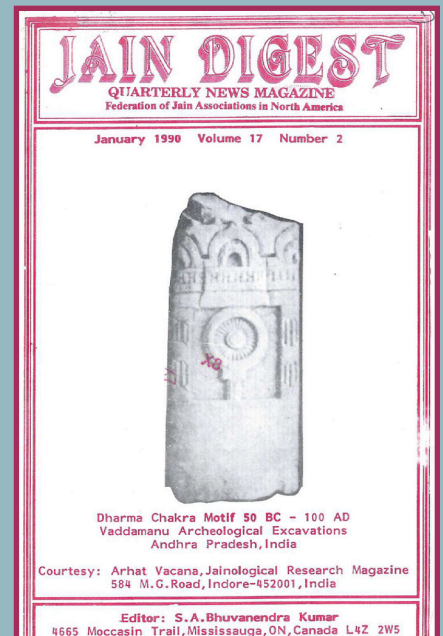
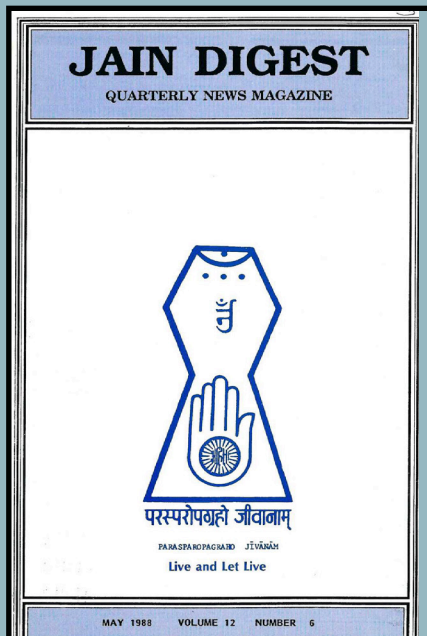
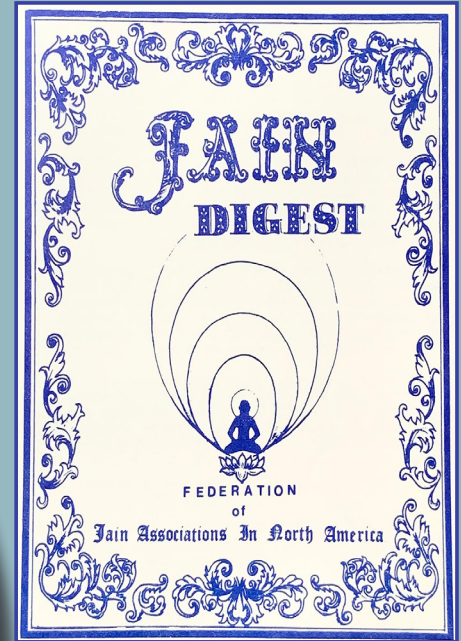
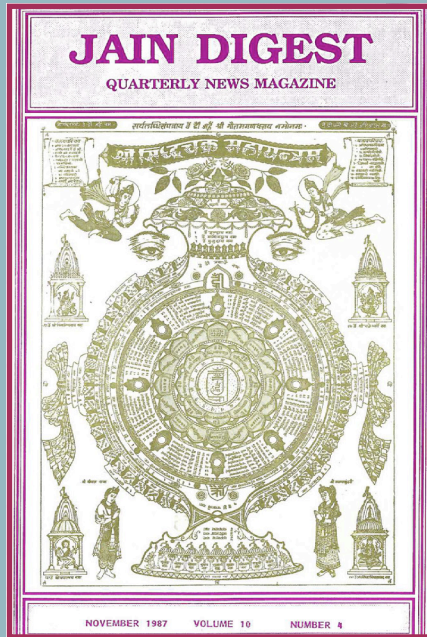


JainDigest

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Volume 27



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REMEMBERING DR. S.A.B. KUMAR
THE FIRST EDITOR OF JAIN DIGEST

JAIN DIGEST

A Publication of the

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On the Cover

Remembering Dr. S.A.B. Kumar – The First Editor of Jain Digest

The cover shows Dr. Kumar's picture along with a few front cover pages of Jain Digest from 1985 to 1990. The image in the top right corner is the cover page of the first issue of Jain Digest published in July 1985.

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	
Bringing Vision and Hope to Children in Nigeria	Jayana Shah 7
Practicing Compassion with Akshay Patra	Savita Jain 10
Section: Devotion	
Acharaya Shri Hemchandracharyaji.....	Dilip V. Shah 12
Sakal Tirth Sutra	Jepal Bijal Shah 14
Section: Education	
Aparigraha: An Essential Principle for Peaceful Living	Bhavin Jhaveri 17
Sadhak nu Sankalpsutra - Jay Viyaraay Sutra - Part 2	Dr. Ramjan Hasaniya 19
Section: Information	
Passing away of Dr. S.A.B (Bhuvanendra) Kumar	Amar Deep Salgia 23
Our Homage to Dr. Bhuvanendra Kumarji	Dr. Sulekh Jain 24
Navapada Yantra at Philadelphia Museum of Art	Dhruti Rathi 25
Enriching our Life through Jain Society of Greater Detroit	Sanjay Bhandari 28
JAINA Academic Liaison Committee Update	Manish Mehta PH.D..... 31
Cataloging Jain Manuscripts and Books – A Rewarding Project	Manish Mehta PH.D..... 33
Section: Inspiration	
The Timeless Wisdom of Viktor Frankl	Payal Seth 37
Main Ek Ped	Dr. Mukesh Lathia 40
Section: Transformation	
Importance of Healthy Body and Mind in Meditation	Ramesh Khandhar 42
Section: Young Generation	
Essays by Pathshala Students in North America - Jain Society of Houston	45
2024 YJA Convention - Traditional Pathways, Modern Footprints	Suryaraj Jain 50
Section: Conversation	
Conversation with Dr. Professor Siddhartha Dalal	52



EDITOR'S NOTE

We hope you had a very devotional and spiritually elevating Paryushan and Das Lakshana celebrations. Michhami Dukkadam to you all on behalf of the Jain Digest committee.

With blessings of Bhagwan and with encouragement and support from all of you, our editorial team is pleased to bring you this issue of Jain Digest which marks completion of our 9 years of service to the Jain community. We are humbled by the interest and enthusiasm shown by all the authors in writing articles on various topics. It is their passion and hard work that makes it possible for us to bring you high quality content that we hope enriches your spiritual life.

It is with deep sadness and reverence, I inform you that Dr. S. A. B. Kumar, the First Editor of Jain Digest, passed away on July 7th 2024, at the age of 84 years. Unfortunately, I had not met him and did not know much about his extraordinary personality. He was a Jain scholar, passionate about sharing his knowledge of Jain philosophy through several books and periodicals such as Jain Digest and Jinamanjari.

It was a very nostalgic feeling to hear about Dr. Kumar and the birth of Jain Digest from the past JAINA President Dr. Tansukh Salgia. Dr. Salgia told me that in May 1985 during the JAINA convention in Detroit, he was elected as the next JAINA President and decided to start a newsletter to connect JAINA's fast-growing membership base. Dr. Salgia came up with the name "JAIN DIGEST" and requested Dr. Kumar to be its first editor-in-chief in the pious presence of Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji.

You can read more about Dr. Kumar and the early years of Jain Digest in an article by Amar Deep Salgia, son of Dr. Tansukh Salgia. Also included is an article by Dr. Sulekh Jain - a poetic homage which captures the highlights of Dr. Kumar's life.

We bow down to Dr. Salgia and Dr. Kumar for their vision, passion and hard work in keeping the Jain community informed and connected.

In the Compassion section, Jayana Shah narrates her very enriching hands-on experience in participating in an Eye Camp in Nigeria and Savita Jain tells us about how offering seva, along with her husband, Rahul, as the Washington DC chairs of Akshay Patra, has given them immense satisfaction and a sense of purpose.

In the Devotion section we bring you an article about Kali Kal Sarvagn Shri Hemchandracharya ji by Dilip V. Shah and a Gujarati article by Jepal Shah explaining the content and meaning of Sakal Tirth Vandana Sutra.

In the Education section, we have the second part of the Jayviyray Sutra by Dr. Ramjan Hasaniya – in Gujarati. And Bhavin Jhaveri elaborates more on the topic of Aparigraha – one of the three fundamental principles of Jain Dharma.

In the Information section, Dhruti Rathi covers Navapada Yantra at Philadelphia Museum of Art as a part of the series on "Jain Sculptures and Art Collections". Sanjay Bhandari tells us about how volunteering in various positions at Jain Society of Greater Detroit has enriched his life. Dr. Manish Mehta has contributed two articles – one provides us an update on the activities of JAINA's Academic Liaison Committee and in the second article he narrates his rewarding experience in cataloging Jain manuscripts and books.

In the Inspiration section, Payal Seth covers a heart-wrenching and inspiring story of Dr. Viktor Frankl – an Austrian neurologist and psychologist – based on his international bestseller "Man's Search for Meaning". And realizing that nature also can inspire us in living a fulfilled life, we are including a poem in Hindi by Dr. Mukesh Lathia titled "Main Ek Ped". Don't miss this!

In the Transformation section, Ramesh Khandhar emphasizes the importance of healthy body and mind for a more effective meditation and explores ways to achieve true well-being of the body, mind, and soul.

In the Young Generation section, we bring you essays written by four talented students at the Jain Society of Houston. We also have a brief report by Suryaraj Jain of the highly successful 2024 YJA convention held in Atlanta.

Lastly, Dhruti Rathi shares insights from her conversation with Dr. Siddhartha Dalal, about his achievements as a scientist and a philanthropist.

My sincere thanks to all the writers for their contribution and to the members of our editorial team for their dedication and hard work.

If you would like to write an article for our next issue to be published in February 2025, please write to us at: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com Or call or send a message at 310-721-5947.

In Seva,
Dilip Parekh

JAINA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear fellow Jains,

I am delighted to address our vibrant community through the pages of "Jain Digest." As we continue our journey of spiritual growth, cultural preservation, and

community service, I am heartened by the unity and cooperation that defines us.

Mahavir Jayanti Celebrations Across North America

During the auspicious occasion of Mahavir Jayanti, Jain centers across North America came alive with devotional celebration. These celebrations remind us of Lord Mahavira's teachings and inspire us to walk the path of compassion and non-violence. From Toronto to Sacramento, Milwaukee to Miami, Buffalo to Montreal, and Niagara to Calgary, JAINA leaders visited Jain centers, fostering connections and spreading the message of unity.



Youth Engagement

Our vibrant Jain youth gathered for the Young Jain Association (YJA) Convention in July at Atlanta convention facility. Over 1,000 young Jains came together, forging friendships, exploring their spirituality, and contributing to our collective growth. Their enthusiasm and energy are a testament to our community's bright future.

Upcoming JAINA Convention 2025: "Unity in Diversity: The Jain Way"

Mark your calendars! The eagerly awaited JAINA Convention 2025 planning is progressing well. With its theme of "Unity in Diversity," this convention resonates deeply with our community. Nearly 4,000 attendees have already registered as of the end of August; eager to engage in meaningful discussions, learn from each other, and celebrate our shared heritage.



JAINA Accomplishments

- The Financial Council has completed the **financial audits for 2019 to 2023**.
- JAINA is also drafting a **Conflict-of-Interest Policy** for all Jain leaders to ensure transparency that our community deserves.
- Our **Jaina Youth Exchange Program (JYEP)** is thriving, giving young members the chance to experience new cultures in collaboration with JITO. Recently, fourteen Jain youth from various parts of the world traveled across the USA, learning about the Jain way of life.
- **Jaina Student Guidance Committee** has helped countless new Jain students arriving in North America for education to adjust to new environments.
- **Women's Empowerment Committee** continues to deliver educational, informative sessions for Jain community-at-large.
- **All Jaina committees** are doing excellent work.

Paryushan & Das Lakshana Festivals (*Parvas*): A Time for Reflection and Purification

As we enter August and September, our entire Jain community prepares to observe Paryushan and Das Lakshana. These sacred festivals provide an opportunity for introspection, fasting, and seeking forgiveness. During this time, our Jain centers across the USA organize various meaningful activities to engage the community.

Here are some details about the activities done during the Paryushan & Das Lakshana *Parva*:

1. **Lectures and Discourses:** Jain scholars, monks, and knowledgeable speakers will conduct enlightening sessions to cover a wide range of topics, including the teachings of Lord Mahavira, the significance of Paryushan, and practical ways to apply Jain principles in our daily lives.

This year during Paryushan, JAINA had planned online lectures by Dr. Kumarpal Desai in Gujarati, by Dr. Samani Pratibha Pragyaji in Hindi and by Dr. Bipin Doshi in English to cater to the language preferences of our diverse community members. During Das Lakshana, Anupreksha Jain gave lectures in Hindi.

2. **Scripture Study:** Paryushan is an ideal time to immerse ourselves in Jain scriptures. Many centers organize group readings of sacred texts such as the *Kalpa Sutra*, *Tattvartha Sutra*, and *Samayika Sutra*.
3. **Fasting and Austerities:** Fasting during Paryushan is a common practice. Devotees abstain from solid food, and some even observe waterless fasts (*nirjala*). Austerities (*tapas*) are also undertaken. These may include limiting sensory indulgences, practicing silence, and focusing on inner purification.
4. **Pratikraman - The Ritual of Confession:** Pratikraman is a central aspect of Paryushan. It involves sincere introspection and seeking forgiveness from all living beings.
5. **Das Lakshana:** The Das Lakshana parva is celebrated for 10 days after Paryushan and focuses on the Ten Supreme Virtues which have immense significance in Jainism. These ten

virtues are: Forgiveness (*Kshama*), Humility (*Mardava*), Straightforwardness (*Arjava*), Contentment (*Santosh*), Truthfulness (*Satya*), Self-Restraint (*Sanyam*), Austerity (*Tapa*), Renunciation (*Tyag*), Detachment (*Akinchanya*) and Celibacy (*Brahmacharya*). Study and deeper understanding of these virtues guides us toward a life of ethical conduct, compassion, and helps us move forward on our spiritual path towards liberation.

6. **Community Gatherings:** Jain centers organize communal meals (*samuhik bhojan*) during and after Paryushan as *Swami Vatsalya* to emphasize unity, equality, and sharing.
7. **Charity and Service:** Paryushan inspires acts of compassion. We Jains engage in charitable activities, supporting those in need through *Jivdaya*, *Vaiyavaccha*, *Sadharmic Bhakti* donations, volunteering, and helping the less fortunate.
8. **Prayers and Meditation:** Devotees spend extra time in prayer and meditation to seek spiritual growth and inner peace. Jain temples hold special evening prayers (*pratikraman*) where the community gathers to recite sacred verses and reflect on their actions.

Remember, Paryushan & Das Lakshana is not just about physical fasting, prayers and pratikraman; it's a holistic process that involves purification of the mind, speech, and body. It's a time to reconnect with our true selves, seek forgiveness, and strengthen our commitment to non-violence and compassion.

I am sure many of you have whole-heartedly participated in these activities on the JAINA platform and at your local Jain centers.

On behalf of JAINA EC and BOD, if we have knowingly or unknowingly hurt you, we seek your forgiveness. *Michchhami Dukkadam!*

May this Paryushan and Das Lakshana *Parvas* bring you immense spiritual growth and harmony! 🙏

With warm regards,

Bindesh Shah

BRINGING VISION AND HOPE TO CHILDREN IN NIGERIA

JAYANA SHAH



Jayana Shah, a volunteer, and Graphics Designer by profession, dedicates herself to various organizations such as JCSC, JAINA, and NGOs such as VOICE of Specially Abled People and TCCOP. Her commitment to service led her to become the editor for Compassion Section at Jain Digest, showcasing her passion for spreading awareness and supporting causes close to her heart.

On May 4th, I embarked on a transformative journey to Nigeria for a 10-day eye camp dedicated to helping children in need of vision care. This trip was organized through the collaboration of Anekant Community Center (ACC) organization and Aparigrah Foundation. in Los Angeles with which I had previously worked on several service projects in the USA. However, this mission felt different, and my excitement grew as the departure date approached. It was a significant leap into the unknown, fueled by a profound sense of compassion that overshadowed any fears of uncertainties.

The Build-Up: Anticipation and Commitment

The journey began with a blend of excitement and apprehensions. Leaving on our anniversary - a day my husband and I had always celebrated together - felt bittersweet. Friends questioned my decision to travel alone to Africa for the first time, especially given the current global turmoil. Despite their concerns, my determination to serve and the anticipation of making a difference strengthened my resolve. This would be my first international eye camp, and I was eager to see what lay ahead.

Arrival and Initial Impressions

Our team included nine volunteers from the USA, one from India and one from Zambia. Upon arrival, we received a warm welcome from the local Rotary Club volunteers, who handled all logistical details. They coordinated with the school districts for permissions, liaised with school principals, arranged our meals, and organized transportation. Their meticulous planning and dedication laid the groundwork for our mission.

The Routine and Challenges

Unlike my previous experience at a dental camp in Bidada, India, where everything was centralized in one school, this eye camp required us to travel to

different schools each day. We divided into five teams, each responsible for visiting 3-6 schools daily. Although the distances between schools were only 10-20 miles, poor road conditions and traffic extended our travel times to 35-55 minutes.

Each morning, we started around 7 AM after a hearty breakfast, equipped with our lunch and cases of water. With temperatures soaring above 90 degrees and schools lacking electricity, fans were a luxury they couldn't afford. The eye-check machines required darkness, so we had to work with windows and doors closed, turning the classrooms into ovens. Despite drinking 1-1.5 gallons of water daily, I did not need to use the restrooms (a personal pet peeve of mine) until we returned to our hotel rooms. I had never perspired so much; it felt as though my body was cleansing itself along with my soul.



Dark enclosed mock clinic room with 30 to 40 children at a time in 90 degrees

Despite the challenging conditions, these hardships felt minor in comparison. Working with the children, engaging in conversations, and sharing brief moments of their lives was incredibly fulfilling. Their eagerness and curiosity were completely understandable. Although their accents presented some challenges, I was pleasantly surprised that they all spoke English, and the language barrier did not hinder our communication.

We brought groups of children at a time into a makeshift classroom that had been converted into a clinic room. The children's eyes lit up with hope and excitement, as if we were bringing magic into their lives. Witnessing their reactions made me realize the profound impact of our work. As Americans, we often take our privileges for granted, but seeing the gratitude in these children's eyes was truly humbling.

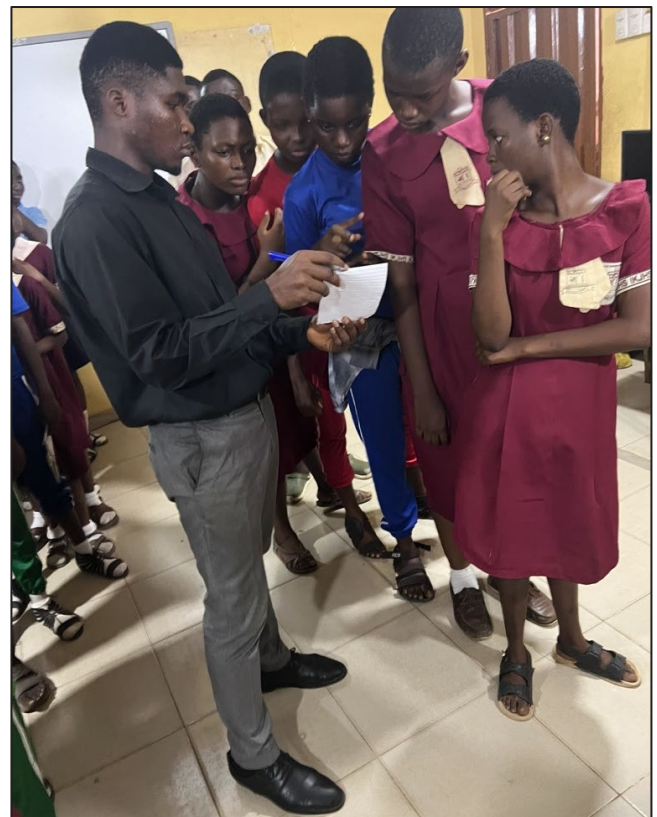


Students in uniform - waiting in line for their turn

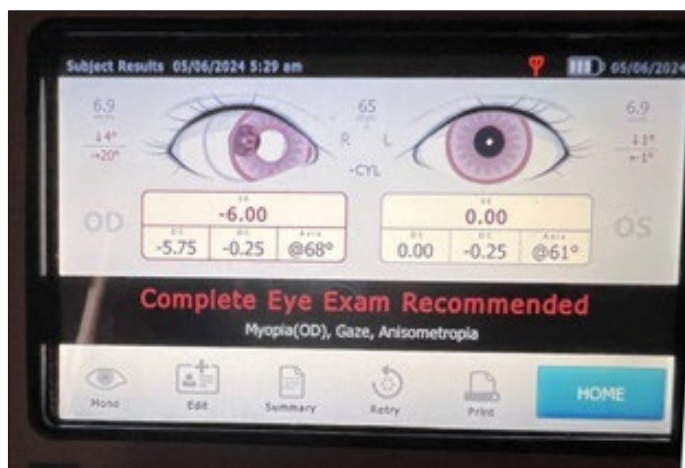
Each team examined between 1500 and 3000 students and staff per day. Over the course of five days, five teams visited 98 schools, examining a total of 37,673 individuals. Of these, 10,717 were referred to local Optometrists who accompanied us to each school. Additionally, approximately 3791 pairs of eyeglasses were distributed.

One observation I would like to share is that kids are kids, no matter where they grow up. Teenagers exhibited typical behaviors, such as running around and sometimes misbehaving with each other. Managing them was initially challenging, but I found that giving them leadership roles - like handling paperwork and monitoring lines - made a significant difference. It was wonderful to see how they responded to being entrusted with responsibility. They needed attention, respect, and acknowledgement of their importance among their peers. At the end of each session, I would offer them simple tips on eye care and hygiene to share with their families. Observing how seriously the children took these tips was fascinating and highlighted their mindset. It became clear that a little compassion goes a long way.

At one point, one of our local helpers began writing down the instructions we usually gave verbally. Among the batch, six to eight children were visually impaired, yet the other kids interacted with them as if nothing was amiss. Witnessing this natural inclusivity was truly heartwarming.



Visually impaired students' commendable inclusivity: only difference is that the collar of the uniform has different color border



Eye examine result of not so healthy eyes

Exploring Opportunities to Practice Compassion

In the evenings, we would gather for dinner with the Rotary Club members. During these meals, we shared our daily experiences and got to know one another better. Since most of us were meeting for the first time, it was surprising to find how aligned our hearts were. One particularly noteworthy experience shared by Pankajbhai, the president of the local Rotary Club, stood out.

He shared a story about his apartment complex in India, where the management periodically clears out abandoned bicycles. Rather than letting them be destroyed, Pankajbhai approached a bicycle repair company to fix them at a minimal cost for donation. Inspired by this initiative, the company offered to repair and distribute the bicycles to nearby villages at their own expense. This collaboration has resulted in over 500 bicycles being donated each year.

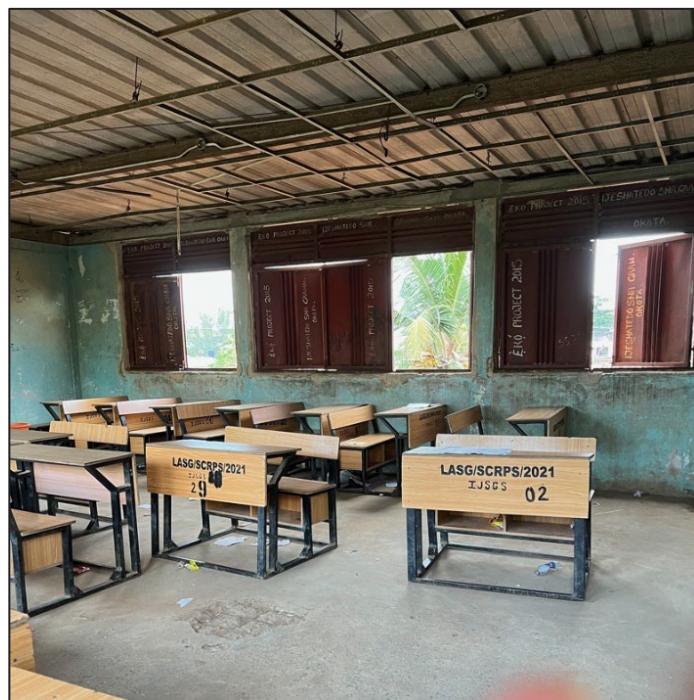
It was a perfect example of a compassion chain, demonstrating how people with the right mindset can come together to tackle significant problems and create meaningful impact through teamwork. This experience made me realize that opportunities to show compassion and serve the community are always present. All it takes is a deep desire and willingness to seize those opportunities. When you do, it often feels as though forces align to bring like-minded people together.

Conclusion: A Life-Changing Experience

This eye camp in Nigeria was more than just a service project; it was a journey of self-discovery and

profound human connection. The satisfaction of helping these children and the purpose I found through this mission was unparalleled. Despite the heat, exhaustion, and initial fears, the experience reaffirmed my belief in the power of compassion and the limitless potential of human kindness. I returned with a renewed sense of purpose and a deeper understanding of what it truly means to genuinely serve others.

I am thrilled to report that the foundation's ambitious goal for this year of helping over 100,000 children and staff was surpassed. After our efforts in Nigeria, we reached 90,478 individuals, and by adding the numbers from Zambia, Kenya, and Uganda in July 2024, the total soared to an impressive 134,904.



A Typical classroom

Anekant Community Center (ACC) established in 2005, and Aparigraha Foundation (AF), established in 2021, are nonprofit organizations dedicated to humanitarian missions worldwide. ACC has supported underserved communities in 26 countries and organizes numerous humanitarian missions each year in the US, India, Ghana, Zambia, Jamaica and beyond.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact:

Jayana Shah at jayana.n.shah@gmail.com or Dr. Nitin Shah at nitinshahmd@gmail.com.

PRACTICING COMPASSION WITH AKSHAY PATRA

SAVITA JAIN



Savita is JAINA's Director of Public Relations since 2019. She was a Emcee for JAINA Conventions in 2019, 2021 and 2023. Currently volunteering for teaching Jain Sutras since last 5 years. She recently launched her You Tube Channel. She is the Co-Chair of Akshay Patra foundation for DC MD VA chapter along with her husband Rahul Jain. She is an anchor dancer, choreographer, a motivational speaker, and a 7 time gold medalist in BSC and Visharad in Hindi. savita@savitajain.com

**ज़िंदगी तब बेहतर होती है जब आप खुश होते हैं !
लेकिन तब बेहतरीन हो जाती है
जब कोई आपकी वजह से खुश होता है!**

I was fortunate to have been born into a relatively well-to-do Marwadi family in a small village called Malkapur. I attended a girls-only Marathi language school, the only one of its kind in the village. This school had a mix of students from all walks of life - some well-off and some less fortunate. I was a good student, excelling in my studies and winning many state and local competitions for my school.

However, many of my classmates struggled to complete their homework and pay attention in class. During the summer months, some even fainted in the classroom due to hunger and exhaustion. At the time, I did not think much of it - maybe it was innocence or perhaps it was my feeling of superiority.

As time passed, I completed my schooling and college in Malkapur, got married, moved to the US, and had children - life was good. One afternoon, while enjoying my masala chai, I came across a video by Mr. Narayan Murthy discussing Akshaya Patra (<https://apusa.org/>). He talked about how a child's life and education are severely affected when they do not have enough food to eat every day. They cannot pay attention in their classes, are always tired, and lag behind other students.

That moment... that very moment... all those memories - my school, my classmates, those girls who looked tired even at the beginning of the school day - it all came rushing back to me. I was filled with guilt and could hardly breathe. I have not been able to overcome that feeling - and I am not sure if I ever will - but it motivated me to actively support various Akshaya Patra chapters with their fundraising activities, and anchoring galas.

About Akshaya Patra USA

Hunger is a major barrier to education for millions of children in India, often forcing families to prioritize work over schooling. Those who attend school frequently suffer from hunger, hindering their ability to learn. To tackle this hunger problem and to promote education, Akshaya Patra, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization was founded in 2000. The organization provides hot mid-day meals to school children. This initiative ensures children receive the necessary nutrition for cognitive development, encourages school attendance, and reduces dropout rates. Mid-day meals serve as incentives for children to attend school and for parents to send their children to school; instead of sending them to work to support the family.

From the humble beginning in 2000 when meals were served to 1500 children across 5 schools in Bangalore, India, Akshaya Patra now operates one of the world's largest mid-day meal programs, providing freshly cooked, nutritious meals to over 2.2 million children across 20,000 schools in 16 states and two union territories in India.

Akshaya Patra's kitchens are a marvel of efficiency and hygiene. They operate 72 centralized kitchens across India, each designed to cook and distribute food on a large scale while maintaining the highest standards of cleanliness and safety. These kitchens are capable of preparing meals for tens of thousands of children each day, with some of the largest facilities able to feed up to 100,000 children. The food prepared is vegetarian, adhering to local dietary customs and excluding onions and garlic to cater to various dietary restrictions. The quality of the meals is excellent, ensuring that each child receives the nutrition they need to stay healthy and focused in their studies. To see Akshaya Patra's kitchen in action, watch a YouTube video "How 2 Million Children

Are Fed Daily By The World's Biggest Free School Meal Provider" (Courtesy: Business Insider India)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMJkJD5pQpl>

Recognition by the United Nations in 2024

In addition to its extensive operations in India, Akshaya Patra has established several chapters in the United States, including its presence in Washington, DC, to support its mission through fundraising and awareness initiatives. Recently, Akshaya Patra celebrated its 4 billionth meal at the United Nations, an event my husband and I were honored to be part of, at the UN Headquarters in New York. It was a momentous occasion that highlighted the incredible impact of the organization on a global stage.

Becoming the DC Chapter Chairs

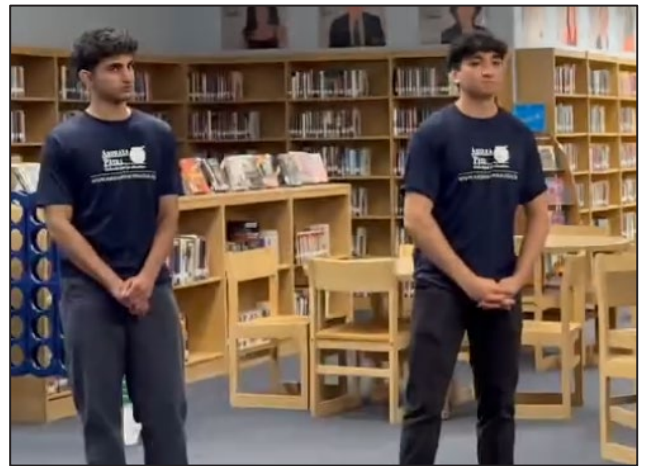
Inspired by our initial involvement and the realization of the impact we could make, my husband and I decided to take on more responsibility. We became the DC Chapter Chairs for Akshaya Patra, dedicating our efforts to expanding the reach and effectiveness of the organization's mission. We have been involved in organizing fundraising events, spreading awareness, and connecting with the local community to garner support for this noble cause.



At Chicago AP Gala with Dr. Kiran Patel & actor Kamal Haasan

Our involvement with Akshaya Patra has not only been fulfilling for us but has also impacted our son, Rishab, so much that he started a high school chapter of Akshaya Patra. His passion and drive were evident as he quickly rallied more than 50 students to join the cause within just two months. When we visited the Bhopal Akshaya Patra kitchen during our last trip to India, Rishab was deeply inspired by the efficiency, hygiene, and organization of the operations. He was moved by the love and care that went into not just preparing the food but also ensuring it

was delivered to the children on time every day. Seeing the meticulous process and the dedication of the staff left a lasting impression on him.



Rishab (right) introducing Akshaya Patra at the school library

Rishab's commitment to ensuring children receive daily meals is commendable. He went above and beyond, creating his own website, delivering presentations at offices, temples, and mosques, and encouraging his peers to participate. He personally called potential donors, sharing his enthusiasm and the importance of the cause. The satisfaction and pride he felt were palpable, especially during family dinners when he would joyfully announce the number of children we were able to feed; thanks to generous donations. His dedication has been infectious, motivating his friends in different schools to start their own Akshaya Patra clubs. His efforts to spread the message and engage more young people in the mission have been truly inspiring. Seeing the smile on his face and the satisfaction he derives from helping others reinforces our commitment to this noble cause.

As a family, our involvement with Akshaya Patra has brought us immense satisfaction and a profound sense of purpose. Giving back to our roots in India, where we came from, has been incredibly fulfilling. Our faith, Jainism, teaches us about the virtue of Anukampa, or Compassion, which motivates us to care for and support all living beings. By contributing to Akshaya Patra, we are not only helping to feed and educate children but also practicing a core value of our faith.

There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up. — John Holmes

ACHARAYA SHRI HEMCHANDRACHARYAJI

DILIP V. SHAH



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Kali Kal Sarvagn Shri Hemchandracharya is a much-revered Acharya for the Jains. His essential bio is well known. Born in 1089 on *Kartiki Purnima*, in Dhandhuka (present day Khambhat), Gujarat to businessman Chach and his wife Pahini Devi, and was named Changdev. Before the birth of Changdev, the parents had an occasion to visit Acharya Shri Devchandrasuri. In giving his blessings, Acharyashri made a profound prediction – their future son is destined to be a great proponent of Jain Dharma.



When Changdev was just 5-years old, Acharya Shri Devchandrasuriji was again visiting Dhandhuka and Pahini Devi took him to the *Upashraya* to pay their respect. The playful child separated himself and ran towards the sacred bench - *Paat* - reserved for Acharyashri and sat on it. Observing this, Acharya shri reminded Pahini Devi of his earlier statement that her son was going to be a great Jain Acharya who will be an exponent of Jain Dharma. He asked that she hand over the child to them so he could be trained to achieve his brilliant and manifest destiny. After some hesitation, she handed over her son to Acharyashri. Thus, a pious journey began for Changdev. He

received *Diksha* at the age of 9 and was given a new name - Somdev. After intense studying, at age 17, Devchandrasuriji bestowed upon him a new title, and a new name: Acharya Hemchandracharya.

As a Jain Acharya, he was not just influential in reviving the Jain religion in his era but had a profound influence on the history of Gujarat. He was a discreet advisor in statecraft to two kings – Siddharaj Jaisinh and later, King Kumarpal. His indulgence in statecraft was limited to propagating Jain teachings and Jain culture. But he was respectful to the followers of other religions. King Siddharaj once asked, Acharya Shri “Which religion can lead a person to Moksh?” He gave an answer not by referring to Jain Dharma but by quoting from *Bramhan Puran* because he was certain that a true seeker, who was not biased towards any one religion, will eventually find the answer in Jain Dharma. When the King Kumarpal, at the insistence of his advisors tried to test Acharyashri's equanimity towards Hindu religion in a Shiva temple, Acharya Shri created *Mahadev Stotra* on the spot and stated, “Whoever has won over his passions that impel the soul into cycle of births, may he be *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Shiva*, or a *Jina*, I bow to them.” This lucid response removed all doubts of the king regarding the fairness of the Hemchandrasuriji.

King Siddharaj of Patan (The historic capital of Gujarat for 400 years) requested Acharyashriji to create grammar rules for the Gujarati language because none existed at the time. Acharyashri agreed and the Gujarati language received its first grammar “Siddh Hem Shabdanushashan” (Governance of words by King Siddharaj and Acharya Hemchandra). The magnum work on the grammar for Gujarati language consisted of 125,000 stanzas. The king was so pleased that at the inauguration ceremony of it, he organized a majestic procession where the king with his soldiers, Acharya shri, scholars, townspeople, musicians, and dancers all walked behind a ceremoniously decorated elephant that carried the grammar book on its back. History has no parallel to

the respect accredited to “Siddh Hem Shabdanushashan”

King Siddharaj did not have a son who could succeed him, but he also did not want his half-brother Kumarpal to succeed him. For that reason, he ordered his army to track him down and kill him. On one occasion, Kumarpal's life was saved by hiding him from King's soldiers in his ashram by Hemchandracharyaji. When Kumarpal ascended to the throne, he installed his savior, Hemchandracharyaji as his Guru although Kumarpal, a Shaivite by birth, had not embraced Jainism yet. For saving his life, King Kumarpal offered Hemchandracharyaji anything he wished for. As a monk, Acharyashri did not need any worldly objects, but he wished for the upliftment and welfare of the society. He asked for three things from the king. First, he pleaded with king Kumarpal to prohibit killing of animals for food, hunting or sacrifices in religious rituals. Secondly, he asked for prohibition in his kingdom on gambling and consumption of alcohol and lastly, he sought king's cooperation in propagating Jain Dharma. These three provisions are still the hallmark of Gujarat today even after the passing of Shri Hemchandracharyaji 900 years ago. Soon after that King Kumarpal became a Jain.

In his lifetime, Hemchandrasuriji is said to have penned 3.5 million Shlokas (stanzas)! His contribution to literature covered so many fields – Philosophy, Yog, Grammar, Justice, Biographies, Rule books governing the composition of poetry and drama, and Dictionaries, etc.

It is unfortunate that much of what Acharya Hemchandrasuriji wrote is lost. Among the scores of books that have been preserved, his Yog Shastra (12,570 *Shlokas*), Kavyanushashan (6,800 *Shlokas*), Abhidhan Chintamani Kosh (Dictionary with 10,000 *Shlokas*) and Trishisth Shalaka Purush (biographies of 63 Jain luminaries, 32,000 *Shlokas*) command the most respect. Various western scholars have produced English translations of Acharya Shri's important works like Trishisth Shalaka Purush by Helen Johnson and Yogshastra by Olle Qurnström. But not much has been written about this giant of Jain universe in India in the 21st century.

The religious leaders and scholars of the time honored him by giving him the honorific – *Kali kal Sarvagna* (Omniscient of the present age), the

western scholars have described him as the Ocean of Knowledge. Johann Georg Bühler (1837 – 1898) a German scholar of ancient Indian languages wrote and published Shri Hemchandracharya's biography in a German magazine in the year 1889. Motichand Kapadia got it translated in to English by the help of a German lady. That typed copy remained with Shri Motichandji for a long time and later he translated it in Gujarati during his incarceration by the Britishers for participation in the freedom movement for India.

Acharya Shri Hemchandracharyaji passed away at the age of 74. His beloved disciple, King Kumarpal followed him just a few months later.

In 1939, the 14th Gujarati Sahitya Parishad had their three-day conference titled “Shri Hem Saswat Satra” in Patan under the chairmanship of Shri Kanaiyalal Munshi. The conference was attended by Muni Punyavijayji, Motichand Girdharlal Kapadia, Shri Jyotindra Dave, Kaka Kalelkar etc.

The conference also featured the inauguration of “Shri Hemchandracharya Gyan Mandir,” a grand library in his memory was built next to the famous Panchasara Parswanth Temple in Patan. The library has over 1,000 manuscripts of palm leaves, 20,000 manuscripts on paper and cloth, 6,500 books in loose-leaf system, and 15,000 books. A few years before his passing, Muni Jambuvijayji himself surveyed the whole collection and created an index of the library's holdings.

In 1986, after a prolonged debate, the Gujarat Government established Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University in Patan with Judication encompassing five districts – Patan, Mehsana, Banaskantha, Sabarkantha, and Aravalli. The university was carved out of Gujarat University and has 212 Acres of land in Patan. In addition to the four colleges in Patan, it presently has about 55 colleges in the five districts.

All the efforts mentioned above to memorialize the lion of Jainism, one who glorified the kingdom of King Kumarpal, and one who formalized the Gujarati language are commendable. However, a center affiliated with the Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University for research, preservation, and dissemination of all Jain knowledge in Patan, will also be a good reminder of this glorious past.

સકલતીર્થ વંદના સૂત્ર

લેખિકા: જેપલ બીજલ શાહ



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

સામાન્ય રીતે તીર્થ એટલે યાત્રાધામ કે ધર્મસ્થાન. જૈન પરંપરામાં જે રાગ-દ્વેષથી ભરેલા સંસારથી તારે તેને તીર્થ કહેવાય છે. તીર્થના બે પ્રકાર છે.

(1) સ્થાવર તીર્થ - જે સ્થિર હોય તે (2) જંગમ તીર્થ - જે હાલતાં-ચાલતાં હોય તે

સકલતીર્થ સૂત્રમાં શરૂઆતમાં સ્થાવરતીર્થને અને અંતમાં જંગમતીર્થને વંદના કરવા દ્વારા ત્રણે લોકમાં રહેલા સર્વ તીર્થોને વંદના કરવામાં આવી છે. આ વંદના સૂત્રની રચના મુનિ શ્રીજીવવિજયજી (સમય- વિક્રમની અઢારમી સદીનો પાછલો ભાગ અને ઓગણીસમી સદીનો આગલો ભાગ) દ્વારા કરવામાં આવી છે. તેઓએ પ્રાચીન ગાથાઓના આધારે આ સૂત્રની રચના વિક્રમની ઓગણીસમી સદીની શરૂઆતમાં કરી હશે તેવું માનવામાં આવે છે.

સૂત્ર પરિચય

પ્રાતઃકાળના પ્રતિક્રમણના 6 આવશ્યકો પૂર્ણ થયા પછી સાધક આ સૂત્ર દ્વારા ત્રણે લોકમાં રહેલાં શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો, શાશ્વત જિનાલયો, વર્તમાન તીર્થો, વિહરમાન જિનો, સિદ્ધો અને સાધુઓને વંદન કરે છે. આ સૂત્રના ગાથા પ્રમાણે બે વિભાગ છે.

1. સ્થાવરતીર્થોને વંદના

	વિષય	ગાથા નં.
1	ઊર્ધ્વલોકના ચૈત્યોની વંદના	1-6
2	અધોલોકના ચૈત્યોની વંદના	6 -8
3	તીર્થલોકના ચૈત્યોની વંદના	9
4	વ્યંતર-જ્યોતિષી દેવોના વિમાનના ચૈત્યોની વંદના	10
5	દક્ષિણાર્ધ ભરતક્ષેત્રના પ્રસિદ્ધ તીર્થોની વંદના	11-12

2. જંગમતીર્થોને વંદના

	વિષય	ગાથા નં.
1	વિહરમાન તીર્થકેરોને, સિદ્ધોને વંદના	12 -13
2	અઢીદ્વીપના સાધુ મહાત્માઓને વંદના	14-15

આ સૂત્રની શરૂઆતમાં કહેવામાં આવ્યું છે, સકલ તીર્થ વંદુ કર જોડ, જિનવર નામે મંગલ કોડ....સાધક આમ કહીને અનંત ઉપકારી તીર્થકેર પરમાત્માનું સ્મરણ કરીને આ જગતમાં જે જે તીર્થો છે તે સર્વેને ભાવપૂર્વક વંદન કરે છે. તીર્થકેર પરમાત્માના નામસ્મરણથી સાધક પુણ્યાનુબંધી પુણ્યનું ઉપાર્જન કરી સિદ્ધગતિને પ્રાપ્ત કરી શકે છે તેથી કહ્યું છે કે જિનવરના નામથી કરોડો કલ્યાણ થાય છે.

લોક	શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો	શાશ્વત જિનબિંબો
ઉર્ધ્વલોક (સ્વર્ગ)	8497023	1529444760
અધોલોક (પાતાળ અથવા ભવનપતિના આવાસ)	77200000	13896000000
તીર્થલોક (મનુષ્યલોક)	3259	391320

A. સ્થાવરતીર્થોને વંદના

1. ઉર્ધ્વલોકના તીર્થોની વંદના

ઉર્ધ્વલોકમાં બાર દેવલોક વગેરે દેવતાઓના આવાસ છે. પ્રત્યેક દેવલોકમાં જિનચૈત્યની સંખ્યા ભિન્ન-ભિન્ન છે, જે 100 યોજન લાંબા, 50 યોજન પહોળા અને 72 યોજન ઊંચા હોય છે. આ શાશ્વત જિનચૈત્ય રત્ન, સુવર્ણ અને મણિના બનેલા હોય છે. પ્રત્યેક ચૈત્યમાં 180 જિન પ્રતિમા હોય છે જેની ગણતરી નીચે મુજબ છે:-

દરેક દેવલોકમાં પાંચ સભાઓ હોય છે. (1) મજ્જનસભા (2) અલંકારસભા (3) સુધર્મસભા (4) સિદ્ધાયતનસભા (5) વ્યવસાયસભા. આ દરેક સભાને ત્રણ દ્વાર હોય છે, આમ પાંચે સભાના મળીને કુલ પંદર દ્વાર હોય છે. પ્રત્યેક દ્વાર પર ચૌમુખ જિનબિંબ હોય છે, એટલે પાંચે સભામાં મળીને કુલ 60 જિનબિંબ હોય છે. દરેક ચૈત્યમાં પશ્ચિમ સિવાયની ત્રણે દિશામાં દ્વાર હોય છે. તે પ્રત્યેક દ્વાર પર ચૌમુખજી હોય છે એટલે કુલ 12 જિનબિંબ હોય છે. પ્રત્યેક ચૈત્યના ગભારામાં 108 જિનબિંબો હોય છે. આમ, પ્રત્યેક ચૈત્યમાં કુલ 120 (108+12) જિનબિંબો હોય છે, તેમાં પાંચ સભાના 60 જિનબિંબ ઉમેરતાં કુલ 180 જિનબિંબો થાય છે. નવ ત્રૈવેયક તથા અનુત્તરવિમાનોમાં સભાઓ નથી હોતી તેથી તેમાં 120 જિનબિંબો જ હોય છે.

2. અધોલોકના તીર્થોની વંદના

અધોલોકમાં રત્નપ્રભા આદિ સાત પૃથ્વીઓ છે પણ તેમાં સર્વત્ર શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો નથી. માત્ર પ્રથમ રત્નપ્રભા પૃથ્વીના પિડમાં ભવનપતિ અને વ્યંતરનિકાયના અસંખ્યાતા આવાસોમાં જ શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો છે. અન્ય પૃથ્વીઓમાં માત્ર નારકીના જીવો રહે છે. આ રત્નપ્રભા પૃથ્વી એટલે આપણે જેની ઉપર રહીએ છીએ તે પૃથ્વી. તેમાં ઉપર-નીચે 1000 યોજન છોડી વચ્ચે 1,78,000 યોજનના પિડમાં દશ ભવનપતિના દેવોના 7 કોડ અને 72 લાખ ભવનો આવેલા છે. આ પ્રત્યેક ભવનમાં એક-એક શાશ્વત ચૈત્ય છે. ઉર્ધ્વલોકના દેવવિમાનના ચૈત્યોની જેમ આ પ્રત્યેક ચૈત્યોમાં પણ 180 પ્રતિમાઓ હોય છે.

3. તીર્થલોકના તીર્થોની વંદના

તીર્થલોકમાં કુલ 3259 શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો છે. તેમાં જંબૂદ્વીપના 365, ધાતકીખંડના 1272 અને પુષ્કરવરદ્વીપના 1272 મળી કુલ 3179 ચૈત્યો મનુષ્યક્ષેત્રમાં છે. જ્યારે 80 ચૈત્યો મનુષ્યક્ષેત્રની બહાર રહેલા છે. તેમાં 60 ચૈત્યો 4 દ્વારવાળાં હોય છે, એટલે તેમાં રહેલાં જિનબિંબોની સંખ્યા 124 હોય છે અને બાકીનાં ચૈત્યોમાં 120 જિનબિંબો હોય છે.

ત્રણે લોકના સંખ્યાતા ચૈત્યોની સંખ્યા જણાવી તેમને વંદન કર્યા પછી હવે જ્યાં અસંખ્યાતા ચૈત્યો છે તેમને વંદન કરવામાં આવે છે.

4. વ્યંતર, જ્યોતિષના શાશ્વત તીર્થોને વંદના

રત્નપ્રભા પૃથ્વીના પિડમાં વ્યંતરનિકાયના અને વાણવ્યંતરનિકાયના અસંખ્ય ભવનો છે. આ દરેક ભવનમાં એક-એક શાશ્વત ચૈત્ય છે, જે 50 યોજન લાંબા, 25 યોજન પહોળા અને 36 યોજન ઊંચા હોય છે. આમ, વ્યંતરનિકાયમાં

અસંખ્યાતા શાશ્વત ચૈત્યો છે. તે ઉપરાંત સૂર્ય, ચંદ્ર, ગ્રહ, નક્ષત્ર અને તારા, આ પાંચ જ્યોતિષ દેવો છે. તેમાં અઢીઢીપમાં સંખ્યાતા સૂર્ય-ચંદ્રના વિમાનો હોય છે જે ગતિશીલ હોય છે અને અઢીઢીપની બહાર અસંખ્યાતા જ્યોતિષી વિમાનો છે તે સ્થિર હોય છે. દેવલોકના અન્ય વિમાનોની જેમ પ્રત્યેક જ્યોતિષી વિમાનોમાં પણ એક શાશ્વત જિનાલય હોય છે. તે દરેકમાં 120 જિનપ્રતિમા હોય છે. આમ, જ્યોતિષીમાં પણ અસંખ્યાતી શાશ્વતી જિનપ્રતિમા છે.

દરેક ઉત્સર્પિણી અને અવસર્પિણી કાળમાં ભરત, ઐરાવત તથા મહાવિદેહક્ષેત્રમાં મળી શ્રી ઋષભ, શ્રી ચન્દ્રાનન, શ્રી વારિષેણ અને શ્રી વર્ધ્માન આ ચાર શાશ્વત તીર્થંકર અવશ્ય થાય છે. દરેક શાશ્વત જિનબિંબો આ ચાર નામોથી જ ઓળખાય છે.

આ વ્યંતર, જ્યોતિષ અને શાશ્વત જિનોને વંદન કરવા દ્વારા શાશ્વત જિનચૈત્યોની વંદના અહીં પૂર્ણ થાય છે.

5. ભરતક્ષેત્રના તીર્થોની વંદના

પછીની બે ગાથાઓમાં ભરતક્ષેત્રના સમેતશિખર, અષ્ટાપદ, વિમલાયલ, ગઢ ગિરનાર, આબુ, શંખેશ્વર, કેસરીયાજી, તારંગા, અંતરિક્ષ, વરકાણા, જીરાઉલા, ખંભાત, અને પાટણ જેવા પ્રસિદ્ધ તીર્થોને વંદન કરવામાં આવે છે. આ સર્વે તીર્થોમાં જુદા-જુદા તીર્થંકરોની પ્રતિમાઓ છે, તે ઉપરાંત જુદા-જુદા ગામોમાં, નગરોમાં, પુરોમાં અને પત્તનમાં ગુણોના ભંડારરૂપ જે જે જિનેશ્વર પરમાત્માના ચૈત્યો છે તે સર્વેને વંદન કરવામાં આવે છે.

B. જંગમતીર્થોને વંદના

1. વિહરમાન તીર્થંકરો, સિદ્ધોને વંદના

હવે વીશ વિહરમાન જિનો અને આજ સુધીમાં થઈ ગયેલા અનંત સિદ્ધોને વંદન કરવામાં આવે છે. હાલ મહાવિદેહક્ષેત્રમાં શ્રી સીમંધરસ્વામી આદિ વીશ તીર્થંકર ભગવંતો સદેહે વિચરી રહ્યા છે. વીશ વિહરમાન જિનના પરિવારમાં 1680 ગણધરો, બે કરોડ કેવળજ્ઞાની મુનિઓ તથા 20 અબજ સાધુ-સાધ્વી ભગવંતો હોય છે. તેમને ભાવપૂર્વક વંદના કરવામાં આવે છે.

ચૌદ રાજલોકના અંતે સ્ફટિકની બનેલી સિદ્ધશિલા છે. તેની ઉપર લોકના અંતભાગને સ્પર્શીને અનંતા સિદ્ધ ભગવંતો રહેલા છે. આ સિદ્ધ અવસ્થાને પામવાનું દરેક સાધકનું પરમ ધ્યેય હોય છે. તેમની વંદના કરવા દ્વારા સાધક સિદ્ધ અવસ્થાને પામવાનું લક્ષ્ય રાખે છે.

2. સાધુ ભગવંતોને વંદના

સંયમને ધારણ કરનારા સાધુ-સાધ્વી ભગવંતો સહુને સંસારથી તારવામાં સહાયરૂપ બને છે તેથી તેઓ તીર્થ કહેવાય છે અને એક સ્થાનેથી બીજા સ્થાને વિહાર કરતાં હોવાથી જંગમ તીર્થ કહેવાય છે. તેઓ અઢાર હજાર શીલાંગરથ (સંયમરૂપી રથના 18000 અંગ)ને ધારણ કરનારા છે. પાંચ મહાવ્રત, પાંચ સમિતિ, ત્રણ ગુપ્તિ અને પાંચ આચારનું સ્વયં પાલન કરે છે અને અન્યને આ આચારો પળાવવામાં સહાયક બને છે. તેઓ 6 બાહ્ય અને 6 અભ્યંતર તપમાં સતત રમમાણ રહે છે અને તપથી કર્મની નિર્જરા કરે છે. ગુણોના ભંડાર એવા આ સાધુ મહાત્માઓને પ્રાતઃકાળે ઊઠતાં જ નમસ્કાર, વંદન કરવા જોઈએ. સૂત્રની અંતિમ પંક્તિ “નિતનિત ઊઠી કીર્તિ કરું, જીવ કહે ભવસાયર તરું” માં મુનિશ્રી જીવવિજયજી સુપ્રભાતે આવા મુનિવરોનું સ્મરણ-વંદન કરવાથી ભવસાગરથી પાર ઊતરી શકાય છે તેવું જણાવે છે.

સંદર્ભ : (1) સૂત્ર-સંવેદના-5, સંકલન-સાધ્વીજીશ્રી પ્રશમિતાશ્રીજી, પૃ.208

(2) પ્રબોધટીકા ભાગ-3, સંશો.પંચાસશ્રી ભદ્રંકરવિજયજી, પૃ.2

APARIGRAHA: AN ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE FOR PEACEFUL LIVING

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Aparigraha is one of the 5 essential principles of the Jain religion. Lord Mahavir in Utaradhyayana Sutra has said, “Where there is inner desire for material gain and possession of worldly objects of enjoyment, there is greed”. The desire to possess various modes of pleasure slips us into the rabbit hole of more possessions, greed, etc. This limitless desire to accumulate more power and wealth is called ‘*Parigraha*’. It pollutes our mind and compels us to engage in activities that bind us to the perpetual cycle of birth and death. Aparigraha in simple terms means non-hoarding of things and detachment from objects of pleasure. Aparigraha does not forbid an individual to fulfill basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, etc. Lord Mahavir did not insist on control over the quantities of useful commodities nor to earn less money; he simply emphasized on control over desire and hoarding.

Additionally, the idea of possessiveness complements the philosophy of yoga, which has always encouraged simple living and a non-materialistic approach to life. Minimalism is indeed a crucial aspect to yoga, as it is closely related to what Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra defined as a fundamental ‘*Yama*’, Aparigraha, which literally means ‘non-greed’ and non-possessiveness. Aparigraha means, in other words, to detach from materialism and this idea is also tightly interconnected to another Patanjali’s Niyama: *Santosh* or ‘contentment’ which tells us to be satisfied with what we have and not desiring more.

In Christianity, the principle of non-possession is evident in the Ten Commandments “Thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s house; thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s”.

The most famous tenet of Jainism is Ahimsa – nonviolence. To truly understand non-violence, we need to first understand that the root cause of violence is greed. So, the foremost step of practicing Ahimsa is by not being greedy i.e., Aparigraha! As per Jainism, the main five sins are greed, lies, lust, stealing, and violence. Greed, which comes from our desire to hoard is the key cause for the other four sins. If the principle of

Aparigraha is not adhered to, then all other vows are violated. Thus, by practicing Aparigraha we lay the path for us to practice all the Jain principles that enable our spiritual growth.

Despite Aparigraha being regarded as one of the 5 essential principles of Jainism, it brings up many misconceptions and misinterpretations due to the nuances of the modern world around us. Most of us indulge in various types of material possessions and continue accumulating even more. At times we even acknowledge possession of material objects as an outcome of good karma. We consider the worth of a person from the amount of accumulation and consumption of those objects. So, let’s dive deeper to understand various facets linked to Aparigraha from a current times perspective and apply it mindfully in our work-life.

Consumerism

Economists tell us that today people own and consume twice as much as they did in 1950. Are they twice as happy? This clearly expresses that the things that we consume and the happiness that we derive from our consumption are not correlated. Consumerism does not have an effective means to quench the thirst for possession of worldly objects. It only attempts at temporary appeasement of a yearning, and this actually has the opposite effect of actually causing desire to flare up. For example, how many clothes do you have in your cupboard that you know you won’t ever wear again, but they’re still hanging in there just in case? How many gadgets, ornaments, books and shoes do we have that we really just don’t need?

Aparigraha can teach us that we actually probably don’t need the new shirt that looks exactly like that other one we have at home. We probably don’t really need to buy that new cushion just because it goes with the new wallpaper, and we definitely don’t need that new car just because our neighbors’ car is better than ours. The more we hoard material possessions, the more we weigh ourselves down with not only physical, but energetic baggage, and the more we become attached to and worry about losing these said possessions.

Attachment to Worldly Objects

Worldly objects are transitory, and we leave everything behind when we leave this life on earth. Having family, friends, and relationships is fine as long as we don't get over-attached to people. Too much clinging and craving for someone will make us dependent. This bonding and a persistent desire to possess them causes suffering. It acts as an obstacle and blocks the liberation of one's soul. The uncontrollable desire for the accumulation of worldly objects is aroused by deceit, ego, and greed. Whereas fear, anger, and sorrow are aroused when one has to part with worldly objects.

Holding on to our own Beliefs

Our beliefs need to be evaluated on the basis of their contribution towards the evolutionary gain of humanity and the proportionate benefit to the society. The biggest Parigraha is in holding on to negative biases, grudges, and disgust for other castes, creeds, and cultures. Outdated beliefs against other people's religion could cause us to disparage and demean them. Keeping an adverse bias for other cultures sparks ill-will in the community. Lack of respect for people from other castes will cultivate antipathy in our minds. Obsolete concepts such as the superiority of men over women disable the manifestation of the full potential of women's talents in our society. Thus, by practicing Aparigraha of thoughts we can create a spirit of mutual respect and build strong relationships in our society.

Social Harmony

When we see our community members indulging in materialistic pleasures, it instigates desire, jealousy, and resentment in us. This incremental desire for happiness through materialistic pursuit is like running after a mirage. By involving ourselves in this race we lose our peace of mind. Economic prosperity without proper balance will make us feel more insecure which leads to paranoia. Practicing moderation will enable us to possess our fair share in society and not rob others of their share. Simplicity is a way of life such that material abundance loses its attraction for you. This will eradicate the class struggle and lead to a better society.

Peace on Earth

The principle of Aparigraha not only applies at an individualistic level, but it also applies at the level of nations. At the root of all violence and war, there is the lust for power and possession. Everyone has the right to use the gifts of nature but has no right to deprive others of using these gifts. If each nation truly practices Aparigraha we can reduce ill-will between countries and restore peace. Affluent nations will share their wealth with nations that don't have much. Powerful nations will not spend excessive wealth in manufacturing weapons

and avoid triggering other nations to do the same. A reduced threat of wars will enable harmonious co-existence.

Go Green

The rich out of greed and the poor out of need are being cruel to nature's assets leading to environmental degradation. Greed and excessive possession of materials are causing exploitation of the environment. We can practice Aparigraha by changing our individual lifestyles and thus influencing the collective lifestyle of our community. It's high time for us to stop the adverse effects of climate change for our own safety and to benefit our macroeconomic system. We can use the mantra of Reduce, Refuse, Reuse viz.

- Reduce water usage and food wastage.
- Refuse over consumerism.
- Reuse bags, non-plastic water bottles, and use steel & glass utensils.

The motive becomes critical in determining whether one is practicing Aparigraha. A noble purpose that benefits society is a great example of truly practicing Aparigraha. The true dimension lies in the mind as all actions arise from our intentions. Thus, the intention and the resultant actions from these intentions determine our true character.

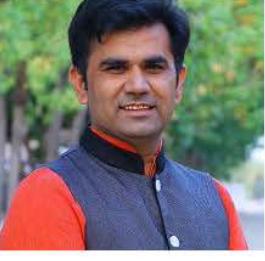
Summary

The main spiritual work is to evaluate our mindset regarding possessions and possessiveness. The mindset of not attaching our sense of self-worth and our happiness to material possessions can free us from comparison, competition, etc.

Aparigraha teaches us to use material possessions with the awareness of their transient nature and their impact on other living beings and the environment. It brings orderliness and acceptable equality from within, through an empathetic consideration for others and for oneself. It is a solution to several problems that today's society is facing – economic, social, political, familial, and personal. For social reconstruction and survival of society, voluntary limitation of desires and personal possessions is the only key. Environmental degeneration because of too much spread of consumeristic ways of life can be checked only by the self-imposed discipline of limited desires and limited possessions. Amassing wealth for the sake of amassing it will neither help the individual nor the society. It is harmful for both as it causes an increase in disparities leading to consequent evils of corruption, envy, jealousy, and mental restlessness. We need to think about how much do we need? And how much is enough? Now, it is up to us as the final decision rests with us.

સાધકનું સંકલ્પસૂત્ર : જયવીયરાય સૂત્ર - ભાગ બે

By Ramjan Hasaniya



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(In the first part of this article, published in the June 2024 issue of Jain Digest, we covered the explanation of the three prayers expressed in the first stanza. In this second and final part, meaning of the remaining stanzas has been covered.)

જય વીયરાય ! જગગુરુ ! હોઉ મમં તુહ પભાવઓ ભયવં !
ભવનિવ્વેઓ મગ્ગાણુસારિયા ઈદ્ધફલસિદ્ધિ.

લોગવિરુદ્ધચ્ચાઓ ગુરુજણપૂઆ પરત્થકરણં ય;
સુહગુરુજોગો તવ્વયણસેવણા આભવમખંડા.

વારિજજઈ જઈ વિ નિયાણબંધણં વીયરાય ! તુહ સમએ;
તહ વિ મમ હુજ્જ સેવા, ભવે ભવે તુમ્હ યલણાણં.

દુક્ખખઓ કમ્મખઓ, સમાહિમરણં ય બોહિલાભો અ;
સંપજજઉ મહ એઅં, તુહ નાહ ! પણામ કરણેણં.

સર્વ મંગલ માંગલ્યં , સર્વ કલ્યાણ કારણમ્ ;
પ્રધાનં સર્વ ધર્મણાં, જૈનં જયતિ શાસનમ્.

આગળની પ્રાર્થના છે 'લોગવિરુદ્ધચ્ચાઓ'. હે વીતરાગ ! મને તમારા પ્રભાવથી શિષ્ટજનો જેને વિરુદ્ધ માનતા હોય., અયોગ્ય માનતા હોય તેવા કાર્યોનો ત્યાગ કરાવો. અહીં લોક એટલે સામાન્યજન નહિ પણ ઉત્તમ લોકો. શિષ્ટજનોથી નિંદાયેલા કામોનો ત્યાગ કરું. ખોટા રસ્તે ન જાઉં. સારા શ્રેષ્ઠ-સાધુજનો જે કરે છે તે જેટલા અંશે કરી શકું તે કરું પણ તેઓ જેને ત્યાજ્ય ગણે છે, ન કરવા જેવું કામ માને છે તે તો ન જ કરું.

મોક્ષમાર્ગ પર ચાલવાનો યત્ન કરતો સાધક તેના વિપરિત માર્ગથી બચાવવાની યાચના કરે છે. સાચા માર્ગે જવું અઘરું છે, પણ ખોટા માર્ગે તરત જ વળી જવાય છે. જાણીતા નિબંધકાર ભોળાભાઈ પટેલ તેમના 'વિદિશા' નામક નિબંધસંગ્રહમાં એક જગાએ ડુંગર ચડવાની વાત કરતાં નોંધે છે કે, 'ડુંગર ચડતા નાકે દમ આવી ગયો, પણ ઉતરતા વાર ન લાગી. આમે ઉતરતા ક્યાં વાર લાગે છે.' ભક્ત અહીં અધોગતિની દિશામાં લઈ જનાર આવા કાર્યોથી બચાવવા પ્રભુને પ્રાર્થના કરે છે. ખોટા માર્ગે ન જઈ હિંસા, જૂઠ, ચોરી, દૂરાચાર આદિ પાપકર્મોથી બચવાની સાધકની ભાવનામાં સંવર ભાવના છુપાયેલી છે.

સાધના માર્ગે ચાલતા સાધકે આગળ માગ્યું છે ગુરુજનોની પૂજાનો અવસર. ગુરુજન એટલે અહીં ધર્મગુરુ, વિદ્યાગુરુ તો ખરા જ પણ વ્યવહારિક દૃષ્ટિએ માતા-પિતા અને વડીલોને પણ ગુરુ કહેવામાં આવે છે. મોક્ષમાર્ગની સાધનામાં જેમ લોકવિરુદ્ધ પ્રવૃત્તિનો ત્યાગ જરૂરી છે તેમ નજીકના ઉપકારી એવા માતા-પિતા, શિક્ષક, વડીલો આદિનો વિનય, બહુમાન, ભક્તિનો ભાવ પણ આવશ્યક છે. કારણ કે, જે પ્રત્યક્ષ ઉપકારી પ્રત્યે કૃતજ્ઞતા વ્યક્ત ન કરે તે પરોક્ષ ઉપકારી અરિહંત પરમાત્માના ઉપકારને કઈ રીતે સમજી શકે ? વડીલોનું ઔચિત્ય જાળવવું પણ તેટલું જ જરૂરી છે. હું વડીલો પ્રત્યે વિનય- વિવેક જાળવું. તેમના આદર-માન સાચવું તેવી પ્રાર્થના સાધકે કરી છે. અહીં સાધક નમ્રતા ઈચ્છે છે. પોતાનાથી મોટા (જ્ઞાનમાં, ઉંમરમાં કે અન્ય કોઈપણ રીતે)ને તે માન આપે, તેમનો અનાદર ક્યારેય ન કરે તેવું સાધક ઈચ્છે છે. વળી, સાધના માર્ગે આગળ વધનાર વ્યક્તિથી સમજદારીમાં, જ્ઞાનમાં કદાચ તેના મા-બાપ, વડીલો પાછળ રહી જાય તેવું પણ બને. આવો સાધક પ્રાર્થે છે કે હું ગમે તેટલો આગળ વધું પણ વડીલો પ્રત્યેનો વિવેક ન ચૂકું. સાધક જાણે છે કે જો એમ થયું તો પોતાની અધોગતિ નિશ્ચિત છે. આ સાધક એકદમ સાવધ છે. તે કોઈ ચૂક રાખવા નથી ઈચ્છતો, જેથી મોક્ષમાર્ગની યાત્રામાં વિઘ્ન આવે ને મોક્ષ પ્રાપ્તિમાં વિલંબ થાય, માટે તે આવી પ્રાર્થના કરે છે.

સાધકની પ્રાર્થનાનું આગળનું સોપાન છે પરોપકાર. ધર્મ માર્ગે આગળ વધનાર જીવમાં પરોપકારની ભાવના તો સહેજે આવી જ જાય છે. ધર્મમાર્ગ વ્યક્તિને શુષ્ક નથી બનાવતો. તે સ્વવિકાસ તો કરે જ છે સાથોસાથ પરોપકાર પણ કરે છે. પોતાના જેવા કે પોતાનાથી નિમ્ન હોય એમના પ્રત્યે તેના હૃદયમાં કરુણા પ્રગટે છે. સેવા, માનવતા જેવા ગુણોનો વિકાસ થાય છે. સ્વકલ્યાણ માટે બીજા પ્રત્યે અભાવ કેળવવાનો નથી. કેટલાક લોકો 'કોઈ કોઈનું નથી રે' કે 'સૌ પોતાના કરેલા કર્મો ભોગવે છે' એમ કહી હાથ વાળી લે છે. આમ કરતાં પાપકર્મ બંધાય એવું કહી સેવાના કામથી દૂર થઈ જાય છે. ત્યાં ધર્મની સમજમાં ક્યાશ છે. એ સ્વાર્થાધિતા છે. જેમનામાં પરાર્થકરણની ભાવના નથી તેવા આત્માઓ કદી લોકોત્તર ધર્મને પ્રાપ્ત કરી શકતા નથી. કેમકે, સ્વાર્થ કે સંકુચિત વૃત્તિનો ત્યાગ કર્યા વિના કદી ધર્મની શરૂઆત જ થતી નથી. ધર્મ કરનાર વ્યક્તિમાં હૃદયની કોમળતા અને વિશાળતા હોવી અતિ આવશ્યક છે. આચાર્ય હરિભદ્રસૂરિએ આ ગુણને પૌરુષચિહ્ન કહ્યું છે.

પરોપકાર બે રીતે થઈ શકે-લૌકિક અને લોકોત્તર, વ્યવહારિક અને પરમાર્થિક, અન્ન, વસ્ત્ર, દવા, ધન કે અન્ય જરૂરિયાતની વસ્તુઓ આપવી તે લૌકિક ઉપકાર છે. આત્મજ્ઞાન અને તેને પ્રાપ્ત કરવાના સાધનો બતાવવા કે તેને અનુકૂળ સંજોગો કરી આપવા તે લોકોત્તર પરોપકાર છે. તીર્થંકર દેવ કે મહાન ધર્માચાર્યો જે દેશના કે ધર્મોપદેશ આપે છે તે તેમનો જગત પરનો મહાન ઉપકાર જ છે. સાધક અહીં લૌકિક ઉપકારથી આરંભી લોકોત્તર ઉપકાર કરવાની ભાવના સેવે છે. 'સર્વો જીવ કરું શાસન રસિ'ની ભાવનામાં પણ પરોપકારની ભાવના જ છુપાયેલી છે ને તેનાથી તીર્થંકર નામકર્મ બંધાય છે. આમ, પરોપકારની ભાવના ઉત્તમ ફળદાયી હોઈ ભાવવા યોગ્ય છે, આ વાતને બરાબર પ્રમાણતો સાધક અહીં પ્રભુ પાસે પરોપકાર વૃત્તિ પ્રગટાવવાની પ્રાર્થના કરે છે.

આગળની બધી જ પ્રાર્થનાઓ ફળીભૂત કરવા આવશ્યક છે સદ્ગુરુનું હોવું. ભવનિર્વેદને ટકાવવા, મોક્ષમાર્ગ પર ચાલવા, ઈચ્છિત ફળ મેળવવા, લોકવિરુદ્ધ પ્રવૃત્તિનો ત્યાગ કરવા, વડીલોનો વિવેક કરવા ને પરોપકાર કરવા પ્રત્યક્ષ સદ્ગુરુની તાલીમ આવશ્યક છે. માટે સાધક આ બધું જેને પ્રાપ્ત છે એવા સદ્ગુરુની માગણી કરીને જાણે ખૂટતી સર્વકડીઓ માગી લે છે. સાધક માગે છે ' સુહૃદુરુ જોગો તવ્વયણસેવણા આભવમખંડા'— જ્યાં સુધી જન્મ-મરણના ફેરા કરવા પડે

ત્યાં સુધી ભવોભવ સદ્ગુરુનો યોગ પ્રાપ્ત થાય અને તેમના વચન પ્રમાણે ચાલવાની શક્તિ મળે. યોગ એટલે મિલન-જોડાવું. પરમના માર્ગે ચાલવા સદ્ગુરુનું અતિ આવશ્યક છે. સદ્ગુરુનો યોગ થવો એ કદાચ સૌથી મોટી ઉપલબ્ધિ ગણાવી શકાય. શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજીએ તો એટલે સુધી કહ્યું છે કે 'પ્રત્યક્ષ સદ્ગુરુ સમ નહિ, પરોક્ષ જિન ઉપકાર.'

અહીં ગુરુનું નહિ પણ સદ્ગુરુનું મિલન સાધકે વાંછ્યું છે. આપણે મોહપત્તીના બોલમાં કહીએ છીએ કે 'કુદેવ, કુગુરુ, કુધર્મ પરિહારું, સુદેવ, સુગુરુ, સુધર્મ આદરું'— સાધકે આવી સુગુરુની યાચના કરી છે. સત્યદર્શન કરાવનાર ગુરુઓને પ્રાપ્ત કરીને અનેકાનેક શિષ્ય પરમપદને પામ્યા છે. જેને ગુરુ પ્રાપ્ત થયા હોય તેવી વ્યક્તિને 'સગુરો' ને જેને ગુરુ ન મળ્યા હોય તેને 'નગુરો' કહેવામાં આવે છે. આનંદધનજી મહારાજે એક પદમાં કહ્યું છે કે, 'સગરા હોય સો ભરભર પીવે, નગરા જાય પિયાસા મેરે ભાઈ રે.' કમનસીબે લોકો ઉત્તમોત્તમ ગુરુ મળ્યા હોવા છતાં તેમનો લાભ લઈ શકતા નથી. તેમની પાસે ક્ષુલ્લક દુન્યવી માગણી કરતાં અચકાતા નથી. આનંદધનજી જેવા અલગારી પાસે રાજાની રાણી સંતાન પ્રાપ્તિના આશીર્વાદ માગવા આવે છે ત્યારે ગુરુ તો ઉત્તમ જ છે પણ લેનાર વ્યક્તિને તેની પાસેથી શું લેવું તેનો વિવેક નથી માટે તેનો યોગ્ય લાભ લઈ શકતી નથી. વ્યક્તિએ સદ્ગુરુની ઓળખ પ્રથમ કરી લેવી પણ એક વખત સદ્ગુરુને મેળવ્યા બાદ તેમના વચન પ્રમાણે જ ચાલવું. સાધકે અહીં સદ્ગુરુ-વચનમાં શુરા થઈને ચાલવાની પ્રાર્થના કરી છે. ગુરુ મળે પણ તેમની આજ્ઞા પ્રમાણે ચાલી ન શકાય તો કામ ન થાય. ને વળી, ગુરુ આજ્ઞાનું પાલન માત્ર આ ભવે જ નહિ, ભવોભવ કરી શકું એવી શક્તિ ભક્તે માગી છે. સાધક માત્ર સદ્ગુરુનું શરણું જ નહિ પણ તેમની આજ્ઞાનું પાલન કરવા માટેના આશિષ પણ માગે છે. આવનાર ભવમાં જો આ બધું છૂટી જાય તો મોક્ષગામી યાત્રા અધુરી રહી જાય. માટે જ્યાં સુધી મોક્ષ ન થાય ત્યાં સુધી જેટલા ભવ લેવા પડે તે પ્રત્યેક ભવે આ સર્વ માગણીઓ મને પ્રાપ્ત થાઓ-એવી પ્રાર્થના સાધક કરે છે. અહીં સુધીની પ્રાર્થના આગળ નોંધ્યું તેમ ગણધરોક્ત છે ને ત્યારપછીની પ્રાર્થના ગીતાર્થ ગુરુ ભગવંતો દ્વારા રચિત છે. પાછળથી અહીં તેનો પ્રક્ષેપ થયો છે.

પ્રાર્થનાસૂત્રમાં ભક્ત પ્રભુ પ્રત્યેના આત્મીયતાના ભાવથી પ્રેરાઈને કહે છે કે, 'હે વીતરાગ! તમારા સિદ્ધાંતમાં-શાસનમાં નિયાણું (કરેલ સુકર્મનું ઇચ્છિત ફળ મેળવવાની માગણી) કરવાનો નિષેધ કરાયો છે; તો પણ હું એટલું તો ચોક્કસ માગીશ કે મને ભવોભવ તમારા ચરણોની સેવા કરવાનું સદ્ભાગ્ય સાંપડે. જૈન ધર્મ તો મૂળે નિષ્કામ ભક્તિને પ્રાધાન્ય આપે છે માટે નિયાણું તો ન જ બંધાય. પરંતુ આ જે માગણી છે તેને નિયાણું કહેવાય જ નહિ. આ તો ભક્તિની ભાષા છે. આગળ 'આભવમખંડા'માં જે ગુણો ભવોભવ મને પ્રાપ્ત થાય તેવી માગણી છે તેના અનુસંધાનમાં ભક્ત આગળ માગે છે ભગવાનનું શરણું. તે જાણે છે કે જો ભગવાનનું શરણું નહિ મળે, શાસન નહિ મળે તો કદાચ ભટકી જવાની શક્યતાઓ ઊભી છે. માટે મોક્ષ જ્યારે મળે ત્યારે પણ ત્યાં સુધી પ્રભુનું શાસન-પ્રભુનો માર્ગ ભવોભવ મળે જેથી પથભ્રષ્ટ થવાની ચિંતા જ ન રહે.

ભગવાનના ચરણોની સેવા વાંછી ભક્ત અન્ય ચાર પ્રાર્થનાઓ વીતરાગ દેવ પાસે કરે છે, તેમાં એક છે દુઃખનો ક્ષય. ભક્ત માગે છે કે, 'હે નાથ ! આપને પ્રણામ કરવાથી મારા દુઃખોનો ક્ષય થાઓ. દુઃખ તો જીવમાત્રને ગમતું નથી, પણ અહીં તો સાધક પોતાના સાધનામાર્ગમાં વિઘ્નરૂપ બનતા દુઃખોના ક્ષયની પ્રાર્થના કરે છે. અહીં દુઃખનો ક્ષય એટલે દુઃખના ભાવનો ક્ષય કરવાની પ્રાર્થના છે. સુખદુઃખ તો સંસારમાં રહેવાનાં જ પણ પ્રભુ શાસન મળતાં મને એવી અવસ્થા પ્રાપ્ત થાય કે જાણીતા સ્તવનની પંક્તિઓ 'પ્રભુ તમને પામ્યાનું એ સૌથી મોટું સુખ કે દુઃખ હવે લાગે ના દુઃખ' સાર્થક થાય.

વ્યવહારિક રીતે વિચારીએ તો પણ દુઃખના ડરથી દુઃખ દૂર કરવાની માગણી નથી કરાઈ, પરંતુ જ્યાં સુધી દુઃખની હાજરીમાં પણ સમાધિસ્થ રહી, સ્થિર રહી મોક્ષમાર્ગની સાધના કરવાની ક્ષમતા મારામાં ન આવે ત્યાં સુધી મારા દુઃખોનો ક્ષય થાઓ એવો અર્થ પણ વિચારી શકાય. તો વળી, સાધક માટે ભવ એટલે કે સંસારચક્ર એ જ સૌથી મોટું દુઃખ છે, માટે એના ક્ષયની માગણી પણ એમાં ગર્ભિત હોઈ શકે.

આ દુઃખનો ક્ષય કર્મના ક્ષય વિના શક્ય જ નથી, માટે આગળની પ્રાર્થના છે કે કર્મનો ક્ષય થાઓ. સાધકને ખ્યાલ છે કે જ્યાં સુધી કર્મો છે ત્યાં સુધી તેના ઉદય પ્રમાણે સુખદુઃખ તો આવવાના જ. સાચા સાધક માટે સુખ અને દુઃખ બંને બાધારૂપ છે. આ ચક્રમાંથી મુક્ત થવાનો એક જ માર્ગ છે કર્મક્ષય ને એના માટે સંવર અને નિર્જરા જ ઉપાય છે. નવા કર્મોનો બંધ પડતો અટકે અને સંચિત કર્મોને ખપાવું એ જ સાધકની પ્રાર્થના છે.

આગળની પ્રાર્થના છે સમાધિપૂર્વકનું મરણ. સમાધિ એટલે સુખ- દુઃખમાં ચિત્તની સ્વસ્થતા. સમાધિપૂર્વકનું મરણ જીવનની સુખદ ફલશ્રુતિ છે, ને સદગતિ માટે કારણરૂપ પણ છે. મૃત્યુ સમયે સમતા ટકાવવી મુશ્કેલ હોય છે. ભક્ત પ્રાર્થે છે કે, પ્રભુ આ વેળાને તમે સંભાળી લેજો. સંસારના સત્યોને સમજી તેના પ્રત્યેના રાગ-દ્વેષથી પર થઈ હું સમતાપૂર્વક દેહ છોડું તો મારો આવતો ભવ પણ આ જ યાત્રામાં આગળ લઈ જનારો બની રહે. મૃત્યુને પોતે ખોરડો બદલવાની ક્ષણ સમજી સહજતાપૂર્વક તેનો સ્વીકાર કરી શકે તેવું ભક્ત પ્રાર્થે છે. ભક્ત પોતાના મૃત્યુને સુધારવાની ઝંખના અહીં વ્યક્ત કરે છે.

છેલ્લી પ્રાર્થના છે બોધિલાભની પ્રાપ્તિની - સમ્યક્દર્શનની પ્રાપ્તિની. જ્ઞાન, દર્શન, ચારિત્ર્યની સાચી સમજ કેળવાય તો જ અધ્યાત્મમાર્ગે આગળ વધી શકાય. આમ, જૈન દર્શન પ્રમાણે સમ્યક્દર્શન લાધ્યા પછી જ અધ્યાત્મયાત્રા ખરા અર્થમાં આરંભાતી હોય છે. માટે છેલ્લે પ્રભુ પાસે ભક્ત પ્રાર્થે છે કે મને સાચું દર્શન પ્રાપ્ત થાઓ ને જેથી આગળ માગેલ ગુણો અને અનુકૂળતાઓ વચ્ચે હું ધર્મમાર્ગે પગરણ માંડી શકું. એવું ક્યાંક સાંભળેલું કે જેને સમ્યક્ત્વ પ્રાપ્ત થઈ જાય તેનો મોક્ષ નિયત થઈ જાય. એ રીતે અહીં ભક્ત મુક્ત થવાની જ આડકતરી પ્રાર્થના કરે છે.

પ્રભુ પાસે પ્રાર્થનાઓ રજૂ કર્યા બાદ સૂત્રના અંતે સર્વમંગલ બોલાય છે. તેમાં જે પ્રભુ -જે શાસને સાચો માર્ગ ને સાચી સમજ આપી છે તેના પ્રત્યેનો અહોભાવ-કૃતજ્ઞતા વ્યક્ત થઈ છે. અહીં ભક્તના અંતરના ઉદ્ગારો સરી પડ્યા છે. પોતાને જેમની પાસેથી કલ્યાણમાર્ગ સાંપડ્યો છે તે શાસનનો જય જયકાર કર્યા વિના ભક્તથી રહેવાતું નથી. એટલે તે ઉલ્લાસભર કહી ઊઠે છે કે, 'સર્વ મંગલોમાં, મંગલરૂપ, સર્વના કલ્યાણનું કારણરૂપ તથા સર્વ ધર્મોમાં જે પ્રધાનરૂપ છે એવું જૈન શાસન જયવંતુ વર્તો. આમ, જયકારથી આરંભાયેલું સૂત્ર જયકાર પર વિરમે છે ને એમાં ઈચ્છિત પ્રાર્થનાઓને પ્રાપ્ત કરી સાધનારત રહેનાર સાધકનો પણ આખરે જયજયકાર થાય છે.

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૫. પ્રાર્થના સૂત્ર કે માધ્યમ સે પરમાત્મા કો પ્રાર્થના, આ. શ્રી. વિ. કીર્તિયશસૂરિ, પ્રથમ આવૃત્તિ, વિ. સં. ૨૦૫૯.

PASSING AWAY OF DR. S.A.B (BHUVANENDRA) KUMAR

AMAR DEEP SALGIA

A great Jain sravak, visionary leader, scholar, writer, and author, Dr. S.A. B (Bhuvanendra) Kumar, passed away on July 7, 2024, at the age of 84 in Toronto, Canada.



Dr. Kumar was one of the foremost Jain scholars in North America. He was founder of **Bramhi Jain Society**, which published the Jain scholarly periodical magazine, **Jinamanjari** which he initiated, edited and mostly funded with his own efforts. All issues of Jinamanjari are now available on the JAINA e-Library

Born in Karnataka, India, Dr. Kumar moved to Canada over 50 years ago. An engineer by training, he earned his Ph.D. in Jainism from Benares Hindu University. In pursuit of Jain research, Dr. Kumar traveled widely and was well-known in many academic circles. In early 80's he was secretary general of Jain Society of Toronto. He was listed in WHO's Who of Jain Scholars in Canada.

Dr. Kumar conducted extensive research and fieldwork on the history and antiquity of Jainism in South India, particularly in Karnataka, and authored

several scholarly books and many articles. Some of his notable works include:

- Jainism in America (1996)
- Canadian Studies in Jainism (1996)
- Come to the Jina: Polemics and Proselytism in Jainism (2009)
- Jain Studies in Canada (2012)

All these books were published by Jain Humanities Press.

Dr. Kumar – The First Chief Editor of Jain Digest

In May of 1985 during the JAINA convention in Detroit, Dr. T.J. Salgia was elected JAINA President and he decided to start a newsletter to connect JAINA's fast-growing membership base. Dr. Salgia came up with the name "JAIN DIGEST" and requested Dr. Kumar to be its first editor-in-chief in the presence of Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and members of the newly elected JAINA executive committee.

With the assistance of Dr. Kumar and others in Mississauga, Canada, the team started designing cover pages and by around September 1985, published and printed our first 500 copies in 8.5 x 5.5-inch format and distributed them to all Jain Center Presidents. It was a quarterly magazine, and Dr. Kumar devoted many hours in editing and promoting the magazine and served as a chief editor for many years and transformed it into a must-read periodical under his leadership. He expanded the magazine with matrimonial listings, advertisements, and news about Jainism in India, all of which helped fund the magazine for over 10 years under Kumar's editorship and thereafter. Dr. S.A. Bhuvanendra Kumar was one of the very few representatives of the South Indian Jain community in JAINA, and he brought scholarship and high professional standards to all of his work.

Dr. Kumar was unassuming and never sought any recognition and honor. He will always be remembered as a scholar and a friend to many.

Dr. Kumar is survived by his daughters Navita and Siri, his son Ashij and his grandchildren.

OUR HOMAGE TO DR. BHUVANENDRA KUMARJI

DR. SULEKH JAIN

A Jain sravak of great renown,
A visionary leader, his light has flown.
A scholar, writer, author grand,
Dr. Kumar's work touched many a hand.

In Toronto's embrace, he passed away,
On July 7th, a somber day.
At eighty-four, his journey ceased,
Leaving a legacy, never to be released.

In North America, his name shines bright,
A foremost Jain scholar, a guiding light.
He founded the Bramhi Jain Society's seed,
Jinamanjari magazine, his devoted creed.

Initiated, edited, funded with care,
His efforts made knowledge widely share.
Jinamanjari issues now in e-Library's embrace,
A testament to his scholarly grace.

With JAINA, his efforts found their home,
In Canada, his work would brightly roam.
Chief Editor of Jain Digest in eighty-five,
Transforming it, keeping its spirit alive.

Born in Karnataka, India's land,
To Canada he moved, a journey grand.
An engineer with a Ph.D. in Jain lore,
From Benares Hindu University,
His knowledge did pour.

In pursuit of research, he traveled far,
Known in academic circles, a shining star.
Listed in WHO's Who, his name did stand,
A Jain scholar, admired across the land.
His research deep in South India's soil,
Karnataka's history, his dedicated toil.
Books and articles, his wisdom spread,
A legacy of knowledge, widespread.

"Jainism in America," his words profound,
"Canadian Studies in Jainism,"
Where insights abound.
"Come to the Jina," a polemic's art,
"Jain Studies in Canada," a scholarly heart.

Published by Jain Humanities Press,
His works remain, his impact no less.
Unassuming, recognition he never sought,
A friend, a scholar, with wisdom he brought.

Survived by daughters Navita and Siri,
Son Ashij, in his memory, not weary.
Grandchildren too, his legacy lives,
In hearts and minds, his spirit gives.

Dr. Kumar, your light continues to gleam,
In the world of Jainism, you live in every dream.



Front Cover of the First Issue of Jain Digest

NAVAPADA YANTRA AT PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

DHRUTI GHIYA RATHI



Dhruti is a New Jersey-based MBA, SAP and FJAS professional. Dhruti is Involved with Jainism-Says-Blogspot, she researches Jain Iconography, Epigraphy, Historical and Numismatic references in Jain literature overlooked by historians, and on the applications of Jain principles. Dhruti's research was presented at the Dating of Mahavir Nirvana Symposium by ISJS.

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In this issue of Jain Digest, we feature a Yantra in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. Not much literature exists about Jain Yantras, and in this article, an attempt is made to reveal the details of a hitherto unknown Jain Yantra.

A Yantra is a mystical diagram used in religious rituals and functions as a revelatory conduit of cosmic truths. It is primarily used for meditation and for removing obstruction and evils. Nalini Balbir states: "Yantras are a tradition of large painted diagrams from the western India on paper or cloth, mostly from Śhwetāmbar origin, which are occasionally seen in museum collections in India and outside." In this article, we shall discuss the "Illustrated Page from An Unidentified Jain Manuscript" at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Illustrated Page from An Unidentified Jain Manuscript



Fig 1 Title: Illustrated Page from An Unidentified Jain Manuscript Date: 17th century Artist: Unknown, Indian Medium: Opaque watercolor and ink on paper Dimensions: Image: 4 3/16 × 9 3/4 inches (10.6 × 24.8 cm) Credit Line: Stella Kramrisch Collection, 1994 Accession Number: 1994-148-477 Geography: Made in Gujarat, India, Asia.

The left image in the Fig 1 painting describes the Navapada (Nine Petals) symbol which is now popularly known as Siddhachakra in the Svetambar tradition and as Navadevatā amongst the Digambara. The Digambara perform the Navadevatā Vidhān or Navadevatā Bruhad Vidhān worshipping the qualities of Panch Parmeshthi. Kristi Wiley defines Navapada and Siddhachakra as a Circle of Perfection. A Navapada Yantra is the primary object of worship during Navapada Oli during which the followers relinquish various kinds of foods for the nine days and undertake

meditation. *Navapada* symbolizes the *Namokār Mantra*'s five *Panch Parmeshthis* which are the *Arihants*, *Siddha*, *Achārya*, *Uvvajāya* and *Sādhu*. It also includes the four tools through which one achieves liberation or *moksha*. These are *Samyak Darshan* (Right Faith), *Samyak Gnān* (Right Knowledge), *Samyak Chāritra* (Right Conduct), and *Tapa* (Penance). Together, they form the nine petals of the *Navapada Yantra*, shown as nine petals lotus with concentric circles around it.

In Fig 1, the center image in the lotus represents the *Arihants*. To the north, is the figure of the *Siddhas* who are the liberated souls and indicated in red, as also indicated in the Jain Aum symbol. On the right in yellow is the figure of the *Achārya*. At the bottom in blue is *Uvvajhāya* or *Upādhyāya*, and *Sādhus* are to the left in dark blue. Moving clockwise, the intermediate four petals represent the *Ratnatraya*, or the three jewels of *Samyak Darshan*, *Samyak Gnān* and *Samyak Chāritra*, and *Tapa*. The writings in the intermediate petals in the clockwise direction reads as: *Om Hrim Namō Dasannassa* (Right Faith), *Om Hrim Namō Nānassa* (Right Knowledge), *Om Hrim Namō Chāritassa* (Right Character), and *Om Hrim Namō Tavassa* (Tapa/Penance). The *Tapa* reflects the internal *Tapa* focused on controlling the emotions and on attaining equanimity. Since all these four are tools for *moksha*, they reflect the *Shukla Leshya* or white color of the *Arihant*, who has attained the stage of complete purity.

The image to the right in Fig 1 is that of Bhagwan Mahāvīr's first disciple Indrabhuti Gautam Swāmi, as indicated by the name *Gotamsāmi* written there. The reason for his depiction in this image is known from the story of Shripāl and Maynāsundari, per *Shripāl Charitram* by Ratnashekhara Suri. The oldest Prākṛit text of *Shripāl Charitram* discovered so far belongs to 1428 VS or 1371 CE. In this story, Indrabhuti Gautam Swāmi narrates to King Srenik Bimbisār, tools to achieve *Samyaktva* or Equanimity. He recounted the story of Maynāsundari and Shripāl who worshipped the *Navapada*. Gautam Swāmi advised King Srenik to perform the *Navapada* worship in his quest for liberation. This indicates that the story of King Shripāl and Maynāsundari was known before the time of Bhagwan Mahāvīr. Per Sunandaben Vohra, King Shripāl's time should be estimated with the era of the 20th Tirthankar Munivsvrat Swāmi. Shripāl, who was plagued with leprosy was cured by worshipping the *Navapada*. The primary objective of the *Navapada* worship is attaining liberation, as detailed in *Shripāl Charitram*, and also in *Shripāl Rās* by Vinayvijayaji and Yashovijayaji Maharaj (VS 1732). The story of *Shripāl* was also featured in the June 2024 issue of Jain Digest. (https://www.jaina.org/page/Jain_Digest_June_2024)

Shripāl Charitram indicates *Navapada* Yantra being worshipped from *Aso Sud 7* for nine days. Later, a second *Navapada Oli* celebration in the month of *Chaitra* is also noticed in the *Shripāl Rās*. Fig 2 shows a folio from the 17th century manuscript of *Shripāl Rās*. The header text therein states in Gujarati, *Arihantādik Navapada Ne Vishe*, indicating that the Yantra in there relates to *Navapada*.



Fig 2. Siddhacakra The British Library Board. Shelfmark: Or. 13622 Author: Vinayavijaya and Yaśovijaya Date of creation: 17th to 18th centuries Folio number: 72 versos. Total number of folios: 88 Place of creation: Western India Language: Gujarati Medium: watercolour on paper Size: 24 x 11 cms. Image Source Jainpedia.com

Navapada Yantra is also seen as a part of the *Siddhachakra* as shown in Fig 3. There are two types of *Siddhachakra*. The small types have only a central part depicting *Navapada* and include the nine petals described in the *Navapada* earlier. The larger type is popularly known as *Brihad Siddhachakra* or *Siddhachakra Mahāyantra* as in Fig 3. It may also include *Kalash*, *Nava Nidhis*, *Yaksha*, *Yakshi*, and the 16 *Mahāvidyās*. The smaller *Siddhachakra* are observed in the Jain temples and carvings. The larger ones are prominent in metal form or are made of different lentils and colors and created on the temple floors during its worship. Fig 4 shows *Shripāl* and *Maynāsundari* worshipping the *Navapada*. The *Digambar* traditions concur on the five petals of *Panch Parmesthi* with the *Shwetāmbar* traditions but differ on the four intermediate petals. Per *Umakant Shah*, on an 11th century CE stone *Navadevatā* of the *Digambar*, four intermediate petals in the clockwise direction show the *Chaitya* (image), the *Chaityālaya* (shrine), the *Dharmachakra* (Wheel of Law), and the *Sruta* or the *Agama* Scripture shown on a stand, (a *sthāpana*) as detailed in Fig 5.

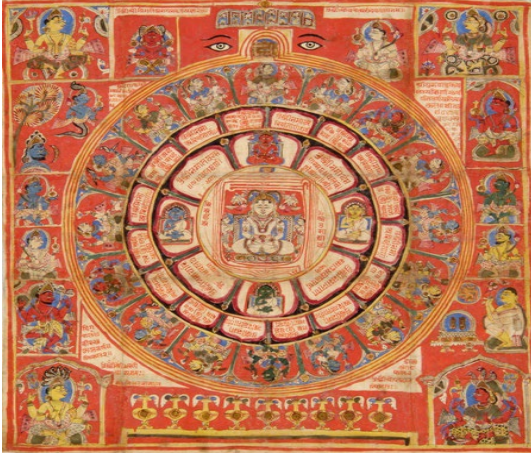


Fig 3: Siddhachakra Mahāyantra

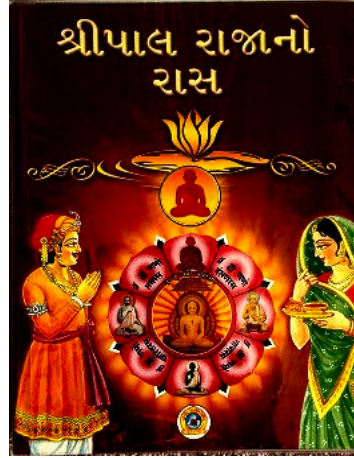


Fig 4: Shripāl and Maynāsundari Worshipping Navapada

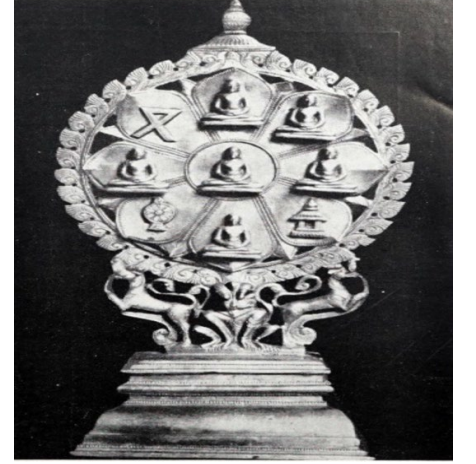


Fig 5: Digambar Navadevatā

Conclusion

Yantra worship assists in meditation and is a part of ritual for the Jains, Hindus, and Buddhists. Very little is published regarding the Jain Yantras, which earlier were on paper, cloth, stone, or as recently seen in metal. Similar diagrams are seen in painted Jain banners. Yantra and its constituent parts are believed to have divine energy and symbolic meanings. Furthermore, with its specific colors and mantra, a Yantra evokes the divinity being worshipped.

Thus, based on the above details and a similar image in Fig 2, it is concluded that the painting in Fig 1 is from the *Shwetāmbar* manuscript *Shripāl Rās* by *Vinayvijaya* and *Yashovijaya* of the 17th century CE. The painting depicts the *Navapada Yantra* which is worshipped to attain liberation.

The author is grateful to the Philadelphia Museum of Art for the free use of the art image which can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3y6vP4o>

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ENRICHING OUR LIFE THROUGH JAIN SOCIETY OF GREATER DETROIT

SANJAY BHANDARI



Sanjay Bhandari is a section editor of the Young Generation section of Jain Digest. He is a chairman of JAINA's Jains Got Talent (JGT) committee and has served as a judge of JGT competitions during the 2023 JAINA Convention. He has also 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.

After seven years of moving from city to city across the USA, my family and I finally found our home in Detroit, Michigan, in 2004. Our previous interactions with Jain temples were limited, so discovering the vibrant Jain community in Farmington Hills was a revelation. The Jain Society of Greater Detroit (JSGD) turned out to be much more than just a temple; it was a community that welcomed us with open arms, offering a range of activities—from pathshala for children and yoga classes to swadhyay, lectures by scholars, cultural programs, and religious celebrations like Paryushan, Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, and Diwali.

As we became regular participants in these events, we found ourselves not just attending, but growing alongside this community. Our involvement with JSGD has profoundly enriched our lives, bringing us joy, fulfillment, and personal growth in ways we never imagined.

Personal Growth and Learning

Our journey with JSGD began with small acts of volunteering at community events, which quickly evolved into more significant roles.



One of my first experiences was leading activities at the Father's Day outdoor event. Managing raffles, trivia games, and entertainment, and coordinating with vendors, not only honed my event management skills but also deepened my appreciation for the collaborative spirit within our community. This experience taught me that the smooth execution of any event is the result of meticulous planning and teamwork, often invisible to those who simply attend.

These initial experiences opened doors to new opportunities. I was invited to serve as a publication officer on the JSGD Executive Committee (EC), a role that allowed me to develop new skills, particularly in communication and collaboration. Working alongside experienced and supportive peers, I learned the intricacies of leadership within a dynamic and evolving team, with each member contributing their unique perspective.

This role eventually led to a recommendation by respected seniors in the community to join the editorial team of Jain Digest as an editor. I have had the honor of serving in this capacity for the past nine years, during which my writing and editing skills have flourished, thanks to the guidance of talented team members.

My journey continued as I took on responsibilities as a board member and vice chairman of the Board of Trustees at JSKD. These roles broadened my understanding of decision-making and teamwork, particularly the importance of considering diverse viewpoints—a real-life practice of the Jain principle of Anekantvad. Whether it was evaluating the feasibility of a new building or organizing major events, I learned that effective leadership requires both analytical thinking and compassionate listening.

Fostering Connections and Spiritual Growth

Our involvement in JSKD has not only brought us closer to the community but also deepened our spiritual lives. Participating in religious and charitable events like Diwali, Paryushan, and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak has strengthened our bonds with friends and reinforced the values of *Seva Bhav* (service) and *Aparigraha* (non-possessiveness). The late nights spent preparing for temple events were not just about getting things done — they were about giving back to the community and building lasting friendships with people who are now like family to us.



With JAINA officials at the 25th Anniversary of JSKD

The 25th anniversary of our temple was a particularly special occasion. Along with various religious programs, the celebrations provided a good platform for society members to showcase their talents in singing, dancing, garba, stage performances and trivia games.



My experience in performing on stage for many years gave me an opportunity to serve as an international ambassador, judge, co-chair, and eventually chair of JAINA's Jains Got Talent (JGT) committee. This experience, along with others, has not only boosted my confidence but has also been a source of inspiration for many children and adults in our community, shaping their careers and lives.

Recently, I joined a committee dedicated to engaging seniors (JOS), where we organize musical programs, along with technological and medical camps. This role has deepened my sense of humility and responsibility, allowing me to engage with seniors, understand their challenges, and contribute to solutions that enhance their lives. The leadership opportunities I've had at JSKD's fundraising events have further reinforced my sense of duty and commitment to the community.

On a personal level, our spiritual growth has been profoundly influenced by our temple involvement. My wife, Manisha, undertook *Atthai* tap (eight-day water fast), an act that inspired our son, Prakhar, and me to embrace fasting, meditation, and yoga. These practices have significantly improved our health and deepened our spiritual connection.

Development for our Children

JSKD has also played a crucial role in the development of our children. The temple's educational resources have enriched their lives, providing them with study classes that foster friendships and instill Jain values. My daughter, Aditi, has seen remarkable improvements in her memory and academic performance, thanks to her practice of Jain Stutis and Logassa Stotra. My son, Prakhar, has become more disciplined and cultured, crediting his experiences at the temple for boosting his confidence and shaping his skills.

Both of our children believe that their connection to the temple and community has deeply enriched their lives. They have learned Jain principles such as Jiv Daya (compassion for all living beings), Ahimsa (non-violence), and Anekantvad (the acceptance of multiple viewpoints). The various competitions and talent events organized by the temple have further enhanced their personalities, problem-solving abilities, and public speaking skills.

Broader Community outreach and Respect for Diversity

JSGD is not just about internal community development; it actively engages with other communities and organizations, fostering unity and respect for diversity. Hosting visitors from various Jain societies and collaborating with organizations like MICS and Palav has broadened our social connections and introduced us to new ideas. These partnerships have led to initiatives such as medical seminars and technology camps, enhancing our community's outreach and giving us a sense of belonging within the larger fabric of society.



MICS Technology Camp

Our temple has also extended its support beyond our immediate community. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we provided assistance to those affected

by the virus and also funded local efforts to help the needy. We also supported Indian students in the USA with food, accommodation, and tuition. These efforts have brought us immense satisfaction, knowing that our temple is making a positive impact both within and beyond our community.

Additionally, our temple organizes Tirth Yatras and visits to other Jain centers across the USA, giving us the opportunity to connect with a broader range of Jain communities and learn about their unique cultures and customs.

Conclusion

Being part of the Jain Society of Greater Detroit has been a journey of immense personal growth, social connection, and spiritual fulfillment for me and my family. We are deeply grateful for the support and friendships we have found within this community. Our experiences have taught us that true respect comes from hard work, service, and selflessness, not from wealth or personal accomplishments. The path to growth and fulfilment on this journey is ever-present and deeply rewarding. We encourage new families to join this enriching community, where they too can experience the transformative power of belonging to something greater than themselves.



JAINA ACADEMIC LIAISON COMMITTEE UPDATE

MANISH MEHTA, PH.D.



Manish Mehta is an engineer, problem-solver and entrepreneur settled in Ann Arbor, MI, USA (near Detroit), and is passionate about uplifting those at the "bottom-of-the pyramid." He was born in Jaipur in a Mewari-Gujarati Sthanakvasi Jain family and schooled in East Africa, India, Singapore and the US. After arriving in 1985 as a graduate student in Cincinnati, Manish was recruited as a Pathshala teacher for youth at Jain Center of Cincinnati-Dayton until 1989, and later continued his volunteerism as a parent teacher with Jain Society of Greater Detroit (JSGD) during 2002-13. He has been a JAINA Director from JSGD since 2004.

Advancing Jain Studies Globally

The Academic Liaison Committee (ALC) was founded in 2004-05 and has been actively working with visionary Jain philanthropists and institutions and engaging with leading universities and colleges around the world to establish professorships, lectureships and research programs in Jain studies and applied Jainism. To date, regular courses in Jainism are taught at over 50 campuses in more than 15 countries around the world including USA, Canada, U.K, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Italy, Israel, Kenya, Nepal, South Africa, Pakistan and the Philippines.

Recent ALC achievements are summarized below, which indicate just the 'tip-of-the-iceberg' of the positive impact and awareness raised about Jainism amongst academia over the past twenty years:

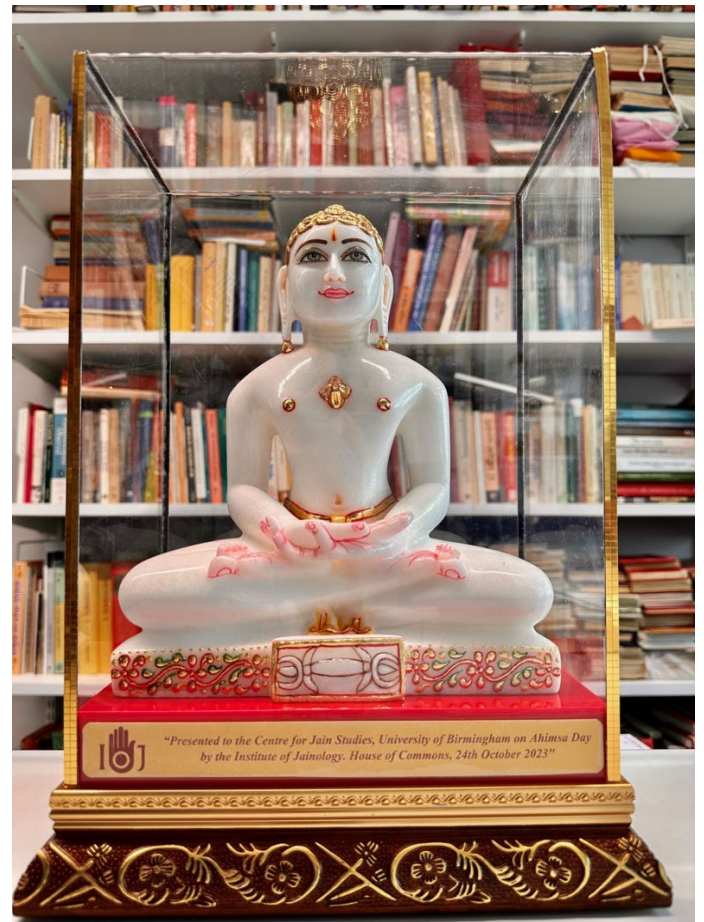
- 9 Endowed Chair Professorships,
- 11 Endowed Professorships (Assistant and Associate),
- 10 Post-Doctoral Fellowships,
- 7 Lectureships, Adjunct Professorships, and annual lecture events at universities,
- 28 Scholars are doing Ph.D. degrees currently on various topics in Jainism (in USA and within our global university network), of whom 6 are financially supported by the ALC donors,
- 13 Scholars have trained in Prakrit language, with ALC donor support,
- 15 Other universities are offering regular courses in Jainism (not funded by Jain community).

Inauguration of the Bhagwan Dharmanath Jain Studies Program at University of Birmingham

On November 16, 2022, in an unprecedented collaboration across Jain diaspora countries facilitated by the ALC, generous donors from the U.S. and U.K. formally established the **Bhagwan Dharmanath Center for Jain Studies** at University of Birmingham. Birmingham is the U.K.'s second largest city and is home to diverse immigrant populations and faiths from around the world. Under this Center program, following three

positions have been appointed in perpetuity in the Department of Philosophy, Theology and Religion:

- Dr. Marie-Hélène Gorisse, Assistant Professor of Jain Studies
- Dr. Areti Theofilopoulou, Assistant Professor of Ethics of Non-Violence
- Dr. Jinesh R. Sheth, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Jain Studies



Statue of Bhagwan Dharmanath with some of the books and manuscripts donated by the estate of late Professor Paul Dundas (University of Edinburgh) shown in the background

Last October 2023, a delegation of ALC members and donors from the U.K. and USA and the founders/faculty of Arihanta Institute attended three formal events in the U.K.

1. Inauguration program for Bhagwan Dharmanath Center for Jain Studies held at the University of Birmingham campus on October 23, 2023,
2. Reception hosted by the Birmingham Jain community at the Jain Ashram (Birmingham is the site of Europe's first Jain temple founded in 1976 by Acharya Sushil Muni) and attended by interfaith leaders from the Sikh, Jewish, and Christian communities.



Representatives of JAINA, ALC, Arihanta Institute, IOJ and Jain Ashram were hosted by UoB senior administrators and faculty at the Inauguration of Bhagwan Dharmnath Center for Jain Studies on October 23, 2023

3. The Ahimsa Day Award presentation by Institute of Jainology (IOJ) to our ALC member and magnanimous philanthropist Dr. Jasvant Modi at an elegant ceremony held in the U.K. House of Commons in Westminster (City of London) on October 24, 2023.



Dr. Jasvant Modi receives the 2024 Ahimsa Day Award from the U.K.-based Institute of Jainology Board at a ceremony held on October 24, 2023, in the U.K. House of Commons, London

Providing ongoing support to Students and Faculty

Since its founding, the ALC is constantly identifying and sponsoring new faculty and graduate students interested in pursuing Jain studies for introductory courses and immersive study programs typically offered at zero cost (paid by generous Jain community donors), by the Pune-based International School for Jain Studies (ISJS) – an accredited institute of higher learning administered by Amar Prerana Trust.

Over 1100 students have been prepared for the academic and research pipeline in India (and with online courses) through a combination of lectures by Jain scholars and faculty, visits to Jain institutions, deep conversations with our sadhus and sadhvis, and immersive experiences with Jain families. Such graduates are in high demand by the ALC's university partners for new faculty and research positions.

The ALC team of visionary volunteers and donors, both, contributes and raises philanthropy money to fund new faculty positions in perpetuity so that well-curated Jain courses can be made available to the mainstream students in institutions of higher learning. The ALC and ISJS work with leading India- and western- based book publishing houses to organize donations of Jain textbooks to serve as a "startup kit" for equipping new college programs with important and authoritative course materials and reference books on Jainism.

The ALC leverages JAINA's committees through outreach to local leaders of Jain centers around the world to identify both potential donors/philanthropists, and graduate students with high potential to succeed in Jain studies. ALC members mentor and financially support new researchers in undertaking Jain studies, track their progress and career paths, link them with local or nearby Jain centers, and often refer them to networking and public outreach opportunities for dissemination of relevant studies.

Approximately \$35 million has been donated to date by philanthropists for Jain studies (of which nearly \$25 million alone has been contributed by Vardhamana Charitable Foundation (established by Drs. Jasvant and Meera Modi of Jain Center of Southern California), with at least \$70 million leveraged with matching funds and in-kind resources provided by ALC's university and college partners.

CATALOGING JAIN MANUSCRIPTS AND BOOKS - A REWARDING PROJECT MANISH MEHTA, Ph.D.



Manish Mehta is an engineer, problem-solver and entrepreneur settled in Ann Arbor, MI, USA (near Detroit), and is passionate about uplifting those at the "bottom-of-the pyramid." He was born in Jaipur in a Mewari-Gujarati Sthanakvasi Jain family and schooled in East Africa, India, Singapore and the US. After arriving in 1985 as a graduate student in Cincinnati, Manish was recruited as a Pathshala teacher for youth at Jain Center of Cincinnati-Dayton until 1989, and later continued his volunteerism as a parent teacher with Jain Society of Greater Detroit (JSGD) during 2002-13. He has been a JAINA Director from JSGD since 2004.

JAINA's Academic Liaison Committee (ALC) members have connected with senior faculty involved in teaching Jain studies to assess interest in donating their collections of references, texts and other rare and out-of-print books and manuscripts on Jainism to various university programs. We are concerned that many university faculty and *shravak* scholars in our diaspora communities are in their advanced years, and several have been deceased recently – notably, Professor Padmanabh Jaini (University of California Berkeley), Professor Paul Dundas (University of Edinburgh) and Professor Cromwell Crawford (University of Hawaii). Hence, ALC has been involved in the handling and disposition of their intellectual assets and accumulated library collections. It is a complex yet stimulating and rewarding opportunity for volunteer involvement. For book lovers like me, this activity has been pure *nirvana* and joy!

I am both humbled and motivated to share some recent experiences through this article, as well as wish to draw the readers' attention to examples of behind-the-scenes volunteerism in our tiny North American community that illustrate how anyone and everyone can strengthen and promote Jain education in our diaspora.

My interest and opportunity arose when I worked in 2011 on a cataloging project involving reviews of nearly 200 books on Jainism donated by Professor Madhav Deshpande – a senior faculty who succeeded Professor Padmanabh Jaini at the University of Michigan's Center for South-Asian Studies. Professor Deshpande taught Sanskrit for over forty years and thus, had also accumulated a large collection of reference books and dictionaries on Prakrit and Jainism, which he chose to donate to JAINA. The Jain Society of Greater Detroit honored Professor Deshpande for his thoughtful gesture, and we, in turn, distributed the books to JAINA Library at JCSC,

Claremont School of Theology, University of California Riverside and University of California Irvine.

Moving the Intellectual Assets of Professor Paul Dundas to University of Birmingham (UoB)

Co-incidentally, while planning the inauguration of the Bhagwan Dharmanath Jain Studies events with the UoB faculty in April 2023, we received the sad news of the demise of Professor Paul Dundas (1952-2023), an eminent British Indologist, author and scholar of Buddhist and Jain Studies at University of Edinburgh, Scotland (U.K.). I had met Professor Dundas on several occasions at Jaina Studies Workshops organized annually by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at University of London. His authoritative textbook "The Jains" (published in 1992) is widely used as an introductory text in many universities and colleges around the world where oriental religions are taught.

Professor Dundas' widow contacted the U.K. Jain community in June 2023 to offer his entire collection of over 4,000 books and manuscripts on Jainism. The ALC worked with the Institute of Jainology (IOJ) leadership to quickly raise 4,000 pounds sterling (approx. US \$5,400) from the U.K. Jain community. These funds paid for the transportation of the precious cargo of Paul Dundas' tangible legacy collections to the UoB campus.

The UoB is an excellent new home for these assets as it already houses an extensive collection of over 2 million medieval Islamic manuscripts in their secure, climate-controlled storage vaults at the Cadbury Research Library on campus. Some of the rare books and manuscripts in Professor Dundas' extensive collection of Jain literature will be stored here as well. On October 23, 2023, our group from the JAINA-IOJ team received a special tour of the library, as part of

the inauguration program of the UoB's Bhagwan Dharmanath Center for Jain Studies. We were impressed to be able to hold, and flip through pages of many original medieval-era books and manuscripts written in Persian, Hindi, and Sanskrit, including even the early translations of the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics into Persian.

In conjunction with the October 2023 inauguration of the new UoB Center for Jain Studies, the Wellcome Collection announced at IOJ's Ahimsa Day event it would gift its collection of 2,000 Jain manuscripts to the Cadbury Research Library for future access by scholars.

The dilemma for the UoB's new faculty members hired at the Bhagwan Dharmanath Center for Jain Studies was how to perform an initial sorting and cataloging of the large number of books and manuscripts from Professor Dundas' collection while they were so focused on development of curricula for teaching Jain courses in the fall semester of 2023. Dr. Priti Kothari (a Princeton University graduate and member of Jain Center of South Florida) and I (an Ann Arborite, University of Cincinnati graduate, and former Pathshala teacher at Jain Society of Greater Detroit and Jain Center of Cincinnati-Dayton) responded to the ALC's call, and we offered a week of our time as volunteers in performing this initial sortation project as we both had prior documentation experience from our respective graduate school days.

Cataloging of Rare Books and Manuscripts of Professor Paul Dundas at UoB

With the successful transfer of Paul Dundas' collection to the UoB campus in July 2023, fellow ALC member Dr. Kothari and I worked under the guidance of Professor Marie-Helene Gorisse by unpacking, reviewing, sorting, and cataloging the books and manuscripts. We did the work over a ten-day period in a campus conference room dedicated to UoB's Global Philosophy of Religion Project awarded by the Templeton Foundation.

For the duration of our volunteerism, we were graciously hosted in the home of Jain Ashram Birmingham's Founder President Shri Arvinder and Renu Jain. Arvinderji serves as our Jain community's local liaison with the UoB. Arvinderji also took us to tour the Jain Samaj Europe temple in Leicester.



ALC and Arihanta Institute team with the Modi family welcomed by members of Jain Ashram Birmingham President Arvinder Jain

The cataloging work was physically demanding in that the Dundas books were stored in nearly 80 cartons, stacked in the small conference room and in an adjoining storage room. Most older books had hard-cover cardboard binding, were oversized, and filled with hundreds of pages. Majority of the books were limited edition or out-of-print textbooks or early translations from our *Aagams* published in the early 1900s which were used in Indian and European institutions for teaching Jainism. There were also many M.A. and Ph.D. dissertations on Jainism done at Indian institutions, often with detailed translations from Sanskrit or Prakrit into English (or French, German or Italian) documenting scholars' analyses of Jain scriptures. Such works were primarily completed in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka. Many books contained Professor Dundas' personal handwritten notes and comments used in his own research and publications. For example, we even found the Ph.D. thesis on translation of *Tattvarthasutra* prepared by Nalanda University Professor Nathmal Tatia, which has the distinction of being the first unified version of the scripture that is accepted by both, Digambar and Shwetambar sects of Jainism.

Each carton was opened, and contents stacked into dozens of piles sorted by language (English, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, Prakrit, Sanskrit, French, German, Italian, etc.) We then prioritized the review and cataloging of each book stack into an Excel database, capturing the title, year of publication, name and location of author or publishing house, key

topic(s) and also summarized with a brief description of the document.

Besides Jain religious texts and *Aagam* translations, there were many books on Jain history, philosophy, astronomy/cosmology, medicine, etc. as well. Professor Dundas' immense collection contained not only works of Jain faith but also works of other faiths and philosophical schools besides many works of poetry and other literature in Prakrit, Pali, Brahmi and Apabhramsa languages.

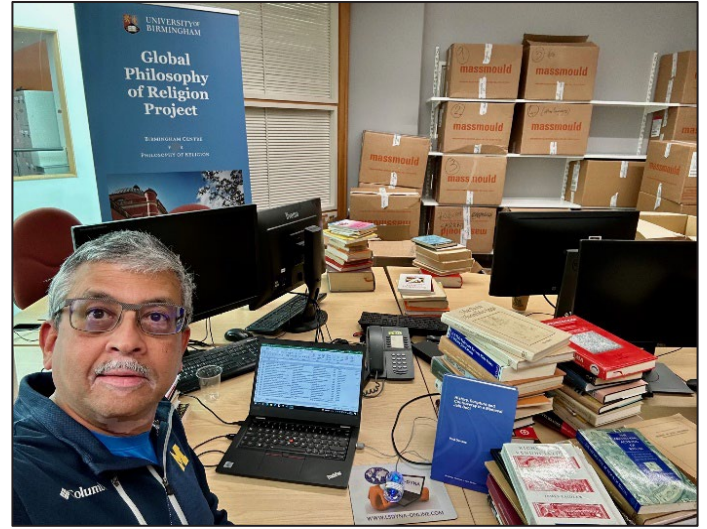


Professor Marie-Helene Gorisse and Dr. Priti Kothari performing sorting and categorization of books.

I also personally opened dozens of manuscripts which were neatly wrapped in red, orange, or white cloth and laced up with cotton rope binding. It was a surreal, almost mystical or dreamlike feeling to touch, and gingerly handle humanity's single copy or translations of major Jain scriptures done by scholars from a bygone era, which Professor Dundas had gathered over his nearly 50-year career in research, teaching and authorship.

When fatigued from cataloging, we took short refreshment breaks and also regularly visited and updated Professor Marie-Helene Gorisse and her Department Chair Professor Charlotte Hempel on our progress. They also introduced us to other UoB faculty members in Judeo-Christian religious studies, and several involved in Holocaust Studies. I also visited the UoB's College of Engineering (where ALC co-founder and donor Dr. Sulekh Jain obtained his Ph.D. degree in Mechanical Engineering in the 1960s) and held a meeting via Facetime between the

Department Chair Professor Carl Anthony and Dr. Jain who warmly recalled his study and research done at UoB.



Ultimately, over a ten-day period, an Excel database of hundreds of spreadsheet entries was prepared that will be further documented by the UoB's Post-doctoral Fellow Dr. Jinesh Sheth, after which the UoB team will develop a plan for scanning these precious volumes and upload to the JAINA e-Library in the cloud for enabling worldwide access. The volumes deemed the rarest will be stored at UoB's Cadbury Research Library.

Acknowledging Other Efforts in Jain Book Warehousing and Cataloging

A similar situation arose in late 2023 when Emeritus Professor Cromwell Crawford (1927-2023) passed away in Hawaii. Professor Crawford, an Anglo-Indian, enthusiastically blessed and supported the formation of ISJS with Drs Sulekh Jain and Shugan Jain. The ALC expresses grateful thanks to Shri Nirmal and Prithi Jain, restaurant entrepreneurs settled in Kona, Hawaii, who assisted by sorting books on Jainism that were donated by Mrs. Matild Crawford. Dozens of books were identified and shipped to Professor Shivani Bothra who teaches at California State University in Long Beach, CA.

We also acknowledge the donation of nearly 500 books and *Aagam* manuscripts from the collection of Dr. Prem Gada (Lubbock, TX), which are now housed at Eastern Connecticut State University.

Virendrabhai Shah (past President of Jain Center of Southern California) is a humble point-person who is leading an extensive warehousing, cataloging, shipping and recycling/reuse/takeback program for Jain books since 1995. As owner of JC Flag Corporation, he has worked closely with Manubhai Shah of MSI International and Pravinbhai K. Shah (past Chair of JAINA Education Committee) and a dedicated group of volunteers from JCSC (Rajbhai Salecha, Kailashbhai Muttha and Yogeshbhai Shah) to handle shipments of printed Jain books, and distribute Jain Education Series textbooks to both, Jain Centers and university partners identified by ALC – over 5,000 JES textbooks have been shipped to our university partners. To date, he has coordinated the warehousing of over 100,000 Jain textbooks and informed me the recent JAINA recycling campaign received nearly 75,000 books.



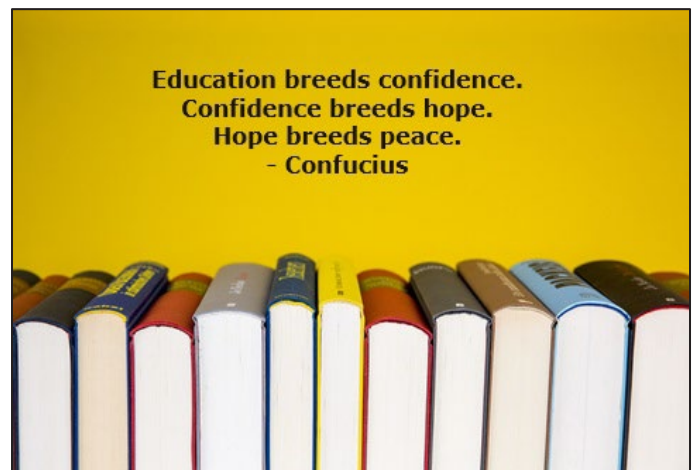
Storage of Jain books at JC Flag Corp.'s warehouse in Los Angeles.

In, conclusion, I cannot express my feeling of gratification with our revered Jain institutions and dedicated volunteers on both sides of the Atlantic for this unique cataloging opportunity, and special access I enjoyed reviewing our sacred texts at the UoB campus. It satisfied my decades-long curiosity and evoked a deep sense of respect and reverence for not only the original authors (i.e., our mastermind *Sadhus*, *Acharyas* and lay teachers) of these ancient Jain texts, but also the modern-day scholars who spend lifetimes patiently translating, interpreting and disseminating new knowledge through publications and teaching materials.

Call to Action

This year *Gyan Panchami* is on November 6, 2024. It is the day when Jains celebrate our *Aagams*, manuscripts and printed books. Typically, Jain centers and *pathshalas* will also distribute school supplies to students (many centers do it during Paryushan which coincides with the start of the academic year). For professionals and learned persons settled outside India, *Gyan Panchami* reminds us of our obligation to promote the establishment of *Gyan Bhandars* (libraries and repositories) at universities and colleges in our neighborhoods. We can do this by taking care of our precious scriptures and manuscripts, not only within our own individual collections and center libraries, but through the sharing of our ancient knowledge and teachings in a more significant way for the good of humanity and our planet. The ALC offers an excellent pathway for Jain scholars and others to leave a legacy for teaching Jain religion in academic settings.

This article is intended to inform, motivate, and invite the readers of Jain Digest to become more engaged in their local university communities, and thereby advance the ALC's efforts to honor the legacies of deceased and senior scholars (i.e., contemporary Acharyas) by preserving and democratizing access to Jainism's precious and rare intellectual treasures for future generations of students and researchers. Jains have throughout history been knowledge-seekers, and hence were very liberal and eclectic manuscript collectors. The responsibility of our diasporas is to globalize, sustain and continue this tradition with greater passion.



THE TIMELESS WISDOM OF VIKTOR FRANKL

PAYAL SETH



Payal Seth, an economist, is currently serving as a volunteer at the Ramakrishna Mission school for underprivileged children in New Delhi. She is also a passionate author who crafts illuminating articles, dedicated to exploring and celebrating the profound significance of spiritual values in our modern lives. Her articles have been published on several national and international platforms..

Around the time when Hitler had occupied Austria, Viktor Frankl, an Austrian neurologist and psychologist, received his US immigration visa. While his old parents were overjoyed because they expected that he would soon be allowed to leave Austria, he hesitated: could he really afford to leave his parents alone to face their fate, to be sent, sooner or later, to a concentration camp? He prayed for "a hint from Heaven". It was then that he noticed a piece of marble lying on a table at home. On it, an engraving in Hebrew read, "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land." At that moment he decided to stay with his father and mother upon the land, and to let the American visa lapse.



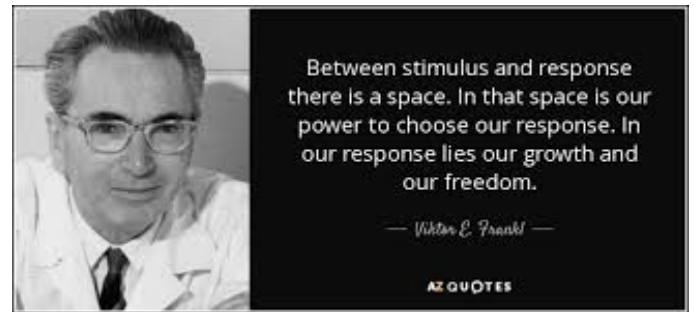
What he could not have known at that moment was that he would endure and survive four concentration camps (a total of three years) and his experience of the depths of human cruelty would give birth to his seminal work "Man's Search for Meaning".

This 69-page book describes his profound insights into the human condition, gleaned from his own harrowing experiences and his subsequent development of logotherapy, offering timeless lessons on finding meaning, resilience, and the power of choice.

It is my honor to revisit Frankl's extraordinarily inspiring journey and the enduring lessons he imparts.

The Power of Choice

One of Frankl's most empowering ideas is that between stimulus and response, there is a space in which we have the power to choose our reaction. Frankl writes about how, even in the concentration camps, he retained the freedom to choose his attitude. He recounts an instance when he stood in the freezing cold, forced to dig a trench, and found solace by visualizing himself giving a lecture on the psychology of the concentration camp. This mental exercise enabled him to transcend his immediate suffering and maintain a sense of inner freedom. He often cited the example of prisoners who shared their last piece of bread with others, highlighting that our choices define us, not our circumstances. He famously noted, *"Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms — to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."*



Frankl's Undaunting Faith in the Goodness of Humanity

Frankl had a unique and undaunting faith in the goodness of humanity, even in the midst of the bleakest circumstances. He often cited many examples to substantiate his beliefs. For instance, he had a great admiration for Father Maximilian Kolbe and praised his courageous example of self-sacrifice. Maximilian Kolbe was a deeply religious priest who devoted his life to the Virgin Mary and the Franciscan Order. Arrested by the Nazis, Kolbe was sent to Auschwitz. In July 1941, ten prisoners were selected to die in a starvation bunker as a

punishment for a prison escape. One of them, Franciszek Gajowniczek cried out, "My wife! My children!" Deeply moved by his cries, Kolbe volunteered to take his place. In his prison cell, Kolbe led the prisoners in prayer. Each time the guards checked on him, he was standing or kneeling in the middle of the cell and looking calmly at those who entered. After they had been starved and deprived of water for two weeks, only Kolbe and three others remained alive. The guards wanted the bunker emptied, so they gave the four remaining prisoners lethal injections of carbolic acid. Kolbe is said to have raised his left arm and calmly waited for the deadly injection. He died on 14 August 1941. And Gajowniczek, upon release, dedicated his life to spreading the story of Kolbe's sacrifice. Like Father Kolbe, Frankl often praised the sacrifices of many inmates.

Further, upon release, Frankl went over and beyond to elucidate the benevolence of the prison guards as well - *"there were some who took pity on us... that this man had paid no small sum of money from his own pocket in order to purchase medicines for his prisoners from the nearest market town."*

One of the most moving instances for me was this: *"I remember how one day a foreman secretly gave me a piece of bread which I knew he must have saved from his breakfast ration. It was far more than the small piece of bread which moved me to tears at that time. It was the human "something" which this man also gave to me — the word and look which accompanied the gift."*

Exemplifying an Ideal of Compassion

Besides the several stories of acts of kindness that gave Frankl strength to survive, the story of his own compassion and self-sacrifice are no less moving. Frankl was volunteering to take care of the dying patients and he came across a perfect opportunity to escape. One of the patients sensed it and in a tired voice he asked him, *"You, too, are getting out?"* Suddenly, Frankl ran out of the hut and told his friend that he could not go with him. *"As soon as I had told him with finality that I had made up my mind to stay with my patients, the unhappy feeling left me. I did not know what the following days would bring, but I had gained an inward peace that I had never experienced before."* Science now identifies the acts of kindness and compassion as the hedonistic paradox which states that the person who seeks pleasure, or happiness, for him or herself will not find it, but the person who helps others will.

In another story, Frankl describes a beautiful scene that occurred upon release from the camp. *"A friend was walking across a field with me toward the camp when suddenly we came to a field of green crops. Automatically, I avoided it, but he drew his arm through mine and dragged me through it. I stammered something about not treading down the young crops. He became annoyed, gave me an angry look, and shouted, "You don't say! And hasn't enough been taken from us? My wife and child have been gassed — not to mention everything else — and you would forbid me to tread on a few stalks of oats!"* Frankl thought to himself: *"Only slowly could these men be guided back to the commonplace truth that **no one has the right to do wrong, not even if wrong has been done to them.**"* The harshest circumstances in the world had molded Frankl to not just feel compassion towards his fellow inmates or guards, but also all creatures, be it stalks of oats!

Frankl's Logotherapy: Discovery of Meaning

Logotherapy, or "healing through meaning" in Greek, is the psychological theory developed by Viktor Frankl. Based on his experiences as a medical doctor, psychiatrist, neurologist, and philosopher, he formulated his meaning-centered approach which promotes freedom of choice and personal responsibility. Logotherapy posits that the primary drive in human beings is not pleasure (as Freud suggested) or power (as Adler proposed), but the pursuit of meaning. Hence, even in the face of extreme suffering, life holds potential meaning, and thus, even in the darkest of times, there is *always* a reason to live. The core principles of Logotherapy are as follows:

- 1) Freedom of Will** – We are free to choose how we respond to life and are personally responsible for our choices.
- 2) Will to Meaning** – We are motivated to find meaning and when this search is thwarted we experience existential frustration and feelings of meaninglessness.
- 3) Meaning of Life** – We are called moment-to-moment to answer the demands that life places on us. The focus is not on what we feel we deserve from life, but rather what our responsibility is to give to life. We have the ability and the ultimate necessity to self-transcend in order to improve humanity.

He developed logotherapy prior to entering the concentration camps at the age of 37. His encounters with the worst of human conditions

ended up providing him with an unwanted laboratory that confirmed his theory. Frankl discusses how we can discover meaning in life in three different ways:

1) Through Work i.e. by engaging in work or activities. Frankl observed that prisoners who had projects they wanted to complete, even in the dire conditions of the camps, found a reason to endure and survive.

2) Through Love i.e. by experiencing something — such as goodness, truth, and beauty — by experiencing nature and culture or, last but not least, by experiencing another human being in his very uniqueness — by loving him or her. In the midst of the bleakest conditions, he understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved. Through the loving contemplation on the image of his wife, he was able to experience pure and serene bliss. *"I knew only one thing — which I have learned well by now: Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in his spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still alive at all, ceases somehow to be of importance."*

He also mentioned how as the inner life of the prisoners tended to become more intense, they were able to experience the beauty of art and nature as never before. One evening, a fellow prisoner rushed in and asked them to run out to see the wonderful sunset. Standing outside they saw that the whole sky was alive with clouds of ever-changing shapes and colors, from steel blue to blood red. Their desolate grey mud huts provided a sharp contrast, while the puddles on the muddy ground reflected the glowing sky. Then, after minutes of moving silence, one prisoner said to another, "How beautiful the world *could* be!" Despite their intense suffering — or maybe because of it — they were carried away by nature's beauty, which they had missed for so long.

3) Through the attitude we take toward unavoidable suffering Frankl notes that what alone remained in the camps as *"the last of human freedoms"* was the ability to *"choose one's attitude in a given set of circumstances."* Although the prisoners were only average men, but some, at least, chose to be *"worthy of their suffering"* and proved man's capacity to rise above his outward fate. He gives his example to illustrate. When he was taken to the camp, his manuscript, which consisted

of his life's work, was confiscated. This fueled a deep desire within him to reconstruct it. Hence, even within the rigors of the camp, he started jotting down notes on scraps of paper. This desire to re-write his lost manuscript upon liberation is what sustained him from succumbing to a cardiovascular collapse when he fell ill in a Bavarian concentration camp.

In another instance, when he was close to dying, he volunteered for medical duties in another camp containing typhus patients, even against the urgent advice of my friends. He strongly felt that if he had to die there might at least be some sense in his death. He writes, *"When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves."*



Frankl's determination to always look for the goodness in humanity and his evolving search for meaning, despite the all-prevailing horror, has inspired millions of people throughout the world. When Frankl had to surrender his clothes as he entered the camp, he inherited the worn-out rags of an inmate who had already been sent to the gas chamber. In its pocket, he found one single page torn out of a Hebrew prayer book, containing the most important Jewish prayer, *Shema Yisrael*. He writes, ***"After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."*** All it takes is a deeper look at the mud of suffering, to notice the lotus blooms of resilience and inherent goodness of humanity.

References:

1. Frankl, V. E. (1946). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Beacon Press.
2. <https://viktorfranklamerica.com/>

मैं एक पेड़

डॉ. मुकेश लाठिया



Dr. Mukesh Lathia is a Board-Certified psychiatrist practicing in Michigan for more than 25 years. He is also an avid, published poet and author. He writes in Hindi, English and Gujarati. He has presented his poems and memoirs in several forums including American Psychiatric Association, iLead, Bharatiya Bhasha Parishad, Kolkata, AAPI (American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin) and other organizations. He is an Executive Member of American Psychiatric Association Art Council and Founding Member of Interfaith, Saginaw. He has recently produced a documentary on mental health, "Mentality", which has won awards at various film festivals.

Editor's Note: We are including this beautiful poem in our Inspiration Section to remind us of the profound wisdom and tranquility that nature, particularly trees, offer us. This poem serves as a timeless reminder of the harmony and balance that nature brings to our lives. We hope that the vivid imagery and profound emotions in these verses will inspire you to reconnect with nature. To view a beautiful cinematographic version of this poem in Mukeshji's own voice and with English transliteration, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17p0BD2R0JM>



घने, लंबे, छायादार पेड़ों के बीच आहिस्ता आहिस्ता जब भी मैं चलता हूँ,
लगता है जैसे स्नेहधिन कई बुजुर्गों के साये में पलता हूँ;
होता है इस परिवेश का इतना मुझ पे असर,
कुछ पल के लिए मैं भी बन जाता हूँ एक वृक्ष, एक तरुवर। (२)

धरती की सतह के नीचे दूर तक अपनी जड़ें फैलाता हूँ,
और हरी-भरी पतियों से लद शाखाओं को मुक्त गगन में लहराता हूँ;
चंद तिनके और अगणित सपनों से निर्मित न जाने कितने नीड़,
कितने घोंसले को अपने तन पर सजाता हूँ;
और हर पात, हर बूटे, हर डाल पर
न जाने कितनी चिड़िया, कितने गौरैयाँ, कितनी कोयल को झूलाता हूँ। (२)



जेठ की प्रखर धूप में थके हारे राही को करता हूँ विश्रान्ति प्रदान;
और वही हर दुपहर करता है भोजन खटिया पर
स्वेद से लथपथ किसान। (२)

लगता है हर साँझ यहाँ एक मेला अलबेला,
और सजता है मेरे ही अस्तित्व का महा उत्सव;
करते हैं जब घर लौटे पक्षी अनवरत चहचहाहट, कलरव।
इनके आतम गीत से ब्रह्मांड पूरा है गुँजता,
ईश्वर की हस्ति प्रतीति का प्रमाण मिलेगा क्या इससे पुख्ता। (२)

दुआएँ अल्लाह की कुछ मेरे भी है नसीब की,
सुनता हूँ मंत्रमुग्ध पढ़ता है जब कोई मेरी ही छाँव में नमाज़ मगरिब की। (२)

मेरे तने, मेरे पैर के पास अनायास ही बैठा हुआ पत्थर,
नज़दीक के गाँव वालों के लिए बन जाता है महा शिव संकर;
करता है दिन रात शेष नाग जिसका जतन,
लिए बेलपत्र, है डोलता महादेव की आस्था में मगन । (२)



लगातार देह पर मेरे असंख्य चींटियाँ हैं रेंगती, दौड़ती;
और किसी बावरे कठफोड़वा की चोंच
टक टक टक मेरी काया को है करती छलनी, तोड़ती । (२)

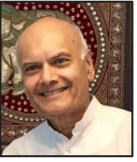
पर मैं स्थितप्रज्ञ, अपनी रीढ़ की हड्डी पर बिल्कुल सीधा खड़ा रहता हूँ;
तटस्थ हूँ, मौन हूँ, स्थिर हूँ, कुछ भी नहीं कहता हूँ ।
पता नहीं था कि मैं भी हूँ इतना सक्षम, प्रबुद्ध,
पल पल प्राणवायु से समस्त संसार को करता हूँ शुद्ध ।

मेरे भीतर और बाहर झूमती है प्रकृति नयन रम्य;
आत्मसात् करता हूँ मैं उसकी हर ध्वनि, हर दृश्य-
चाहे जड़ें हो या शाखाएँ,
नीड़ हो या घोंसले,
चिड़ियाँ हो, गौरैयाँ या कोयल,
थका हारा राही हो या
स्वेद से लथपथ किसान ।
नमाज़ पढ़ता हुआ कोई पाक मुसलमान,
या महादेव की भक्ति में लीन आस्थावान ।
हो पक्षियों की अनवरत चहचहाहट,
या चींटी और कठफोड़वा की अथक मेहनत ।
युगों की प्रतीक्षा, तपस्या के पश्चात
पाया है मैंने यह अलौकिक दर्शन, दिव्य ज्ञान,
कि ईश्वर की मनोहर सृष्टि में है हर एक की भूमिका
हर एक का स्थान; (२)

प्रभु की अनंत कृपा का जैसे ही मैंने लिया संज्ञान
तब से मैं क्षण क्षण असीम कृतज्ञता की भावनाओं में
बहता हूँ, हँसता हूँ, रोता हूँ, पिघलता हूँ;
घने, लंबे, छायादार पैडों के बीच आहिस्ता आहिस्ता जब भी मैं चलता हूँ,
लगता है जैसे स्नेहधिन कई बुजुर्गों के साये में पलता हूँ;
होता है इस परिवेश का इतना मुझ पे असर,
कुछ पल के लिए मैं भी बन जाता हूँ एक वृक्ष, एक तरुवर । (३)

IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY BODY AND MIND IN MEDITATION

RAMESH KHANDHAR



Ramesh Khandhar is a former secretary of the executive board and past head teacher of Pathshala at Jain Center of Southern California. He travels around to deliver spiritual discourses and continues to do intense introspection and contemplation. Currently, he is serving as Section Editor and Advisor of Jain Digest. (ramesh.khandhar@gmail.com) (This article is inspired by the teachings of Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshji, the founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission, Dharampur)

In the article “Why Meditate?” published in the June 2024 issue of Jain Digest we discussed various types of meditations that were focused on helping with our physiological and psychological needs.

(https://www.jaina.org/page/Jain_Digest_June_2024)

Those methods are also essential practices for spiritual advancement. However, in order to fully benefit from such meditation practices, we need to have a healthy body and mind. To keep the body healthy, we need to have a proper diet, do exercise, etc. and for a healthy mind we need to manage our thoughts, emotions and attitudes in order to stay calm.

In this article we will explore how we can achieve a certain level of fitness of the body and stillness of the mind to enhance our meditation practice.

How to Achieve Fitness of the Body

Proper Diet

The food should be nutritious and sattvic. The stomach should not be loaded. The fiber-rich vegetarian diet of fresh fruits, whole grain cereals, legumes, proteins, and vegetables is preferred to maintain the lightness of the body. It is also important to drink a lot of water to carry nutrients and oxygen to all of the cells in our body. 90% of our blood is made of water, making water essential for proper bodily function.

Allow at least 1-2 hours after meals before meditation, so that our body has enough time to digest. Evening meals should be light for those who meditate during the late evening.

Yoga and Exercise

Although one can meditate while walking and doing daily chores as practiced in Buddhist tradition, in most meditation methods we need to be able to stay in a certain body posture. The regular practice of asanas helps develop control over the body. The firm body posture enhances the focused attention needed in spiritual as well as our daily work activities. An uneasy

or unsteady body distracts the focus and affects the quality of meditation. With practice, we can learn to keep our head, neck, and spinal cord in a straight line and erect during meditation.



Any light exercise to increase the strength and flexibility of muscles and joints such as stretching, weights, water aerobics, etc. done regularly, will help to keep the body in shape. Gentle physical exertion and cardio workout through sports or simply walking help maintain healthy circulation and promote healthy cardiovascular function.

Yoga postures are beneficial in keeping the muscles and joints flexible while regulating the energy channels within the body. It primes our body, not just by increasing strength but also by opening spaces within us that we might not even realize were tight. Engaging in yoga before meditation smooths the transition from physical activity to mental serenity. It is an excellent tool to prepare the body to stay still which helps to reach a deeper meditative state.

Another Yoga practice called *Pranayama* deals with breathing exercises that let us take control over *Prana* – the vital life force. Breath has a direct influence over our mind activity. Short breaths are related to an

unsteady mind and long deep breathing tends to make the mind quiet and steady which is essential for a healthy, happy lifestyle.

Relaxation

Most meditation methods start with focusing on various muscles in the body and relaxing them. The purpose is to transition our body and mind from our externally focused non-stop thinking and brain activity to an internally focused quieter state. Relaxed muscles help us move our attention away from the entire body. This followed by focusing our attention on our breath subsides the chain of thoughts. Relaxation helps reduce stress, anxiety and regulates our physiological processes conducive to calming the mind. It should be practiced regularly and repeatedly to make it a natural process, making it easier to do so at the start of the meditation practice.

Unblocking the Chakras (Energy Centers)

The primary energy centers, known as *Chakras*, are an integral part of our subtle body which regulate our physical, emotional, and mental well-being. When the chakras are aligned and balanced, the life energy flows through them which maintains the health of the body and mind. However, various factors such as trauma, stress, anxiety, and negative emotions lead to blockage of the energy flow.



Certain yoga poses are great ways to open the chakras by aligning and balancing the energy flow in the body. Breathing exercises and visualization techniques can also aid in balancing the chakras. A balanced diet, regular exercise, and stress management are crucial for unblocking chakras. The chakras can also be unblocked by acknowledging the negative emotions, fear, anger, guilt, and practice of self-compassion and forgiveness. Prayers, practicing

silence, and connecting with nature can strengthen the energy flow in the chakras. All of these help to have a healthy body and a steady, calm mind.

How to Achieve Stillness of the Mind

It is well known that meditation requires a still mind. Most people have difficulty keeping their minds quiet when they first start a meditation practice. That is because the mind is incessantly active, projecting itself, what it should do, it must not do, endlessly chattering, accepting, comparing, judging, condemning, etc. There are several reasons why that happens. Our responsibilities, ambitions, materialistic goals, desires, focus on finding happiness through external means, our passions such as anger, ego, deceit & greed, lack of control over senses, etc. keep our mind totally preoccupied. Hence it is important to look into what we need to do to achieve the stillness of mind.

Reducing Passions

The passions such as anger, ego, deceit & greed need to be reduced so that we can achieve a certain degree of peaceful mind. All these passions result in activities of the body, mind, and speech which may inflict pain and suffering to other beings. The negativity, animosity, vengeful attitude, etc. are violent acts and promote verbal abuse and bodily injury. We should also constrain our greed, selfishness, irritability, or annoyance as these vices greatly disturb the calmness of the mind. The urge to fight and participate in heated arguments caused by the ego has a detrimental effect on the mind and reduces the effectiveness of our rituals and spiritual activities.

To reduce passions, daily introspection of actions, thoughts, and emotions is very useful. It is a tool to inquire within to find our own faults in all unfavorable situations in our lives. It sheds light on our negative thoughts, hurtful thoughts, animosity, habit of finding fault in others, and the habit of giving unsolicited advice. The confession from within, accompanied by a forgiving nature, eliminates or greatly reduces all those hurtful feelings and attitudes. This enables us to replace our chaotic obstructive thoughts with spiritual inner thoughts that promote a clear conscience and prevent us from being restless and feeling guilty, making it conducive to achieving thoughtful meditation of witnessing attitude as well as advanced meditation that takes us beyond thoughts.

Control over our Senses

For an average person, the mind remains preoccupied with the objects of sensual pleasures. We remain continually caught up in engaging external stimuli and life simply happens with very little conscious input and direction from within. The strong desire for the pleasure of the five senses needs to be reduced to keep the mind calm. If we are continually caught up in engaging external stimuli, we become slaves to it. The weak mind easily succumbs to temptation detrimental to the spiritual path. The practices of *Tapa* (Penance), *Aparigraha* (Non-possessiveness), *Satsang* (Spiritual study), etc. will help in getting more control over our senses and desires.

Moral Behavior

Engaging in occupations that are in accordance with morality helps one maintain a clear conscience. Our livelihood should not be based on dishonesty and immoral behavior. The practice of morality in our job or business avoids negative actions of body, speech, and mind that bring harm to oneself and others, such as killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, intoxicating oneself, or actions inspired by anger or greed. It also promotes inner virtuous positive actions such as generosity, patience, kindness, simplicity, contentment, truthfulness, love, compassion etc., all of which leads us to develop wholesome mental states conducive to transforming our lives. It facilitates a clear conscience.

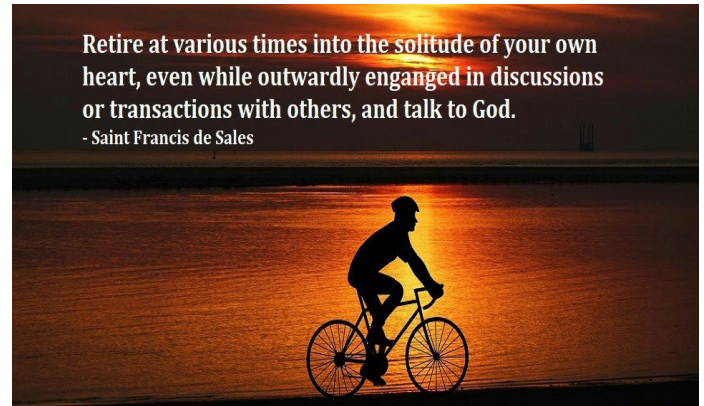
Loving Relationships

Loving relationships with our family members and friends is of utmost importance in staying happy and content. It keeps our minds calm and positive. Quite often we take for granted the people that are closest to us, and we stay preoccupied in our daily responsibilities. We need to be sensitive to their needs and be there for them when they need us. Spending quality time together is essential to create strong bonds of love. Everyone feels secure and loved when we have strong and positive family relationships. Valuing each other and loving communication is at the heart of good family and social relationships. Taking an interest in each other's lives, sharing family stories and memories, recognizing each other's differences, talents, and abilities, and utilizing each others' strengths promotes a positive attitude, love, compassion. Fostering similar relationships with our colleagues and friends also

enriches our life. All of this is inductive to peace of mind and makes our meditation practice easier.

Solitude

One should spend some time regularly in solitude – alone in a quiet place where there are minimal external distractions. This helps us withdraw from the senses and remain in silence so that we can listen to the voice coming from deep within.



When we come out of all routine activities and be silent, the faint but clear and serene intuitive voice can be heard. Pure consciousness knows our problems, objectives, and goals. Hence the intuitive voice can provide us solutions that are much more effective because they are not based on our limited knowledge and conditioned mind. Such experiences in solitude can be very useful during meditation as it will make it easier to go deeper and get in touch with our true selves.

Conclusion

We have covered many aspects of body and mind that affect our meditation practice. Even though we have provided separate “how to” lists to keep it simple for our readers, it should be understood that body and mind have a close relationship. When we ignore our physical health, it affects how we feel about ourselves and the world around us. When we are mentally stressed out and anxious, our immune system suffers, and we get sick. Often, the root cause of many diseases is psychological.

Hence a holistic approach to our well-being is essential. Along with ancient alternative medicinal practices, regular meditation practice is one of the tools recommended to achieve a balanced, true well-being of the body, mind, and soul.

ESSAYS BY PATHSHALA STUDENTS IN NORTH AMERICA

Beginning with the February 2023 issue, the Jain Digest Editorial Team has started a new series of articles – essays written by the Pathshala students in North America. Many Jain Centers in USA and Canada have been conducting Pathshala classes for several years. Many volunteers provide selfless service to the Jain communities by teaching the students about Jain principles, values, rituals, culture, Indian languages, etc. Essay competitions are held to motivate the students to stimulate their thinking and analytical skills about what they have learned in Pathshala. We continue this effort to showcase the winning entries from one Jain Center in each issue of Jain Digest. In the June 2024 issue we showcased essays by students from **Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW)**. In this issue we bring you essays by the students from **Jain Society of Houston (JSH)**. We hope that you will enjoy reading these essays and be pleased with the talent these students exhibit. We would love to hear from you. Write us note at jaindigestpublication@gmail.com



Category 1 First Prize Winner
Naitik Dedhia, Age: 10, Grade: 5



Naitik is learning a lot about Jainism such as Tirthankaras' life stories. He currently attends 3 different pathshala classes a week. He likes to swim, read and do math puzzles.

Topic: Festivals play a crucial role in strengthening the religious and social fabric of the Jain community, fostering a sense of unity, devotion, and adherence to Jain principles. Describe your favorite Jain festival. Explain its significance in Jainism and why the entire Sangh celebrates it. Explain the traditions, rituals, and special activities done during this festival.

My favorite Jain festival is Das Lakshan (Digambar Paryushan). Other religious festivals are about enjoyment, eating good food, wearing good clothes, dancing/singing, however, Das Lakshan is about reducing our passions[kashays]. In Jainism kashays are mentioned as anger, ego, deceit, greed. To reduce our kashays we need to control our senses [touch, taste, smell, sight hearing and mind]. During Das Lakshan we try to focus on our soul not our body [controlling senses]. Jain monks practice this life long, we common people try to practice during these ten days (30 days). Das Lakshan festival is celebrated three times a year for ten days, during which every day is celebrated for one virtue.

Ten Cardinal Virtues

The first day is celebrated as **Uttam Kshama**, Uttam Kshama means forgiveness -forbearance. This means not to allow anger to rise and if it does, then to render it ineffective through internal power. The second day is celebrated as **Uttam Mardava**, Mardava means lack of pride, selfishness or no ego is humility or Mardava dharma. To accept what one is, is humility. The third day is celebrated as **Uttam Arjava**, Arjava means lack of cunningness or lack of fraudulent attitude is defined as simplicity or straightforwardness. The fourth day is celebrated as **Uttam Shauch**, Shauch means no Greed (desire to possess) with eradication of Greed the Soul is practically Passionless (this leads to no Karmas). The fifth day is celebrated as **Uttam Satya**, Satya means lack of falsehood which is truthfulness. For most truthfulness means not to Lie. Absolute truth is knowing things as they are and not to differentiate them as good or bad. The sixth day is celebrated as **Uttam Sanyam**, Sanyam means control over oneself, violence can be caused by mind, body, or speech. Self-control leads to minimum violence, less Karmas and hence is path to liberation. The seventh day is celebrated as **Uttam Tap**, Tap means penance or austerity which is repentance of own sins. Austerities are of two kinds, external and internal. External type consists of physical restraints(control) and internal type which results in mental purification. The eighth day is celebrated as **Uttam Tyaag**, Tyaag which means Renunciation is defined as giving up possessions. The ninth day is celebrated as **Uttam Akinchanya**, lack of possessions is detachment. External possessions are wealth, home, Internal possessions are attachment, aversion, and desires. To lack internal possessions is the ultimate virtue. The tenth day is celebrated as **Uttam Brahmacharya**, meaning absolute restraint from sensual pleasures which can be due to mind, body, and speech and this leads to ultimate celibacy.

This year we celebrated Das Lakshan at our temple all 10 days by doing Abhishek and Puja with friends. Based on the day I did follow the virtues for example did ekasana on Uttam Tap day and controlled senses on Uttam Sanyam day. I also watched Jain Stories that help us to understand how the Siddhas/Arihants changed their life for betterment of not only own self but every person who came across them. I also learned a few Stutis that I continue reading every night before going to bed. I have been practicing veganism for the last 5 years (eating only Jain food since I was born) and this is not only to minimize violence towards other living beings but also to control my senses when I see non- Jain/non-Vegan food items. I hope more people understand the Jainism aspects of Paryushan/Das Lakshan is not restraint of food but our own self. My understanding is that the more I control my senses, less the passions/desires I will have which will reduce my Karmas and lead me on path to liberation. Our Tirthankars have shown us the way to salvation which is really followed by Acharayas/Muni and as a Shravak (lay person) my job is not to create own path but to follow what already is shown by the enlightened and reach salvation.

Even though Das Lakshan comes three times a year due to busy school activities I fully celebrate once a year however we still try to reduce social activities during other two Das Lakshan too. The idea of these Jain festivals (Paryushan/Das Lakshan, Asthanika, Solah Karan Bhavana) are to make sure we don't go away from religion which will keep us on track to reduce Karmas and be a better person in life. Our group during these festivals performs Abhishek, Pujas and do some meditation whenever possible. Every festival has its own Puja and story that we read during these days too. In India during this festival lot of activities are carried out in temple three times a day. I worship and practice learnings of our Panch Parmesthis(Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyas and Sadhus) everyday, this is only way to get ethical in life not only religiously but also in practical life so that I don't involve in arguments leading to bad passions(Kashay's).

I cannot think of any other festival that can bring so much change to one's life as much Das Lakshan can. To me it's time when person slows down his/her own busy life and devote time to own self by practicing more religious activities which ultimately brings him/her closer to own Soul and ignore body for short time. I love this festival and am encouraged to practice more and more religion taught by our liberated souls.

Category 2 First Prize Winner Ayushi Kewadia, Age: 13, Grade: 8



In her free time, Ayushi enjoys art, especially painting. She also likes to play badminton with her sister and has a passion for reading and writing.

Topic: Throughout the history of Jainism, Acharyas have been revered as spiritual leaders who guided the Jain community in religious practice, ethical conduct, and philosophical understanding. They are considered highly knowledgeable and have been entrusted with the responsibility of leading the community on the path of righteousness. Research a past or present Jain Acharya and write about their life, teachings, contributions, legacy, and impact on Jain philosophy. Highlight any inspiring stories or lessons they shared. Reflect on their teachings and examine how you would incorporate their wisdom into your life.

Jainism, one of the oldest religions, has lived across centuries, preserving teachings from Tirthankars to the present. Acharyas, leaders in the Jain congregation, play a pivotal role in sustaining these principles. The term "Acharya", meaning "one who teaches by their conduct" in Sanskrit, underscores their responsibility as leaders, but also teachers of Jain values and their application in life. From Acharya Manatunga-Suri, author of Bhakatamar to Acharya Kundkund, whose seminal work explores the soul's nature, these leaders have safeguarded spiritual heritage. Notably, Acharya Tulsi, founder of the Anuvrata movement, stands out for fostering moral growth through self-effort. His contributions have transformed perspectives on Jainism, showcasing its potential for all in pursuit of liberation.

Born on October 20th, 1914, in Ladnun, Rajasthan, Acharya Tulsi was deeply influenced by Acharya Kalugani, the 8th head of the Terapanth Sect. Taking Diksha at 11, he immersed himself in Jainism, seeing it as a path to enlightenment and service to humanity. Recognized as Acharya Kalugani's successor at 22, he became the 9th Acharya of the Terapanth sect. During his leadership, over 776 Sadhus and Sadhvis were initiated, and he mentored notable disciples like Acharya Mahapragya, the 10th head, sharing a vision of spreading Jain and humanitarian values to all living beings.

Beyond his religious role, Acharya Tulsi was a social advocate, particularly for women. Recognizing their plight - illiteracy, mistreatment of widows, and inequality - he sought to empower them. In alignment with Jain teachings on compassion for all, he took bold steps to eradicate cruel practices like child marriage and improve the lives of uneducated women in India. Establishing committees, he provided women with leadership roles and a voice in their communities. His impactful efforts earned him the Indira Gandhi National Integration Award in 1993, instilling hope for women to lead with confidence in modern society.

To add, he is well-known for founding the Anuvrata movement (1949), which encouraged all to follow the 5 Anuvrats (limited vows). Living amid a world with prejudice and war, Acharya Tulsi wished to tell the world that "they could be their counterpart". By his words, they alone had "the power to ward off and counter the threat of an atomic bomb." More than 600 of his disciples implemented this practice, pledging to never resort to crimes and violence. Many followed suit, leading to a significantly positive impact transcending communities. From lowering crime in local areas to eradicating diseases like diabetes, a wave washed upon the globe, encouraging all to discard evil habits and have goals of living with intention.

Sadly, Acharya Tulsi died at 82, but his legacy continues to inspire many. His teachings emphasized the power of starting small. Many, including myself, often set ambitious and unrealistic goals. For example, last year, I wanted to do Upvaas for the first time, with confidence in accomplishment. This philosophy proved me wrong, as I constantly found myself demotivated after failure. It was then that I realized that "Anuvrats" in Jainism are like "goal setting" in common language, both implying taking small steps for achievement. This year, setting smaller fasting goals, progressing from Beyasna, Ekashna, and finally, Upvaas, increased self-control. This method helped me achieve more in a shorter time, bringing greater personal satisfaction.

Due to the efforts of leaders like Acharya Tulsi, women are now empowered and experience an improved life. His acts of kindness resonate with me deeply. Despite Jainism's call to respect all living beings including one sensed beings, we sometimes neglect to extend equal compassion. Our collective oversight has contributed to current environmental problems. As the new year approaches, I've made it my resolution to minimize one sensed beings resource usage, especially water, in response to global warming. Cutting down shower time, less air conditioning, and repurposing water- such as rice water for plants - aligns with Jainism's ethos of simple

living, giving me peace. Passing on this kindness, I hope to inspire a collective shift towards a sustainable future.

In conclusion, Acharya Tulsi's profound legacy in upholding Jain principles stands as a beacon of inspiration. As a religious leader and social advocate, his commitment to spiritual enlightenment, humanitarian values, and social justice is evident. Empowering women, fostering moral growth, and promoting small, impactful steps through the Anuvrat movement, Acharya Tulsi has left an enduring mark on Jainism and beyond. His teachings have shifted my perspective, inspiring me to embrace simplicity, kindness, and sustainability in my daily life. Even today, Acharya Tulsi's wisdom guides us toward a more compassionate, sustainable, and spiritually enriched world.

Category 3 First Prize Winner

Rohan Chintan Mehta, Age: 14, Grade: 10



Rohan enjoys working out and hanging out with his friends. He is adventurous and likes to travel/explore with his family and friends.

Topic: *Today there is much science and research around the human body, both mental and physical. All humans are on a journey in their ways to thrive in the world and this begins with the self to have great mental + physical strength. Express what Jain principles you have learned that can be applied to this endeavor of optimizing one's mental and physical health.*

Mental and physical health along with the impact of those on the human body continues to be an extensively scientifically researched subject in current times. In my opinion the best way to improve your health, not just physical but also mental, is through going on a spiritual type of route and following certain principles. Some Jain principles that I believe are great for helping your mental and physical health are *ahimsa anuvrat* (non-violence) and *samayik vrat* (meditation).

Non-violence is an essential principle of Jainism and one of the great five vows. It is expressed to all living beings as small as microscopic bacteria to huge animals like elephants or your fellow humans through thoughts, speech, and actions. Having a mindset of non-violence guides us to be more compassionate and have empathy towards all beings. I try to practice and live by this

principle in my daily life. While there are many different examples of how I practice non-violence, animals have always held a special place in my heart.

An experience that I would like to share is about a time when I had the opportunity to help a baby bird. One evening my brother and I were walking in our neighborhood, we came across a baby bird that had fallen out of its nest from the tree. My brother and I both felt the need to help save this bird. I had my brother run to our house and bring an empty shoe box along with some napkins. I waited by the bird and gathered some twigs and dry grass from around me. Once my brother was back, I set up the shoe box, placed the baby bird in the shoe box and took him home. We decided to take care of him and named him Craig! I spent the entire evening researching how to feed and keep baby birds alive at surrounding veterinary clinics as well as bird rescue centers. I lifted him out of the shoebox and fed him some *dhoklas* diluted in water. After some time, he started to squawk and that gave us hope. At night, we put up a table in our garage and placed Craig back into the shoebox and onto the table.

We decided to take Craig to the Edith L. Moore Nature Sanctuary in Houston the next morning. As much as I wanted Craig to continue to stay at our house, I knew he would get better care at the nature sanctuary. At the sanctuary, we learned that Craig was just a few days old, and he was a mockingbird! The caretaker told us that he looked healthy and would thrive in their bird center. It is hard to express the happiness, relief, and little bit of sadness that I felt driving back home. We helped save a baby bird! Years after the incident, I still have fond memories of that experience, and it always brings a smile to my face.

Samayik vrat is the other Jain principle that I believe helps with both mental and physical fitness. I like to think of the practice of samayik vrat in broader terms specifically around the practice of meditation and not focus too much on the specific process of samayik as far as timings, sutras, etc. are to be followed. When one thinks of meditation, one immediately thinks of mental health or spiritual aspects. But what if I were to tell you it is also good for your physical health.

When you meditate, you are supposed to find a quiet place, observe your thoughts, and moderate your breathing to calm yourself down. It has been scientifically proven that consistent meditation helps lower stress levels and anxiety. Stress can take a toll on your body and trust me, as a freshman I have been there. At the beginning of my school year, I found myself in the middle of an extremely busy and demanding schedule. I would

find myself staying up until midnight every night trying to keep up with the pressures of my new high-school environment. I was not eating well nor sleeping well and eventually it took a toll on my physical health as well.

I have now learnt to take the time to meditate, even if only for 15 minutes to help me stay positive and feel good both mentally and physically. Per an article within the National Library of Medicine, meditation has proved to be 'beneficial' in various multi-factorial diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and fibromyalgia. This aspect of Jainism has boosted not only my mental health but also my connection to Jainism and other spiritual aspects. I hope to keep up with these practices throughout my life.

Non-violence and meditation have helped me survive my first year of high school and improved my mental and physical health. While on the surface, the Jain principles of *ahimsa anuvrat* and *samayik vrat* might not come across as practices that can be easily applied in our daily lives; the truth is that they can be viewed through a slightly different lens and adopted to help maintain strong mental and physical health.

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Category 4 First Prize Winner

Simran Jain, Age: 18,
Freshman at University of Houston



Simran says that the Houston pathshala has laid down such a solid foundation in Jainism in her and in her peers. Through the years, dedication of the teacher, parents, and the community have allowed the students to grow their faith and knowledge of Jainism. Going into college, Simran feels so thankful, blessed, and equipped for life.

Topic: As you prepare to embark on a new chapter in your life, take some time to ponder the invaluable lessons from Pathshala and the Jain Society of Houston (JSH) that you intend to carry forward. Contemplate the challenges you will face in college away from home and the Jain Center and how you plan to overcome those challenges. Think of ways you

could stay involved with JSH and the Jain Community. Describe how you plan to continue practicing the Jain principles in the next phase of your life.

Standing on the threshold of a new chapter in my life, I am once more reflecting on the memories, experiences, and lessons learnt in the current chapters of my life before closing them for good. The invaluable teachings from pathshala that I have carried with me and the warm embrace of the Jain Society of Houston (JSH) are like guiding stars in the vast expanse of the unknown. These lessons have not only shaped my character but have become an integral part of my identity as I develop a profound sense of community. My years at pathshala have not been just years at a religious institution, rather they have been years at an educational sanctuary of wisdom and a place where Jain values are not just taught but also lived.

Through the long-awaited Easter weekend Jain camp, to the ever so chaotic weekly lunches in the Main Hall, and of course the JFH meetings in which all the kids would bunch up in a single trailer, I have developed deep and intimate connections with not only the kids, but also with the adults at the mandir. The Jain Society of Houston's close-knit community, supportive environment, and place of internal happiness has become a second home- where I have spent countless hours playing Uno with friends, have completed college applications in the main hall, and have helped to organize chess and carrom tournaments. They say when leaving for college, you experience both sweet and sour feelings, and leaving this haven and this family to venture into the unfamiliar landscape of college, is flavored with strong sentiments of sourness.

In contemplating my future involvement with the Jain community, I hope to partner with technology as I strive to stay connected virtually, attending the monthly Zoom Digambar poojas, watching the annual Mahavir Jayanti program live through YouTube livestream, participating in WhatsApp discussions, and involving myself in Young Jains of America (YJA) to continue building upon my hard laid foundation of Jainism. The physical separation may be inevitable, but the spiritual connection forged between the walls of the Jain Center will live on forever.

The practice of Jain principles will not be confined to the walls of a temple nor to the walls of the pathshala trailers, rather they have become the bedrock for my decision-making capabilities, the foundation upon which I build my relationships, and my guiding light in

times of moral distress. The Jain principles of Ahimsa(non-violence), Satya(truth), and Anekāntavāda (idea of multiple perspectives), will be my companions, offering guidance as I navigate the complexities of college-life and later on, in adulthood. Through knowledge of the seven addictions, I understand how and why intoxicants are advised against in the Jain religion. Through my knowledge and strength, I will steer away from any drinks or substances that may alter my perception or ability to process information. Through knowledge of intention, I have learnt about the idea surrounding the popular meat alternative "Beyond Meat." Through Jainism, I have learnt that karma can also be acquired through intention. Although "Beyond Meat" may be a great alternative for others, it does not work for Jains as ultimately, your brain considers to think you are consuming animal meat when seeing a turkey leg, even though it may just be shaped to be a shaped plant based "vegetable drumstick."

Although there are many sour sentiments as I leave, there are also some sweet. And as I embark on this new phase of my life, realizing that I now carry the torch of wisdom, as I face the challenges that await me in the uncharted territories of college life, being fueled by the love and support of the Jain Society of Houston, along with the belief that I will remain enough for myself and will accept the constant change of attributes within myself by remembering that every Dravya(substance), has a Guna(attribute), that will constantly change through manifestation, also known in Jainism as Paryay.

I have learnt hundreds of hours' worth of Jain literature, philosophy, and ideology between these four walls, but as I venture to college, I will use these teachings completely on my own in the real world. Rather than an adult "enforcing" the way of Jainism onto me, I will finally take full accountability and control of every action as I refer back to my religious foundation before making every decision.

With the forthcoming physical distance, emotional ties may stretch, but they will not break. With every step, I move forward with gratitude for the lessons learned, the friendships forged, and the values instilled deep within me. The journey ahead may be daunting but armed with the teachings and love of the Jain community, I step into the future with a heart full of hope and a spirit fortified by the enduring principles of Jainism.

2024 YJA CONVENTION - TRADITIONAL PATHWAYS, MODERN FOOTPRINTS

SURYARAJ JAIN



Suryaraj currently works full-time as an engineer at SAP Concur. He is serving on the 2023-2024 YJA Executive Board as the Director of Project Development, as well as a Co-Lead for the 22+ Programming Committee for the 2024 Convention Committee. Suryaraj looks forward to bringing new experiences to the YJA community and helping keep YJA sustainable for the future.

From July 4th to 7th, 2024, the vibrant city of Atlanta hosted the 2024 YJA Convention, themed “Traditional Pathways, Modern Footprints.” This biennial convention brought together culture, learning, and fun, with over 900 Jain youth and 120+ adult volunteers from around North America (and even India) in attendance.

A Day in the Life at the Convention

As attendees began flowing into the Signia Hotel, they filled the halls with energy and excitement about what was to come throughout the weekend. The second and third days of Conventions started with a delicious breakfast including vegan pastries and traditional Indian delicacies. Once attendees were ready to start their day, a lineup of unique sessions was ahead of them. From guided meditation and yoga, mental health awareness, and looking through different lenses, attendees certainly left each session having learned something new. Next up was the keynote address that sparked inspiration and curiosity from a fireside chat with Simi Shah and Seema Jain, as well as the 22+ keynote featuring three unique speakers discussing Mann, Vachan, and Kaaya. The afternoons were filled with engaging sessions including the Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) and Jains in Action (JIA) competitions, Seva activities, and so much more.



Diverse Sessions and Workshops

Throughout the day, attendees chose from a variety of breakout sessions. Whether they were interested in social impact discussions, singing, Jain education, or professional development, there was something for everyone. These sessions were designed to challenge attendees' thinking and help them grow personally and professionally.

Evening Extravaganzas

As the day wound down, the fun was just beginning. Evenings at the YJA Convention were all about forming new bonds and celebrating talents. The Talent Show showcased the incredible skills of attendees, from dancing and singing, to a stand-up comedy and art showcase. Friday night started out with "Raja aur Rani Ki Raas Kahaani," a Rajasthan-themed Garba night where attendees brought their energy as they snapped, clapped, and twirled the night away! But the night wasn't done just yet as attendees enjoyed Indian-street food during the post-garba mixer, along with henna and other games.

Saturday night was all about a whimsical world of enchantment at the Alice in Wonderland-inspired formal event where the magic of the enchanted forest met the elegance of a formal affair. With formal dresses and suits all around the ballroom, attendees came dressed for a magical affair for sure. The 22+ age group enjoyed a "who done it" activity, featuring a story of a ring being stolen at the magnificent Ambani wedding. As a group, the attendees worked through the clues given to them and decided on who was the culprit in the case. After figuring out who had stolen the ring (we won't say who did it) and eating dinner in an "Enchanted Under the Stars" themed ballroom, they joined the rest of the attendees to dance the night away with DJ Nick and his amazing mixes.

Fun Facts and Highlights

- 527 first-time attendees!
- Top 5 states from where attendees came from: New Jersey, Illinois, California, Texas, Georgia
- 100+ Sessions: With over 100 sessions to choose from, attendees had the opportunity to learn about anything and everything.
- 50+ Speakers: Inspirational speakers from various fields shared their insights and experiences.
- Completely Jain and Vegan food was provided to attendees throughout the convention.
- For the first time ever at any YJA convention, 22+ attendees were offered an off-site activity: boxing workout class!
- Attendees were treated to a first-ever plated dinner during the opening ceremony of the convention.
- YJA Pop-Up Shop: What's better than showing off the amazing community you are part of than with YJA crewnecks and hoodies to purchase?
- Seva Volunteering: Attendees participated in impactful Seva (selfless service) activities, giving back to the community and embodying Jain values.

Building Connections and Community

One of the most cherished aspects of the YJA Convention was the sense of community it fostered. From sharing stories over Jain meals to participating in interactive sessions, attendees left with meaningful connections and an unparalleled feeling of belonging that we envisioned 8 months ago when the Convention Committee began planning for this convention. The convention was not just an event; it was an experience that we hope stays with attendees for a long time.

So, if you missed this year's convention, make sure to mark your calendar for the next one in 2026. The 2024 YJA Convention in Atlanta was a testament to the power of tradition and modernity coming together, creating memories and connections that will last a lifetime.

CONVERSATION WITH DR. PROFESSOR SIDDHARTHA DALAL



Dr. Prof. Siddhartha Dalal is the Professor of Practice at Columbia University in School of Professional Studies, Statistics Department and Data Science Institute. Prior to joining Columbia in 2017, he was Chief Data Scientist and Senior Vice President at AIG in charge of research and development (R&D) that included creation and application of artificial intelligence (AI), Statistics and CS to Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing, and Sensors/IOT for managing risks. He came to AIG from RAND Corporation where he was the Chief Technology Officer and from Xerox as the Vice President of Research, starting his career at Bell Labs and Bellcore where he was Chief Scientist and Executive Director. Dalal was a member of US Army Science Board, an advisory board of 20 scientists appointed by Secretary of Defense to advise US Army on technology. Dr. Dalal is spearheading the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the areas of Ancient Languages and Literature and is involved with multiple educational philanthropies that are spreading knowledge about Jainism.

Dr. Prof. Siddhartha Dalal, renowned for his dedication to Jainism and life-saving applications of AI, has received numerous accolades, including prestigious awards from IEEE, ASA, and ASQ. Additionally, he has been honored with the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal from the US Army, its highest civilian award. In this feature, our editor Dhruti Ghiya Rathi shares insights from her conversation with Dr. Dalal, highlighting his exceptional achievements and his remarkably humble, warm, and approachable nature

1. Dr. Dalal, please tell us about yourself and your family

I come from a Jain family, and my wife, Alka's grandfather became a Jain Monk. We have two children: our daughter Preeyel in Seattle with her husband, Daniel, while our son Nemil resides in San Francisco with his wife, Lorraine. We also have two grand-children, Shaw and Arun.



I split my time between New York and New Jersey. During the week, I teach and conduct research in AI and cryptocurrency at Columbia University in New York. On weekends, I live in Franklin Township, New Jersey, near the Jain Center of New Jersey (JC NJ). I

lead an active lifestyle. I run 3 to 5 miles daily, have run half marathons, and climbed Mount Kilimanjaro.

We lost Alka to ALS in 2016, but even in her final moments, she continued to inspire me to be charitable. Alka had a remarkable ability to build community wherever she went. She was dedicated to sharing her life and helping others in any way she could. Her father's imprisonment alongside Gandhi during the independence struggle had instilled in her an unwavering resolve to champion her convictions. Alka earned her master's degrees in nutrition from NYU and in food science from Rutgers. She began her career as a nutritionist at Jamaica Hospital in Queens, then went on to serve as a staff manager at AT&T. In her later years, she worked as a consultant and life coach, focusing on supporting small businesses and individuals. Additionally, she was a prolific artist, creating hundreds of oil, acrylic, and mixed media pieces and she also taught painting to many students. Her artwork, inspired by Jain themes, adorns numerous places, including JC NJ.

I am honored to collaborate with Rutgers University, JAINA members Mr. Dilipbhai Shah, Mr. Sulekh Jain, Mr. Jasvant Modi, and the Jain community in New Jersey, all of whom were instrumental in establishing **The Alka Siddhartha Dalal Endowed Postdoctoral Fellowship in Jainism in 2021**. This initiative is distinctive in that it is supported by three core components: research, teaching and the local JC NJ community.

2. From the many accomplishments and more than 100 peer reviewed publications and patents, please share some of your favorite ones.

The most exciting time in my research is always the present moment. I thrive on the excitement of confronting new challenges and finding solutions. Among my most impactful work is the risk analysis of the Space-Shuttle Challenger disaster, where we had identified a 16% chance of failure that could have been reduced to just 1%. Another significant achievement was my tenure as CTO at RAND, where I spearheaded the creation of Human Guided Analytics Systems to aid policy decisions. This initiative led to the founding of Praedicat, a company focused on identifying and regulating hazardous materials that pose risks to humanity. My work in combinatorial software testing is widely utilized around the globe. Currently I find great joy in teaching hundreds of inquisitive minds at Columbia and researching AI and other disruptive technologies to enhance our lives, both practically and commercially.

3. Generative AI is central to your work. Could you elaborate on how you are applying it for the benefit of Jainism and its wisdom?

Jainism, with its core principles and philosophies, offers pathways to peace, harmony and liberation from the cycle of life and death, which are especially relevant in today's polarized and violent world. Its teachings have not only influenced Jains but also leaders like Gandhiji, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela and others. The essential principles are encapsulated in the teachings of Tirthankar Mahavir and his *Ganadhars*. Mahavir was a revolutionary of his time, communicating his messages in the widely spoken Ardha-Magadhi language. Unfortunately, this language has since become extinct among the general populace. Today, this knowledge is accessible only through a few scholars who interpret it in their own ways. What is needed for the new-generation is the accessibility of that knowledge in contemporary languages, including non-Indic ones like English, French and German.

At my research lab at Columbia University, we are working on a major project to not only translate ancient Ardha-Magadhi texts into modern languages but also to enable interactive Q&A dialogues with these translations using AI technologies. The inspiration for this dialog-based approach comes from Shrimad Rajchandra's "Atma-Siddhi," where a

disciple engages in dialogues with the teacher to deepen understanding of Jainism. For our Generative AI- based translations, we need training data that includes original Ardha-Magadhi texts and their precise translations. This alignment of original and translated texts enables AI to automatically translate previously untranslated works. Currently, we are using digitized manuscripts of our *Agams* translated into Hindi by Dipratnasagar Muni and other works by V. K. Jain in English as our training data. This project, which began 8 months ago, is still in its early stages. We plan to extend it to additional texts, such as Acharya Kundakunda's *Samaysar*.

4. What are some of the pitfalls in using Generative AI to interpret the manuscripts?

Generative Artificial Intelligence is reaching a point where it can perform translation tasks quite effectively, provided it has access to high quality translation data. However, the accuracy of these translations is heavily dependent on the quality of the training data. Improper translations or documents can lead misguided outputs, as the AI system may continue to generate results based on flawed information, potentially steering the process in the wrong direction. Additionally, the field lacks established guardrails to prevent such issues. Driven by these challenges, I am actively engaged in advancing both the theoretical and practical aspects of generative AI.

5. Your work truly embodies the concept of Anekantavada, by using several translation sources to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of our scriptures. What has been your motivation in undertaking the Jain Manuscript project?

I believe in democratizing knowledge so that it is accessible to everyone, rather than being limited to a select few. Tirthankar Mahavir Bhagwan's *teachings*, which are meant for all, should be available to everyone, including those who are not Jains. Jainism offers many valuable principles that could greatly benefit the world if shared more widely.

6. What are the current challenges you face in the Manuscript Project?

There are two main challenges we currently face. The first is the availability of translated material. Very few manuscripts with precise translations are available;



many translations that claim to be precise are mixed with interpretations and comments. Therefore, more precise translations are highly desirable. The second challenge is resource-related: specifically, supporting students and obtaining computing resources. As you may know, much of Generative AI work requires specialized hardware, such as Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), which can cost tens of thousands of dollars. Currently, I am supporting two students at Columbia and covering computing resources through my research budget. However, since this is a multi-year project, additional funding would help accelerate our progress. We welcome everyone's participation in this project. Please feel free to reach out to me at sd2803@columbia.edu to learn more about the project and how you can contribute.

7. Are there any other research projects using Generative AI towards ancient texts?

I am also working on other AI projects that could positively impact the ancient text project. I am collaborating with monks in Thailand who are translating Pali Buddhist texts into English. Much of their literature is available in transliterated Pali with English translations. Since Pali is a sister language to Ardha-Magadhi, both of which descend from Prakrit, this resource will be valuable for our project.

8. You also sponsored a Jain library at the Jain Center of New Jersey (JCNJ). Could you please share more details about that?



The three jewels of Jainism are *Gnana* (Right Knowledge), *Darshan* (Right Faith) and *Charitra* (Right Conduct). Unfortunately, Gnana has received less emphasis recently, possibly due to limited resources. To address this, Alka and I believed it was

crucial to support Jain education and make Jain knowledge accessible to the next generation, regardless of their background. This belief led to the establishment of the library and pathshala.

In addition to initiating the Jain Postdoc program at Rutgers, my family has been involved in supporting Jainism through endowed chairs at institutions such as one in Turin, Italy, as well as fostering local courses and Jain media in India. My hope is that these efforts will cultivate new leaders who, while they may not be Jain themselves, will understand and value Jain principles – such as respect and compassion for all living beings – and contribute to global peace and harmony. This commitment to supporting these initiatives was further strengthened by two out-of-body experiences I have had.

9. Please describe your out of body experiences

After Alka passed away, during my grieving period, I spent some time at a Buddhist monastery meditating for 15 hours a day. During one meditation session, I suddenly became aware of my *atman* (soul) emerging from my body illuminating the hall where hundreds were meditating. It felt as though a divine light had emerged from me and was guiding me to change my life. This experience was followed by another profound moment while I was nearing the summit of Kilimanjaro. Struggling with the thin air; -15 degree temperature, and 40-50 MPH winds, I was on the brink of death. In a vision, Alka appeared and assured me that I would conquer the summit at 19,400 feet. This divine intervention enabled me to complete the climb and led me to realize it was time for me to shift my focus from the commercial world to the one dedicated to training the next generation and committing myself to philanthropic causes. Since then, I have become a Professor at Columbia and have devoted my life to these new endeavors.

10. Please share one of the prominent principles of Jainism, close to your heart?

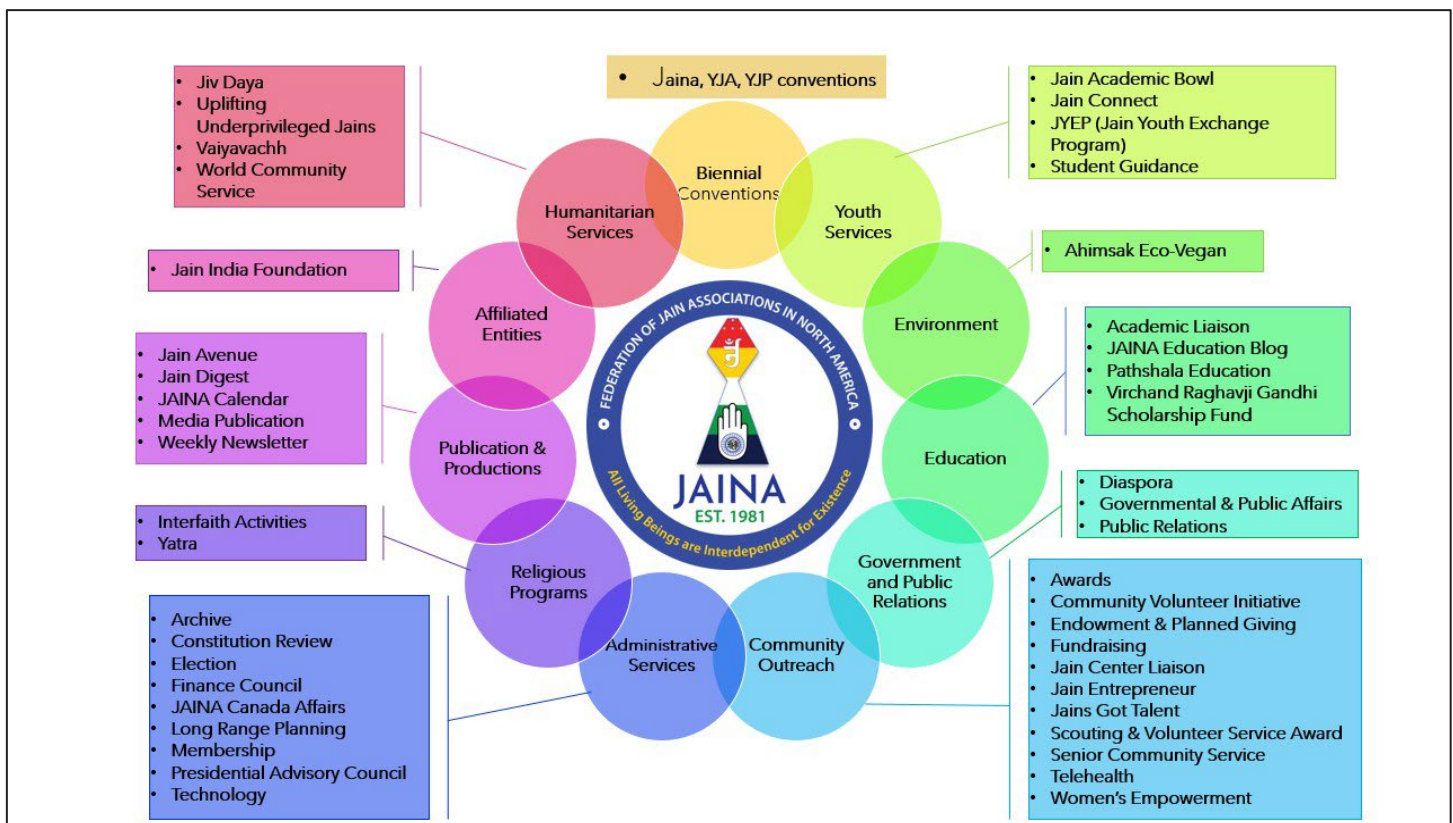
The principle of Ahimsa is very close to my heart. My research has focused on reducing various types of risks, including accidents and fatalities among construction workers, regulating harmful chemicals, and detecting nuclear materials that could be used by terrorists to create dirty bombs. I also value Anekantavada, as it guides me in my scientific work by encouraging the examination of phenomena from diverse viewpoints.

JAINA ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



4

JAINA Committees





JAINA Convention 2025

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