

CELEBRATION OF INTERFAITH WEEK

November 21st-27th 2010

LIVING TOGETHER IN  
DIVERSE FAITHS  
DIVERSE COMMUNITIES  
DIVERSE CULTURES  
AS A JAIN



**Jain Network**

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*The forum for the development of the Jain Community*



EDITOR

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# Introduction

## Britain today

The British are a diverse, multicultural society, with "strong regional accents, expressions and identities". The social structure of Britain has changed radically since the 19th century, with the decline in religious observance, enlargement of the middle class, and increased ethnic diversity. The population of the United Kingdom stands at around 61 million, with a British Diaspora concentrated in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States, and post war immigration in Britain from more than 200 countries of the world.

People from various ethnic groups reside in the United Kingdom. Migration from what are now the Northern European states has been happening for millennia, with other groups such as British Jews. Since the World War II, substantial immigration from the New Commonwealth, Europe, and the rest of the world has increased and altered the demography, social structure and culture of many cities in the United Kingdom

## British Society

With considerable migration after the Second World War making the UK an increasingly ethnically and racially diverse country, race relations and equality policies have been developed that broadly reflect the principles of multiculturalism and assimilation of minority communities. For last 25 years the Government and the Statutory Authorities have realised the value of faith communities and the work of their organisations and have established consultative councils to advise them on issues concerning faiths.

Historically, Christianity "has been the most influential and important religion in Britain", and it remains the declared faith of the majority of the British people. Its influence on British culture has been widespread, extending beyond the spheres of prayer and worship, in architectural landscape of cities and towns, schools, hospitals and other public institutions, and the way of life of the people. Christianity remains the major religion of the population of the United Kingdom in the 21st century, followed by Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Buddhist, Jain, Baha'i and Zoroastrian in terms of number of adherents. Secularism was advanced in Britain during the Age of Enlightenment, and modern British organisations such as the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society offer the opportunity for their members to "debate and explore the moral and philosophical issues in a non-religious setting".

## Diverse Communities

In the major cities of Britain today many diverse communities live. Many of them have preserved their own culture, languages, food habits and way of life. Their younger generation and some of them are trying to integrate in broader part of British way of life, but sometimes their efforts do not produce the expected outcomes. They feel marginalized. We believe the cultural diversity affects everyone and people have to learn to live together as a

cohesive community for a peaceful and progressive society.

In today's global economy the economic migration and travelling for business, education and improvement for quality of life are facts of life. The companies do business in different countries; they have work force trained in many countries and diverse communities. If we look around the cultural diversity exists all around us; in different households and communities; in educational and public institutions; in sports and entertainment industries - the diversity is a part of the society. The people have to learn to live together; the teachings of practically all faiths provide guidance to promote equality and racial harmony. To prevent discrimination, the Government has legislated acts such as race relation and equality. In a Big Society we all have to play the part so that the cohesion of different communities can take place and we all can live together in our multifaith society.

Diversity of cultures can provide opportunities for businesses and successful living in a multi faith society that was never dreamed few years back. The opportunities may be in shopping, music, arts, sports and leisure, festivals, food and learning from the traditions and beliefs of each other. Few years back who would have dreamt, our major stores selling foodstuffs and other articles to satisfy the needs of diverse communities and culture?

The Government is well aware of providing equal opportunities to all its citizens and hence in 2001 UK Census, it sought information on ethnicity and religion. The ethnicity of Britain and the diversity of the religions have been very well demonstrated by the 2001 UK Census.

The Census has classified ethnicity into several groups: White, Black, Asian, Mixed, Chinese and Other. These categories form the basis for all National Statistics.

### According to the 2001 Census, the ethnic composition of the United Kingdom was

Ethnic group	Population	Proportion of total UK population
<u>White</u>	54,153,898	92.1%
<u>Mixed race</u>	677,117	1.2%
<u>Indian</u>	1,053,411	1.8%
<u>Pakistani</u>	747,285	1.3%
<u>Bangladeshi</u>	283,063	0.5%
<u>Other Asian (non-Chinese)</u>	247,644	0.4%
<u>Black Caribbean</u>	565,876	1.0%
<u>Black African</u>	485,277	0.8%
<u>Black (others)</u>	97,585	0.2%
<u>Chinese</u>	247,403	0.4%
<u>Other</u>	230,615	0.4%

## Diverse Faiths

Britain is a multifaith society in which everyone has the right to religious freedom. Although Britain is historically a Christian society, people are usually tolerant towards faiths of others and also those who have no faiths. In major cities of Britain today most of the world religions are practised.

In 2001 Census people mentioned their religious identity to a voluntary question as follows:

### Population of Great Britain: by religion, April 2001

	Total population (Numbers) (Percentages)		Non-Christian religious population (Percentages)
Christian	41,014,811	71.8	51.9
Muslim	1,588,890	2.8	51.9
Hindu	558,342	1.0	18.3
Sikh	336,179	0.6	11.0
Jewish	267,373	0.5	8.7
Buddhist	179,157	0.3	4.9
Any other religion	159,167	0.3	5.2
All non-Christian religious population	3,059,108	5.4	100.0
No religion	8,596,488	15.1	
Religion not stated	4,433,520	7.8	
All population	57,103,927	100.0	

According to the statistics of Jain Organisations Jain population is estimated to be about 30,000. As there was no separate box for Jains, Jain community was confused and the population stated in Census Statistics from other religions box is grossly under numbered.

Let us now give very short summary for the major nine faiths who are the founders of the Interfaith Network.

# Major Nine Faiths

## Baha'i

The Baha'i faith was founded by Baha'u'llah in Iran in 1863. There are 6 million Bahá'ís in the world, in 235 countries and around 6,000 live in Britain. Bahá'ís believe there is one God and that all the universe and creation belong to him. Each human being has an immortal soul; they all are different, but equal; there should be no inequality between races or sexes. The central idea of the faith is that of unity; people should work together for the common benefit of humanity.



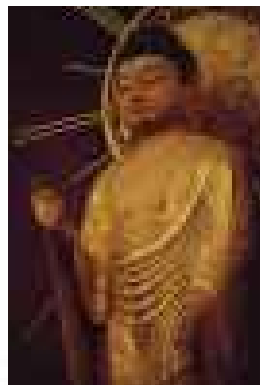
Beliefs and customs: Main festivals are Naw-Ruz (New year) on 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> March, Ridvan (Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of his mission) on 21<sup>st</sup> April to 2<sup>nd</sup> May, Period of Fast (2<sup>nd</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March). Baha'is' practise fasting, designated 19-day period of fasting each year immediately before the Baha'i New Year, as a discipline for the soul. Every Baha'i over the age of 15 must recite daily one of the three "obligatory" prayers and read extracts from scripture every morning and evening.

Baha'is' have a very open attitude to other faiths, and are expected to treat members of other faiths with friendship and peace. The Baha'i community has been particularly active in the field of *human rights* and believes that the world should create a 'culture of human rights'

## Buddhism

Buddhism was founded by Gautama Buddha (566 to 486 BCE), It has 151, 816 in Britain according to the 2001 census and about 376 million followers worldwide. It is a spiritual tradition that focuses on personal spiritual development and the attainment of a deep insight into the true nature of life. It teaches that all life is interconnected, and the path to Enlightenment is through the practice and development of morality, meditation and wisdom.

Beliefs: Nothing is permanent; everything is transitory; the world is a chain of interdependent momentary events; everything derives from an antecedent condition, which ceases after producing its consequence. The soul is impermanent; it is a stream of consciousness; and attachment to the world produces suffering. It teaches four noble truths: the psycho-physical being, initial consciousness of the embryo, past karma and ignorance; and the eightfold path based on ethical conduct (*sila*), mental discipline (*samaadhi*) and wisdom (*prajnaa*). It believes in karma, and that everyone has to suffer or enjoy the consequences of their actions, except detached ones, either in this life or in lives hereafter. The three jewels of Buddhism are the Buddha, the



## Dharma and the Sangha.

It has its holy texts, customs, rituals, festivals, dietary habits and Sangha consisting of monks & nuns. Buddhists take active part in interfaith activities; respect others faiths and are expected to treat members of other faiths with friendship and peace.

## Christianity



Christianity originated as a sect from within Judaism around 2,000 years ago, following interpretations from the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth. It is the most popular religion in the world with over 2 billion adherents and with 42 million in Britons. In UK there are many Christian traditions; main ones are: The Church of England (the Anglican Church); The Roman Catholic Church; The Orthodox Churches (Greek, Russian, and Others); The Methodist Church; The United Reformed Church; The Baptist Union; The Salvation Army, and The Pentecostal Churches., and smaller groups such as The Jesuits, The Benedictines, The Dominicans and The Carmelites (nuns).

Christians believe: **Jesus** was the son of God sent by Him to the earth to save humanity from the consequences of its **sins**; and that Jesus gave his life on the Cross (the *Crucifixion*) and rose from the dead on the third day (the *Resurrection*). Jesus' death and resurrection is at the very heart of the Christian faith. The soul is immortal; death is not the total and final end and there is a life after earthly death. There is only one God, but most also believe in *Trinity*, Him having three elements: God the Father, God the Son and The Holy Spirit. Christianity teaches love, humility and forgiveness. The ethical life of Christians emphasises the virtues of love, kindness, humility and self-control. It is based on their sacred text: Bible.

Christianity is the most organised religion; it has its own rituals, festivals, method of worship, and prayers.

Interfaith Relations: Christianity is an evangelical religion, but in Britain, for last few years, the Christian leaders participate actively in the interfaith movements. They respect other faiths. They may allow the married partner of other faith to practise his / her religion. They are also active in the field of equality, human rights and justice.

## Hinduism

Hinduism is the religion of the majority of people in India and Nepal and has over 900 million adherents worldwide including about 600,000 in Britain. It is closely associated with the other Indian religions Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Hindus believe in the immortality of souls and their transmigration through many lives because of attached *karma*. The aim of human life is to annihilate *karma* and attain liberation (*moksa*) and oneness with God. *Moksa* can be attained by one of three paths: the path of knowledge (*jnaan maarga*, inner realisation), the path of detachment from actions (*karma maarga*) and the path of devotion



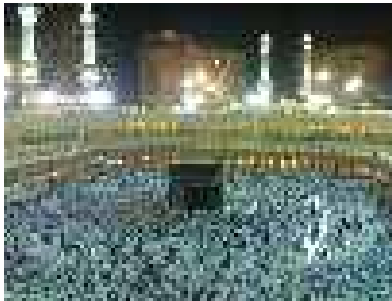
to God (*bhakti maarga*). For inner realisation, Hinduism prescribes the various disciplines of *yoga*, austerities (*saadhanaa*) and meditation.



Most Hindus believe in a **Supreme God**, whose qualities and forms are represented by the multitude of deities which emanate from him. God possesses three aspects: creator, preserver and destroyer, the creator is *Brahma*, the preserver is *Vishnu* and the destroyer is *Shiva* (Mahesh); these three constitute the Trinity of Hinduism. The general duties prescribed for all Hindus are the practices of *ahimsaa* (non-violence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (non-stealing), *brahmcharya* (celibacy) and *aparigraha* (*detachment*). Hinduism *emphasises* the virtues of love, compassion, purity, self-restraint and philanthropy, charity and social service

## Islam

Islam is the second largest religion in the world with over 1 billion followers. The 2001 census recorded 1,591,000 Muslims in the UK, around 2.7% of the population. Muslims believe that there is only one God (Allah).



Muslims are divided into many sects, for political rather than doctrinal reasons. Main among them are: **Sunni** (about 90%) and **Shi'as** (about 10%) that include *Ismaili Khojas*, *Zaidis*, *Wahhabis*, and *Ahmadiyas*. *Sufis* represent a mystical trend in Islam.

*Six main beliefs* of Muslims are: Belief in *Allah* as the one and only God; Belief in *angels*; Belief in the *Qur'an*; Belief in the *Prophets*, **Muhammad** as the final Prophet; Belief in the *Day of Judgement* ; and Belief in *Pre-destination*.

### The five essential duties of a Muslim are known as 'Five Pillars' of Islam:

1. *Sahadah*: repetition of faith in the absolute oneness of 'Allah' and Mohammed as his messenger
2. *Salat*: observance of five daily prayers
3. *Zakat*: giving alms to the poor, as a religious tax, usually two and half percent of annual income
4. *Ramadan*: a month of fasting and spiritual discipline in the ninth month of the lunar calendar
5. *Hajj*: pilgrimage to Mecca and the Ka'bah (the house of God) at least once in a lifetime

Muslim ethics are mainly social: such as hospitality; obedience to parents; avoidance of

adultery, cheating and lying; and refraining from stealing, killing and murder. Islam forbids violence except in the name of religion, or self-defence. It teaches individual virtues such as refraining from intoxicating drinks and from the use of perfumed oils; and cultivates renunciation and non-attachment towards worldly possessions.

## Jainism



The name Jainism comes from *Jina*, meaning 'victor' over the passions and the self. The Jain population is about five million (twelve Million according to Jain institutions) around the world; most Jains and all their ascetics (about 10,000) live in India; 80,000 in North America and 30,000 in the UK. The origin of Jainism remains untraceable. Jains believe time rotates in a cycle, descending and ascending. In each half of the cycle twenty-four *tirthankaras* establish the fourfold order (*sangha*) consisting of monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen; and revive the teachings of previous *tirthankaras*. The first *tirthankara* in this descending cycle was Risabhdeva, who is traditionally believed to have lived thousands of centuries ago, the twenty-third was Parsvanatha (c.870 BCE to 770 BCE) and the twenty-fourth (and last) was Vardhamana Mahavira who lived from 599 to 527 BCE.

Mahavira, who revived the Jainism to the needs of modern time, is a super example of non-violence. He had all the power, wealth and comfort but he decided to leave these behind and renounced worldly pleasures for an ascetic life to attain spiritual liberation and manifest the characteristics of the soul i.e. total knowledge, permanent bliss and freedom from the cycle of transmigration. The total knowledge helped him to teach others the Jain way of life and motivate them to progress on the path of spiritual liberation. He celebrated diversity of life, diversity of philosophy, diversity of the belief in 'truth' and made spiritual democracy (*anekaantavada*) as guiding principle for dealing with other traditions and people.

His teachings included the co-ordinated path of the 'Three Jewels': Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Right Faith is belief in the nine 'real entities' (living being, non-living being, merit, demerit, influx of karma, karmic bondage, stoppage of karma, shedding of karma, and liberation); Right Knowledge is a proper grasp of the nine 'real entities'; and Right Conduct is the ethical code, behaviour and actions taught by the *Jinas*.

The basic tenets of Right Conduct as taught in Jainism can be summarised in two words, namely *ahimsaa* ('non-violence and reverence for all life') and *anekaantavada* (pluralism) the two principles of peaceful co-existence, both in thoughts and action, for all living beings in the world: humans as well as the beings in the natural world. Observances of the principle of *ahimsaa* makes us to be truthful, honest, devoid of worldly desires, detached from material possessions, humble, friendly and respectful to all, and develop the virtue of forgiveness. Belief in *anekaanta* will make us open-minded, tolerant to others, understand other's point of view and the 'truth' through its many pathways.



## Judaism



Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people; its origin can be traced to Abraham and a chain of prophets following Moses to reform the faith over time. It believes in one and only one God who requires humans to serve and observe the Torah ('teaching') and commandments given to them. In their existence on the earth, humans have an opportunity to lead a life of righteousness and serve God's purpose. Judaism believes in the immortality of the soul, and life after death in heaven or hell, in accordance with earthly deeds. Judaism has four main divisions: orthodox, conservative, reform and liberal. Its population is estimated to be 13 million in the world; most residing in the USA and Israel; and 267,000 in the UK.

Judaism teaches its followers to live an active social life of righteousness, love and kindness for the welfare of society and God's creations. The basic ethical virtues consist of justice, mercy, righteousness, humility, and holiness. Judaism believes that only God is eternal, while the world is mortal. Judaism has a series of dietary regulations: food is either permitted (*kosher*), forbidden (*treif*) or neutral (*parve*), but these restrictions apply to animal products only; fruits and vegetables are, by definition, *kosher*.

The Shabbat (or Sabbath) is central to the rhythm of Jewish individual, family and communal life, observed as a day of worship, rest and peace, on Saturday, the seventh day, as this is believed to be the day on which God rested after creating the earth in six days.

## Sikhism

Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak (1469-1539 CE) in the Punjab, as an attempt to reconcile Hinduism and Islam, and was promoted by a succession of nine gurus, the last of whom was Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 CE). Sikhism is a monotheistic religion believing in the oneness of God and of humanity and that divinity lies within oneself; its teachings as revealed to the Gurus are found in the holy Sikh scripture the 'Guru Granth Sahib' (*Adi Grandh*), a copy of which is kept in every Gurudwara (Sikh temple). There are 20 million Sikhs in the world; the 2001 census recorded 336,000 Sikhs in the UK.

All Sikh men take the religious name Singh (lion) and all Sikh women have Kaur (princess), in order to promote equality and nullify caste. Sikhism, however, does have a number of sub-sects such as: *Namadhari*, *Akalis*, *Nirankaris*, *Nanak-panthi*, *Khalsa*. As an act of moral and practical symbolism, spiritual importance and a sign of obedience to the will of God, they wear the 'Five Ks': have uncut hair (*kesh*), a comb (*kangha*), a sword (*kirpan*), a bracelet (*kara*) and shorts (*kaccha*). Men are also required to wear a turban.

Sikhism believes in humanity and its true nature, karma, transmigration, salvation by God's grace with the aid of Guru and teachings laid down in Guru Granth Saheb.



## Zoroastrianism



Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, founded in Iran by Prophet Zarathustra (Zoroaster) between 1500 BCE to 600 BCE. He proclaimed the worship of Ahura Mazda (The Wise Lord) as the source of truth, righteousness, order and justice, and good mind. He called the people to the threefold ethic of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. From tenth century CE onwards, many Zoroastrians migrated to Gujarat and became known as the Parsis. Zoroastrianism has about 190,000 followers worldwide and 5,000 in Britain.

Zoroastrians believe in supreme God Ahura Mazda who has made the world with an ethical purpose, free from suffering and evil, and who has laid down responsibility on human beings to assist Him by living a life of righteousness and virtues such as truthfulness, chastity, charity and kindness. He called the people to the threefold ethic of good thoughts, good words and good deeds.

Zoroastrianism is also about action. Zoroastrians work towards improving the local community and society in general. They tend to give generously to charities and are often promote educational and social initiatives. The Parsi community in India is particularly known for its industrious and philanthropic contributions to the Indian society.

## Common Values

If we analyze the teachings of all the religions, we will find there is much more common. All teach humanity and its values such as non-violence, truthfulness, honesty, care of natural world, humbleness and helping each other for living together as cohesive community. Of course there are few differences, but they are not so great that they can cause conflicts and disharmony amongst the communities. The religious conflicts which we see around us are due to misunderstanding or misinterpretation by a few of their own sacred texts and their teachings, and also due to misinformation about other communities, their culture and faith.

We are living in Britain that has diverse communities, diverse culture and diverse faiths, Global conflicts affect us, but if we wish to live peacefully and happily as Big Society we will have to resolve our misunderstandings about others through dialogue. Dialogues, tolerance and respect for others will help us to live harmoniously with our neighbours in the Multifaith society.

**Face to Face and Side by Side:** a framework for partnership in our multi faith society: In July 2008 the Government launched a document after consultations with all the faith communities for inter faith interaction and faith communities working together for common good. Face to Face dialogue leads to people developing a better understanding of one another, including celebrating the values held in common as well as acknowledging distinctiveness and Side by Side collaborative social action involves people working together to achieve real and positive change within their local community.

Inter faith dialogue helps to build the understanding of the values held in common such as integrity in public life, care, compassion and respect, and collaborative social action involving different faith communities and wider civil society.

Both face to face dialogue and side by side collaborative social action can help to build cohesive, active and empowered communities for a successful and effective Big Society.

## Jain Society

Most of Jains now living in UK migrated directly from India in 1950s; others came in 1960s and 1970s from east African Countries such as Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and in recent years some who came for studies from India have settled after qualifications. Many of the Jains in UK live in around Greater London area and in Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham, Coventry, Luton, Northampton, and Wellingborough. Jains have long been engaged in business and finance. In the UK they are well represented in the professions of accountancy, medicine and pharmacy.

Jain Community or Sangha has two main monastic groupings the *Shvetambara* and *Digambara*; these terms are also used derivatively to describe their lay followers. The *Shvetambara* has further groupings of *Deravasi* (*murtipujak*), *Sthanakvasi* and *Terapanthi*. Because of their vows of strict 'non-violence and reverence of all life' the monks and nuns do not travel by vehicle and hence cannot come to UK, resulting in the absence of the lay followers' guiding force of the ascetics. The prayers and rituals for majority of Jains are performed in Gujarati language; few who originate from Northern India perform them in Hindi language.

Typical of Jain activity in the United Kingdom since the 1980s is the establishment of groups for community activities, resulting in 30 Jain Organisations. They have established consecrated major temples in Leicester and Potters bar and small *Digambar* one in Harrow; semi-consecrated temples in Kenton, Colindale, Croydon and Manchester. Most of the Jains have some sort of shrine for worship at home. They hire halls for observance of their sacred days, for community activities and religious education of their children, but they feel it is not the ideal situation and aspire to have their own places for their activities.

Jains are peace loving, law abiding people, tolerate other communities and try to live together as a cohesive unit. They are enterprising, hard working and settle well in communities where they live.

## Jain Values

Jains believe the aim of human life is to attain spiritual liberation. Their sacred texts describe living beings as 'worldly' or liberated. Worldly souls are engaged in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth due to attached *karma*, while liberated souls are eternal in permanent happiness and bliss, and do not have to take rebirth. The texts further mention that by following the path of Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct together, humans can attain spiritual liberation and live eternally in total bliss in the abode of the liberated souls.

Jain values and practices are meant to progress on the path of purification. They worship *Mahavira* and other *Tirthankaras* as an example and firmly believe in their teachings that the self-effort only can lead them to the path of spiritual liberation. *Mahavira's* teachings included the co-ordinated path of the 'Three Jewels': Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct; involvement in the welfare of others and the care for the natural world; the equality and pluralism, the life of equanimity and simplicity, and the obedience to the law of the land. He addressed the various problems of the day, such as the caste system, slavery, and equality of women, carnal desires, killing or harming life for religious rituals or pleasure of the senses. He taught the acceptance of multiple views - pluralism (*anekaantavada*) and qualifying dogmatic assertions - relative pluralism (*syaadavaada*) to understand multiple facets of the truth.

### He taught his followers to observe

- ⊗ *Ahimsaa* (non-violence and reverence for all life)
- ⊗ *Satya* (truthfulness, communication in a pleasant and non-hurtful manner that is free from falsehood)
- ⊗ *Asteya* (not stealing or taking anything which belongs to others including the states or nations, without their permission)
- ⊗ *Brahmacharya* (chastity and control over senses; for the ascetics total celibacy and for the laity faithfulness to one's spouse)
- ⊗ *Aparigraha* (non-attachment to material things)
- ⊗ *Austerities* (both external and internal) as a help to shed karma

The ascetics observe the above totally as far as humanly possible, while the laypersons observe them partially giving allowance to their worldly duties, will avoid all intentional violence, violence to mobile beings and are always vigilant in avoiding harm to any living being.

## Aspirations & Needs of Jains

### Awareness of Jainism

Since the Jain community has settled in UK recently, public in general have little awareness about Jains and their way of life. They cannot distinguish sometimes between Hinduism and Jainism. Of course Jains and Hindus have same culture; their religion differs. Jainism is now recognised as one of the nine major faiths by the Interfaith Network and public institutions.

In schools and other public institutions the awareness of Jainism is very important so that the authorities can provide the services appropriate to the needs of the Jain community.

One of the important tasks of the Jain community is to bring the awareness of Jainism in the public arena. Interfaith dialogues and activities have certainly brought this awareness at the national level in major public institutions. However local and grass root levels also require this awareness to be brought to them.

## **Jain way of life**

Jains believe in non violence and lays stress on the individual and self effort, equality, tolerance and respect to other faiths, philanthropy and non violence and respect for all life including the care for the natural world, environment and animals. Its teachings are logical, scientific, and if followed properly lead to the path of peace, blissfulness and spiritual liberation. It fits very well in the modern world and advocates a way of life that promotes friendship to all and malice to none. Jains are law abiding citizens with human values and believe living together in the society where they settle.

## **Jain Diet**

Jains are strict vegetarians; their religious life prohibits them harming any form of life, which has more than one-sense. Even while procuring plant food, they are very careful in the selection, preservation and cooking, so as to minimize violence to plants and other one-sense life. They do not take root vegetables and eggs. Jains are lacto-vegetarians; they take milk and milk products. The Jain diet is pure, nutritious and obtained without any overt violence and it sustains their physical and mental health: consisting of grains, pulses, milk, yoghurt (curd), ghee (clarified butter), buttermilk, vegetables and fruit. The Jain seers have advised diet excluding the items, which are produced by overt violence, and are not conducive to physical and mental health. Jain seers have observed duration and deterioration of various fresh foods, and suggested not eating it after its 'expiry' date.

Jain food is very tasty, nutritious and has a very varied repertoire of dishes. The dietary habits of Jains - eating regularly and slightly less than the capacity of one's stomach, avoiding eating at night, taking only acceptable foods and periodic fasting - keeps morbidity to a minimum.

Jains do eat manufactured or processed foods but take care that they do not contain animal products.

## **Infrastructure for the development of the Jain community relevant to the western world**

Since the Jain monks and nuns cannot come to the UK, the Jain community lacks the spiritual leadership and guidance. Although there are about 30 Jain organizations, but they are managed by voluntary workers who may not have appropriate skills and time. They require administrative and training set up similar to established faiths such as Christianity and Judaism. This is the question that the community has to address, if it wants to progress in preserving their heritage and way of life for the future generations.

## **Education for Jain heritage**

The Jain children require training in the Jain way of life, understanding the rituals and philosophy, learning the about the vast resource of Jain arts and culture. The community has to provide resources and infrastructure to set up training facilities within their set up and organizations. The Jain Academy has sponsored a course in Jainism at the De Montfort University in Leicester for three years; in the School of Oriental and African Studies, it sponsored a course for two years; established a Chair in Mumbai University and Department

of Jain studies in the Faculty of Comparative Religions in Antwerp. Jain Academy delivers lectures at various interfaith institutions and publishes articles and booklets. The Institute of Jainology runs course on Jainism and has taken on an important task of digitalizing sacred texts available in British Libraries and Museums and publishing them on the website. The Young Jains are organizing lectures on Jainism and some organizations such as Jain Samaj Europe, Veeryatan, and Magic Touch are running children's schools, but there is a gap ; lack of trained teachers, teaching in modern acceptable way and reaching to the whole community; and lack of resources that they can provide to the R E teachers in State and Public schools.

### **Training**

It is essential that Jains develop the capacity and skills for employment and public services. This will help them to look after the needs of the elderly, women and young persons. They also require knowledge about the use of public services such as local authorities, NHS, Social services and educational institutions. The community requires training and skills for participation in the civil society and charity and voluntary work.

### **Contribution of Jains in civil society**

The principles of non-violence and reverence for all life; acceptance of multiple views; belief in equality; human responsibilities and rights; activities in animal welfare; their concern for the environment and natural world; and their resilience for acceptance of the culture in which they settle have made them good and respectable neighbours. Their motto is to 'live and help to live'. These principles and their way of life indirectly percolate to their neighbours. This will help the society in general to be law abiding, respectful to others and diverse communities to live together in harmony.

### **Interfaith Organisations**

Interfaith organisations are of interest not just to those within the faith communities but also to the people working in many other contexts – from local authorities and other public agencies to youth organisations, schools, chaplaincies, voluntary organisations and increasingly, sporting and in the private sector

Among these interfaith organisations there are key national, regional and local organisations doing valuable work in the interfaith arena; the main national ones are Interfaith Network of UK and Faith based Regeneration Network. Every English region has regional interfaith organisations and most of the cities and counties have local Multifaith bodies. They offer vital resources to access interfaith expertise, opportunities for engagement with other programmes and assistance in developing interfaith projects and community cohesion. The details for the national organisations are available from the following websites:

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

[www.fbrn.org.uk](http://www.fbrn.org.uk)

[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk)



Many regional and local organisations have their own websites which are available on the Interfaith Network website. Many local authorities and the government provide useful resources and information for interfaith and community cohesion activities.

### **Highlights of Interfaith Week 2010 (21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November)**

Inter Faith Week 2010 is taking place in England and Wales from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November. The Week will include and highlight activities organised by bodies around the country designed to:

- ⊙ strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels in our increasingly diverse society
- ⊙ encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and co-operation
- ⊙ increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- ⊙ to gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally, as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations
- ⊙ increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs
- ⊙ encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

### **Some of the events taking place during this week are :**

- ⊙ Places of worship opening their doors to all
- ⊙ Women and interfaith dialogue workshops
- ⊙ Multifaith environmental projects
- ⊙ Civic events
- ⊙ Interfaith learning events in schools
- ⊙ Day event on 'older people, spirituality and health'



# Jain Network Organise an Interfaith Day at the Jain Centre on 21st November 2010.

## Theme: Jain contribution in the Public Life

Venue : Jain Centre, 64-68 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5DR  
Date : Sunday 21st November 2010  
Registration : 10am -10.30am: Refreshments available

### Session 1 (*Ahimsa*)

#### Beyond Faith Boundaries: Respect for Life, The Basis of a cohesive community

10.30 am	Reflections: Sister Maureen
10.35 am	Lightening the lamp by dignitaries
10.43 am	Welcome address: Dr Natubhai Shah
10.48 am	Chair: Matthew Offord MP
10.50 am	Launch of Interfaith Book on Marriage:
10.55 am	Mayor of Harrow Cllr Ashad Omar
11.00 am	1. Jain Perspective: Dr Vinod Kapashi
10.10 am	2. Christian Perspective: Rev Robin Thompson
11.20 am	3. Hindu Perspective: Mr Madhava Turmella
11.30 am	4. Jewish Perspective: Mrs Leonie Lewis
11.40 am	Mayor of Barnet Cllr Anthony Finn
11.45 am	Matthew Offord MP
12.00 noon	Workshops:
	i) Respect for human dignity
	ii) Gender equality
	iii) Respect for natural world
	iv) Respect for public property
12.30 pm	Plenary session & Panel discussion
13.00 pm	Lunch



On this occasion, His Worshipful Mayors of Barnet and Harrow launched an Interfaith Book on Marriage **“Reflections and Understandings Nine Faiths in Britain”** published by the Jain Academy. It is perhaps a first publication that gives contextualised information about marriage beliefs and customs of nine major faiths practised in Britain namely, Baha'i, Buddhist, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Sikhism and Zoroastrianism. As mentioned by the Mayors and participants, this publication will be useful for prospective couples and social services and educational departments. The book can be obtained at the Jain Centre, 64-68 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5DR.



## **Session 2 (*Anekaantavada*)**

### **Meaningful Multifaith engagement: importance of pluralism**

14.00 pm	Chair / Facilitator: Hon. Barney Leith
14.05 pm	1. Jain Perspective: Rajeesh Shah
14.15 pm	2. Sikh Perspective: Prof Harbhajan Singh
14.25 pm	3. Zoroastrian Perspective: Ms Sarosh Jehangir
14.35 pm	4. .Bahai Perspective: Hon. Barney Leith
14.45 pm	5. Reflections
14.55 pm	6. Buddhist Perspective: Rev. Seela Wimala
15.05 pm	7. Muslim Perspective: Lord Hameed
15.15 pm	8 National Perspective: Harriet Crabtree & Warwick Hawkins
15.30 pm	Tea & coffee
15.45 pm	Workshops:
	i) Meaning of Life
	ii) Respect of places of worship
	iii) Living together in diverse community
16.15 pm	Plenary session & Panel discussion
16.50 pm	Closing remarks and end of the session



### **Relations with other faiths and why it is important for Jains to participate in interfaith activities**

Mahavira's teachings of 'acceptance of multiple views' - pluralism, 'qualified dogmatic assertions' – relative pluralism have made Jains respectful and tolerant to other faiths. Some leaders of the Jain community take active part in the interfaith activities and support the movement without any reservations. The interfaith work has helped the Jains for establishing their identity in the major public institutions and government bodies. Interfaith and Multifaith activities will assist the authorities to understand the needs of children in schools. The understanding of Jain values by employers, businesses, professionals, public servants and workers in the hospitality industry will help the community to get better services.

This story tells us why it is important to do interfaith work if you are a Jain.

*Case Study – speech by Jyoti Mehta at the Inter Faith Week Launch 2009*

*Respected friends, good afternoon. My name is Jyoti and I am a practicing Jain from Croydon. I work as a production assistant for Red Bee Media, which provides subtitles for television. When I am not subtitling the news, I enjoy dedicating my time to the Jain community and interfaith activities.*

*I am currently one of the youngest Trustees of the Inter Faith Network, and this is the result of a journey which started at university when my interest in interfaith dialogue was really sparked. One of the foundational qualities described in Jainism is maitri, or universal friendship. The idea of universal friendship had always taught me to theoretically extend friendship to people of all faiths, but it was only when I became involved with other faith communities that I could actively practice this friendship. Engaging in interfaith dialogue at university educated me, inspired me and provided me with new friends. This ancient philosophy of universal friendship, maitri, was no longer academic for me, but real and I*

*understood how important it is not just for social harmony, but also for spiritual progression. We are one of the smallest faith communities in this country, but we are absolutely committed to extending our friendship as far as it can reach throughout society.*

*It is interesting to note that our translation of maitri is not just friendship, but universal friendship, and this is because we embrace all living souls, including plants and animals into this companionship. The central philosophy of Jainism is Ahimsa, non-violence. Expressed in positive terms, this means compassionate love. Because we consider nature and animals to be fellow sentient souls, Jains are committed vegetarians, and we see this as key to protecting animals, the environment and even humanity. Vegetarianism is not just a diet for us – it is a way in which we practically express our compassion. By consuming a non-violent diet, this extrapolates for us into a wider aim to be non-violent in every single thing that we do, in thought, speech and action. As a result of this central philosophy of Ahimsa, the Jain community has for centuries been closely associated with environmentalism, sustainable living and supporting of animal welfare and animal sanctuaries. The Jain community in the UK, including the youth, continue to live by these virtues and share them with wider society.*

### Summary:

The participation of the Jain community in the interfaith week 2009 and 2010 has helped the community to come in contact with members of other faiths and public institutions. The celebrations on 21<sup>st</sup> November at the Jain Centre were very well received by the interfaith community. We hope that the Jain community as a whole participates in the interfaith activities and be an example for community cohesion – the promotion of the unique principle of *Anekaantavaada* laid down by Bhagwan Mahavir.

We are thankful to the Department of Communities and Local Government to provide resources for the celebration of the Interfaith Week and this publication.

### MISSION

Development of Jain Community, promotion of Jain values and Jain awareness in the wider communities

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide facilities for worship and study for all Jains
- To promote education of Jain culture and society
- To provide welfare facilities for improving the quality of life of Jains and the wider community

## Prayer for peace:

Peace and universal love is the teaching of Mahavira.  
The Lord has preached, equanimity is the dharma  
Forgive do I creatures all, and let all creatures forgive me.  
Unto all have I amity, and unto none enmity.

"Do not injure any living being."  
It is the eternal way of spiritual life.  
Violence causes of all miseries in the world,  
and it keeps the soul in spiritual bondage.

A weapon, howsoever powerful it may be,  
Can always be superseded by a superior one,  
No weapon can conquer the passions and the self,  
Conquering self is the meaning of life, a path to bliss and peace.

May the entire universe be blissful;  
May all beings be engaged in each other's well being.  
May all weakness, sickness and faults vanish;  
May everyone be healthy, peaceful, and blissful everywhere



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