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LIFE IS AS DEAR TO A MUTE CREATURE AS IT IS TO A MAN  
COMPASSION AND LIVING KINDNESS ARE THE HALLMARKS OF ACHIEVEMENT AND HAPPINESS.

- DALAI LAMA-

## SANTHARA OR SUICIDE?

Jaipur: Seventy-four-year-old Amar Chand Kasawan has attained divine status according to the Jain community. After suffering from gangrene and pneumonia for a long time, he took up Santhara, a religious ritual of fasting unto death. Kasawan died on the fifth day of his fast but instead of mourning, the family will glorify his death. "This is a religious fast and my father-in-law really wanted to take it up," Kasawan's daughter-in-law, Kalpana said. This is not a stray incident in the community. Before Kasawan, 61-year-old Vimala Devi died last week after fasting for 14 days. A petition has been filed in the Rajasthan High Court, equating the practice of Santhara with the likes of suicide, euthanasia and Sati. Like Vimala Devi's family, Kasawan's family, too, justifies it by claiming that it was a wish, which he had expressed in his diary 15 years ago. "When the doctor gave up on him he told us 'now you take me home and fulfill my last wish'," Kasawan's son, Vimal said. Three other cases of Santhara have been reported from Rajasthan, all of them being women over 80 years old. The Shwetambar sect of the Jain community considers this practice to be the ultimate spiritual achievement. However, the Rajasthan High Court will hear a Public Interest Litigation challenging the practice of Santhara. In the last one week five cases of Santhara have been reported in Rajasthan, of which two people have died since the filing of the PIL.



## SARDARI DEVI LUNIA DIES AFTER TAKING UP SANTHARA

Jaipur: In the third such death in Rajasthan in less than 10 days, a 94-year-old woman has passed away in Hanumangarh district after giving up food and water in the Jain ritual tradition of 'santhara', her family said on Saturday. Sardari Devi Lunia of Nohar village in the district died on Friday after completing 40 days of 'santhara' and was cremated on Saturday with hundreds of people of the Jain community accompanying the funeral procession, her elder son Vijay Singh said over the phone. He said his mother wanted to take up 'santhara' 20 years ago but the family did not allow her. Sardari Devi is the third person in the state to succumb to the ritual fast in the past two weeks after Vimla Devi (60) of Jaipur died on September 29 and Amarchand Kaswan (77) of Ajmer on September 30. Two more women, Keila Devi (93) of Jaipur and Dhanni Devi (85) of Bikaner are still observing 'santhara'. The Rajasthan High Court, which was expected to give a ruling on a public interest petition likening 'santhara' to suicide or 'sati', has deferred its decision.

## ACHARYA MAHA PRAGYA JI OBJECTS INTERFERENCE WITH AGE-OLD JAIN RITUALS

Bhiwani: Facing a lot of criticism from media and human rights activists over practicing the age-old tradition of Santhara or, fast unto death, the Jain community's high priest has objected to this hue and cry, saying it has existed for centuries. Reacting to the hullabaloo over two women committing Santhara, Acharya Maha Pragyaaji, said when millions were dying worldwide of starvation and required immediate help, no one seemed to be bothered. The attention given to the cases of self-starvation were unwarranted, he said, adding that society is only concerned about the fate of the affluent. He was referring to the public outcry over ninety-three-year-old Kela Devi Hiravat observing Sathara for the past 32 days.

"In Jain community, anyone undertaking the vow of "Santhara" gives up on food when he or she feels his or her life has served its purpose and awaits death, said Kela Devi Hiravat's family members. A terminally ill and 61-year-old, Vimla Devi, died after undertaking Santhara for ten days. Practicing Jains say their traditions should not be interfered with. The rituals, they say, are not a modern-day phenomenon. "Why would somebody take the agony of fasting for 30, even 40 days at a stretch? 'Santhara' is just a penance one undertakes when he or she realizes that the body has become defunct anyway. So by undertaking it one wishes to alienate desires associated with the body," said Acharya Maha Pragyaaji, while speaking on the issue in Bhiwani town in Haryana.

"Santhara' is a religious act, a spiritual act. It is neither a desire to kill oneself, nor to clutch on to life, otherwise, that would be a suicide. 'Santhara' is just a graceful, courageous and peaceful way of confronting the imminent death and about embracing the death

through resolve and penance," Pragyaji added. Meanwhile, the State government has said that it would abide by the Court's orders over the issue.

Santhara or Sallenkhana is a procedure in which a Jain stops eating with the intention of preparing for death. This is different from suicide as it is not taken in passionate mood of anger, deceit or other emotions, but is undertaken only when the body is no more capable of serving its owner as a instrument of spirituality and when inevitability of death is a matter of undisputed certainty. The intention is to purify the body, and remove all thought of the physical things from the mind.

Jainism was found by Acharya Rishabhdev, who is considered the first Tirthankar (religious teacher). Mahaveer was the last and the most famous. The basic idea behind Jains' fasting is to acquire lowest possible negative karma and purifies one self in the process. Santhara, in this sense, is the best way to purification. Jain women more often do fasting than men. Fasting also purifies body and mind, and reminds the practitioner of Mahavira's emphasis on renunciation and asceticism, because Mahavira spent a great deal of time fasting. The sole intention is to purify the body, and remove all thought of the physical things from the mind. As well as giving up food and water, the ascetic abandons all desires and dislikes so that they can concentrate exclusively on the spiritual as they approach death.

#### **SANTHARA - A RELIGIOUS PRACTICE IN JAIN RELIGION TO ATTAIN MOKSHA**

Santhara is different from suicide which is an act of cowardice of a frustrated and emotionally unstable mind. It is also different from mercy killing or euthanasia, where a terminally ill patient who is unable to bear pain desires to die. It is also an escapist route. Neither it is like a sati reserved for women who are burnt forcefully on pyre. On the other hand it is considered a more noble action as it requires a very high echelon of thoughts to be able to realise that one is open to death. Death in Jainism is nothing but transition from one experience to another. But it has a profound impact on all our future conditions of life. Here all our unfulfilled desires and ideas condense into an intense feelings and longings drawing us into the new environment and conditions congruent with our feelings. Hence it is equanimity is required at the time of death as it will determine which gati our soul will take.

Santhara is always taken in contemplation of death, where one is sure that ones time has come and all other responsibilities are over. This ensures that all attachment to the materialistic life and body itself ceases. It may be noted that universally, law also treats actions done in "contemplation of death" or "causa mortis" as different actions from normal activities. For example Gift in contemplation of death which would be ordinarily taxed is not taxed by law. In the same way, Santhara in contemplation of death is different from suicide or euthanasia. The principle behind this is that a person while giving up this body with complete peace of mind, calmness, and patience, without any fear at all not only prevents the influx of the new karmas but also purges the old karmas which are attached to the soul. It is done by a person in complete control of oneself. Chandragupta Maurya, Sane Guruji, Veer Savarkar and Vinoba Bhave are all have died through Sallekhana. They all were rationalists. Courtesy: Anish Shah.

#### **JAINS SPLIT WIDE OPEN ON GUJARAT CONVERSION BILL**

Ahmedabad / Rajkot / surat/vadodara - MODI continues to court controversy and this time, it is his Government's decision to include Jainism into the Hindu-fold that has unleashed a debate among the community members. While Ahmedabad witnessed dharnas and agitations, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara remained relatively quiet. In Ahmedabad, this decision certainly has no takers among the community leaders. According to Shobhagmal Kataria, president of Bharat Jain Maha Mandal (Gujarat), the main issue is the Government has termed Jainism as one of the denominations of Hinduism. "We have no problem people converting from Jainism to Hinduism or vice-versa. But to say that Jainism and Buddhism are part of Hinduism is ridiculous. It seems that the Government is not aware of reality," he said, adding, "We are a different religion, different culture and different way of life. Jainism is even older than Hinduism." At a dharna held at the Town Hall members of Jain and Buddhist communities gathered under the banner of 'Committee to Fight Against Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Act' to register their protest. They also burnt dummy copies of the proposed Bill while shouting anti-Modi slogans. "We are here to protest the Bill, as it is unconstitutional and misleading," said Dharmachari Ratnakar, convener of the committee. In Gujarat, the total population of Jains is about 5.25 lakh. Jains in Gujarat are considered to be financially strong and highly educated community. This may also be a reason for Modi to touch this subject.

Unlike Ahmedabad, Rajkot did not see dharna or agitations by Jains. But it doesn't mean that the community, which has wholeheartedly supported Modi since his maiden election in 2002, is happy. Modi won the Rajkot-II by-election in February 2002 with the support of around 45,000 Jain voters. The community now stands divided over the issue. People, who supported and later felicitated Modi for winning a case of Cow Protection Act in Supreme Court, are shocked. Though the political leaders affiliated to the BJP have welcomed the amendment, those representing religious trusts and laymen are not happy with the State Government's move.

"Jainism is a completely different religion based on an altogether different ideology. It cannot be part of Hinduism. Jains' religious feelings have been hurt," said Kishor Lakhani, trustee of Digamber Jain Temple in Rajkot. It's the religious leaders of Digambar sect who have started agitation in New Delhi demanding Modi Government's ouster. More trouble is brewing for Modi from Vanik Navnat Sammelan, which is an association of businessmen belonging to nine castes, including Digambar and Shwetambar Jains, Modh Jains and even Swaminarayan. Majority of the members of the association are based in Rajkot. Former chief minister and NCP leader Chhabildas Mehta, who is president of the Sammelan said, "We are planning to pass a resolution against the Bill in our next meeting scheduled for October 1." A Jain himself, Mehta added, "I consider the law unconstitutional. Every individual has right to choose and practice his religion. A law cannot define a person as Hindu or Jain."

"One of the reasons that Modi won the Rajkot-II by-election in the home town of Keshubhai Patel was Jains' support. During all these years, the Jains have felicitated and honoured him on number of occasions. But now the Jain leaders in Rajkot are having tough time convincing the community to welcome the amendment," said a leader on condition of anonymity. Since the time of first mayor of Rajkot, Arvind Maniyar, a Jain, the community has been loyal to the BJP. Modi, with his communication skills and charisma, has pulled even the new generation of the Jain communities toward the BJP. There are around 90,000 Jains, including all sub-sects in Rajkot

city. Fortunately for Modi, Digambar sub-sect, who have launched agitation in New Delhi, are in less number in Rajkot, and most of the Jain leaders, who are affiliated to the party, are not Digambar. Be it Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Rupani or Home Minister Amit Shah and former speaker Dhiru Shah, none of them is follower of the sect. In Surat, Jain leaders claimed that Jainism and Hinduism run parallel to each other. "We believe in Karma but we do not believe in God. Hinduism is a society comprising four religions, Sikhism, Vedic, Jainism and Buddhism. As a religion we hold a separate entity," said a priest of Jain Samaj, Surat.

It is deeply regrettable that on this important issue which will effects all Jains, the community and its leadership at national level is quietly watching the scene. Except Digambar Jain Samaj of Delhi no other Indian Jain organisation or Jain Institutions existing outside India have shown any strong reaction on this issue. Institution like JAINA which represents the entire Jain community of North America and Canada can play an important role in dealing with Modi Government. In view of the All India Digambar Jain (Dharam Sanrakshini) Mahasabha's protest against the controversial amendment passed in Gujarat Assembly to include Jainism in the Hindu fold, the State Home department is yet to send a relevant file on the Gujarat Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2006 to Governor Naval Kishore Sharma for his assent.

<b>OPEN LETTER TO SMT. SONIA GANDHI, PRESIDENT, INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS</b>	
<b>By</b>	
<b>Bal Patil Secretary-General</b>	<b>Chakresh Jain President</b>
<a href="#">.....Please Click to read</a>	

#### **JAINS MAKE REPRESENTATION TO SOLICITOR GENERAL**

Vadodara, The predominant Jain sect in Gujarat, the Shwetambar Murtipujak Jain Sangh, held a quiet meeting with state's solicitor-general recently to assert that Jainism is a distinct religion and not a Hindu denomination.

#### **MODI'S BILL NOT ACCEPTABLE TO MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS**

The Catholic church of Gujarat is starting a statewide protest signature campaign against amendments in religious setups. The Gujarat government's proposed Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2006 seems to have stirred a hornet's nest, as it has got activists as well as different faiths opposing it, even if on different grounds. For the Muslims also the state government's proposed amendment, which gives a go-ahead to different sects within the same religion to move to another sect, has caused great resentment.

#### **JAIN COMMUNITY WANTS NARENDRA MODI OUT**

The entire Jain community in Gujarat is feeling highly agitated over the amendment passed in the Assembly to include Jainism into the Hindu fold. They have demanded an immediate dismissal of the Modi government and have asked the community members to relinquish posts held by them in the Bharatiya Janta party, if necessary. An appeal has been sent to the President, Prime Minister and the Home Minister to dismiss the government. The All India Digambar Jain Mahasabha has also appealed to the Governor of Gujarat not to give his assent to the Bill and refer it to the President, as it violates Article 25 of the Constitution.



#### **JAINISM AND HINDUISM ARE SEPARATE RELIGIONS - L. D. INSTITUTE, AHMEDABAD**

Though the controversial Freedom of Religion (amendment) Bill recently passed by Gujarat Assembly the government has clubbed Jains as a denomination of Hinduism, several ancient manuscripts and texts present at L.D. Indology institute describe the two as different religious entities. "There is absolutely no doubt that both Hinduism and Jainism are different religions and at our institute we have several ancient manuscripts and scriptures, about 1,000-year-old, and can easily prove this," said Jitendra Shah, the director of the Ahmedabad based L D Institute of Indology. An ancient text, 'sad-darshana-samucchaya' written about 1,200 years ago on Indian philosophies by a renowned scholar Hari Bhadra Suri clearly states this difference.

Similarly, another text 'syad-vada-manjari' written by Malli Sen Suri about 800 years ago, is a religious commentary and dwells in detail on these two religions, he said. While explaining the difference between the two religions as mentioned in these ancient texts, Shah, a Jain scholar himself said "Hinduism and Jainism are poles apart when it comes to individual Gods, rituals, religious practices and the way of living practised by followers of these religions." Talking about the differences in Gods, Shah said, "Three main Gods -- Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh -- form the base of Hinduism while among Jains there are 24 Trithankaras." "In Jainism, there is no concept of re-incarnation of Gods, while in Hinduism, Gods are re-born in different forms to counter the evil on Earth," Shah said. Courtesy: Anish A. Shah.

#### **NAXALITE PROBLEM, A REALITY OR A THREAT- ACHARYA MAHAPRAGYA**

Hunger is a reality. When it is trampled by the wealthy people it poses a danger. In fact wealthy class of people is trying to underplay this reality and thus it is becoming more threatening. If Naxalites are using their weapons to create terror amongst the community, it is a sign of danger. On the contrary, if it is a signal to awake those who are denying the reality of hunger, then it should not be taken as a danger. Leftist ideology and Naxalism are spreading rapidly. It is a cause of concern for many. The irony is however is that the people who should worry are interested in furthering display of their wealth and consumerism, thereby playing hides and seek with the facts.

I do not wish to dwell at length the various problems. I want to emphasise that those who consider the Naxalism as a threat of direct

violence are in fact ignorant of indirect violence perpetrated in the background of Naxalism, which is again a danger to our economy and society. The differences between the rich and the poor are considerably widened. While on the one hand there is an abject poverty where majority of the population is deprived of even a square meal a day, on the other hand there is a display of wealth and consumerism by the wealthy, leading to provocation.

Agriculture is the backbone of India's development. If a farmer is compelled to commit suicide under the fear of heavy debt, it would imply that the very foundation is shaken. The farmers of Punjab have also taken cue along with those of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra in resorting to suicidal acts. It is seen that the violence in the form of many facets is emerging in family life and in society at large. Violence breeds crime. Let us admit that alcoholism is a major vice in perpetrating most of the crimes. It is a major source of revenue for the Government. Total prohibition seems to be a distant dream. These factors have contributed for the mushrooming growth of liquor shops, just as any other store. Despite the resistance put forth by the masses the Government is apathetic to the reality.

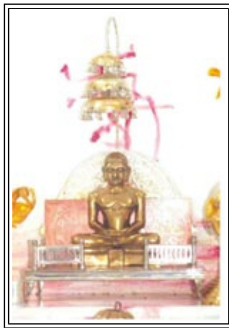
During our course of Ahimsa Yatra in villages and towns of Punjab we have ourselves observed that men folks move in inebriated condition. The women folks and the children struggle with the domestic problems. Let us all admit that the Government would never be in a position to change the vices of drinking. It can however take stern measures to impose prohibition. There was a time when persons from the various strata of life have made concerted efforts to resolve the issues and provide directives in bringing changes in the society. However in the present situation the decision taking authority is vested with the Government who manages at the top level. It is not clear as how far the persons at the helm of affairs are in a position to contemplate on the problems which have plagued the society.

Notwithstanding if the people at the helm of the affairs share the views of educationist, sociologist, economist, psychologist, writer, journalist and scientist in reforming the society, I am confident, it can certainly pave the way in right direction to establish healthy management of the society. In fact efforts are not as per the expectations. It is expected that we contemplate the problem consciously.

#### **MANY JAINS ARE SILENTLY SUPPORTING MODI**

Many Jains who are silent and supporting Modi are unaware how they are harming their own heritage. RSS and Modi Government complaining about Muslim Vote bank but playing same strategy. Secretly all Government employees in Gujarat have been influenced to become member of RSS to support and carry out their agenda. The same efforts are being carried in M.P. Even if it is illegal, with the help of over Zealous party workers all politicians are securing their seats. Instead of vote bank Gujarat Government is working from inside with effective chain of command. So, no wonder, Modi has winning hand. With this strategy Modi has kept all Jains in his left pocket. However may be now Jains are feeling the bite and things might change. The following is the MUST READ article for all JAINS. Written by - Prominent Historian Romilla Thapar  
[groups.yahoo.com/group/jainhistory/message/722](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/jainhistory/message/722)

This is how RSS, BJP and Sangh Parivar is playing religious card in politics. May be Business class Jains either ignorance of their heritage or being assimilated in so-called Hindu fold are helpless and keeping silence. However for such a neglect future generation Jains will pay heavy price. Already with present conversion Bill more than 50 Jain religious institution in Gujarat are in trouble. So every one can ponder and plan their strategy. Politics is the only viable alternative to secure our religious freedom. Definitely, all over India in different states there are Independent Jain M.Ps if they could bring such issues and unite we could form effective alliance. Courtesy: SHAN PARISA



#### **SHRI DIGAMBAR JAIN TEMPLE AT BANGKOK**

It is heartening to note that Shri Digambar Jain Samaj, Bangkok, Thailand has recently completed the construction of a 3 storey townhouse property for "Shri 1008 Mahavir Digambar Jain Mandir", at house # 143/3, near K. Building Apartment, Soi 45 (Soi Putha Osoth), Chareon Krung (New) Road, Bangkok. It is indeed a memorable event and a milestone for the growth of Jainism in Thailand and for all Digambar Jains living in Thailand for past several years. The Jin Bimb Vedi and prayer hall are on the 2nd Floor. The space is more than adequate for the current size of Digambar Jain community. Even though, both sects are followers of same Tirthankars and Jain philosophy and have jointly observed all major Jain festivals in the past and will continue to do so in future as well, it was felt during past 2-3 years by Digambar Jain community in Thailand to have their own Jin Mandir owing to the fact that Digambar Jin Bimb is Vitraagi (without any adoration) and the method of worshipping and Pujan vidhi is also different from other sects.

There are over 450 Jain families living in Thailand, mostly in Bangkok, for past several years. Out of them, about 70-80 are Digambar Jain families and the rest are Shwetamber families and they have their Derasar in the vicinity, built few years ago. Majority of the Jains are in the Gems and Jewelry business. In April 2004, current President of all India Digambar Jain Organisation, Shri Nirmal Kumar Sethi, had visited Bangkok and had inspired the Bangkok Digambar Jains to construct a temple for the Digambar Jains. On 5th and 6th September this year, on the auspicious occasion of Das Lakshan Parv, Digambar Jain community took out a very gracious procession from existing -Jinalay location to the recently renovated Digambar Jain Mandir with vidhivat pratisthapana of Shri 1008 Mahavir Swami's panch dhatu Jin Bimb in the new Mandir. It was a truly historical event for all Jains. Courtesy: Pramod M. Jain, DJF Committee Member  
 Mobile #: +(6681) 8211739, E-Mail: [pmjain@hotmail.com](mailto:pmjain@hotmail.com)

#### **JAIN CENTER, AN UNIQUE STRUCTURE FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AT NEW YORK**

An unique facility for the entire Jain community of America, known as 'Jain Center' has been built recently at New York to pray, meditate, worship and hold religious activities. The entire structure



consists of a four-storey building along with a cellar, covering a total construction area of over 16,000 sq. ft. The total height of the building with kalash is 66 ft. and shikhar, 24 ft. tall An Ashtapad temple is housed on one of the floors along with a 'sthanak'. Other floors house ashri Adi nath Ji temple, Shri Mahavir Swami temple and temples of Dada guru Shri Rajendra Suri Ji and Shrimad Raj Chandra. The cellar provides a mini-theatre with audio-visual equipment and public speaking system. A meditation hall and a well-equipped library are also provided. The entire structure is highly impressive and attractive. For Jains, visiting America, it should be a 'must see' item on their list.



#### FIRST ASIAN VEGETARIAN CONGRESS HELD IN GOA

The first Asian vegetarian congress was a great success. The conference was organized with the objectives, to meet like minded people, to learn new things and to spread the vegetarian idea in the country/continent, where the event takes place. The conference turned out to be a great success in achieving its objectives.

The congress was inaugurated by India's former president, R. Venkataraman who at the high age of 91 flew from Delhi to honour the vegetarian event in Goa. Goa's governor was present along with several other highly decorated guests. The local newspapers and a TV channel interviewed speakers and participants and reported about the event in a country where 60 % of the population is still vegetarian and where even an Italian restaurant like "Little Italy" in Mumbai is completely vegetarian.

Nearly 200 like minded people from four continents except Australia attended the congress organised by "The Vegetarian Society of Mumbai" to pass a week together in Goa. Unfortunately, a delegation of 40 members from Thailand had to cancel their participation due to fear of war. The war in Afghanistan was also the reason why some speakers had preferred to stay at home. Jashu Shah, long term vegetarian promoter, General Secretary of the Vegetarian Society in Mumbai had together with his organizing staff carried out the event.



Lectures covered subjects like project of bio-dynamic farming which is much felt in India too, yoga. Other lecture topics included health and nutrition for children. The very last lecture was held by a pediatrician, which was a good omen for the time to come as children are our future. The organizers had taken a lot of trouble to install a rich exhibition on all subjects of vegetarianism.

On occasion of the Asian Vegetarian Congress a new chapter of the Vegetarian Society was opened in Goa to make sure that the vegetarian Idea will revive in a country where more and more people are taking to meat eating. Following the inauguration of the new Goa chapter an invited guest was impressed by the speeches and decided spontaneously to become a vegetarian.

The same can be said of the TV camera man Micheal, who followed the whole sessions and thus was initiated to vegetarianism. Courtesy: Sigrid De Leo, Secretary of the European Vegetarian Union, Bluetschwitzerweg 5 9443 Widnau Switzerland. [www.ivu.org/evu](http://www.ivu.org/evu) Received through: Mr. Y. Malaiya, E-Mail : [yimalaiya@yahoo.com](mailto:yimalaiya@yahoo.com)

#### EIGHTH WORLD ASSEMBLY OF RELIGIONS FOR PEACE AT KYOTO, JAPAN

More than 2,000 people of faith from a hundred countries-including some of the world's most troubled regions-gathered in Kyoto, Japan, for the **Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly**. They stood fast together, condemning violence and committing to concrete ways to ease suffering and foster genuine understanding. Subjects discussed and deliberated included human family, blood shed and killings in war, destruction, sufferings by innocent, crushing weight of poverty, orphaned children, HIV/AIDS etc.



At the Religions for Peace Eighth World Assembly, delegates adopted the Kyoto Declaration, which pledged, "As people of religious conviction, we hold the responsibility to confront violence within our own communities whenever religion is misused as a justification or excuse for violence." All sectors of every society must acknowledge common vulnerabilities and assume collective responsibility to address them.



More than 400 participants coming from sixty-five countries joined in the Women's Assembly. They adopted a Declaration affirming, "women of faith make available strength and hope when all seems hopeless.". A Youth Assembly was also formally convened by more than 300 youth. They produced their own Declaration, proclaiming: "We choose hope because that is the only way forward." The assembly provided an incomparable means for both women and youth to build relationships, share experiences, and forge achievable plans of action in the years to come.

According to William F. Vendley, the organizer of the event this assembly in Kyoto was particularly meaningful because we as the Religions for Peace family returned to the city of our birth. When our wise founders first gathered in Kyoto in 1970, the world was a far different place. We were in the grip of a Cold War, and we were confronted with nuclear proliferation and the threat of annihilation. Today, our concerns and fears are far different, but what remains the same is that our quest for peace with justice remains steadfast-as does our belief in the beauty and power of inter-religious cooperation. August 2006. Courtesy: From: William F. Vendley E-Mail : [wvendley@WCRP.org](mailto:wvendley@WCRP.org)

#### ACHARYA MAHAPRAJNA ACCEPTS MOHAN BHAGWAT'S(RSS) INVITATION TO ATTEND SHRI GURUJI BIRTH

**CENTENARY YEAR CELEBRATION** - Noted Terapanth Jain saint Acharya Mahaprajna has agreed to preside over a function to be held in Bikaner in January next year to celebrate the birth centenary of Shri Guruji. He has reportedly given his consent to attend the function during a meeting with RSS Sarkaryavah Shri Mohan Bhagwat and national secretary of Shri Guruji Birth Centenary Year Celebration Committee, Dr Bajranglal Gupta, Shri Chaitanya Kashyap. Founder of Chaitanya Foundation, was also present in the meeting. Acharya Mahaprajna remembered the close relations between Shri Guruji and Acharya Tulsi. He emphasised the necessity of a joint platform of different organisations to eradicate untouchability from the society. During the discussion the Jain saint said the word Hindu has wide perspective and it is not correct to use it as a religion. He said misinterpretation of the word created confusion among people. He said Hindu means a nationality of culture.



**YOUNG JAINS OF INDIA CONVENTION AT NEW DELHI**

This year's Young Jains of India convention is shaping up to be one of the International conventions. There are already over 300 young Jains who are confirmed and coming out to New Delhi, India across the globe from November 3rd - 5th, to be a part of this great event. Early registrations are requested to avoid last minute disappointment due to limited seating. YJI has limited 600 seats for participants. Some of the invited speakers on this occasion are Dr. Abhishek Singhvi Congress Spokesperson and MP Rajya Sabha, Mr. D. R. Mehta SEBI, Mr. Kriti Daftary President JAINA, Swami Shrutpragya Ji, Smt. Indu Jain Chairman Times Group, Dr. Sughan Chand Jain - Organiser of International Jain Summer school, Dr.C. Devkumar, Anil Jain (Ahimsa Foundation) - Delhi, Principal Scientist IARI and Dr.Manoj Jain USA. The registration amount is Working 1000/-Rs. and Non-Working 750/-Rs. This token money will include accommodation and food during the convention. All participants can also invite two guests each on opening day ceremony to be held on 3rd November at Siri Fort Auditorium.

**INTERNATIONAL INDOLOGY CONFERENCE AT GOA - FEBRUARY 2007**

A new web site, [www.indologygoa.org](http://www.indologygoa.org) has been launched, which contains all the details of the International Indology Conference, Goa to be held from February 8-10, 2007 at the Kala Academy, Goa, India. The theme of the conference is "Ancient Wisdom Brought to Modern Times- Pathway to Higher Consciousness". [www.indologygoa.org](http://www.indologygoa.org) will now have a permanent global presence as a monthly International Magazine featuring news and views on indological issues worldwide. Please mail us your valuable suggestions as well as news and views to enable us to keep the website constantly updated. For details, contact: Dr.Anjali Mohan Rao, Convener, International Indology Conference,Goa. Address: GIRIVAR, Opp.Dhempe College, Miramar Beach, Post-Caranzalem, City-Panaji, Goa 403002 INDIA Phone: 0091-832-2462195 Cellphone: 0091-9422057786/0091-9422062910 Courtesy: R.P. Jain M.A. Sundaram N Chandrashekhara A Ten-day ( February 1-10,2007) International Indology Book Fair is also being organised at the conference venue, where a discount of 25% will be offered to the general public. Conference Host Kala Academy, Goa [www.kalaacademy.org](http://www.kalaacademy.org) Sponsor-Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, (MLBD), New Delhi.



**DR. YATISH JAIN HONOURED**

Dr. Yatish Jain was honored by the President APJ Kalam in at auspicious presence of M.P. Governor H.E. Dr. Balram Jakhar, Chief Minister of M.P. Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, President M.P. Legislative Assembly Shri Iswar Das Rohani and UGC Chairmen Dr. Sukhdev and others by the three Gold Medals and Gold Medal Certificate for the Merit Position in Economics at 21st convocation of Jabalpur University on 12th October 2006. Dr. Yatish Jain completes his M.Sc. ( Environmental Science) and Doctorate in water Pollution. He also done LL.B and M.A. in Economics & Sociology in order of merit position in University. Apart from these he also did B.Ed, Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Management and Ayurved Ratna. He is the founder member and Director of NGO 'Prakruti Mitra Environmental Society'. He is the member and various post bearer of number of Academic, Scientific, Cultural and Religious Society.



**JAIN BHAGWATI DIKSHA MAHOTSAVA**

Km. Snehalata Gadia daughter of Shri Navratan Mal Ji Gadia and Km. Anju Bafna daughter of Shri Nemi Chand Ji Bafna were accorded Jain Bhagwati Diksha in the Shwetambar Sthanakwasi sect at Pipar town in Rajasthan after receiving consent from Acharya Shri Hira Chand Ji maharaj in the holy presence of Upadhyay Shri Man Chand Ji maharaj and Shri Gautam Muni Ji maharaj holding chaturmas at Pipar town on the 11th October, 2006.



**IPS OFFICER S. K. JAIN TAKES OVER AS NEW IGP, CHANDIGARH**

Chandigarh, S.K. Jain, an IPS officer, joined the Chandigarh police force as its new Inspector General. Jain joined the police services in 1980 . While addressing the police personnel and mediapersons, IGP SK Jain said, "Weeding out corruption from among our members and welfare of our men would be my top most priorities." Emphasising on the need of prevention of crime and instilling a sense of security in the minds of city residents, Jain said, "Our prime objective should be instilling a sense of security in the minds of the residents and of course, prevention of crime and detection should be our top priority."



**KHIVRAJ CHORDIA MEMORIAL CENTRE, CHENNAI OFFERS FREE DIALYSIS SERVICES TO KIDNEY PATIENTS**

Khivraj Chordia Memorial Centre has established free dialysis services for patients with end stage chronic renal disease. The centre is established under Shree Jain Medical Relief Society, which operates a maternity hospital in Sowcarpet and an eye hospital in Royapuram. Patients will only have to meet the cost of consumables kit, which works out to Rs. 300 for a few sessions whereas the total cost of a dialysis session costs between Rs. 800 to Rs. 2000 elsewhere in the city. The cost of the dialysis (which has been estimated at Rs. 500 per session) is being raised from donors and philanthropists. The centre is operating with four machines and plans to acquire three more machines. Registration or consultation with a nephrologist is also available. The dialysis centre at 48, Arundale Street, Mylapore, can be contacted on Telephone no. 65266789.

**MATA CHAKRESHWARI DEVI FAIR BEGINS AT PUNJAB (SIR HIND) JAIN TEMPLE**

FATEHGARH SAHIB: The three-day annual fair at Mata Chakreshwari Devi Jain Temple will begin here from October 5. Pilgrims from all over the country and abroad belonging to Jain community are likely to reach here to pay obeisance to Mata Chakreshwari Devi. Mata Chakreshwari Devi Jain Temple, the highly respected religious shrines of Sikhs, Hindus, is situated two kilometers from here on the Sirhind -Chuni road lies the religious shrine of the Jains, "Mata Chakreshwari Devi Jain Temple". Thousands of pilgrims from all over the country and abroad converge on this shrine every year on the full moon of Kartika. This year the annual fair will be held from October 5 to October 7.

As per reports, this is the only temple in the country where the idol of Mata Chakreshwari Devi is situated. According to history once Rajasthan faced a severe drought situation. A large number of devotees of Mata Chakreshwari Devi moved towards Punjab on their bullock carts. The idol of the Mata was placed on one of the carts. On the way the devotees stopped near Sirhind for rest. Most of them were Khandelwal Jains. As they set out after a brief rest, the cart carrying the idol of Mata Chakreshwari Devi just did not move. After some time they heard a voice from above to let the idol lie there, as it was the fittest place for the Mata. The devotees subsequently built a temple at that spot. Now a beautiful temple, Amrit Kund, and the other complex for the stay of devotees has been constructed. A free dispensary service has been provided for the residents of the area.

Not only Jains but people of other faiths also visit this temple to pay obeisance. Chakreshwari Devi believed to have great powers and protects her devotees through crisis. The Sikhs also hold this place in great reverence because "Diwan Todar Mal", who was also a devotee of Mata Chakreshwari Devi, purchased land by offering gold coins to cover the land selected for the cremation of two younger Sahibjadas of Guru Gobind Singh, who were bricked alive at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib and now Gurdwara Jyoti Swarup is situated there.

This year more than 10,000 pilgrims are expected to take part in the annual fair. Children from various Jain schools of Punjab and Haryana will present cultural programmes. A free medical check-up camp will also be arranged. As per information, the district administration has provided special medical teams, sanitation staff and facilities of drinking water and buses from Sirhind to the mela site have been made.

**ACHIEVEMENTS OF VARDHMAN SANSKAR DHAM TRUST - MULUND, MUMBAI**

1. Distribution of more than 100000 food packets, 400000 water pouches, 50000 biscuit packets, 50000 water bottles and antibiotic medicines distributed during flood days.

2. 10000 basic necessity kits were distributed to 10000 affected families by our volunteers. The cost of each kit was around Rs 700/- and contained 5 kg rice, 3 kg dal, 2 kg sugar, 1 kg oil, 250 gm tea powder, 1.5 kg masala, 2 bottles of milk, 2 water bottles, 1kg namkeen, matchbox, a set of steel utensils, set of kitchenware plastic box, 2 buckets, mats, lunchbox, waterbag, plastic bags etc.

Few of our ongoing projects are

1. Aawas Yojana (Home for Needy) for Jain sadharmik badhus at Mira Road, Mumbai and Virar, Mumbai. wherein Dham provides interest free lifetime loan/donation for needy sadharmiks. For 50 odd needy families, Vardhman Sanskar Dham has donated the flats for free.

2. Ashlilata Virodhi Aandolan - Dham has produced a small clip on Ashlilata in TVs and how it affects the mind of children/kids. For more details, please contact us Paresh Jain (9820781696), Abhay Shah (9323910931), Web: [www.geocities.com/greatparesh](http://www.geocities.com/greatparesh)

**MAHATMA GANDHI'S BIRTH DAY CELEBRATIONS IN USA**

Like previous years there were celebrations in many cities and towns across USA. Mahatma Gandhi statues were installed in Cleveland, Ohio in Atlanta, Georgia and other places. In Houston, for the past three years, Mahatma Gandhi Library has been celebrating Mahatma Gandhi Week from Sept 25-October 2nd. This year the program was on a big very scale with participation by many Indian and non Indian organizations and persons. On Sunday, October 1st, the Universal Unitarian Church of Houston started the day with prayers and a Tribute Service to Mahatma Gandhi and his practice of Non violence, compassion, love and service. In next few weeks, this Church is planning to start regular 12 week long classes on wisdom and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi Jayanti -Gandhi's Birth day, was proclaimed as a peace and non-violence day in proud city of Houston by mayor Bill White at "1000 Lights for peace". A candle lighting ceremony of more than a thousand people celebrated at the steps of the Houston city hall. It was a celebration of Mahatma Gandhi and all the values he stood for. All in attendance left with renewed spirits, and perhaps a better understanding of his relevance in today's world. In recognition of the wisdom and effectiveness of Gandhi, the Mahatma Gandhi Library and more than 60 local organizations celebrate Mahatma Gandhi Week each year. Gandhi demonstrated to the world that nonviolent methods such as Satyagraha (holding to truth) can be used to bring about profound social change and lasting peace. The mission of the Mahatma Gandhi Library is to increase public awareness of Gandhi's philosophy and teachings, highlighting the universal values of Truth, Nonviolence, Service and Love. Courtesy: Dr. Sulekh Jain

**DELEGATION OF INTERNATIONAL JAIN CONFEDERATION MEETS JAIN COMMUNITY OF DELHI**

The Jain Community of Delhi Met the Delegation of the World Jain Confederation who came to India to have an "All World Jain Confederation Peace Meet" at Ashoka Hotel New Delhi. The following were present:- Mr. Dirk Ficca, Mr. Partap Bhogial(Trustees of W.J.C.), Smt Vidya Stokes (MPP & Power Minister HP Govt.), Smt Aruna Oswal (VP of W.J.C.), Sh Naren Bhiku Ram Jain (Secy. D.P.C.C.), Sh Pradeep Patodi, Sh M.P. Jain , Sh. Dr. A K Merchant (Exe. Trustee Bahai Temple), Sh Amitabh Jain (IAS), Sh Sanjay Jain (Hony. Secy. W J C), Ms Tempa Tsering



(Representative of Dalai Lama) & Pt Gautam Kaul (Tug-of-War , Federation of India) will be Present.Courtesy: Mr. Naren Bhiku Ram Jain, E-Mail: [naren.bhiku.ram@gmail.com](mailto:naren.bhiku.ram@gmail.com)

#### JAIN SADHVI DISAPPEARS AND STAGES HER OWN DEATH?

A 21-year-old Jain sadhvi in Maharashtra's Amravati staged her own death for love. Charred remains and bones were found inside a Jain ashram in Amravati, which seemed to point towards a suicide ritual. But it turned out to be an elaborate scheme staged so that Siddhi Si could elope with her boyfriend Rajnikanth, a lawyer. Since 2004, the sadhvi was in touch with someone in Amravati and she wanted to leave the ashram and marry him but feared she would not be allowed to do so and therefore to escape they planned the fake death. Police say it was Rajnikanth who hit upon the idea of staging a mysterious suicide ritual, so that no one would come looking for her. The girl has now been expelled from the Jain community but some community elders believe the incident underlines the need for introspection. After this we have to look at whether there is a need to put an age limit on the people who want to become sadhvis. People who are very young don't seem to have the maturity. Sadhvi Siddhi Si, earlier known as Riddhishri, was from a village in Rajasthan. She was sent to a Jain ashram in Amravati when she was just 14-years-old by her parents who could not provide for her.



#### NEW BOOKS ON JAINISM

**Acharyashri Vidyasagar's biography Acharyashri Vidyasagar Maharaj's biography**, titled 'Atmanveshi' has been written by his disciple and learned scholar Muni Kshamasagar Maharaj. This slim volume has now been translated into English and is called 'In Quest Of The Self'. It is published by Bhartiya Jnanpitha. It is a very interesting book, written with compassion and devotion, and tells the story of an extraordinary man. Definitely worth a read.

**Preksha Dhyana: Theory And Practice - by Acharya Mahaprajna, Preksa Dhyana - Theory And Practice [2.21]** Philosophical Basis of Perception of Psychic Centres - Origin of Impulsive Forces The prime mover or motivating principle of all urges, impulses and habits is the powerful combination of lesya with adhyavasaya. That is why, to change one's perverted habits, it is essential to sanctify this domain by thorough cleansing. Before understanding the process of cleansing, it is necessary to trace the source of pollution and its modus operandi. Once there is adequate knowledge about this, it will be easier to understand and operate the cleansing process.

**Preksa Dhyana - Theory And Practice [2.22]** Philosophical Basis of Perception of Psychic Centres - Mental State, Lesya and Aura- A living organism is neither a pure psyche (soul) nor pure matter. It is a compound of both - the conscious substance (soul) and matter (body). Conscious activity is the characteristic of soul. Colour, smell, taste and touch are characteristics of matter. Aura of a living organism is an amalgam of radiation of two energies — radiations of prana energy from conscious substance and those of electromagnetic energy from the material body. One's mental state constitutes the impelling force of radiation of prana-energy. Though mental states are conscious function and aura is material, there is an intimate relationship between the two. In fact, aura is a true image of one's mental states. From this, it is reasonable to conclude that mental states can be inferred from aura and vice versa.

**Preksa Dhyana - Theory And Practice [2.23]** Philosophical Basis of Contemplation and Autosuggestion - Concentration of thought, contemplation and autosuggestion is not excluded as a technique of meditation from the purview of Preksa Meditation. In fact, it is considered as an important means of realizing the Truth. Thoughts are, no doubt, unproductive when the mind keeps on wandering and does not concentrate on a single theme. But concentrated profound thinking can result in discovering and establishing important philosophical as well as scientific doctrines and principles.

**JAINISM AND THE NEW SPIRITUALITY**, By Dr. Kumarpal Desai - This 224- page book, illustrated with color photographs, is divided into five sections. First three sections provide an overview of the Jain Principles and Practices. This is an excellent source for anyone trying to understand this ancient faith. This simple review also serves as background information for those who may be active in resolving current global problems such as violence, poverty, war, globalization, terrorism, environmental degradation, and social justice would benefit from this review. Section Four reflects on Jain values in light of the 21st century scientific mindset with topics like - New Spirituality, Nonviolence, Global Peace, Vegetarianism, Science, Activist Movements, etc. Section Five Explores the History of Jainism and Jain Literature. The Chapter on Pre-Mahavir History rests on contemporary archeological research, which contradicts much of the misinformation and confirms some Jain assertions. Post-Mahavir History details the development that resulted in schism, sects and reform movements.

**RATNAKARANDA SRAVAKACARA (Sanskrit-Hindi)**, By Acharya Samantabhadra, Pandit Nathuram Premi Research Series Volume 3, Hindi translation by Dr. Jaykumar Jalaj, 2006 220 x 140 mm 48 pp, ISBN 81-88769-04-5.

**THE ART AND SCIENCE OF SELF-REALISATION, PURUSARTHASIDDHYUPAYA OF AMRTACANDRA (Sanskrit-English)**  
Edited with and Introduction by Jagdish Prasad Jain, 2007 225 x 145 mm 94 pp Hardcover Rs. 300.

#### JAIN AGAMS SERIES BY ACHARYA ATMA RAM JI MAHARAJ (in Prakrit-Sanskrit-Hindi)

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All these books are available at: HINDI GRANTH KARYALAY, E-Mail: [manishymodi@gmail.com](mailto:manishymodi@gmail.com)

#### VIEWES FROM READERS

From Shan Parisa - Only **Minority status will save Jain religion**-Especially in Gujarat and Rajasthan Jains being minority and small divisions among us are being exploited by outsiders it may be political in nature or right wing religious groups. The jain community leaders as well as religious one are ignorant of reality and wrapped himself in a phony prestige issue. **MINORITY DOES NOT MEAN BACKWARD**. Minority means by law saving your religious freedom and protection of your heritage. Minority means more opportunities for your community and this is what others don't want you to have. Here is fine example why many Gujarat and Rajasthan Jain Groups are moving to Bangalore Karnataka state opening colleges and schools and financially benefiting. With Minority status your kids can get Bank loan for education And with that loan you can go for higher study in foreign countries. You are missing all these benefits.

Enormous benefits of Minority status for a Cash Rich Jain community :-

1. Start your own Medical/Engineering colleges without Reservations.
2. The colleges can have reserved seats for community.

3. The Jain trust though cash rich if given minority status can be independent of Govt control to rise at optimum levels.

Definitely being Minority a legal clout is what we need this vast crowded world So all Jains in India especially in Gujarat and Rajasthan should wake up to this reality and save our Dharma.

#### NEW ARTICLES

**SANTHARA** : A Spiritual Practice of Penance Par Excellence - Acharaya Mahaprajna - Neither a tradition (or ritual), nor

equivalent to Satipratha, nor suicide The greatly renowned Jain saint, Acharya Mahaprajna, in his response to a T.V. Channel's query on his views about the notice issued by Rajsthan High Court against 'Santhara' (fast unto death practised by Jains) said here today that Santhara is indeed a spiritual practice of penance. He further said, "One who leads a noble life undertakes various practices of penances while living. When such spiritual personage would find, at the fag end of his life, that the body had already reached a tattered state, and would not last long, he would like to pass his last moments of life in complete tranquillity and composure through the practice of penance, in which he renounces food. But the essential condition in Santhara is that he should neither cling to life nor crave for early death. He should be completely equanimous. In such state of extreme mental peace, he reflects that if death occurs, let it come. ....[To read further please click here.....](#)


Ichchamaran/Samadhimaran/Santhara-Dr. Hemang D. Koppikar, E-Mail : [hdkoppikar@vsnl.net](mailto:hdkoppikar@vsnl.net)- We speak from personal and medical experience. Though deaths are broadly classified as "Natural or Unnatural" and the latter is subdivided into "Homicide, Suicide or Accident"; Ichchamaran / Santhara does not exactly fit into any of these categories. Let us take a simple example from everyday life - the gender of human beings. There are broadly only 3 genders - Male, Female and Neuter/Hermaphrodite. However, at the genetic level, there are as many as 16 subtypes with true male and true female at 2 ends but 15 more in-between. Similarly, Ichchamaran / Santhara needs to be classified as a separate entity. It is a non-violent self-desired termination of life, when there is no longer a will to live. While it is true that there is a responsibility towards the gift of life, to live well and keep our body and mind well nourished, as it is the home to our immortal soul, one has to ponder about the situation in which the person realises that the body is no longer able to sustain the soul any longer in its spiritual journey. This is the time when there is no further need for food/nourishment, and then we must give up food voluntarily, with a sense of inner calm and peace. This is only possible for those who get this 'divine' inspiration/call. ....[To read further please click here.....](#)

**THE PLACE OF JAINISM IN INDIAN THOUGHT - By Dr. Felix Valyi**

The study of Jainism has been neglected for a long time. It was considered to be an insignificant offshoot of Hinduism. In France only Guerinot dedicated his life to the analysis of the original sources of Jaina Philosophy. The Indologists of France were absorbed by the study of orthodox Brahmanism with a few exceptions, such as the great Burnouf, whose "Introduction to the History of Buddhism" is a classic, and Emile Senart, who made a deep study of Ashoka's Inscriptions, while Sylvain Levi specialized in the Sanskrit sources of Buddhist Philosophy. Guerinot's monograph on Jainism is an outstanding work, a monument of erudition and philosophical appreciation. ....[To read further please click here.....](#)

Santhärä : Confusion Galore! Pravin K. Shah E-Mail: [education@jaina.org](mailto:education@jaina.org) - Santhärä is neither a cause nor an instrument of death. It is a name given to the last part of an elaborate Jain spiritual practice called Sallekhanä or Samlekhanä (ultimate vow). The meaning of the term Sallekhanä is: to properly emaciate passions and body. Santhärä literally means a bed of hay; the practice derives the name because when the time of death approaches the aspirant sits or lies down on a bed of hay renouncing all possessions, attachment and intake. The reflection of this practice can be seen in every household when a person is brought down from his high level bed to a mattress on the ground during presumed last moments of his life. The oldest, authentic and first mention of Sallekhana is found in Acharanga Sutra, accepted by Shwetambar Jains as the first sermon of Bhagavan Mahavir. According to philologists the first Shrutskandh of Acharanga Sutra depicts the earliest phase of Jainism of about 3rd century BC. It is the oldest available text in Jain tradition. All other discussions about Sallekhana belong to later periods. ....[To read further please click here.....](#)

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Editor  
- Ahimsa Foundation -  
Delhi Office : 21, Skipper House , 9, Pusa Road , New Delhi - 5 , India  
Phones : +91-11-2875-4012 & 13, 98-100-46108 , E-Mail [ahimsa@jainsamaj.org](mailto:ahimsa@jainsamaj.org)  
Jodhpur Office : 44, Sardar Club Scheme, Air Force Area, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India  
Phone : +91-291-267-0382, E-Mail : [ahimsatimes@jainsamaj.org](mailto:ahimsatimes@jainsamaj.org)

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