and prepare others for their own journey. Of course, this article only reflects my experiences, and each individual will have a unique one. In the future, I hope to be able to read about many such experiences!

In the 10 days of fasting, I experienced an utterly fresh perspective towards life. Whether dealing with personal or work challenges, I have grown into a personality that looks at difficulty as temporary. I learned that:

- Most stress agents in my life are not worthy of stress.
- The most critical factor for a happy life is to have a minimalistic approach - food, shelter, and health must-haves; everything else is nice to have.
- Being minimalist with both the tangible and intangible (like minimal thoughts) is calming
- My life is beautiful and precious, and I must make most of it; and lastly,
- My willpower is incredibly strong, and I value commitment and promises highly.

As I share my experience of Das Lakshan fasting with you, I hope it motivates you to experience something similar, learn what this experience could bring, or tackle any anxiety you have about something similar. Most importantly, I'm writing this for those looking to find their inner self to make this world a better place for you, me, and the entire human race. Cheers!

Decisions and Challenges

For the two decades leading up to 2019, I followed religious guidelines strictly, including lifestyle and dietary restrictions of varying extents, during Das Lakshan. Almost every year, I did not eat anything on the first and last days of the festival, and only ate one meal a day for the eight days in between. I also limited my use of resources like water, commercial products, clothes, and vehicles. In 2019, I decided that come what may, I would fast the following year for the ten days of Das Lakshan. It is comparable to Ramadan or Lent but, in my opinion, much more extreme — I would sacrifice food of any shape or form for 10 days alongside implementing several other lifestyle changes.

The purpose of fasting was not to lose weight. It was a spiritual journey to be minimalist — not only with material items but also with essentials like food and thoughts, allowing me to understand who I really am.

When Das Lakshan came around in 2020, the picture was very different than I had imagined in 2019; 2020 had been a year of extreme emotional and mental despair for several reasons, and travel restrictions made it difficult to find emotional and moral support from family. As things were going downhill in the fall of 2020, there arrived Paryushan and Das Lakshan — two significant festivals where Jains dedicated themselves towards spiritual progress. The time had come for me to step-up to my resolution from the

previous year and go all-in. The idea was to put myself through a test of self-control, willpower, emotional and mental strength, and discover my inner soul.

On August 20th, I decided to move forward with the decision. In a panic, my family subtly tried to convince me to change my decision. At the root of this was concern; how would I pull it off all alone in the middle of the pandemic? They would not be allowed to travel across three continents to be with me. Traditionally, a person who fasts for 10 days receives Ghee (clarified butter made from cow's milk) massages, narrations of religious stories, and several opportunities to be in the Tirthankars' presence at a temple. With no family around or a temple nearby, none of these were possible. Yet I decided to move forward with my commitment.

Along with vowing to fast for 10 days while taking boiled water only once a day, I decided to leave behind many lifestyle comforts and adopted an extremely minimalistic way of living. For 10 days, I tracked away from worldly discussions and focused on the 10 virtues represented by each day of the festival:

How it went

I kept my decision low-key to avoid creating unnecessary pressure on myself. I kept my regular diet, routine work, and worked out. I ensured that my manager at work was aware of my decision, and I had taken time off from work for the last five days. Being a curious soul, I read many religious and random articles on people who had pulled off 10 days with no food. I promised myself to take things one day at a time and not overthink. I convinced myself mentally that if it became too difficult, I could always stop. I kept milestones to check-in with myself on how I felt on days two, three, five, and seven to re-evaluate my decision if needed.

Days 1 to 3

- One day at a time: I knew day one was going to be easy. I had kept a single-day fast for several years now. I had the experience and mental awareness of how it feels when you are hungry for a day. I was more anxious about how I would feel on the 2nd and the 3rd day. I knew that if I could survive the first three days, I would be able to cross the finish line.
- Daily routine: Like every year, I woke up at 6 AM to pray.
- I knew I was preparing for a marathon and not a sprint; hence, I had stopped any physical activity or unnecessary conversations. This was an effort to preserve my energy.

- I worked regular hours, and to my surprise, I was feeling light and comfortable even on Day three. This is when the mental block that I may not complete the fast vanished. I felt confident to march forward.
- I made sure that I drank two liters of water (only allowed once a day) from 5:30 pm to 6:30 pm. This is something I followed until the last day.
- Because I was alone at home, I watched TV — one hour of religious content — understanding the 10 virtues listed above in more detail. I also enjoyed an entertaining Bollywood movie.
- My last activity for a day was to conduct more religious prayers (Aarti) before going to sleep.
- Sleep: I had noticed that I started feeling more comfortable sleeping on my stomach than my back. This perhaps helped me calm my empty stomach so that I could sleep well.

Days 4 to 9

- Travel: Because of COVID, no one from my family was with me. Instead of bothering them to travel, I decided that I would travel to my sister's place. So, I made a 7-hour journey on Day four of fasting. This turned out to be a perfect distraction. Time flew by fairly quickly.
- Being with family: Being with my sister, brother-in-law, and my 1-year-old nephew was a refreshing change. So Day five and all days after were good that way.
- There were two significant disadvantages of being with people: They were cooking and eating, so the smell of food drove me nuts on the 5th day and I was talking a lot more with my sister, and in turn, losing some precious energy.
- Daily routine: From Day six, the presence of food around me did not make any difference. I grew over it eventually and realized how strong my commitment and my willpower are. I also became more aware of the energy I could use and hence started communicating with nods and hand gestures, using fewer or no words.
- Day 6 to Day 8 were similar, with the least temptation. I was in full control of my consciousness. I had stopped working during these days so that I did not drain my mental strength. I got much more spiritual and aware of my inner strength, my soul, and my pure thoughts. I felt light.
- My afternoon naps had increased, and I started avoiding TV and any other noises. I had started reading more about the virtues of each day (listed above). These were the days when fasting had cleaned not only my body but also my mind. My thoughts were controlled and streamlined. No unnecessary thoughts would run by me. I was calm, serene, and clear. If someone would ask me

a question, naturally, my mind would think of the simplest and shortest way of answering the question — mostly one-word thoughts and the actual reply would only be a nod.

- Awareness: I had two fundamental realizations 1) There is no need to over-communicate things. If we can accomplish something with minimal effort, then we must target that. 2) All the inessential rules, stigma, trends, and burdens we have adopted are not that important. Our lives have become stressful for things that are not even that important. To live, the fundamental thing required is to continue to breathe. And thankfully, it is an involuntary action, so we need not worry about it. Next comes water and food, and then shelter and clothes. These are the basics. If we are in good health and we are fortunate to have the things mentioned above, we are golden! Rest is just leisure, so if it increases, decreases, comes, goes, it is not that big of a deal. E.g., when I had no food in my body, I felt light and clean, not only physically but also mentally and emotionally. I had clear priorities of what is important to me. Even the thought of consuming food had become a luxury.
- Special day: Day 8 was special. My parents managed to travel from India to be with me. The next few days went by much more easily. Mom's pampering and Dad's support can ease out the biggest challenges of your life.

Day 10

- Public event: My family arranged for a beautiful virtual event to celebrate my last day. I was filled with emotions. The amount of love that was showered upon me was pure bliss. On this day, I used all my energy, interacted with family and friends, danced, and participated in live music. I felt free-spirited. I learned that people who matter to us provide us with immense energy.
- The most challenging part of my 10-day journey were these final few hours. I now knew that I had accomplished my task. I had let my guard down. I started thinking of all the delicious food my mom could make for me. I literally made a list of 32 items that I would want to eat. It was a long night for sure.

Day 11

- Future commitment: After coming back from the temple, I was ready to break my fast. But as part of the ritual, I was asked to commit to two things before consuming food again: (1) donate to a cause, and (2) sacrifice one thing (duration and thing did not matter).
- Identifying a cause for donation was easy. I have always thought of kids and homelessness foundations as causes I would like to contribute to.

- To sacrifice something was a big deal. I truly wanted to test my perseverance and my willpower. And so, I committed to quit drinking alcohol for a year. Drinking socially with friends and colleagues has become a fundamental part of life. Thinking of sacrificing it for a year made me nervous. I wondered how boring my weekends might become, or would I still be interested in meeting friends while everyone enjoyed a drink, and I sat soberly. I thought it through, and I decided to commit. And to my surprise, after the first outing with friends, the awkwardness of being a teetotaler was out of the window. I felt good that I can still be me. This became a new normal, which is equally fantastic.
- I had dreamt of eating tasty food on this day. However, I could not eat anything. I drank different versions of liquid food, which tasted not too bad.

Reflections

The fast was indeed a positive learning experience; I realized that nothing in life is permanent. Joy, sadness, pleasure, and sorrow are all part of life, and they will come and go with time. And so, why should I worry at all? Why should I stress? If I am breathing, eating, and maintaining good health, I need not worry about anything further. I realized that everything else, material and/or non-material pleasures, can continue to drive me — i.e., it is ok to dream to have a big house or a supercar as material pleasures or even aspire to travel the world and learn from vivid culture as a nonmaterial pleasure; If these things motivate me and provide a sense of happiness and accomplishment, I can use them as a driving force; however, if my plan fails or derails, that is okay. I can be happy that I have learned something from those experiences and then I must move on. My inner strength and willpower should continue to drive me towards a peaceful place defined by my ambitions. I have a beautiful life: And I must make the most of it, make it meaningful. I must enjoy its ups and learn from its lows. Most importantly, I must ensure that I do not become a reason to hurt or harm any other creature. Because just as my life is precious, so is theirs (humans, animals, plants, and beyond). I must consume clean and consume less so that there is enough for everyone and no danger to our Mother Earth and all its children.

Even after a year of going through the spiritual cleansing process, the experiences and learnings derived from it continue to help every day of my life. The learnings continue to be a core part of my newfound personality. I am so thankful that my decision to fast for ten days led me to find inner peace, challenge my comfort zone, and attest my strong willpower.

My Exploration with the Truth

By Aarthy Shah



Aarthy is a Biomedical Engineer currently located in Boston, MA. Originally from the small town of Parkersburg, WV, she has always found joy in hiking, music, yoga, and spending time with friends and family. The endless rollercoaster of life encouraged her to dive a bit deeper in the depths of Jainism this year in the sanidhya of Rashtrasant Param Gurudev Shree Namaramuni Maharaj Saheb. Her unique experience in Paramdham Sadhana Sankul has completely transformed her outlook on life.

Attending *Updhaan* was the beginning of the journey towards my soul (*Aatma Yatra*). I have never met Param Gurudev before, listened to any of his discourses, nor have I been exposed to such high-level Gujarati words and phrases. I was born and brought up in the United States in a Jain family. Beyond the quick prayers and bowing to the Omniscient beings (*Manglik*) before leaving the house, observing *Paryushan* (8-10 holy days of the year set aside for spiritual practices), and refraining from eating anything non-veg, I never knew much about Jainism or how to identify myself as a “Jain” beyond the food limitations. I stuck with what I knew best – the American lifestyle, friends, music, culture, and values.

Bhaav Updhaan Tapp Aradhana is the chance to develop our tolerance power over the period of 11 days. It provides the opportunity to reconnect with our souls and its qualities to gain confidence in ourselves that we can also perform penance and practice spiritual techniques/activities like the supreme beings who have achieved omniscience. By observing guidelines like the ones listed below, we are letting go of the comforts we are used to in the worldly lifestyle (*sansaar*).

- 1) Sleeping without a mattress on the floor
- 2) Having tasteless food
- 3) Disconnecting from cellphones, laptops, and other electronic gadgets
- 4) Rotating through 3 pairs of fully white clothing for 11 days
- 5) Not showering or looking in the mirror for 11 days
- 6) Observing complete silence and avoiding any sort of communication that distracts from the awareness of our souls, and
- 7) Observing the 5 vows of a Jain ascetic (nonviolence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), celibacy (*brahmacharya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*))

It is a chance to push the limits of your self-control and to discipline the mind (the lifestyle of practicing

restraint is known as *Saiyam*). If followed and practiced properly, it is a doorway to experiencing the untapped potential energy our souls contain.



From the very first day of *Updhaan*, I knew I was in for something beyond my imagination. The inexplicable overwhelming emotions I felt when receiving the most revered religious symbol (*upkaran*) of Jainism, the *rajoharan*¹, rattled me to the core.



Not knowing Param Gurudev, not understanding the meaning of receiving a *rajoharan*, not understanding what *Bhaav Updhaan Tapp* is or what I’m doing there, I still felt this strange flood of emotion and cried so much that I was shocked to see that my body contained so many tears. Little did I know that emotion was just the beginning. It was the catalyst in my search for the truth and answers to questions like, “Who am I?” “What is the meaning of this life?”

“Where am I supposed to go?” Why am I here?” “How did I get here?”



Despite my complete disconnection from the language, culture, *Jin Shasan*, and Param Gurudev, he went out of his way to accommodate me. Param Gurudev provided special sessions with Param Mahasatijis in English to explain his teachings and answer any questions, in addition to providing me with written translated versions of his discourses and assigned me a fellow member of the congregation (*sevak*) to ensure that I was comfortable with the living situation, food, the environment, and any concerns I had. The environment was so inviting to me as well my soul that I cannot imagine a better place to begin my search in. I feel so grateful for this new beginning.

Every morning of Updhaan would begin with devotional hymns and prayers followed by a unique guided meditation with Param Gurudev. I personally found meditation to be the most challenging thing for me. Regulating your thoughts is a task in itself and requires so much practice. Each session with Param Gurudev was always more than just meditation – it was an opportunity for self-reflection and to question our very existence. One of the most touching sessions was when all the participants were blindfolded and were asked to search for a statue of the soul that had been placed somewhere in the room (without us knowing). This activity represented our spiritual journey to find answers to our questions and awaken our soul. Some people ended up finding the statue, but so many others were unable to. People were falling down, hurting themselves, walking in the wrong direction, listening to outsiders tell them where to go, and others were so close to finding the statue but missed it by a few steps. Seeing so many people falling down, bumping into each other, blindly walking and completely missing the statue taught me my first

biggest lesson: **The importance of a Guru. Why we need a Guru and What a Guru is/does.**

A Guru guides us. He (Guru) dispels the darkness we have become accustomed to in our infinite lives in *sansaar* and paves the way for us to begin our journey towards purifying our soul. He (Guru) shows us the path the Omniscient beings have followed. The path that Guru himself follows, and the one that we should also follow to walk towards liberation (*Moksha*).

Within 5 days, I learned that we have all fallen so deep in this worldly life that we have forgotten to ask questions and search for the things that really matter: our soul (*Aatma*). Our souls are so tarnished that we are unable to identify ourselves anymore. More than this, we have lost our way and we have no direction or knowledge of how to re-identify our true selves. *This* is the importance of a Guru. He is like the mast of a ship that supports and propels us as we sail through the worldly ocean and reaches us to our goal of liberation. From that day on, I felt immense gratitude to be so lucky to have found a Guru and to be in his presence (*sanidhya*). Where would I have been without a Guru?

Updhaan was my first chance to experience a *Saiyami* lifestyle. To learn that Jainism is not just a religion, but a way of living. It is a one that embraces non-violence to the minutest of micro-organisms. Beyond the beauty of the lifestyle, it is a simple, worry-free practice that enables you so much time to spend on searching for your soul.

My second huge awakening happened when I was in quarantine and practicing meditation we had learned during Updhaan. I had taken a lot of books to read while I was secluded and one of the books discussed karma² theory. In it, it was explained that those who have had the chance to *hear and recite* the *Namokar Mantra* have shed 69 trillion billion *sagaropam*³ karmic particles. And on top of that, those who have had the chance to *see (darshan)* or *salute (vandan)* a Jain ascetic (*maharajsaheb/mahasatiji*) have shed 99 *lakhs* of karmic particles. I was dumbfounded when I learned this and upon further reflection, it struck me that I haven't just heard or recited the Namaskar Mantra. I had learned the entire Saamayik⁴ and started to learn Pratikraman⁵, I have had the privilege of hearing Mahavir Swami's preaching directly from the Aagams⁶ along with understanding the meanings, I have had the privilege to do darshan of several mahasatijis and Param Gurudev, I have a Guru who guides me and teaches me so willingly and effortlessly – and that's just the beginning of the list. I

have received **so** much more than just hearing the Namaskar Mantra, so how in my right mind can I waste this precious treasure I have worked so immeasurably hard for?

My third realization occurred during the same period when I was in quarantine and introspecting on what a Saiyami life might feel or look like. Once, in conversation with Pujya Shree Subodhikabai Mahasatiji, upon discussion of *loch*⁷ and my expressing fear about it, she displayed a small instance to me. She confidently plucked out a section of her hair with such willpower and detachment that at first, I was shocked and disturbed but also perplexed that she made it seem so easy and painless? This small action took root in my mind and while in quarantine, it occurred to me that I was curious – what does it feel like? does it actually hurt? how much strength does it take to pluck out your own hair? This inspired me to try it out – and I too, plucked out a small portion of my hair with just the same power and tenacity she had shown me. I was surprised at how effortless and more than anything – how little pain I felt. It felt just like ripping a band-aid off – it wasn't as terrible as I thought it would be. This gave rise to a new feeling within me and one that is still growing within me – that even I can do this! Even I, someone stuck in the worldly attachments, am capable of a life of restraint and self-discipline.

The experience of Paramdham, the culture, soul searching, and of course, meeting Param Gurudev was so powerful that I felt uneasy going back home so fast. I originally planned to stay at Paramdham for two weeks (just for Updhaan Tapp) and then spend a week visiting my family in Mumbai. It ended up being such a beautiful experience that I didn't even feel like visiting the rest of my family members. I spent one day visiting them and then returned immediately to the ashram. I ended up extending my flight until after the initiation ceremony for those renouncing their worldly life (*Diksha Mahotsav*) and I couldn't be more

grateful for that decision. Now, when I look at old photos of myself, or reflect on my past actions and situations, I observe a lost soul with no direction. Someone mechanically going through the everyday motions without purpose and unknowingly binding karmas, bearing the fruits of my actions, and as someone acting without any knowledge. It pains me to see my old self now, so unaware and unobservant. This feeling occurs within me when I see my own past but also when I see others who aren't as lucky as me to have this guidance and direction from our very treasured Jin Shasan. The past two months I spent at Paramdham in Param Gurudev's sanidya is more invaluable than any experience I have ever had in my 25 years of life. I am indebted to Param Gurudev for taking me under his wing and nurturing my body, mind, and soul, and for teaching me, showing me, and making me aware of my purpose in this life; to the all the Param Mahasatijis that were so caring and patient with me during all my questions and for teaching me, to Devanupriya Sonal Didi Ajmera for being the biggest support and helping me with everything throughout my journey alone to India and at Paramdham, and last but not least, to my parents for never giving up on me, and continuously keeping Jin Shasan alive in our home despite all my fancies. Mara Koti Koti Vandan.

¹Woolen threads tied to the end of a wooden stick, designed to sweep away tiny insects. A universal symbol of *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

²Thoughts, words, and deeds that contribute to actions and reactions in the principle of karma (cause and effect).

³Countless years = 1 Palyopam; 10,000,000,000,000 (one quintillion) Palyopams = 1 Sagaropam.

⁴Vow of periodic concentration used to observe or study religion.

⁵A ritual designed to repent for any sins committed throughout the day and night.

⁶Jain Holy Scriptures.

⁷Jain ritual practiced by ascetics that involves the removal of hair on the head through plucking



LIFE LESSONS LEARNED

(Throughout our life we continue to learn important life lessons from our loved ones and from our own experiences. These lessons help us in making right decisions, make progress in our education, career, family life and our overall personal growth. During March and April 2022, we had requested our community members to share their life learnings. We thank all of those who sent in their responses. We have selected a few of those responses in this article. We hope you find these interesting and educational.)

You Reap What You Sow

By Savita Jain, Washington DC, USA

While picking leaves from the green mint plant for garnishing, my mother said, “remember my plants were not flourishing for the last few years? The tomato plant kept growing but wasn’t producing fruits”.

“Yes, I do remember that. What did you do this time that all the plants have become so healthy?” I asked.

Mom replied, “This time I paid special attention to the quality of the seeds I had sown. A healthy and quality seed affects the growth of the plant. Similarly, the future of children can also be improved with love, right values, belongingness, and the care they get in childhood.

If you sow the seed and leave the seedling to others who may or may not give it proper attention, then the result may be disappointing. Never give a chance to the child to say, “My mother never taught me this or never told me about this.” Nothing can be more humiliating than this for a mother. If the seed has been sown, then give it time, love, and advice and watch it flourish, watch it become a good human.

Four months pregnant daughter, which was me, understood her mother’s gesture. Today, while plucking mint leaves, I was giving the same lesson to my daughter. The same daughter who has grown up in a foreign country - yet has got the best combination of culture and code of conduct.

Today, on the occasion of Guru Poornima, my best wishes to my guru, my mother.

Regaining My Faith

Girish B. Shah, Bloomington, Illinois, USA

When we got visa to come to USA, we boarded an express train to go to Mumbai. At Surat station one couple who was travelling from Kanpur got down taking their luggage along with my wife’s carry-on. I just counted all the luggage and found out that my wife’s carry-on was missing. I pulled the chain. The train conductor came, and I filed a complaint against that couple. For several months we were in distress. It was an unbearable loss to us since my wife’s gold and silver jewelry was in that bag, including her mangal sutra. I totally lost faith in our religion. I was very disappointed because I had purchased this jewelry with the money I had earned by working very hard with dedication and honesty as a teacher of Economics.

But miracle happened. The couple who had taken our carry-on, had a change of heart and they sent a letter to my relative’s address which was on that bag. Soon after we got the carry-on intact. And my belief and faith in our religion doubled. I apologized for being upset and asked for forgiveness.

Follow Guru's Advice

Surendra Singhavi, Dayton, Ohio, USA

When I left India I was asked by my mother to visit family Guru Acharya Hastimuni who asked me to follow several vows such as remain vegetarian and avoid alcohol. Later in life my friends suggested me to invest money in a restaurant called Buffalo Wings. My wife and I have strong religious faith and decided not to invest in any business which sold meat and liquor. Our friends lost millions of dollars in that business; but with our strong faith in vows, we were able to avoid losses which created positive impact in my life.

The lesson learned here is that if one will follow any vow or niyam given by Jain Acharya then one will feel very positive in life.

Ahimsa Paramo Dharm

Mayur Mehta, Stoney Creek, Ontario, Canada

I was in school studying in 7th standard. We had a lesson in our science book on how silk is made. Our teacher explained the process telling how the living silkworms are also boiled to death in that process. This sent shivers through my spine on imagining what happens to those poor worms. I think the AHIMSA sanskar my mother had given me as a child was instrumental. From that day I decided not to wear silk in my life ever. I requested the same of my wife to be and she agreed. And not only that, our 3 daughters are also not wearing any silk clothes ever!

Earn Your Living by Working at it

Jagdish N. Doshi, Schaumburg, Illinois, USA

My wife, my 4 year old son and myself were at Abu railway station about 45-years ago, waiting for a train. A 5 year old young boy came to us with his box of shoe polish. He asked me if I would like to get my shoes polished. I did not want to get it done. But when I saw that this young boy needed to earn some money for his daily food, I asked him his rate. He told me that it will be two rupees. I told him to polish my shoes. He put his shoe box on the ground and opened it to get shoe brush and polish. I gave him a 5 rupee note before he began polishing my shoes. He reached into his pocket to give me my change back. I told him to keep the change. He then asked me to give him my shoes to polish. I told him not to polish my shoes but that he could keep the money. He put his brush and polish back in his box and gave me my money back. I asked him the reason why he was giving it back. He said, "Sir, I can't keep your money without doing my job." I almost cried. I gave him my shoes to polish. He did his job and left.

This boy taught me a valuable lesson in my life. From that day I decided to keep only money which I have earned in return for the services I have offered.

Express Gratitude

Dr. Nidhi Shah, Riverside, California, USA

Expressing gratitude in thoughts, words, and action has made a positive impact in my life. Reflecting back on my parent's life I saw them communicate to us, role modeled it in their behavior, and always expressed gratefulness to God. My parents served the Jain community, gave back to society, as well as helped and supported the needy people.

I recall the incident when my father was suffering from cancer and was in severe pain. He still expressed his gratitude and told me to smile, be optimistic, and be thankful to God. My mother always told me to help the poor since we were fortunate that God had given us plenty and we could easily support the needy people. She cared for the well-being of others more than herself. Her motto in life was to serve others and express gratitude to God.

When I saw them doing this, my respect and regard for them was enhanced and I felt inner bliss from within. Due to the positive impact of this on my life, I express gratitude to God, family, friends, colleagues in the workplace, and community members every day. Practicing gratitude has become my core value and gives me joy and true happiness from within. Doing this consistently has improved the quality of my relationship with others and understanding of human beings and seeing things from others' perspective. Expressing gratitude, sharing genuine feelings, and focusing on the core being, has created a win-win scenario for me in all walks of life.

The True Art of Listening

Reena Shah, Los Angeles, California, USA

Listening is like a gust/burst of wind which comes and goes away. When you Contemplate it stays within and meditating leads to actual absorption of an idea/thought. It has been seen that if one listens more or too much, ability to think diminishes. (Shrimad Rajchandra in Vyakhyansar – 2 – 10-11-12)

These lines piqued my curiosity as I always believed that listening to satsang/lectures was the best thing a mumukshu could engage in. The more I thought about these lines, the more I wanted to explore and read about it to understand its full meaning. I understood that these were the three steps of sadhana on the spiritual path. Listening was the first step but contemplating and meditating were two other crucial steps that would make listening more meaningful. I was inspired to change my listening style and this process led to arousal of devotion towards my supreme master Param Pujya Pappaji. I realized that unless I did shraavan also in a particular way, it would be futile. Most times we listen to respond or to react. I had the will now to change it. This inspired me to start my inner journey of listening to pravachans or gnaani na vachan in a new light. It is important to understand these three words in order to tread on this path of self-realization truly meaningfully.

What you sow, so shall you reap

Keval Shah, Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA

Religion gives people something to believe in and provides a sense of structure. Although I have always had imperishable faith in Jainism, there was a small period when I had minor doubts about the Karma theory. I thought that karma is misused to denote the probability of events. I thought this way for quite a while until I attended a 7-day shibir in Ahmedabad.

When I told Maharaj Saheb what I thought about the Karma theory, Saheb Ji gave me a 30-minute lecture on the topic of karma theory, and in just 30 minutes I felt my eyes were opened. I understood that with karma, like causes produce like effects; that is, a good deed will lead to a future beneficial effect, while a bad deed will lead to a future harmful effect.

Then, in front of all the students, his main disciple said to me to not just believe in anything without researching and fully knowing what the topic is about. Although he said that in a light manner, I felt ashamed; but understood what he meant. This advice has been a pivotal lesson for me and has helped me throughout my career.

World's First 48 Dome Bhaktamar Divine Shrine

By Dr. Manju Jain



Dr. Manju Jain is a spiritual healer and works amongst the Jaina method of curing through the chanting of shlokas and mantras. Her immense faith in spiritual healing has cured incurable diseases, defying logic, and science. A number of doctors have endorsed her unique style of spiritual healing and its miraculous results. She has worked successfully on curing people from illnesses such as cancer, psoriasis, kidney failure, tuberculosis, skin problems, and many other ailments. Strongly following this methodology, she believes that the proposed Bhaktamar Divine Shrine will benefit many generations to come.

In 21st Century, humans have made vast advances in material well-being, but we are still far behind in our spiritual and mental well-being. Jainism has always focused on the spiritual and mental development by reaching higher consciousness.

In pursuance of the above objective, we have pledged to build a state-of-the-art **Bhaktamar Healing and Research Centre** as a Divine Shrine

The goal of the Bhaktamar Divine Shrine is to help people of all classes, castes, communities across the world to reach the higher consciousness of being by inculcating the profound impacts of chanting of shlokas from Acharya Maantunga's Bhaktamar Stotra. Each of the 48 domes corresponding to the 48 shlokas will have a pictorial representation and its *yantra* in pure gold. The shrine will also have information about the purpose, method, and significance of chanting of each of the 48 shlokas for wellness in health, prosperity, and education.

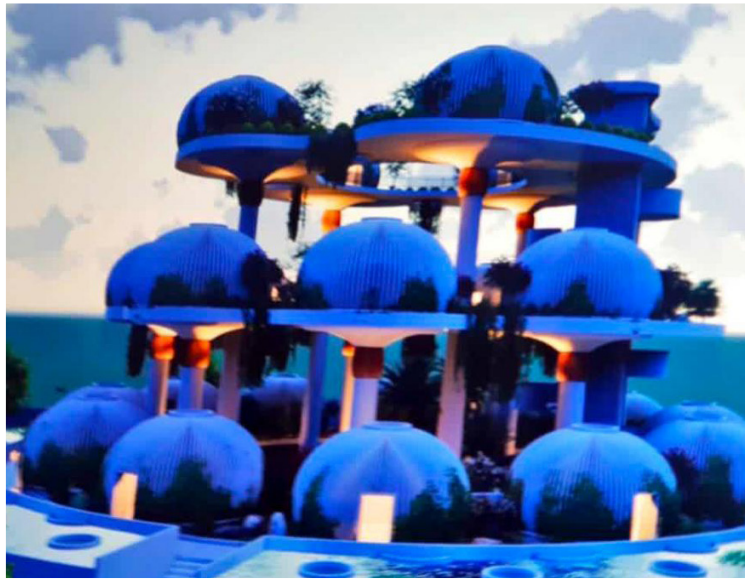
The shrine will have a 500 capacity Auditorium for inhouse Bhaktamar programs and stay facilities for people attending on-campus programs (for 1/3/7 or 21 days) throughout the year.

The proposed Shrine has 4 key objectives:

1. Research and Development - Archaeological artifacts and right methodologies for healing, such as sound, thoughts, vibrations, and frequencies.
2. Outreach Program - Bhaktamar healers to connect with Jains globally online and in-person travel.
3. On-campus Activities - to conduct in-house monthly programs throughout the year.
4. Education - to promote research, educational events and offer PHD level programs.

For more information, watch these videos:

- <https://youtu.be/nZsIM9Y6gzc>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms9ov9mltQQ>
- <https://youtu.be/VYQ57bR04TY>



Architectural images of the
proposed 48 Dome Bhaktamar
Divine Shrine

In Nagpur, Maharashtra

