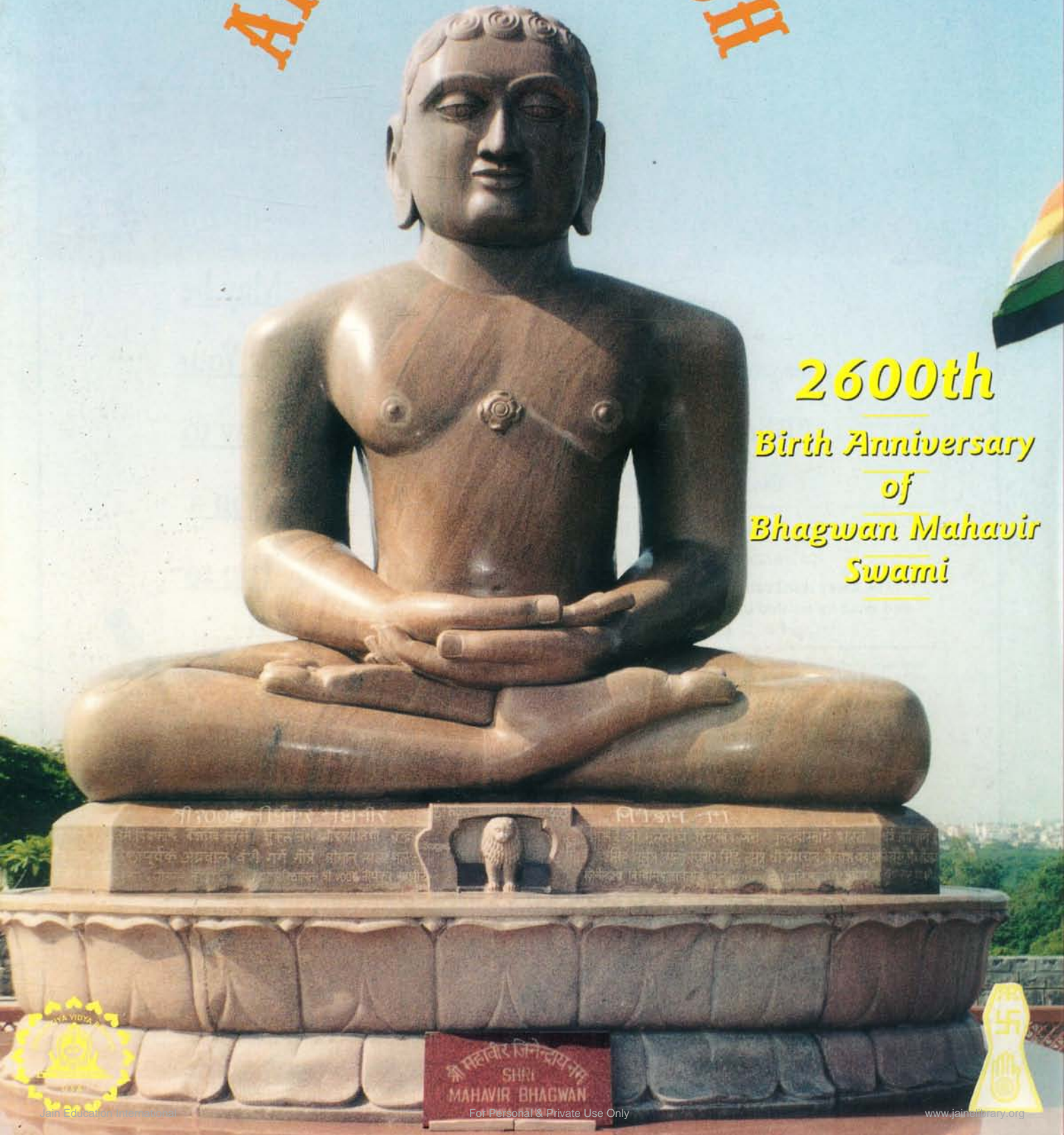


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## 2600th

*Birth Anniversary  
of  
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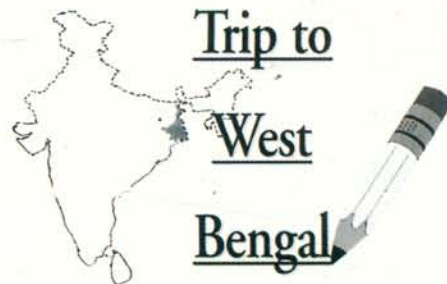
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Send all Essays to:

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Phone: (212) 989-8383

Bhavan must receive essays by October 5, 2001.

All participants must submit the following with a completed essay:

- Resume and photo
- Social Security number and proof of date of birth
- A signed note stating that the essay is original and has been written by him/her for the competition. The letter must also state that the participant has no objection to the essay being published by the Bhavan, USA.

A panel of three judges will evaluate the essays. The winners will be announced October 30, 2001 by the news media. They will also be informed by telephone.

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# AHIMSA VARSH

(The Year  
of  
Non-Violence)

Editors:  
Naresh Jain  
Dr. P. Jayaraman

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*Anniversary of*  
*Bhagwan Mahavir Swami*  
*April 13 & 14, 2002*

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*Thanks the following organizations  
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the Celebration of the  
Year of Non-Violence*

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**WORLD JAIN CONFEDERATION, INDIA**

**INSTITUTE OF JAINOLOGY, U.K.**



# A note from the Chairman of the Celebration Committee

Jai Jinendra



Dr. Navin Mehta

**M**other India is compassion incarnate. She loves the whole universe and wishes good for all. She knows only to embrace all cultures - all beings. She looks at the world as one family - *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. Her motto is: "*Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu*" - Let all be happy.

"*Ma Vidvishavahai*" - We should not hate each other. In other words, we should love every being.

All religions of India - Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, as well as the religions born in other parts of the world and represented and practiced in India, have uniformly declared that to love one another is the only way for peace within and without. Of all these religions, Jainism and its founders - Tirthankaras - have declared *Ahimsa* (non-violence) as the supreme *dharma*, (virtue), of life; Non-violence in thought, speech and action - This is the keynote of the preaching of all Tirthankaras. Of the five principles of Jainism - non-violence, truth, non-coveting, purity of mind and body and non-possessiveness expounded by Bhagwan Mahavir Swami, the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara, the first and foremost principle is Ahimsa.

This 2-day celebration is dedicated to this Supreme concept of Ahimsa as we commemorate the 2600th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavirji.

We are happy and proud that Honorable Member of Parliament, lawyer, constitutional expert, scholar, author and orator Dr. L. M. Singhvi is with us in the celebration. His presence and keynote speech will add grace and dignity to this event of international character; and highlight the message of Ahimsa in the world community.

Several monks, sadhus, sadhvis, scholars, and artists are here to share their wisdom and devotion with us. You have all come from various places to be part of this event.

We welcome all of you and seek your blessings for enabling us to organize such events from time to time for the benefit of mankind.

Vande Mataram

Dr. Navin Mehta



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◀IMAGEADS▶



**T**he celebration of The Year of Non-Violence is timely as well as essential for our world and is also a most appropriate tribute to Lord Mahavira since this entire year we are celebrating his 2600th birth date. Practicing non-violence was the fundamental teaching of Lord Mahavira and it is certain that most of the religions also propose this for the betterment of human life and environment.

Lord Mahavira applied non-violence in its truest sense to every aspect of life and not only to killing of lives. It was of relevance at his time and has always been so; more so now. Scientific research is always intended to make life easier and has improved human life in many ways. However, its inadvertent use has resulted sometimes in destruction of peace. This has also hurt nature and environment. All these phenomena should be viewed as violence and must be taken into consideration when we talk about non-violence. Ahimsa should be practiced in its real sense, which means not to hurt “any being by body, mind, and speech”.

Tirthankar Mahavir Swami preached that Non-Violence and friendship are complementary to each other.

I commend one and all at your fine organization to accept the challenge to address this major cause, which will bring more happiness to this earth. I wish all of you the best. I am confident that the true supporters of Ahimsa from all around the world are with you. I am wishing for the best success of the conference and its mission.

Acharya Chandanaji

***“May the Sacred Stream of amity***

***flow forever in my heart;***

***May the Universe Prosper;***

***Such is my cherished desire.***

***May the Spirit of goodwill enter all our hearts;***

***May we all sing together the immortal  
song of humanhood!”***

**– GURUDEV CHITRABHANUJI**

*Wishing the celebration of  
The Year of Non-Violence  
commemorating the  
2600th anniversary of  
Bhagwan Mahavir Swami,  
a grand success.*

**Trupti & Kenny Desai,  
Komal, Vikas and Bhavik**



# **Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra**

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## *Message*

**I**t is a great pride and privilege that under the auspicious of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA and on the occasion of 2600th Birth Anniversary of Lord Mahavira a grand function is arranged to mark the celebration of the year of Non-violence in the presence of scores of dignitaries from India, USA and other countries.

I extend my heart-felt blessings for a sweeping success of the function and also congratulate you all for this noble cause conducive to world peace and human-welfare.

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# R. Venkataraman

FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA

5, Safdarjung Road, New Delhi - 110 011

## Message

**A**t the dawn of history there were four great civilizations in the world; the Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian and Chinese. They transformed the primordial man from a beast to a human being through the instrument of religion. Religion offered to primitive man incentives like going after death to heaven, the land of eternal bliss by following Dharma or the righteous path. It also propounded taboos and sins with penal consequences after death such as transient or permanent suffering in hell. It forbade incest, killing, robbing, uttering falsehood and defiance of the moral code.

No other country in the world, nurtured so many great religions as India has done. It is the home of Hinduism fully developed independently without any foreign influence. It was here that Bhagwan Mahavira founded the most humane religion, Jainism. The Buddha radiated from India Buddhism to several parts of the globe, the central Asia, Far East, Burma and Sri Lanka.

Bhagwan Mahavira said:

‘Man can become a superman by ascetic practices. The ultimate goal of all spiritual practices therefore is to become a Man God, *Paramatman*

Bhagwan Mahavira’s religion is more a code of conduct. According to Jainism there is no God or Creator and man’s liberation from suffering does not depend on such Superior Power. None the less the Jains believe in Heaven and Hell.

The essence of Jainism is Ahimsa, (Non-violence). In its positive connotation it is universal love. Bhagwan Mahavira said that it is one soul that reposes in the colored and the white, the oriental and the occidental, the virtuous and vicious, the male and the female. For him plants, worms, birds, beast and man, all have the same soul. He preached two millennia ago, the Brotherhood of Man, a concept which we have not realized despite all the material progress and advancement.

Gandhiji acknowledged that in fashioning “Satyagraha” as a weapon in freedom struggle he was greatly influenced by the Jain doctrine of non-retaliation.

Bhagwan Mahavira whose 2600th Birth Anniversary we are celebrating today has left an indelible imprint on the peoples for over two millennia and will continue to do so as long as mountains last and rivers flow. This is an occasion for the peoples of the universe to pledge themselves to eternal Non-Violence in thought, word and deed.

I am glad that the New York branch of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan whose principal objective is the promotion of peace and harmony among the peoples of the world, by synthesizing the diverse religious cultures and traditions, has taken up the celebration of Bhagwan Mahavira’s 2600th Birth Anniversary in a grand manner.

The erudite scholar statesman Dr. L. M. Singhvi’s participation will shed light and luster. The wide variety of subjects relating to Jainism proposed to be discussed at the meeting, promises to make it educative and enlightening.

I wish the function all success.



[R. Venkataraman]

***“The liberty and equanimity of our spirit will make ultimately the greatest contribution to both our personal peace and peace on earth.***

***‘Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah’  
– Non-Violence is the supreme virtue.”***

*We offer best compliments to  
Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan  
and  
other Jain organizations  
for organizing this international celebration of  
‘The Year of Non-Violence’  
committed to promoting non-violence,  
love, compassion and peace everywhere.*

**Dr. Kalpana and Subhash Dalal  
Anjali, Devan and Nidhi**



भारत के उप-राष्ट्रपति  
VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA

## Message



**I** am happy to know that the 2600th Birth Anniversary of Lord Mahavira shall be celebrated as the “Year of Non-violence” by the New York branch of the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan.

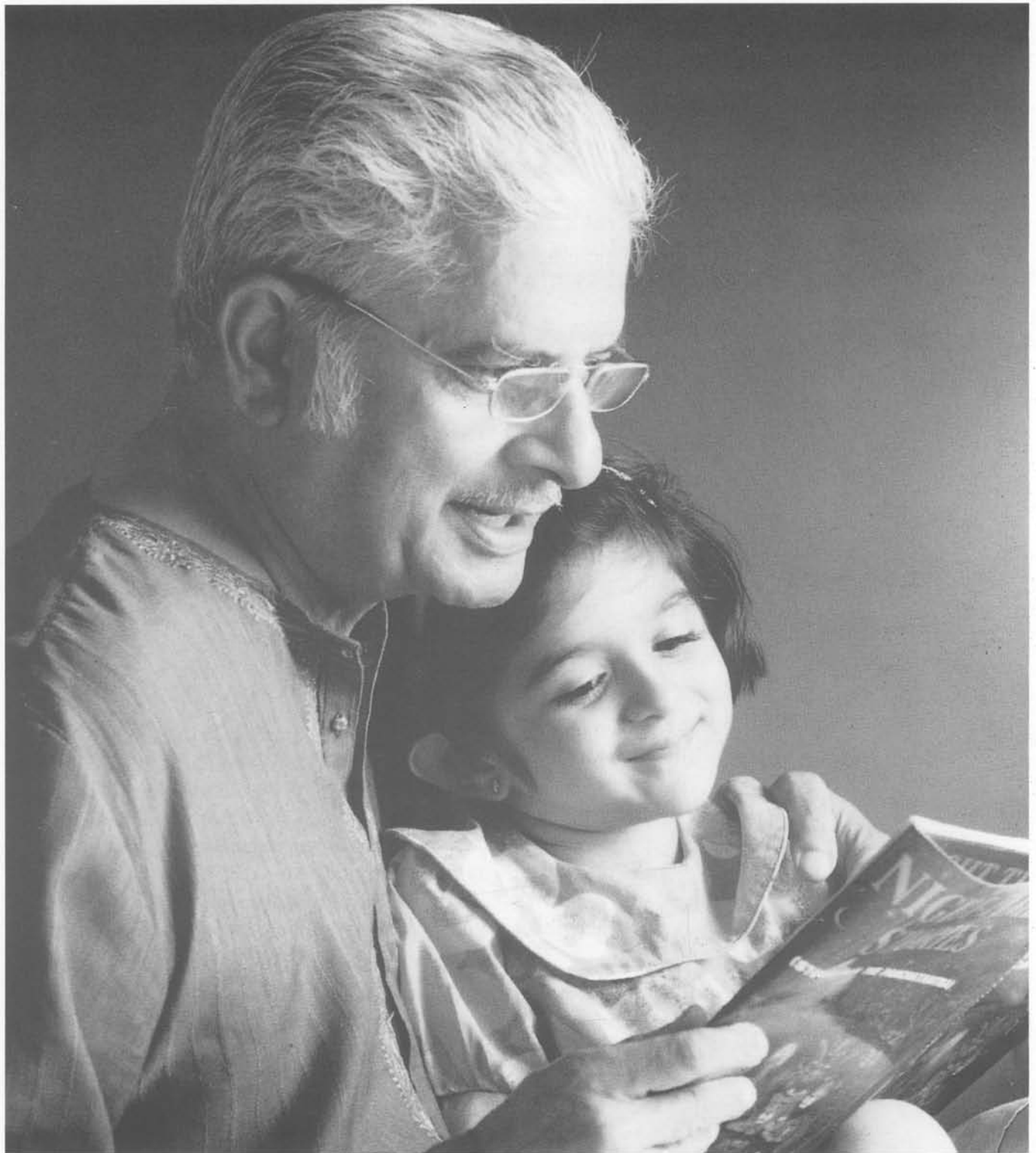
Bhagwan Mahavira was the first to raise non-violence from a mere approach or an attitude, to the level of an ethical and moral philosophy - the very essence of all existence. It is more than a coincidence that the greatest apostles of peace and non-violence of all times, belonged to India.

If our troubled world could recapture even a fraction of Bhagwan Mahavira’s timeless teachings, it can hope to escape from ignorance, violence and moral decay, which are sapping its VITALS.

My best wishes for the success of the celebrations.

New Delhi

[Krishan Kant]



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**L.K. ADVANI**  
**HOME MINISTER**

## Message



**I**t is gratifying to learn that Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Institute of Indian Culture, New York is celebrating the "Year of Non-Violence" in commemoration of the 2600th Anniversary of Lord Mahavira. On this auspicious occasion, a Souvenir is also being published to disseminate information about the life and teachings of Lord Mahavira.

Lord Mahavira preached his message of peace and compassion at a time when there was widespread violence and strife in society. He envisaged establishment of a social order based on harmony, non-violence and peaceful co-existence. This is all the more relevant today since it would enable mankind to channelise its creative potential for the welfare and well-being of all.

I am sure, the observance of the "Year of Non-Violence" would underscore the message of Ahimsa as a way of life to the world at large and propagate love and compassion as the guiding principle for all human endeavors.

I convey my greetings and good wishes on the occasion.

*L. K. Advani*

(L. K. Advani)

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नई दिल्ली - ११० ००१  
Minister of Human Resources  
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## Message



I am glad to note that the Institute of Indian Culture, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA proposes to celebrate Ahimsa Varsh to commemorate the 2600th Anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavira Swamiji.

The main objective of these celebrations is to widely propagate the message of Ahimsa that is so much relevant to the present times when the world community should understand the essence of it in right earnest as this is the real way of the Dharma of Life as was long back preached by Lord Mahavira. These celebrations would be attended to by several Sadhus, Sadhvis, Scholars & other elite groups representing all over the world.

Eminent persons are expected to address the august gathering on this occasion on wide spectrum of subjects such as: Philosophy of Jainism; Concept of Non-violence; Growth and Development of Ahimsa from Lord Mahavira to Mahatma Gandhi. These celebrations would display publications and pictorial glimpses of Jain Temples and Tirthankars as also the Literature on Jainism.

I wish to convey my sincere good wishes for a grand success to the celebration of Ahimsa Varsh. While congratulating the organizers, I do hope and firmly believe that these celebrations would help in propagating the Philosophy of Lord Mahavira, which has withstood test of times over thousands of years.

[Murli Manohar Joshi]



**With best wishes**

to

**BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, USA**

For commemorating the  
2600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
**Bhagwan Mahavir Swami**

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## Message

**A**ncient Vedic wisdom undoubtedly is the earliest attempt to channelise human effort to organized behaviour governed by ethical, moral and spiritual values. The religious pursuits in bygone days were through performance of Yagnas and sacrifices not excluding animal sacrifices. It is only during later centuries, during the development of the Upanishadic concepts that the practice of killing as a sacrifice became an abhorrent behaviour and was later given up.

However, it was Bhagwan Mahavira who pioneered the concept of comprehensive Ahimsa to the level where it encompassed all living beings from a diminutive insect to human beings and emphasized the fact that all beings are equal though different in form because behind every form was a soul. Bhagawan Mahavira's teachings take us to the sublime levels where form has no significance and brought in the concept of good and evil with consequent follow-up of rewards and punishment in Heaven or Hell.

During the period of Bhagawan Buddha similar concepts found echo in other parts of the world, while concepts of Jainism were largely confined to the Indian sub-continent. It was Mahatma Gandhi who raised ahimsa to global levels by adopting Ahimsa as the driving force to propel his quest for justice and political freedom and made the world feel incredulous by winning Freedom without shedding a drop of blood. He could succeed because he practiced Ahimsa in thought, word and deed and indeed it is this profound achievement of his that metamorphosised the man into a Mahatma, now rightly hailed as the Man of the Millennium.

The Bhavan's New York Centre deserves credit for having taken the initiative to organize the celebrations of the 2600th Birth Anniversary of Bhagwan Mahavir as the Year of Non-Violence and it is in fitness of things that an outstanding practicing Jain, Scholar, Member of Parliament and Vice-Chairman of Bhavan International, Dr. L. M. Singhvi is participating in the event which enhances the value and adds brilliance to the proceedings.

I send my prayerful good wishes and greetings.

S. Ramakrishnan  
Executive Secretary &  
Director General



352. Devgarhi, seated Jina, End of ninth century. During recent restoration work this impressive image was chosen to represent Mahavira and accordingly marked by carving his emblem, a lion, into the blanket of his throne (see page 112).

**CONGRATULATIONS TO  
BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAWAN  
&  
JAINA  
IN CELEBRATION OF  
THE YEAR OF NON-VIOLENCE  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
2600<sup>TH</sup> JANAM KALYANAK OF  
BHAGWAN MAHAVEER!**

तुभ्यं नमस्त्रिभुवनार्तिहराय नाथ !  
तुभ्यं नमः क्षितितलामलभूषणाय ।  
तुभ्यं नमस्त्रिजगतः परमेश्वराय  
तुभ्यं नमो जिन ! भवोदधि-शोषणाय !

*O Deliverer from all the miseries of the three realms ! I bow to you.  
O Virtuous adoration of this world ! I bow to you.  
O Lord paramount of the three realms ! I bow to you.  
O Terminator of the unending chain of waves of rebirths ! I bow to you.*

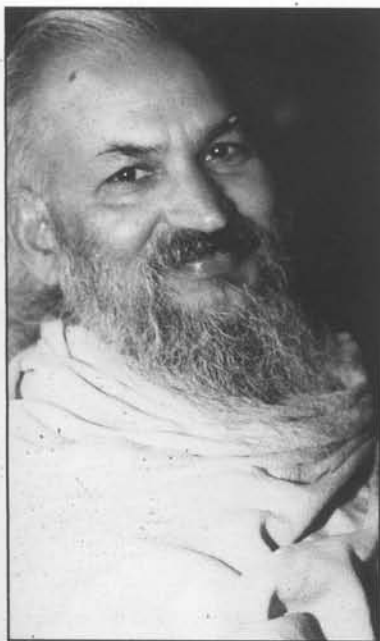
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His Holiness Acharya Sushil  
Kumarji Maharaj: \*

**T**hought is force. Thought has unlimited power. You are what you think. Anyone can achieve complete success by spiritual awareness. 2,500 years ago Lord Mahavir gave this perfect truth, "All mankind is one. There is no superiority or inferiority, no caste or creed, no Caucasian or Aryan." Weather conditions in various areas may have produced of pigmentation as far as our skin is concerned, but since our systems of birth and death are the same, our smiling and weeping are the same, our reactions to pain and pleasure are similar, how can we make distinctions by caste, color or religion? A cow's skin may be red, white or black but the milk is the same.

If all the nations of the world can accept the principle of nonviolence, who will attack? If no country is ready to attack, there will be no problem between China or Pakistan and India or between Iran and Iraq.

Mankind is like a big lake. If someone puts poison in any part of the lake, all the water will become poisonous and people will die. It is not possible to poison only a portion of the lake and expect the people on that portion to die and those on other portion to survive. Total survival and total destruction are related. Science has advanced to such a degree that all mankind on this planet must either die together or survive together. It is time to stop the sinful waste of money which is being poured into the production of instruments of destruction. This money should be used for the betterment of the world, mankind and all living beings. It is the perfect time for people to begin to understand the need for nonviolence. Mankind has suffered much from world wars. They understand the result of fighting and destruction. It is time to practice peace and awareness to achieve perfection and total enlighten-

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Ahimsa Varsh  
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Reshma Kamdar, Rushab Kamdar, Rick Kamdar



ment. We must stand. We must not sleep. We must be awake and stand, but not with weapons. We must fight for the betterment of society - not for destruction. Inside each of us there is a violent army disturbing us. Anger, jealousy, ego, greed, desire and madness of thoughts comprise this army. We must organize a stronger nonviolent army of peace, contentment, self-realization, complete health, bliss and total samadhi. We must work for peaceful coexistence and universal brotherhood. We will march for the betterment of mankind. Then we will accept a nonviolent system of society where there is no lord and no servant. We will help each other and be friendly to one another. The days have gone when the nonsensical principle of killing for survival was upheld. We must help one another. The whole world is existing through and by mutual help. We are all interdependent. Without trees no living being can survive. Trees are converting the minerals of nature into edible fruit. Mankind cannot survive without animals. Animals are eating what is excess and sending it back into nature. If you want to live, then you must be ready to live and let live. We all have to accept it and now is the time. The U.N. is thinking about human rights. We must think about animal rights and ecology rights. Without the animals and the trees we can not survive.

If we even think about destruction, the negative thoughts create a vibration that could destroy our whole system. Lord Mahavir taught, we must practice oneness by body, mind and word. Feel oneness with all living beings and expand yourself. When you experience the universal feeling that all is one and one is all -- that is enlightenment. That is universal man - - Superman. Jainism is calling such a universal man "Arihant." Arihant means the superman who has awakened all extrasensory perception. Christ-consciousness, Bodhisattva or Avatar - all mean the same thing. We are awaiting the birth of a superman who has all powers of mercy, survival, love and oneness, but the basic idea is nonviolence. That is the beginning. If you think about others, they will think about you. What you do not want for yourself, do not do to others. When you feel oneness with all, jealousy, anger and greed, the army of satan, cannot exist. The time has come when we must decide either for total survival or total destruction. If we accept violence in any form, we cannot expect the world to survive. If we want total survival, the only way is to feel oneness with all living beings; love, brotherhood and coexistence.

Om peace. Om shanti.

*\*Acharya Sushil Kumarji was one of the great luminaries of our time. He was the first Jain monk to have traveled overseas. He preached and practiced the principles of nonviolence and peace, and made efforts to bring about the unity among the people belonging to different religions. Outside India, he established the first Jain Tirth - Siddhachalam in Blairstown, New Jersey, USA.*

*He was one of the founder patrons of the Bhavan, USA.*

## The Celebration of The Year of Non-Violence

(Ahimsa Varsh)

### Spiritual heads and Speakers



**Amrender Muniji** was a close associate of the late Acharya Shree Sushil Kumarji of Siddhachalam. He is an accomplished scholar and has written his thesis on the History of Jains Travelling to East & North China. He regularly visits North America and gives lectures to Jains and non-Jains alike. He is the author of the book "Yoga-Siddhi". He has conducted numerous yoga camps, organized medical camps to help poor children and preached compassion among numerous prisoners.



**Devendra Keerti Bhattarakji** is the head of the Hombuja Jain Math in Shimoga, Karnataka, India. He has traveled worldwide and given discourses and performed temple sthapanas. He has written over one hundred religious books, and mastered several languages. He also operates several educational institutions in India.



**Sadhvi Shilapiji** is a young Sadhvi who took Diksha nine years ago. She completed her Master's Degree at London School of Economics and is working on Ph.D. degree at King's College, at the University of London in the UK. She blends her religious and scriptural studies with the western systems of such studies. She is multilingual and a popular ambassador of Jain message spreading it to the young English speaking Jains.



**Samani Charitra Pragyaaji** is a disciple of Acharya Sri Mahaprajna. She was initiated in the year 1990 and she became a member of Saman order which was started by Acharya Sri Tulsi. She has organized many workshops and camps on Preksha Meditation, Science of living, Peace, and Non-Violence in India and several other countries.

**Samani Sharda Pragyaji** was initiated in Saman order in 1994. She holds M.A. Degree from Jain Vishwa Bharati University. During last 7 years, she has widely traveled in India and abroad.



**Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji** is the founder of the Divine Knowledge Society in Mumbai and the Jain Meditation International Center in New York. He has been the spiritual leader and motivator for the formation of JAINA and many Jain centers in North America. He has lectured at many institutions including the United Nations, Yale, Harvard, and many other colleges. He has authored more than twenty-five books. He has also conducted several retreats, workshops, and seminars.



**Dr. L. M. Singhvi** was the High Commissioner of India to the United Kingdom. Dr. Singhvi is an eminent jurist, a leading constitutional expert, a distinguished parliamentarian, a well-known human rights exponent, an author, a poet, a linguist and a Jain. He has distinguished career in law, including at the Supreme Court of India. He has made significant contributions with respect to his religion, profession, and country. He has received numerous honors in India, as well as throughout the world. He prepared the Jain Declaration on Nature, which was presented to His Royal Highness Prince Philip and Pope John Paul II.



**Dr. Kumarpal Desai** is a scholar of Jainism. He has authored more than 20 books besides regularly writing for newspapers. He works as Reader of Gujarati language and literature in Gujarat University, and Editor of Jain Philosophy for Encyclopedia in Gujarati, and assists in editing Ahimsa magazine. He has lectured on Jain religion, and given talks over radio and TV in India and abroad. He holds offices in several Jain and charitable organizations in India.





**Swami Satchidananda** is a scholar, a yoga exponent and founder of Integral Yoga Institutes all over the world and Sri Satchidananda Ashram, Yogaville, VA. He founded LOTUS (Light of Truth Universal Shrine) in Virginia near Charlottesville. He has authored several books in religion and philosophy such as “The Living Gita” and “Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras”.



**Bawa Jain** is a leader in the interfaith movement. He worked with the Office of the United Nations Secretary General to organize The Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders in the UN in 2000. In conjunction with the World Movement for Nonviolence, he founded the Gandhi-King Award for Nonviolence that has been given to the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Nelson Mandela and Dr. Jane Goodall. He has been co-director of the Season for Nonviolence, Vice-Chair of the Council for the Parliament of World Religions, Vice-President of the Interfaith Center of New York, and co-founder of the Global Commission for the Preservation of Sacred Sites. He travels extensively around the world and serves on several International Advisory Boards.



**Prof. Sagarmal Jain** is M.A., Ph.D. in Philosophy, and Director of Pujya Sohanlal Smarak Parsvanath Shodhapeeth, Varanasi, India. He has held several academic positions; and over 25 Ph.D. degrees have been awarded under his supervision. He has authored more than 10 books and 150 research articles; and participated in numerous seminars in India and abroad. He has been associated with several Jain organizations in India.



**Dr. Narendra P. Jain** the former India’s Ambassador to United Nations, European Union, Nepal, Mexico and Belgium, and secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India, is a noted economist, ardent environmentalist, a well known poet, prolific writer, eloquent orator and above all a renowned Jain scholar. He was honored with a Doctorate Honoris Causa and Status of permanent Academician by the famous Mexican Academy of International Affairs in 1984 and the title of Distinguished Professor by the Free University, Belgium in 1988. Since 1993, he has been a Member of the World Spiritual assembly of the Parliament of World’s religions. Dr. Jain’s book: “Wave of bliss” relating to the impact of Jainism on the western world has been very popular. Other publications are “Economic” possibilities of River valley schemes in India. “India and the E.E.C.”, and “An anthology of Nepal poetry. Currently, Dr. Jain is Executive President of the World Jain Confederation.



# Introducing the Honorees ...

On the occasion of this Ahimsa Varsh Celebration, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is proud to honor some of the leading personalities who have dedicated themselves to the promotion of Ahimsa (non-violence) in the world community, and to serving the Indian community, through the preservation and furtherance of Indian culture, values and education. We take pleasure in bestowing on them Ahimsa

Ratna and Sewa Ratna Awards respectively. In addition, the Bhavan is pleased to recognize the services of a few individuals who have committed themselves to spreading the message of Lord Mahavir through their services to the community, educational and charitable activities. The list of honorees is given below.

## Ahimsa Ratna Awardees

### Dr. Mahendra K. Pandya

The 66 year old Dr. Pandya is a first generation American. He left India way back in 1966 after he completed his MD(medicine) from Gwalior University. He travelled to the USA for further studies; then stayed back to practice from 1972 to 1997.

Dr. Pandya's involvement with Jainism is not something new. He says, "Obviously, distance makes the heart grow fonder. But right from the beginning I have adhered to the precepts and principles of Jainism, whether in India or abroad.

Incidentally, Dr. Pandya was the founder member of the first JAINA unit in New York and he was also involved with establishing the first Jain temple in New York. What is JAINA?

Dr. Pandya patiently explains, "There is a sizeable population of Jains in the US, but scattered as they were, they hardly interacted in any significant way. So though there were several unitary bodies, there was no single unifying body.

JAINA filled this vacuum.

Established in 1981, JAINA is the umbrella organization that guides and combines all Jain centers in North America and Canada."

Dr. Pandya, the former President of JAINA has made it his life's mission to bring together all Jains irrespective of their language, region or tradition.



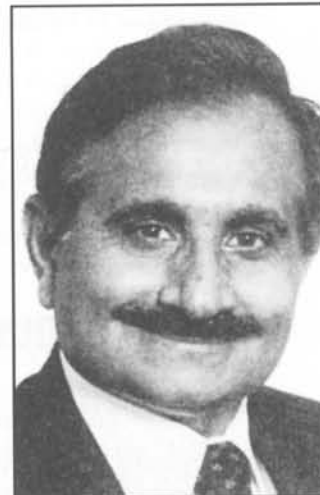
Dr. Mahendra K. Pandya

### Devendra Tokarshi Peer

Devendra Tokarshi Peer was born in Bombay in a Jain family to religious parents. "Peer" means a spiritual person. "Peer" was a title given to forefathers who were thought to possess "spiritual powers".

As President of Samarpan Jain Sangh he took initiative to host the 10<sup>th</sup> JAINA Convention in Philadelphia. With Gurudev Chitrabhanu, Father Valles and Poet Makarand

Dave as speakers and teachers, this convention took Jain philosophy to a higher level of visibility and understanding. The secular spirit of India and Ahimsa were brought home for bicultural Indians in America. This flammable world today needs a philosophy of life that dares people to adopt a way of Non-violence, and show that there is only one way to separate ourselves from the frantic demands of



Devendra Tokarshi Peer

the modern world: uniting our souls with spirituality and minds with love for fellow human beings.

Besides practicing as a Certified Public Accountant, Devendra also spends his time understanding this message. As a Director of Jain Meditation International Center founded by Gurudev Chitrabhanu in 1972, Devendra has followed the path of Non-violence and public service.

He has been instrumental in establishing, under his wife, Dr. Meeta Peer's leadership, a Modern Rehabilitation Medicine Center in Pune, India. He has been a member of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan since he was a student.

In 1999 Devendra wrote a play based on Kulpati Munshi's historic novel *Patan-Ni-Prabhuta* depicting the period of Gujarat's history when the philosophy of Non-violence began to be incorporated

into the daily lives of people; Non-violence, not as a refuge of the cowards, but as an ornament of the brave. The full-length play with 17 characters was staged at the Jain Convention in Philadelphia.

## Shri Kiranbhai Parekh

Shri Kantilal M. Parekh was born in Patan (Gujarat) on February 29, 1916. The name 'Kiranbhai' was given to him by his Guru Shri Bhadrakar Vijayaji Maharaj.

At very young age of 9 years, he was deeply interested in religion and philosophy. Later, under the guidance of his Guru, he studied numerous Jain scriptures. He

devoted himself to teaching and preaching the message and principles of Tirthankar Bhagwan Mahavir.

In Mumbai, at the Pydhonee Godiji Temple, he has been giving lectures for over 30 years. He has written many books and articles on Jainism.

Shri Kiranbhai has been visiting the United States for almost 15 years, spreading the message of Bhagwan Mahavir to *Shravaks* all over the country. He has also lectured in other parts of the world including U.K. and Japan. His only aim in life is to spread the message of *Ahimsa* and preach Bhagwan Mahavir's teachings to as many people as possible. Even at the age of 86, he tirelessly travels in the US giving religious discourses on the message of Bhagwan Mahavir.

## Sewa Ratna Awardees

### Mr. Seymour Sternberg

Mr. Seymore Sternberg is a name in the corporate community. He is the Chairman, President and CEO of New York Life Insurance Company. His achievements in the business world are numerous and noteworthy for their cultural sensitivity and commitment to the values of the people New York Life Insurance Company serves. It was Mr. Sternberg who identified the necessity of establishing a connection to the Asian-Indian community and nurtured this relationship through innovative endeavors. Under his stewardship, New York Life has produced television commercials and print ads in ethnic



media which reflect the values of family, hard work and perseverance, subscribed to by both the community and the company. Recognizing the importance of both ancestral and adopted cultures, Mr. Sternberg initiated the annual Bharat Yatra essay contest, allowing Indian-American young adults, many of whom are American born, to visit India and study its culture and heritage. It was also Mr. Sternberg's vision that made New York Life's entry into India a reality. With a joint venture agreement, with Max India Limited, New York Life is now providing insurance services to people in India. Perhaps most indicative of his commitment to the commu-

Mr. Seymore Sternberg

nity was Mr. Sternberg's response after the tragic earthquake in Gujarat in 2001. Saddened by the loss of life and property, Mr. Sternberg went on national and local Asian-Indian television channels and personally implored viewers to donate generously to the rebuilding effort.

## Dr. Atul Chokshi

Dr. Atul Chokshi is a graduate of B.J. Medical College, Ahmedabad. He is a Diplomat of the American

Boards of Internal Medicine, Cardiology, and Geriatrics and is currently Director of the Cardiac Cath Lab at Interfaith Medical Center, NY. Besides being a brilliant physician with three decades of experience acquired on three continents, Dr. Chokshi is an ardent student of the Bhagawad Gita. Inspired by the teachings of the Gita, he has worked relentlessly, along with Dr. Surendra Mahadevia for the past seven years to



Dr. Atul Chokshi

establish and expand The Krishna Heart Institute, a world class cardiac care center, in Ahmedabad. Dr. Chokshi cites the teachings of Lord Buddha ("of what good are holy scriptures and sacred words if they are not put into practice?"), and Shri Pandurang Athavale Shastri ("It is essential that in a society, divine thoughts and power should co-exist. Simple faith, not backed by material forces, is weak, and strength without a touch of divinity is monstrous.") as the guiding principles of his efforts.

Dr. Chokshi has unshakable faith in the people of India and believes that with the investment of physical, intellectual and emotional, as

well as financial resources, the Motherland can be greatly benefited. Krishna Heart Institute is the product of just such an investment. In the two years since it has opened, the hospital has performed more than 2000 open heart surgeries and 5000 other life-saving procedures.

Dr. Chokshi recognizes the full support this mission has received from well known and dedicated friends like Drs. Surendra and

Panna Mahadevia, Drs. Mehul and Maya Shah, H.R. and Rosemarie Shah, Dr. Rashik and Pushpa Patel, Drs. M. and Lalitha Krishnamurthy, Balaji and Dr. Sarada Gopalkrishna, Drs. Babu and Susmita Jasty, and from 150 investors from the US, Canada and India. The vision of Krishna Heart Institute and the example it sets are fully shared and endorsed by his wife, Dr. Vandana Chokshi and their daughter Krishna.

## Shri. Bharat Bala

Shri. Bharat Bala comes from a family of Indian Freedom Fighters. This family background has instilled in him a profound dedication to Mother India, which has been expressed in his documentaries /videos. A few examples are: "Vande Mataram", in which he has intertwined the voices and instrumental performances of musical geniuses from different ethnic and musical backgrounds; "Jana-Gana-Mana" sung by top-class singers of India in different ragas and "Nobel Peace Laureates" which presents interviews with Nobel Peace Prize winners on peace and Ahimsa. His forthcoming IMAX film "Taj Mahal" will be an epoch-making event in the Indian film industry. Bharat Bala's love and respect for Mother India, her culture and the people, are attributes to be emulated.

## Awards of Excellence

**Shri Pravin K. Shah**

Raleigh, NC

**Dr. Kirti Shah**

New Milford, NJ

**Shri Chandrakant B. Mehta**

Parsippany, NJ

**Mr. Prem Jain**

Fremont, CA

# Program

**SATURDAY APRIL 13, 2002**

8:00 a.m. Registration / Breakfast  
8:30 a.m. Procession and Pooja

### Opening Ceremony

10:00 a.m. Namokar Mahamantra / Mangalacharan – Sadhus and Sadhvis  
Prayer Song

### 10:15 a.m. INAUGURAL FUNCTION

Welcome Address : Dr. Navin Mehta  
Benediction : Gurudev Chitrabhanu ji  
Inauguration of Celebration and Exhibition by lighting the lamp  
Keynote Address by Dr. L.M. Singhvi, M.P.  
Remarks by Smt. Shashi Tripathi, Consul General of India  
Ahimsa and Yoga: Swami Satchidananda ji  
Address by Dignitaries  
Greetings by Shri Bawa Jain  
Address by Shri Shreyans Shah, Editor, Gujarat Samachar  
Ahimsa and Peace (Nobel Peace Laureates) – A Bharat Bala Production  
“What Ahimsa means to me” – Speech by Youth Essay Contest Winner

12:15 p.m. Release of books –  
1. ‘Jain Temples in India and Around the World by Dr. L.M. Singhvi  
2. Ahimsa: The Ultimate Winner by Dr. N.P. Jain  
3. Jainism: A Tribute to Ahimsa – Images and Reflections  
Compiled and edited by Dr. P. Jayaraman

### 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. LUNCH

2:00 p.m. Address by Congressman Frank Pallone  
2:15 p.m. Seminar on “Ahimsa and Spiritual Resurgence”  
Presided by Gurudev Chitrabhanu ji Moderator: Shri Bawa Jain  
Participants: Swami Devendra Keerti ji, Shri Amrender Muni ji, Dr. N.P. Jain,  
Sadhvi Shilapi ji, Samani Charitra Pragya ji, Dr. Sagarmal Jain,  
Prof. Richard Cohen and others.

3:30 p.m. Presentation of Awards – AHIMSARATNA, SEWARATNA and AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

4:00 p.m. Ahimsa – Presentations:  
Ahimsa – The Supreme Message of Lord Mahavir – Dr. Sagarmal Jain  
Journey of Ahimsa – Mahavir to Mahatma Gandhi – Dr. Kumarpal Desai  
Ahimsa and Ecology – Dr. N.P. Jain

Ahimsa – Declaration & Pledge led by Gurudev Chitrabhanu ji and Dr. N.P. Jain

5:00 p.m. Prayer Song  
5:05 p.m. “Who Wants To Be A Mahavir” Game Show YJA/Satyaj

### 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. DINNER

CULTURAL PROGRAM – An Evening of dance, drama and music  
A Tribute to September 11 – An Amazing Grace by Ms. Toral Shah  
Chandanbala – Dance-Drama choreographed by Mrs. Rachna Sarang  
“Maitri Bhav nu Pavitra Jarnu” Prayer Dance presented by Mrs. Alka Shah  
Prayer Song by Mangalam Panwala  
“Think About It” – Dance-Drama by Dina Shah – Jain Center of New Jersey  
8:02 p.m. “Hey Veer Tame Ahimsa No Relavyo Rang” – Priti Doshi



- 8:10 p.m. Dance items by Jain Center of America, New York  
 – Khamma, Khamma, Adeshwadancce by Sneha Shah and Nikita Shah  
 – Chalo Jaye Mahavir Darshane by Mina Gandhi and Kanchi Kapadia  
 – Mahavirswami Bahu Pyara Lage by Usha Vora and Shilpa Mithaiwala

8:30 p.m. **Bhakti Sangeet Sandhya – by Mrs. Shobha Joshi and troupe**

### SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2002

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast  
 8:30 a.m. Stuti and Bhakti  
 9:30 a.m. Namokar Mahamantra Recitation  
 The Essence of Namokar Mahamantra – Shri Amrender Muniji

- 9:50 a.m. Life And Teachings of Bhagwan Mahavir – Dr. N.P. Jain  
 Mahavir Vani from Agam Sutra  
 10:15 a.m. Ahimsa Ke Prayog (Experiences with Ahimsa) – Dr. Kumarpal Desai

10:30 a.m. **Bhakti Sangeet by Shri Anup Jalota**

#### Jainism: Major Tenets of Jain Religion

- 11:00 a.m. The Important of Anekantvad in Jainism – Swami Devendra Keert ji  
 11:15 a.m. Jainism: The Most Compassionate Religion – Dr. Richard Cohen  
 11:30 a.m. Role of Women in Jainism – Samani Charitra Pragya ji  
 11:45 a.m. Jain Legends

#### Cultural Program

- 12:00 noon Let us Go to Pathsala Play by Jain Center of Cherry Hill  
 12:15 p.m. Love for all Jivas – Chandkoshik Drama by Jain Samaj of New Jersey

12:30 to 2:00 p.m. **Lunch**

- 2:00 p.m. Kasturi Mrug (A Musk Deer) – A One Act Play by YJA/NJCC

#### Jainism's Relevance and Future Impact

- 2:30 p.m. Jainism's Relevance to the Modern World – Sadhvi Shilapi ji  
 2:50 p.m. Jainism's Role in Reshaping Future Human Thoughts – Mr. Yogendra Jain

3:15 p.m. **Delegates – National and International**

- |                      |                                 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Shri Pratap Bhogilal | World Jain Confederation, India |
| Shri Mahesh Shah     | Institute of Jainology, U.K.    |
| Dr. Bipin Parikh     | President, JAINA, USA           |
| Youth Speaker        | YJA/NJCC                        |

#### Jain Art – An Audio/Visual Presentation

- 4:00 p.m. Recitation / Song  
 4:05 p.m. A History of Jain Art in Sculpture and Painting – Ms. Yamini Mehta

#### Conclusion

- 4:30 p.m. Valedictory Remarks – Gurudev Chitrabhanu ji  
 4:45 p.m. Vote of Thanks – Dr. P. Jayaraman

- 5:00 p.m. Grand Finale led by Mrs. Rachna Sarang  
 5:10 p.m. Mangalick – Mrs. Champalaxmi Shah  
 5:15 p.m. Tea / Coffee  
 5:30 p.m. SAMAPTI



# Declaration on Ahimsa

## *Preamble*

The world of today stands on the threshold of a defining moment in history. Humanity is face to face with crisis of spirit. The new millennium has opened with the unnerving spectre of terrorism and unbridled violence threatening to destroy the cumulative gains of far – reaching spiritual, cultural and material progress.

**Whereas** human ingenuity, intellect and creativity have in the past millenia built up civilizations which have enlightened and ennobled human minds and hearts; **at the same time** the world has been plagued by hatred, mistrust, discrimination, exploitation and intolerance and ravaged by ongoing local, regional and global conflicts and wars;

**Whereas** religions and faiths have been fountain spring of spiritually inspired peaceful life ethics; **at the same time** inter-faith rivalries and ethnic conflicts have spread violent bitterness and hostility;

**Whereas** tremendous advances in science and technology have created a glamour world of comforts and luxuries; **at the same time** they have also been misused for producing nuclear bombs and other lethal weapons of mass destruction;

**Whereas** religions have propagated that the whole world is one family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam); **at the same time** possessive and exploitative instincts of humans have divided the society into haves and have-nots; harmed the larger living world and upset the ecological equilibrium;

**Whereas** in recent times great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. have courageously and effectively used Ahimsa for gaining respectively political independence, ending apartheid, and fighting racial discrimination; **at the same time** the world has drifted towards escalating violence and barbarous terrorism in all spheres of life causing much physical suffering, mental distress and engulfing humanity in a syndrome of fear and insecurity.

# Pledge

In the light of the above and in this year of Ahimsa coinciding with the 2600th birth anniversary of Jain prophet Mahavir, we the Signatories to the Declaration recall the teachings, of Mahavir of Non-Violence being the Supreme Religion and solemnly pledge:

**To commit** ourselves with courage and resolve to the culture of non-violence in our day to day lives and to propagate actively the global commitment to the culture of non-violence at individual as well as collective levels.

**To call** upon the Secretary General of the United Nations to take the initiative to include in the Preamble of the UN charter the concept of "irrevocable commitment to the culture of Non-Violence"

**To endeavor** with conviction and faith in Ahimsa's wider ranging perspective that not only we shall not hurt, injure, torture, exploit or kill other human beings, or even think of doing so, but create such a climate as will persuade others also not to do so.

**To practice and propagate** the culture of restraint through curbing wants, resisting greed, avoiding wasteful consumption, developing encouraging non-possessive instinct of giving more and taking less.

**To arouse** a spirit of synthesis and conciliation in place of conflict and confrontation and equity and fair play in place of exploitation towards all human beings irrespectively of differences of caste, colour, creed, sex, ethnicity or geographic location.

**To promote** vegetarianism in view of its ethical, ecological,

spiritual and nutritional aspects in the spirit of "live and let live".

**To take** collective initiatives through fellowship of world's religions and with the support of U.N. to forge synergic alliance between science, development, environment and spiritualism.

**To propagate** the message that humanity cannot survive or prosper without sustaining and constantly enriching mutually supportive coexistence between humans, other living beings and the natural environment.

**To participate** individually and collectively in all such grass-root activities as can be useful starting points for promoting compassion, fraternity, tolerance and above all a non-violent way of life.

**To urge** UN and other international organizations and public service NGOs as well as National Governments to step up support for grass-root projects in health, education, disaster relief and such other sectors of basic needs particularly for the distressed, deprived and the handicapped people.

**To provide momentum** through inter-faith cooperation to education at all levels in schools, colleges and adult-circles in the non-violent culture, techniques and strategies for promoting peace and harmony – oriented life ethics.

We the Signatories appeal to peace loving people from all over the world to join us in our mission to ensure that Ahimsa is the ultimate winner bringing peace and harmony to the entire universe.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On the occasion of the celebration of 'The Year of Non-violence' Commemorating the 2600th anniversary of Lord Mahavir held on April 13 and 14, 2002 at Royal Albert's Palace, Fords, New Jersey.



**Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, USA**  
(INSTITUTE OF INDIAN CULTURE)

# Congratulations To **Shravak Shiromani Dhirajbhai Shah**



*Dr. Dhiraj Shah  
receiving Jain  
Ratna Award  
from the Prime  
Minister Shri Atal  
Bihari Vajpayee.*

Dr. Dhiraj H. Shah, Chairman of the JAINA Charitable Trust and the immediate past President of JAINA was the only Jain from North America to receive the honor of Jain Ratna Award.

The occasion was 2600th Birth Anniversary Celebration of Lord Mahavir on April 8, 2001 in Bombay. This historic achievement has brought Honor to JAINA and the Jains of North America.

**His exemplary life Dedicated to public service with  
Integrity, Dignity and Charity has inspired so many  
to follow in his footsteps.**

**SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF DHIRAJBHAI**



# Congressional Record



United States  
of America

## COMMEMORATING THE 2600TH BIRTHDAY OF LORD MAHAVIR HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR. OF NEW JERSEY SPOKE IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*on Wednesday, April 25, 2001*

Mr. Speaker, I come to the House floor today to praise the Prime Minister of India. Mr. Vajpayee, in declaring this year as the year of nonviolence. April 6 commemorates the 2600th birthday of the greatest prophet of Jainism, Lord Mahavir.

Jainism is a beautiful religion originating in India over two millennia ago, built on the principles of nonviolence, working on the self, and realization of multiplicity of truth through our varying perspectives of life. Lord Mahavir worked tirelessly all his life until he reached Nirvana, and then embarked barefoot to spread his message of truth across the great nation of India.

Lord Mahavir practiced and preached environmental protection to safeguard trees, plants and animals for the living. The observation of the nonviolent practices of the Jains was a major influence on the philosophy of the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi. The same principles of nonviolence and respect for life were practiced more recently by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in the United States, as he led the struggle for civil rights for all Americans.

Mahavir's principles are extremely important today as well. Mahavir or the Great Soul taught us liberation of soul by right knowledge, right faith and right conduct. We must all bring this into our lives to make this world a better place for our children and grandchildren.

April 6th marks the beginning of pioneering celebrations throughout the world for non-violence, and thus I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the year 2001 as the year of non-violence worldwide.

*Note: It is a reproduction from the Congressional record of April 25, 2001*

## Meet the Artist

**Shobha Joshi**, a well-known Indian classical and light music vocalist had her training in classical music under Prabha Atre, Manik Verma and Pt. Yeshwant Joshi and in light music under Mehdi Hasan, Yeshwant Deo and Mahesh Chandra. She has performed extensively in India as well as in Canada, Russia, UK, USA, Netherlands, Europe, South Africa, Hong Kong and Singapore.

A recipient of 'Surmani' award from Sursingar, Mumbai, Shobha Joshi has been a performing artist over All India Radio and Doordarshan. She has recorded songs for more than 250 films. She has to her credit 55 audio cassettes / albums in different categories of music - classical, ghazals, bhajans and folk songs.

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# Prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives

Tuesday, May 22, 2001

Delivered by: Gurudev Chitrabhanuji

Let us all join our hands, heads and hearts together  
and bow to all perfect and liberated souls,  
and to all spiritual teachers.

---

Let us pray that all elected representatives  
of the people of this Nation be guided  
in their thoughts, words and actions  
to achieve the greatest good for all.

---

Let them have a high sense of responsibility  
and be free from temptations of selfish interests.  
Let them be filled with knowledge and wisdom  
so that resolutions adopted and laws enacted  
may meet the standards for the good of our people.

---

May the blessings be on our country, our government,  
our elected leaders in this House of Congress, and  
on all living beings of the world.

---

May the entire universe attain bliss.

---

May all beings be interested  
in one another's well being.

---

May all faults be eliminated.

---

May people be happy everywhere.

---

Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

---

*Note: This event was sponsored by Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr.*

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The purpose of souls is to help each other  
- TTATTVARTHSUTRA

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## A Portrait Of

# Jainism

– Dr. N. P. Jain

Former Ambassador of India to the EU, UN, Mexico, Nepal & Belgium

**J**ain religion is one of the oldest religions of India and indeed of the world, dating back in its origin to pre-vedic times. Twenty-four *Tirthankaras* (leader-prophets) beginning with Lord Rishabhanath and ending with Lord Mahavir (599-527 BC) have guided its evolution and elaboration by first achieving and then preaching,

All the *Thirthankaras* were, at one time, historical figures enjoying immense political power and high social status. And yet, at the pinnacle of material glory, when the light of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and *aparigraha* (non-attachment) dawned upon them, they renounced all material possessions of life, set out on the path of spiritual enlightenment and eventually achieved emancipation by conquering the suffering inherent in the instinct of attachment to material illusions.

Jain religion is unique in as much as in its existence of over 5,000 years, it has never compromised on the



– Dr. N. P. Jain

(*Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah*) and has insisted upon its observance in thought, expression and action at individual as well as collective levels.

*Reverence for all forms of life* is deeply ingrained in the Jain ethos. Both in its philosophical essence as well as rituals, Jain religion invokes an intense and constant awareness of communion and interdependence not only with all living beings but indeed with all elements of nature. The holy text *Tatwartha Sutra* sums it up in the phrase "*Parasparopgraho Jeevanam*" (all life is mutually supportive).

Jain religion presents a truly enlightened perspective

concept of nonviolence either in principle or practice. It upholds nonviolence as the supreme religion

of *equality of souls*, irrespective of differing physical forms of living creatures ranging from human beings to animals and microscopic living organisms. Humans alone among livings, are endowed with all the six senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and thinking; thus humans are enjoined upon to give the lead for achieving oneness and harmony with all life by being compassionate, loving, tolerant, forgiving, rational and full of equanimity.

Jain philosophy envisages *harmonious coexistence between humans and nature* in creating an environment that is at once peaceful and non-polluted as well as congenial and inspiring to spiritual upliftment.

Jain religion has a clearly articulated scientific base which elucidates the interrelated properties and qualities of animate and inanimate substances; the inter-relationship is described in terms of evolution and the growth of atoms in time and space as an integral part of the oneness of all life.

*“Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah”*

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Religious impulse is equated with the search for "Truth" (*Satya*) that: "by soul alone I am governed" (*appanam anusasayi*) and "Let Karma not bind you.". The path of enlightenment is sought by finding the kingdom of God within one's inner self through right belief (*Samyak Darshan*), right knowledge (*Samyak Gyan*), and right conduct (*Samyak Charitra*)

Jain religion focuses primary attention on non-attachment (*Aparigraha*) towards material things of life through self restraint, fasting, abstinence from over-indulgence, voluntary curtailment of one's needs and elimination of the aggressive urge. The rituals and practices prescribed for monks (*Mahavratas*) are more rigorous than those (*Anuvratas*) prescribed for ordinary followers. *Aparigraha* and *Ahimsa* taken together imply supreme respect for ecology and the conservation of the environment through avoidance of injudicious exploitation of nature or its wanton destruction.

*Vegetarianism* is a way of life for a Jain, taking its origin from the concept of kindness toward living creatures (*Jiva Daya*). The practice of vegetarianism is regarded as a potent instrument for the

practice of nonviolence and peaceful, cooperative coexistence. Jains are strict vegetarians and now lacto-vegetarians are also steadily growing.

*Anekant* is another basic principle of Jainism which offers a wider, multiple and nondogmatic perception of human relationships. Just as a father also has the role of a husband, a brother, a boss or a cousin to different persons, life has multiple rays radiating from a single element. Relativity in thinking promotes a broader, more universal, more tolerant and more appreciative perspective on life.

**J**ainism has not only shown a spiritual way of life to its followers, but has inspired a distinct stream of culture which has enriched philosophy, literature, art, architecture and sculpture, democratic living and spiritual advancement in India. Jain literature, a rich treasure, is found in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi, Gujarati, Kannada and Tamil languages in varied forms of poetry, prose, drama and story. Temples at Abu, Ranakpur, Halebid, Gomak, Shatrunjaya, Sammetshikhar, Deogarh and Sravanabelgola are marvelous examples of art and architecture, ethical-

ly depicting serenity in a detached and dignified form.

For many centuries Jainism remained confined to India. However, its global spread acquired momentum in the 20th century with Jains settling down in business or professions in Africa, USA, Canada, England, Belgium, Singapore, Hong Kong and elsewhere. Increasing globalization of Jain religion has heightened the Universal awareness about and respect for its deeply compassionate and ecology-friendly philosophy.

The followers of Jainism number about fifteen million. Jain religion is not dogmatic or caste ridden. It is an open philosophy, whose benefits can be taken up by anyone willing to improve one's quality of life and render human conduct rational in situations both of stress and strain as well as harmony and tranquility. Principles of Jain religion have a universal message for humanity as a whole and an abiding relevance in a rapidly changing world confronted with the growing spectre of terrorism and unbridled violence.

*We offer our best compliments  
to the Bhavan, USA  
and best wishes  
for the grand success of  
the celebration of the Year of - Non-Violence (Ahimsa Varsh)  
organized to commemorate the 2600th birth anniversary of  
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# Ahimsa: The Heart Of Jainism

– Dr. Kumarpal Desai

**A**himsa (non-violence), has been the sheet-anchor of Jainism. Ahimsa is one of the basic virtues. Nowhere else in the other religious traditions has this basic virtue been so scientifically, scrupulously and thoroughly integrated with the main doctrine. Jainism is the only tradition, which has consistently allowed this tenet soak into the very essentials of its teachings and practices. This singular uncompromising emphasis on Ahimsa is the special and exclusive feature of Jainism. In Jainism, Ahimsa is not mere human sympathy; it is empathy, the urge to identify oneself completely with other persons, other living beings, with the whole universe,

Bhagwan Mahavir said, *"If you kill someone, it is yourself you kill. If you overpower someone, it is yourself you overpower. If you torment*

*some one, it is yourself you torment. If you harm, someone, it is yourself you harm,*" A wise man knows this and so he does not kill, nor does he overpower or torment anyone.

The heart of Jainism is non-violence. Positively stated, Jainism is a religion of compassion, universal love and friendliness. It aims at the welfare of all living beings, and not of man alone. It maintains that living beings are infinite, all so called empty spaces in the universe are filled with minute living beings. According to it, there are countless single-sense organisms that take the subtlest possible units of material elements -earth, water, fire and air - as their bodies, Fresh earth is alive but when it is baked it becomes dead. Fresh water from a well, etc. is alive but when it is boiled or influenced by mixing some other substance it

becomes dead. Vegetables, trees, plants, fruits, etc. do have life but when they are dried, cut or cooked they die. To avoid injury to them as far as possible, man is advised to use them discreetly. He should resist from polluting water, air, etc. and thereby perpetrating violence to them. Worms, insects, animals, etc. help in keeping ecological balance thus they help man. And domestic animals have for ages been a constant and faithful aid to man in civilizing himself. From the ultimate standpoint of their original pure pristine state, all living beings are uniform in their nature. Jainism teaches to look upon them as upon one's own self. Inflicting injury to them is inflicting injury to one's own self.

The Jain dictum *paras-paropagraho jivanam* that is 'living beings render service to one another' offers an endearing alternative to the

modern Darwinian formula of 'survival of the fittest.' The life of a living being is a life of mutual cooperation and assistance. Industry, labor, service and sacrifice of innumerable living beings are there behind the sustenance and growth of an individual. Thus every individual is indebted to the universal society of all beings. Even virtues and meritorious qualities can never be cultivated and fostered in isolation.

This concept of Ahimsa (non-violence), has evolved from logical thinking and from experience. It has an almost empirical basis, It has emerged from the doctrine of the equality of all souls. Everyone wants to live, nobody likes to die. Violence enters first in thought, it then manifests itself in speech and then in deeds. That is why they say that war is born in the minds of men. The quest for ahimsa is centered in Anekantavada, the philosophy that accommodates a multiplicity of points-of-view and of perspectives.

In Jain philosophy Ahimsa is said to be the supreme religion and himsa is considered to be source of all evil and of all miseries. Ahimsa is not limited to not harming the human beings, it extends to all living beings. This philosophy believes in the unity of life and regards all living

beings as equal. He who can be cruel to animals can be cruel to human beings too. Further, cruelty is not only an aspect of external behavior, but it is also an inner evil tendency. He who is cruel at heart will behave cruelly towards animals as well as human beings. He who is compassionate at heart, will behave compassionately towards all. Moreover, the Jain religion believes in the cycle of birth and rebirth. The soul is in one Yoni (existence) today; it may be in another Yoni tomorrow. It may be a fly today and a human tomorrow, This being so, man has no right to harm other living creations. One should behave sympathetically towards all, friends as well as foes. In fact there should be no enemy. Such is the importance of Ahimsa in Jain philosophy.

**I**t is one of the tenets of Jainism that all living beings desire life and not death, No one has the right to take away the life of any other being; to kill a living being is the greatest of sins, Life is dear to everyone, and we must have respect for life, Not only: "Love and Let Live" but also "Live and Help Others Live" should be our principle. Just as the head of a family looks after the welfare of the members of the family, a human being, who enjoys the highest place in

the evolution of life, should look after the welfare of other lower orders of creations.

The universe is full of living creations, big and small, and, therefore, it is impossible to exist without killing or injuring some of the smallest of the living beings. Even in the process of breathing, or drinking or eating, we almost unconsciously kill many sentient beings? Therefore, according to Jainism the minimum of killing should be our ideal. Moreover, it is more serious where killing is done intentionally or through indifference. Therefore, great care should be taken in all our daily activities to see that the minimum of violence is committed by our deeds, speech and mind.

It was after a gap of 2500 years that Mahatma Gandhi felt inspired by the same principles of non-violence and compassion that Mahavir propounded. In August 1946 Mahatma stood, unarmed before a violent mob and his compassion melted their hearts. Mountbatten said at that time, "What a battalion could not have achieved, has been achieved by this frail man and has saved India from a conflagration." Non-violence links Mahavir with Mahatma, "as if there was an invisible traffic between Mahavir and Gandhi."

# Tenets of Bhagwan Mahavir

## — Ahimsa and Anekantavada

- N. Sugachand Jain

Bhagwan Mahaveer Foundation, Chennai, India

There is an interesting and important aspect of Jainism; this relates to the definition of *Ahimsa* as something more than non-killing of a living being, human, animal or otherwise. *Ahimsa* is held to be comprehensive in the sense that one should never hurt others even by thought, word or deed e.g. shouting at others (rather than requesting or advising or suggesting) itself constitutes a major violation of the principle of *Ahimsa* even though such shouting may not cause physical harm to anybody. So does making a servant work beyond his ability or in excess of what has been agreed to as a reasonable return for the wages paid to him. Even forcing members of one's own family adopt a particular course of action against their desire would thus constitute *himsa*. Disturbing others through noise (which is very common in these days) would also violate the requirements of *Ahimsa*; as does taking more than one's share of anything from a common pool. What has been said above could establish the all embracing unity of *Ahimsa* as the cornerstone of the Jaina Doctrine.

One should not however get away with the feeling that *Ahimsa* involves a rigid adherence to the concept of non-violence. As the world has to func-

tion, there are certain requirements, which would facilitate the average person's day to day life in the world as it exists today. As we are aware, ideal conditions never exist for the practice of *Ahimsa* to be followed to the letter. For instance, civil disturbances and riots have to be quelled, if an average householder has to lead his normal life. Similarly, the country may have to defend itself against foreign invasion or may have to wage war against another country in pursuit of a righteous cause. Obviously such steps would require the use of force by the agency which governs the country, be it a hereditary king or a democratically elected Government. This agency cannot and should not absolve itself of its responsibility to manage the country's affairs by using violence where absolutely necessary on the ground that they are strict adherents to the concept of non-violence. The Jaina philosophy is very particular in laying down that one is bound to do his duty in pursuit of a legitimate or righteous cause even if, in so doing, he has to use violence as a tool of last resort. Obviously Jainism, as almost all other religious philosophies, recognizes that there are no absolutes except the fact that in whatever one does, his motive must be clearly unselfish and in pursuit of a right cause. It has

been asserted time and again by the preceptors of Jainism that non-violence is no alternative to in-action and violence is even preferable to cowardice in deserving occasions.

The idea of *Anekantavada* evolves out of the understanding that no one has the final wisdom and worthwhile idea evolves out of a fusion of many ideas (even though some of them may be totally opposed to each other) which would always be more universally acceptable and serve the interest of the development of society in a harmonious manner instead of a single or few ideas thrust on it by force. Society has always progressed on the basis of a synthesis of conflicting ideas whether they are related to different religious philosophies or even mundane things. Willingness to examine different ideas with an open mind and ultimately find the kernel of truth underlying different perceptions would always provide a better solution to any problem. It has been said that the truth is one, but saints and seers may see it from different angles. In fact even truth is not apparently absolute; for instance, people were sincerely believing at a point of time that the earth was flat, it was at the center of universe and everything else revolved around it. A few hundred years later, we accepted

that the earth is round and revolves around the sun instead of the other way around. we do not know when some other scientists may even demolish this idea and come up with some other explanation.

Incidental to the idea of non violence is the concept of truth. The Jain doctrine believes that when one utters a lie, he not only violates truth, but is also

insulting the Athma that is present in everyone. However wiseman have said that while one may occasionally swerve from the path of truth in order to avoid undeserved harm to others, one can never utter a lie to save oneself from harm.

Bhagwan Mahavir's teachings instill an element of justice. Our hope and prayer is that the spread of Mahavir's message

would lead to a change in the mindset of an individual making him a better man. Naturally such an improvement would contribute to the improvement of the role of family, which in turn would result in a better ordered and socially just society. The inevitable result would be a better family of nations and eventually a harmonious world.

## 'Ahimsa' - The Only Way To Glorify Man!

- Arun Kantharia

**A**s we all know, basically, all faiths have one and the same objective, namely, enabling the human soul to attain its full height of evolution so that man can achieve peace. We are also well aware, we are living in times of revolution – in fact in a troubled world, where different cultures, different civilizations and various religions are standing on firm ground, each vying for its own supremacy. This is the age of science and technology where weapons of death and destruction are multiplying. If we want to serve the future of humanity, it should be our earnest endeavor to bring about a change in the minds and the hearts of the people.

Today, we find a number of faiths and religions, also different cults, prevalent in the world, each with a different philosophy, different approach, different thinking, and different purpose. All these create divisions among people and divisions among themselves too. I do not think, any prudent individual will desire that there should be no peace or that anarchy should reign! It is abundantly clear to almost all of us that lawlessness and massacres are not the

things that ordinarily fall within the range of human ambitions.

True, the craving for peace and tranquility is inherently ingrained in man. Furthermore, every saint, every philosopher, every wise and prudent man has advocated peace. Every religion has also tried to advance the causes of peace and protestations against war, and yet, let's admit, our deep-rooted hatred, power-politics, and thirst for expansionism, religious fanaticism and supremacy are growing fast day after day and all this in the blessed name of unity and peaceful co-existence. What a shame!

With this scenario looming large over us, the question that comes for consideration is - how best this problem could be resolved! What is the solution? What's the remedy? The right answer in times like this is that - the world religious leaders shed their petty differences, and spiritual-minded people join hands to work for humanity in general, to bring about 'one world-government' based on Dharma. Unfortunately, various religious bodies instead of creating an atmosphere of cordiality, mutual respect, love and peaceful co-existence, are themselves

lending a helping hand to sectarianism and religious fanaticism which ultimately leads to terrorism. The need of the hour therefore, is, creation of a healthy environment by shedding destructive, imperialistic, materialistic and totalitarian tendencies.

I personally believe that religion based on 'Ahimsa' (non-violence) is the only way to glorify man. It is on the foundation of Ahimsa that we can bring about religious unity and religious unity based on Ahimsa will do greater good to mankind. If this conference to celebrate "The year of Non-violence", makes us respectful towards other religions - other human beings and sends out a message loud and clear that there are no chosen races, no chosen nations, no chosen individuals but each one has in us the possibility of growing into the divine, then, believe me friends, we have done a remarkable job in the name of brotherhood and peaceful co-existence, to adore humanity.

And finally, let us not forget the noble concept of "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*" (The world is one family).



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# Lord Mahavir and His Teachings

– Pravin K. Shah  
Jain Study Center of NC

**L**ord Mahavir was the twenty-fourth and last Tirthankara of the Jain religion. According to Jain philosophy, all Tirthankaras were human beings but they had attained a state of perfection or enlightenment through meditation and self-realization. They are the Gods of Jains in the sense that they were the persons extremely revered. The concept of God as a creator, protector, and destroyer of the universe does not exist in Jainism. Also the idea of God's reincarnation as a human being to destroy the demons is not accepted in Jainism.

Lord Mahavir was born in 599 BC in the State of Bihar, India. His birthday is celebrated as Mahavir Jayanti Day.

Mahavir was a prince and was given a name Vardhaman by his parents. Being son of a king, he had many worldly pleasures, comforts, and services at his command. But at the age of thirty, he left his family and royal household, gave up his worldly possessions, and became a monk in search of a solution to eliminate pain, sorrow, and sufferings.

Mahavir spent the next twelve and half years in deep silence and meditation to conquer his desires, feelings, and attachments. He carefully avoided harming or annoying other living beings including animals, birds, and plants. He also went without food for long periods. He was calm and peaceful against all unbearable hardships that he was given the name Mahavir, meaning very brave and courageous. During this period, his spiritual powers fully developed and at the end, he realized perfect perception, knowledge, power, and bliss. This

realization is known as *keval-jnana* or the perfect enlightenment.

Mahavir spent the next thirty years travelling on bare foot around India preaching to the people the eternal truth he realized. The ultimate objective of his teaching is how one can attain total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, and death, and achieve permanent blissful state of one's self. This is known as liberation (*nirvana*), or absolute freedom (*moksha*).

Mahavir explained that from eternity, every living being (soul) due to its ignorance is in the bondage of karmic atoms. Then these karmic atoms are continuously accumulated by our good or bad deeds. Under the influence of *karma*, the soul is habituated to seek pleasures in materialistic belongings and possessions. This is the deep-rooted cause of self-centered violent thoughts, deeds, anger, hatred, greed, and such other vices. These result in further accumulation of *karma*.

Mahavir preached the right faith (*samyak-darshna*), right knowledge (*samyak-jnana*), and right conduct (*samyak-charitra*). This is the real path to attain the liberation from *Karma*.

At the heart of the right conduct for Jains lie the five great vows:

- Non-violence (*Ahimsa*)
  - not to cause harm to any living beings
- Truthfulness (*Satya*)
  - To speak the harmless truth
- Non-stealing (*Asteya*)
  - not to take anything not properly given

Chastity (*Brahmacharya*)

- not to indulge in sensual pleasure

Non-Possession/Non-attachment (*Aparigraha*)

- complete detachment from people, places, and material things

The principles of Jainism, if properly understood in their right perspective and faithfully adhered to, will bring contentment and happiness and joy in the present life. This will elevate the soul to a higher spiritual level, ultimately achieving Perfect Enlightenment, reaching its final destination of Eternal Bliss, ending all cycles of birth and death.

Mahavir attracted people from all walks of life, rich and poor, kings and commoners, men and women, princes and priests, touchables and untouchables. He organized his followers into a four-fold order, namely monk (*Sadhu*), nun (*Sadhvi*), layman (*Shravak*), and laywoman (*Shravika*). This order is known as Jain Sangh.

Jainism existed before Mahavir, and his teachings were based on those of his predecessors. He followed the well-established creed of his predecessor Tirthankara Parshvanath. Mahavir was more a reformer and propagator of an existing religious order than the founder of a new faith.

At the age of 72 (527 BC), Lord Mahavir attained *Nirvana*. He became a *Siddha*, a pure consciousness, a liberated soul, living forever in a state of complete bliss. On the night of his *nirvana*, people celebrate the festival of lights in his honor.

# A Way to Stop Inflow of Karma

## - An interpretation

- Rajiv Jain

**T**here are many steps involved in reaching *Keval Gyan* in Jainism. Each of the steps has a prescribed method outlined in the scriptures. For instance, the process of shedding *karma* bound to the soul – *Nirjara* – is accomplished through *Tapa* or *Pratikraman*. The experience of the soul can be practiced through meditation. The cessation of all inflow of *karma* can be attained by renouncing all material needs and by pursuing a life of austerity (monkhood). Even if we shed all *karma* bound to soul, salvation can never be realized unless *karma* inflow stops.

But for the laity, stopping the inflow of *karma* by disassociating completely from the world is not an easy and practical task.

All around us each day, we encounter forces pulling us away from the religious path. We get absorbed in our daily routine, whether it be school or job. Popular culture

seduces the senses. Money culture breeds materialism. All of these forces digress us from the right path and lead us to a mundane life. Greed, anger, and neglect of religion then arise which cause the inflow of *karma*.

Our forefathers had it a bit easier. The community they lived in, made religion an integral part of life. They were surrounded by talk of religion. Attending temples daily and going on frequent religious pilgrimages, created a sort of impregnable shield around the soul, precluding the mind from wavering, and thereby reducing karmic inflow. We however, are living in a much more complex society that requires us to individually recreate the same disciplined atmosphere.

What then is a pragmatic way to stop *karma* formation for children and adults alike today?

A powerful, effective, yet simple way to keep the mind at a higher state every day can be through reading religious books and scriptures

on a daily basis. This is called “*Swadhyaya*”. Just reading a few paragraphs daily provides blissful nourishment to the mind, body and soul.

Religious books and scriptures are richly filled with pointed stories and discussions. Reading at night just for a few minutes (*Swadhyaya*) will help reduce *karma* inflow and together with Meditation will allow us to move forward in the process toward salvation.

### Ahimsa is ...

**A**voidance of  
**H**arm  
**I**ntended by  
**M**ind  
**S**peech or  
**A**ction

courtesy:  
International Jain Sangh

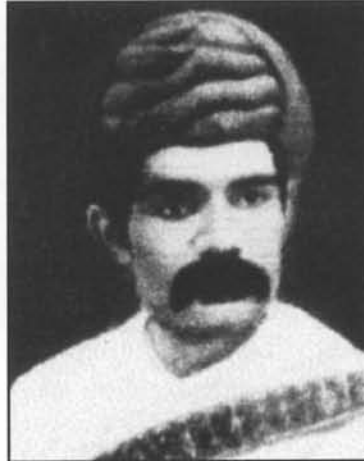
# First Jain Messenger of Non-Violence to the West

- Pravin C. Shah

Chair Person, Shri V. R. Gandhi Scholarship Committee, JAINA

**F**irst Jain, ever to spread Lord Mahavir's message of Universal love and non-violence to the west was Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi. He attended the first ever held Parliament of World Religions, in Chicago in 1893 as a representative of Jain religion, at the age of 29. Swami Vivekananda came to represent Hindu Religion. Shrimad Acharya Vijayanand Suri (Atmanandji) was invited to attend. But being Jain monk, he could not. So Jain Association of India selected Shri Virchand Gandhi. He attended it in traditional Kathiawadi costume wearing dhoti, kurta, golden bordered turban (paghdi), white shawl on his shoulder and pointed country shoes.

Shri Virchand Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Shrimad Rajchandra were contemporaries. Shri Virchand Gandhi was born at Mahuva, Gujarat on Aug. 25, 1864. He was a great exponent of Indian culture, religion and philosophy as well as a brilliant scholar of Jainism and other world religions. He was a great patriot and humanitarian too. He was the first Jain graduate of Bombay University in 1884 at the age of 20. He was the first elected secretary of Jain associ-



**Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi**

**Born: Aug. 25, 1864  
Died: Aug. 7, 1901**

ations of India, in 1885 at the age of 21.

He was a social reformer and succeeded in eradicating some social evils.

In the West he spoke on the Jain code of conduct, Jain way of life, non-violence, Anekantvad (multiplicity of views) and Karma philosophy and convinced people about Jain religion as a rational and authentic religion.

He explained the meaning of Jaina as follower of Jina who conquers one's own inner ene-

mies like passion, hatred, anger, greed etc.

His approach was most non-sectarian. He had an impartial ideology. He had a deep knowledge of all religions. Many literary and spiritual institutions, churches, societies honored him and accorded him warm welcome. His speeches echoed the true spirit, culture, and perspective of India.

When he was in the USA in 1897, India was engulfed in worst famine. He arranged whole shipload of foodgrains and forty thousand rupees. He had established a relief committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. C. C. Bonney, then president of Parliament of world religions. He had also visited England, France, Germany, etc. and gave lectures about Jainism there. Thousands of his followers practiced Jainism under his influence and became vegetarians. One of them, English gentleman, Herbert Warren wrote books on Jainism.

His lifetime mission was to spread Lord Mahavir's message of universal love and non-violence, across the world.

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नमो सिद्धाएं  
नमो आयरियाएं  
नमो उयज्झायाएं  
नमो लोएसव्यसाहूं  
एसो पंचनमुखयोगो,  
सव्यपावपणामाणो।  
मंगलाएं च सव्येसिं  
पदमं हवई मंगलं॥



परस्परप्रेमग्रहे जीवनम्



# Shrimad Rajchandra, Gandhiji and Ahimsa

- Dr. Kumarpal Desai

**I**t was a defining moment in history when Shrimad Rajchandra and Mahatma Gandhi first met. Mahatma Gandhi, then simply known as Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had returned to India, following his admission to the Bar in England. In Mumbai, he stayed with Dr. Pranjivan Mehta, whose brother, Revashankar Jagjivan was Shrimad Rajchandra's business partner. By coincidence, Shrimad was there that day.

Gandhiji stayed in Mumbai to set up a legal practice. He had spare time on his hands and often spent it with Shrimad at his shop. He had observed Shrimad closely and wrote about him: *"Shrimad was always satisfied with the food offered to him. His attire was simple, and consisted of a shirt, a dhoti, a long coat, a scarf and a turban. He walked at a slow pace and it was obvious to passers-by that he was engrossed in deep thoughts. His eyes sparkled with magic and inner brilliance. There was no restlessness: on the contrary they reflected intense concentration."*

In their very first meeting, Gandhiji was greatly impressed with Shrimad's intellectual capabilities. In the time they spent together, Gandhiji was able to appreciate the subtle nuances of Shrimad's personality and conduct. His bright eyes, his contentment, the ease with which he dealt with others and his thoughtfulness, all played a significant part in molding Gandhiji's noble character.

He said: *"I cannot aptly describe the lasting influence Shrimad Rajchandra made on my life. For years, I have been in search of a righteous person in India but I have not yet seen another righteous being who measures up to him. Amongst the European philosophers, I consider Tolstoy of the top order and Ruskin of the second order but my experience with Shrimad was superior to that with both of them."*

There had been extensive correspondence between the two men.

Unfortunately, only three of these letters exchanged between them have survived. Nonetheless, these three letters tell us vividly how Shrimad helped Gandhiji clear his misgivings about his own faith and prevented him from converting to another faith. Like a true barrister, Gandhiji posed a number of questions to Shrimad on issues of the existence of the soul, God, emancipation, religion, reincarnation and Christianity. Shrimad had responses, which were informed both, by intellect and by his own spiritual experience.

Mahatma Gandhi has expressed his deepest respect towards Shrimad Rajchandra in his autobiography "Experiments in Truth" as well as in his various speeches. Expressions of the personal experiences which Mahatma Gandhi had with Shrimad, are compiled here:

*"I have learnt much from the lives of many a person, but it is from the life of Kavishri (the poet i. e. Shrimad) that I have learnt the most."*

[A lecture delivered by Gandhiji in Ahmedabad in 1921]

\*\*\*

"Raichandbhai's commercial transactions numbered in hundreds and thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds. No business problem was too difficult for him. But all these things were not the centre around which his life revolved. It was the passion to know himself. The man who, immediately on completing his weighty business transactions, began to write about the hidden things of the spirit. He could evidently not be a businessman at all, but a real seeker of Truth, And I saw him thus absorbed

in Godly pursuits in the midst of business, not once or twice, but very often."

*("Satya Na Prayog" or the Story of My Experiments with Truth.)*

\*\*\*\*

"While we are worldly souls, Shrimadji was not like us. While we may have to take many births hereafter, for Raichandbhai his present life may be the last. While we perhaps are running away from liberation, Raichandbhai was heading towards it with a tremendous speed. This speaks Volumes of Raichandbhai's self effort."

*[From Gandhiji's Pen-Picture of Shrimad Rajchandra]*

\*\*\*\*

"Two outstanding virtues to be imbibed from Shrimad's life are his love for Truth and Ahimsa [Non-violence]. His actions and conduct reflected what he believed to be true. His love for Ahimsa was because he was a Jain and also because it was inherent in his nature. Basic Ahimsa - which means not to harm even the smallest life-form and so on - (as understood by the Jains) but his Ahimsa did not stop there. If any human suffered any pain, Shrimad would also suffer in sympathy and because of this, he would become very detached from the material world.

His detached lifestyle is noticeable from his earliest days. He passed away at the young age of 33 years. His attitude of detachment can be seen in his writings at the age of 17 and 18. From that young age his life's direction was one of detachment and equanimity. Even though he remained a house-holder and a businessman almost till the end of his life, yet his inner life was one of detachment.

Four lessons for us from his life are :1) Focus on the eternal; 2) Candor in life ! and equal treatment to all; 3) Truth, and 4) a Life full of Ahimsa.

I have read some of the letters he wrote just before his death and I have noticed these virtues in them. Let us remember these virtues and implement them in our lives. "



# Meditation

— Pujya Shri Atmanandji

**T**he ordinary meaning of the word “Meditation” (Dhyana), is concentration of the mind. All people constantly ponder over some subject, individual or substance. The mind of every individual continues to shift in thoughts from one to the other and then to another object. Hence, the state of human mind, pondering over worldly objects and things is known as bad concentration. All such meditations that hinder the spiritual progress (Sadhana) of the self are to be given up. Let us enumerate here, the main types of bad concentration and then proceed to understand meditation that leads us to right religion (Dharma).

## Meditation in spiritual life:

The belief and feeling of “mine-ness” in the objects of the world arises from ignorance. Even the feelings of passion, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy can be considered as offsprings of ignorance. The types of meditation, which subdue these feelings and also lead to purity and steadiness of mind, are all useful and therefore beneficial to the aspirant (Sadhaka).

## Sadhana of meditation:

It would always be beneficial to resort to meditation in a sacred peaceful place, away from bustle. Regularity in food and observance of celibacy will assist the steadiness of mind and body. Such an aspirant (Sadhaka) will acquire greater concentration in his meditation and will not feel lethargy, laziness and so on.

Thus, a Sadhaka is expected to control food and sleep. Once that the Sadhaka comes to know the pure form of Soul (Atma), from an enlightened preceptor, he can, with full success, practice different types of meditation. The details of these different types of meditation have been fully reviewed in the great scriptures of ancient sages. Here we give only a brief and practical survey of the subject.

The mental picture of the enlightened preceptor should be installed in the middle of the eyebrows, or in the heart (i.e. in the left part of the chest); the thought process should then be repeatedly fixed on that pure, detached and equanimous image (Mudra). One should next install the image of God, the supreme in His quiet, blissful and self-poised form in the heart and merge all inclinations of the mind in Him.

One can also practice many of the following types of meditation on the instructions of the enlightened preceptor and in accordance with one's own capacity and circumstances.

1. Meditation on the letters of the different Mantras.
2. Meditation principally related to various Yogic sounds (*Nada*).
3. Meditation principally related to the breathing process.

Actually, the type of meditation is not all that important. What is more important is the acquisition of purity and concentration of mind in moments of meditation. The practice of meditation is longdrawn process indeed.

## The fruits of meditation:

Meditation is the best form of religious austerity. The true mediator feels true happiness and peace of mind. He conquers ill feelings and becomes free from mundane bondage (*Karmabandhan*), and achieves the state of *Samadhi*. Every Sadhaka should try to meditate regularly at least for a short period. What keeps achieving this is company with enlightened preceptor, reading good scriptures, and good conduct.

## Glory of meditation:

1. All emotions can be ousted by achieving repose in the Soul. Meditation on Soul, may therefore, be regarded as panacea for all spiritual shortcomings.
2. Activity is meant for purity of

the mind, but by itself cannot directly lead to self-Realization. Realization of the self is possible only by pondering over Soul, and not through countless activities. The Sadhaka, who desires to realize the self, should therefore, take recourse with compassionate enlightened preceptor who has realized the self and should, under his guidance, ponder over and meditate on Soul (*Atma*).

3. The supreme liberation that eliminates birth, age, decay, and death cannot be attained by the Sadhaka, till he experiences the Supreme Reality, through well-guided contemplation of *Tattvas* (fundamentals).

4. There is no higher happiness or austerity or better path of liberation than meditation on the self.

5. When the Sadhaka experiences the Supreme Reality, through meditation, all knots of illusion around the heart are destroyed completely, all doubts are set at rest, and all feelings of pleasure and pains (*Karmas*) cease.

6. Only the destruction of *Karmas* leads to liberation, only right knowledge makes liberation possible, and only right meditation leads to right knowledge. Meditation is therefore immensely beneficial to the aspirant.

7. Gentleness of mind and senses, healthiness, a compassionate outlook of life, fragrance of the body, minimization of excretions, aura of divine light, purity and delight of the mind and sublime gentle speech - these are the usual traits of a person, who reposes in advanced meditation.

8. Having assimilated the preaching of the true preceptor, one, who attains to real meditation through tranquility of mind can verily acquire the whole series of praiseworthy things such as knowledge, wealth, health, longevity, contentment, supreme worship and emancipation.

**Salute to Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, USA**  
**For Ahimsa Varsh Celebration!**

**In commemoration of the 2600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of  
Bhagwan Mahvir Swami**

*Life's purpose is not to "convert the world" to some belief. Jain principles aim to  
civilize the heart, endow the will, and emancipate the intellect.*

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# Economics of Lord Mahavira\*

- Acharya Mahaprajna

A family-moored person cannot wholly follow the principle of abnegation. He cannot lead a life of an ascetic who lives on doles offered by others. For him, Mahavira laid down the standards governing desires and prescribed the limits of consumption. With the determination of the limits, some principles of economics emerge. The theories of the promotion of extreme expectations and production are tempting, but they are not natural and the outcome is not in the best interest of human beings.

Economics is the discipline of material prosperity, and the science of peace rests on the limitation of wealth. There cannot be any meeting point between unlimited expectations and peace.

Man does only need economic resources. If economic development is secured at the cost of peace, the resultant distressed persons cannot enjoy economic

prosperity; it is a basic requirement of the present times that there should be a synthesis between the satisfaction of economic wants and peace. One-track approach will not be able to solve the world's problems. Economics based on the satisfaction of economic wants and the economics of peace are complementary to each other. Restraint, abandonment, sacrifice and limitation are not dear to people aspiring for economic prosperity. Consumption, luxury and comforts are, no doubt, appealing. But what is not very tempting is an essential for the future of mankind. The realization of this imperative would give inspiration to know Mahavira and his principle of limitation of possession and consumption in the perspective of Economics.

## The Objective of Economics

Modern Economics has espoused the theory that

man's lure of self-interest needs to be enhanced. It has, therefore, become the main objective of today's Economics that, as far as possible, the attitude of self-interest should be promoted. Development is measured by promotion of self-interest. Personal motivation of personal self-interest stimulates more work from man than anything else. It is very clear to us that self-interest is a big inspiration. Accordingly, the theory that modern Economics has established, is meaningful and attractive. Every person should enhance his self-interest as much as possible and earn as much wealth as he can.

The principles presented by communism are no less attractive. It promises that nobody will remain hungry, remain without a house, without clothing and without employment. Everybody's needs will be satisfied. This was and has remained an attractive dream of communism.

\* Extracted from the book "Economics of Lord Mahavira" by the author, published by Jain Vishwa Bharati, Ladnun, Rajasthan, India honoring Lord Mahavira's 2600th birth anniversary.

## **Tempting and Useful**

In this context, let us analyze the philosophy of Mahariva. Mark two words: attractive and useful. An article may appear tempting but may not be useful; and another which is useful but may not be tempting. And yet another article could be tempting, attractive and useful. Everybody becomes rich inspired by the attitude of self-interest, so that wealth, when it grows, becomes attractive but not useful. In human beings, self-interest is even otherwise dominant, so much so that individual self-interest has created several problems in society. If attempts are made to accelerate this process, the result could be visualized by a look at the conditions of the present times.

## **Non-Violence and Purity of Means**

Everybody wants that there should be economic development in society. The real question is, how? What should be its process, its

mechanics? Apparently, there is no alternative to economic development if contained in limits.

Mahavira says that while thinking about economic development, the following points should be definitely considered:

- Ahimsa (non-violence) and purity of means
- Non-erosion of moral values
- Limits for self-interest

First, it should be examined if economic development is leading to more violence. If we want to achieve development, it should be through ethical means, not by any other means. There was an ordinary person with poor means. He kidnapped a rich man and demanded ransom of one crore rupees. He succeeded in extracting the ransom. From being a poor person, he became a millionaire. His financial development did take place. But can the means or method adopted for achieving this be considered desirable? The obvious

answer is in the negative.

In the ancient times there prevailed a belief that fame makes man successful. A person developed a desire to become famous. He started thinking how he could become famous. Somebody advised him to go to market that stocked earthen pots and break them with a stick and suggested, that would make him famous. If he did not want to do that, then he should throw all clothes and become naked, and he would become famous at once. If even this did not make him famous, then he should ride a donkey, which would make him famous.

This also implies that there are two routes that one could adopt: one of using any means and the other of using ethical means. Bhagwan Mahavira said, nobody can object to economic development in society, but this should not be done by just any means. It should be achieved with ahimsa (non-violence) and with good and ethical means.

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# **AHIMSA IS THE SUPREME WAY OF LIFE**



# Temple of spiritual knowledge

**T**he Jain Vishva Bharati Institute (Deemed University) is a tranquil haven of knowledge and spirituality in the semi-arid desert of central Rajasthan.

At the headquarters of the Terapanth Jains in Ladnun, Rajasthan, the only building that vaguely resembles a temple serves as the administrative wing of the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute (Deemed University). In many ways the Institute, established in 1972 by the late Acharya Tulsi, is a manifestation of the spirit and beliefs of a sect which does not believe in, yet does not condemn, building temples.

The religious beliefs of the order are expressed through the graduate and post graduate programmes offered by the Institute: Jainology, Comparative Religion & Philosophy, Non-Violence & Peace Studies, Science of Living, Social Work. All its courses, while rooted in the bedrock of ancient scriptures, strive to be relevant to modern realities. And where the Institute is uniquely different from educational institutes around the world is that the spiritual development of its students is as

important as imparting knowledge and sharpening their intellect.

The prospectus of the Institute sums up the essence of its approach:

Without moral and spiritual education, no amount of material advancement can bring about peace in individual, family, community or international relations. Wars are the product of the mind and peace will also have to be found in the mind.

Indeed, the words of Lord Mahavir: *Nanassa Saram Ayaro* (Right conduct is the essence of knowledge) are the motto and guiding light of the Institute.

It is around this temple of knowledge that the 60-acre campus, an oasis of green tranquility in the semi-arid desert of central Rajasthan, revolves. Facilities here include a library stocked with over 40,000 books and 5,000 rare manuscripts, an art gallery, a 60-room meditation and yoga center, separate hostels for boys and girls, an English medium secondary school, computer center, as well as a bank, printing press, canteen and an Ayurvedic center.

The university community, apart from the administrative

staff, comprises a faculty of 22 and 60 students and only 10 percent of them are Jains. Regardless of their origins, all are required to follow a strict code of conduct: abstinence from smoking, drinking and violence, pure vegetarianism, participation in morning prayers, meditation and yoga, love and respect for all living things both on and off the campus.

"We are not in the numbers game and are well aware that these requirements, combined with the fact that most of the degree courses are not exactly job oriented, may result in low enrollment. However, what we are attempting to achieve here is very relevant as it becomes increasingly important that we do not lose sight of man's spiritual destiny in today's world of modern technology and growing materialism," says S. Bengani, the Kulpati or Chancellor of the Institute.

In addition to its graduate and postgraduate studies, the Institute also conducts a 3-month residential course in meditation and yoga. Students who undertake this training course are accommodated in the 60-room meditation center and are expected to follow a stringent



# Thanks

The Bhavan, USA gratefully acknowledges the generous support for this celebration of Ahimsa Varsh, of the following philanthropists.

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Jain Samaj of USA  
Samarpan Jain Sangh  
Young Jains of America  
(Mr. Nitin Talsania)

The Bhavan, USA offers its sincere thanks to them. The Bhavan also wishes to express its gratitude to all the members of the Celebration Organizing Committee who worked very hard to see to the success of this celebration. Our thanks are also due to Mrs. Shobna Patel and all staff members of Royal Albert's Palace for their immense help and meticulous care of every aspect of the arrangements for the celebration.

We offer our respects and thanks to all saints, sadhus, sadhvis, scholars, artists, participants and volunteers who have taken time to make this event a grand success.

Jai Jinendra.

daily routine which starts with waking at 4 am and following a strict Jain vegetarian diet that includes total fasting between sunset and sunrise.

Alternatively, visitors and tourists may opt for the less stringent 15-day or 7-day course while residing in the three guest houses (with attached kitchens that prepare simple yet wholesome Jain vegetarian meals), that overlook a garden built around the *samadhi* of Acharya Tulsi who died in 1998 at the age of 86.

Acharya Tulsi was the spiritual head of the community for some 60 years and was instrumental in leading it into the modern era. He was the inspiration behind the establishment of the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute. In a radical break from convention, he established in the early 1980s, the Saman order of *sadhvis* who, unlike traditional Jain *munis* and *sadhvis* for whom the only way of getting from one place to another was on foot, were allowed to use modern means of transportation to spread the message of peace across the world. Today, one Samani heads the computer department of the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute. More importantly, Acharya Tulsi initiated the on going process of reinterpreting the scriptures to make them more relevant to a generation driven by modern technolo-

gy. Indeed, within the campus is an audio-visual center that records all the official discourses of the Acharya.

With the passing of Acharya Tulsi, the flame of spiritual enlightenment passed on to his disciple and successor Acharya Mahapragya.

At sunset, a peaceful calm settles over the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute complex. Jets of water from a musical fountain within the garden dance to the soothing rhythm of melodic bhajans. But for a local family that has come to relax in this peaceful setting and take group photographs in front of the fountain, the place is deserted. The Samanis are in their quarters meditating and the other *munis* and *sadhvis* are out on the road following the footsteps of the spiritual leader as he trudges across the land.

Yes, modern technology may be creeping into the physical headquarters of Jainism at Ladnun, but tradition still rules supreme around the spiritual beacon that is Acharya Mahapragya and his following of *munis* and *sadhvis* as they walk across the land; never anchoring for too long in one spot but leaving behind a little divinity before moving on.

Courtesy: 'Vardhaman' – A Times of India Publication

# Post September 11 and Jainism

– Naresh Jain

Outside my office window, the sky on September 11, 2001, was clear blue and beautiful. Shortly before 9 AM I was checking my e-mail at work. My colleague Don suddenly appeared to inform that a plane had crashed into the World Trade Center. I fast-walked 120 feet to the other side of my floor. I was thinking that I may see a few floors fallen down similar to a couple of top floors of the famous Kutub Minar in New Delhi which I gazed in my teenage years from my dorm room on the fourth floor. In the next two hours, I saw the second tower hit and collapse. I could not believe how the perpetrators could sink below any level of thinkable degeneracy and cause the deaths of thousands of people. Since then Sept. 11 has become a new word with a new meaning.

On September 13, Lincoln Tunnel opened and I drove from New Jersey into Manhattan to attend the Annual Interfaith Service held at St. Bartholomew's Church near Rockefeller Center. I felt comfort in the company of my wife Sarla, HH Amrender Muniji and a friend Mary Van Abs. In the religious procession at the church prior to the service, a priest spotted my coat pin of a raised palm- a symbol of Jainism. He asked, "Are you a Jain?". I replied, "Yes sir". In a humble voice he said, "This is the time for Mahavir". I replied, "It sure is". The service included prayers for world peace from several religions including Jainism. The UN Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan spoke of a shared faith binding us to understand each other and to live in peace. What he spoke was Jainism to me- *Parsparopagraho Jivanam* (i.e., all life is bound together with

mutual support and assistance).

In the 20th century, several historical social changes were achieved in several countries through heroic adaptation of non-violence by leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela and Lech Walesa. I thought that these heroes had proved that non-violence is an active process and more powerful than hatred. But, after Sept. 11 suddenly, I felt ignorant again, back to square one.

In the weeks and months that followed, the thirst for knowledge took a different direction. People wanted to know more about Islam and other religions. Now they question everything around them: America's place in the world, the perception of evil, the assumptions of different religions, and the relevancy of religion itself. Now people want a life where they understand each other and where there is hope for a better future.

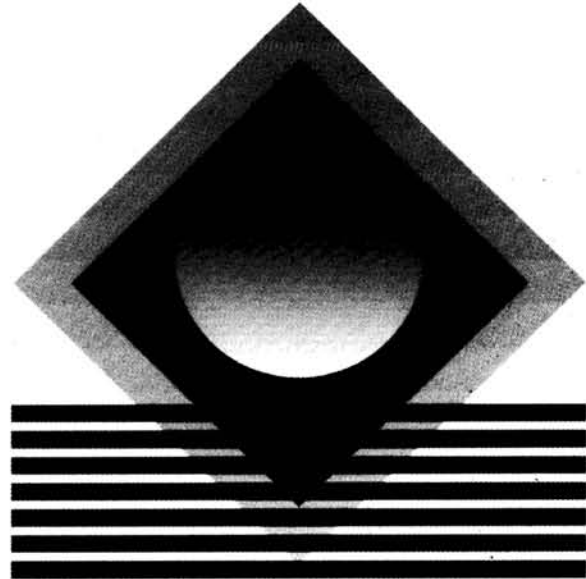
After Sept. 11, I have participated in several panel discussions. At the panel discussion on 'Religion as Social Inspiration', on September 30, 2001, in the American Museum of Natural History, I briefly reviewed the basic teachings of Jainism – '*Ahimsa Parmo Dharmah*' or non-violence is supreme religion. As non- darkness would mean light all around, nonviolence would mean love all around. The principle of Anekantvad or open-mindedness will make us more tolerant and respectful to others. The follow-up questions reflected a craving for a better understanding of the nonviolence principle. Observations were similar in the subsequent visits to the opening ceremonies of the World Museum of Religions in Taiwan, and talks at the

Theosophical Society in New Jersey, and in the Surya Theosophical Society. During conversations with friends around the country, I gathered that after Sept. 11, Jain Center of Central Ohio had organized a Jain prayer and a tribute for the philosophy of Ahimsa in the Ohio Senate; Dr. Sushil Jain, Dr. Manoj Dharamsi, and Mr. Kanubhai Doshi in Washington metro area had participated in the memorial prayer at the Washington national Cathedral, in a CNN interview regarding Jain community's reaction, and in several prayers for world peace and lectures in churches, mosques, interfaith, city, county and college gatherings. Mr. Pravin Shah had participated in similar programs in North Carolina. People are now more curious about exploring alternatives which could give more hope and better understanding.

Only 2 people out of every 1000 people on this earth are Jains, but their message is strong. A better understanding of the principle of nonviolence and respect for life will increasingly move the society toward a culture of peace and justice. The following of the teachings of Lord Mahavir would lead to the virtues such as tolerance, peace, respect, and harmonious relations; as well as care of our earth. These ethics can potentially avoid enormous funds that are spent on security, defense and environmental cleanups which can then be utilized for the welfare of the less fortunate world-wide. If we seize the moment and band together to foster the understanding of the philosophy of nonviolence- a gift of Jainism to make this world a better place for our children and grand children, then truly, this is the time for Mahavir.

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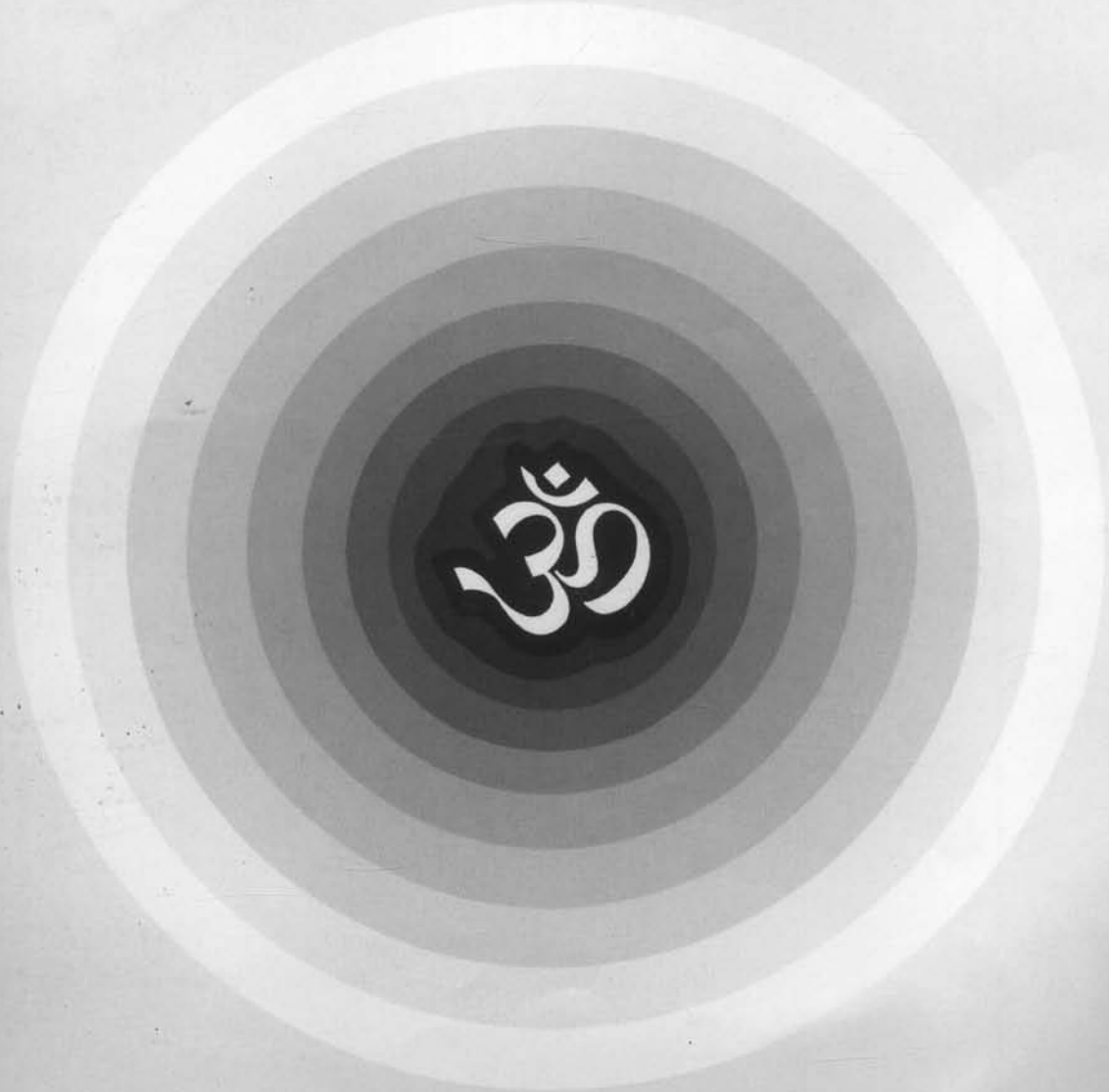


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there is LOVE  
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there is PEACE*

*Where there is PEACE  
there is GOD  
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ॐ = "AUM" HAS OVER 100 MEANINGS ONE OF THEM IS  
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पढमं हवइ मंगला'

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