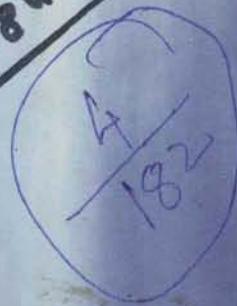


Issue No. 1  
July - September 1999  
International Quarterly Publication

# JAIN SPIRIT

ADVANCING JAINISM INTO THE FUTURE

6842



LIFESTYLE

WORSHIP

ART

YOUTH

ENVIRONMENT

**JAINISM  
- A PATH TO  
PURIFICATION**

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# JAIN SPIRIT

...to the present...



Photo: Young Jains

# From the past...



Photo: Chandu Shah

# ...for our future!

[www.jainspirit.org](http://www.jainspirit.org)



## JAIN SPIRIT TEAM

Jain Spirit was founded in 1998 for the following purposes:

1. To inform and inspire Jains world-wide and people interested in Jainism;
2. To dispel myths, illusions and misinformation about the Jain tradition;
3. To help protect, preserve and promote the sacred texts, art, stories and rituals;
4. To nurture a Jain renaissance;
5. To foster a Jain solidarity, through a non-sectarian outlook;
6. To place Jainism onto the world map as a distinct religion with a deep history and philosophy;
7. To relate Jain tradition to modern concerns and lifestyle;
8. To convert Jains to Jainism.

We invite our readers to send letters, excellent Jain photos, clippings, and reports on events and encourage others to subscribe.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## EDITORIAL

Dear Jain Spirit readers,

It is with great pleasure and excitement that I write the editorial of the inaugural issue of Jain Spirit. The mission of this magazine is simple: to make one of the oldest religions of the world accessible to people from all walks of life. We are hoping to reach out to both Jains and non-Jains and the contents are designed to appeal to both young and old. Through the pages of Jain Spirit, we wish to make the fundamental values of Jainism understandable. We also wish to celebrate its great wisdom and beauty by portraying the very best of Jain art, history, culture and philosophy. Recognising the great strengths of the past, we wish to move to the present. In particular, we hope to make this tradition accessible by the young generation, as they are the key to its future.

With this in mind, this first issue contains articles on philosophy, lifestyle, worship, art, youth, kids, environment, history and workplace. The contributors include eminent scholars like Prof. Padmanabh Jaini and Acharya Mahapragya and youngsters like Neel Bhuvra who is eighteen years old. We have interviewed campaigners like Dr. Michael Tobias and Mrs. Maneka Gandhi and artists like Mrs. Jayshree Khimasia and Mr. Kamal Shah. We also provide news of major Jain events all over the world. There is no doubt that the Jain tradition has had a long and distinguished heritage, and this is still alive in the hearts and minds of all Jains in different degrees. We would like you to read the pages that follow and give us any comments or suggestions you may have for the kinds of articles and information you would like to see in future issues. Jain Spirit is from all Jains for all Jains. Our mission is non-sectarian, and we hope this magazine will help Jains to see the significant scope for unity without compromising the rich diversity of Jainism as it is lived today.

We sincerely wish that you will take some time out to savour Jain Spirit and share it with your friends and relatives. If you like what you read, please help us to reach out to more and more people by acting as our ambassadors. Photocopy the subscription form and give it to your friends – you are our best promoters, and we promise you valuable punya points! In this way, you will help keep the great Jain tradition alive in the hearts and minds of people wherever you live. Such actions will provide valuable encouragement to the team and all our supporters.

A large number of people have helped us to come this far. These include the authors of the articles, artists, photographers, financial supporters, publishers and volunteers. We are grateful to all of them for their support at such a crucial stage. We hope we can continue to count on this support in the future, and more of you will come forward to help this project succeed.

Jai Jinendra,

Atul K. Shah,  
Executive Editor  
United Kingdom, July 1999  
Email: editors@jainspirit.org





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# GLOBAL JAIN NEWS



## NORTH AMERICA

### JAINA CONVENTION – Philadelphia, July 2-5 1999

The tenth biennial JAINA Convention is expecting some seven to ten thousand Jains from all over North America. The event will be held at the massive Valley Forge Convention Centre near Philadelphia. Planned for the Independence Day Holiday weekend of July 2-

5, this event has been attracting Jains from all over North America for the past twenty years, and is becoming ever more popular. The Convener of the Convention is Dr. Devendra T Peer who is President of the Samarpan Jain Sangh. He is assisted by Dr. Dhiraj Shah, President of the Federation of Jain Associations in North America.

The planned events include lectures on different aspects of Jainism, workshops, exhibitions, and cultural programmes every evening. It is an event targeted for a family audience, and people come to meet fellow Jains and family members who live in different parts of North America. This event is perhaps the largest gathering of Jains outside India. The official launch of **Jain Spirit** will be done at this convention. The event also attracts delegates from all over the world, notable among which is a youth delegation from the Young Jains of the United Kingdom, which has been a regular attendee for the last ten years.

### PROF. HARISH JAIN ON HUMAN RIGHTS REVIEW COMMITTEE.

A four-member panel headed by former Supreme Court of Canada justice Gerard LeForest has been named to conduct a sweeping review of Canada's human rights law and the watchdog body that enforces it.

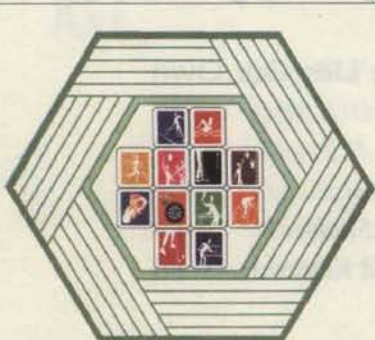
The LeForest panel has one year to report back to Justice Minister Anne McLellan with recommendation on whether to broaden the 22-year-old law to prohibit discrimination on other grounds such as "social condition" or in other words, low-income status.

The other Members of the review panel include Professor Harish Jain, who teaches at McMaster University's Faculty of Business specializing in systemic discrimination issues. He served as a panel member of the Human Rights Tribunal from 1986 to 1992 and has done extensive work in the fields of employment equity and affirmative action. Prof. Jain is a senior member of Toronto's Jain community and President of the International Mahavir Jain Mission (Canada).

## AFRICA - KENYA

### OYLMpics

For over forty years, the Oshwal Association of East Africa, a Jain community organisation, has been co-ordinating a Sports Festival organised by the Oshwal Youth League (OYL). Called the OYLMpics, this event has been attracting a growing representation from the United Kingdom, and this year, over 100 delegates attended this event. Held during the Easter Holidays, youths compete in a whole range of sports from table-tennis and badminton to swimming, squash, bridge, and even volleyball. This year, all the games will be hosted by the Nairobi branch of this community. Competitions are banded in age groups, with children as young as eight years also competing. Sports is a very important way of attracting young people to the community and bringing them together. This event has been instrumental in uniting the East African Oshwal Jain community for many decades.





## FOOD FOR LIFE CYCLE MARATHON

In October 1998, the Young Jains of Nairobi organised a Food for Life Cycle marathon where some seventy cyclists cycled for three days from Mt. Kenya all the way to Nairobi. Among the participants were many children. The significant amount of money raised will feed over 9000 people every month for life, a project co-ordinated by the Hare Krishna centre in Nairobi. The Young Jains have also adopted a



school near Thika called Gatunyo Primary School which regularly receives financial and material support – the African children who study there have learnt to recite the Navkar Mantra and even other Jain prayers. The school was totally run down when the Young Jains decided to support it, and its success has lifted the morale of the whole village.

Print by:  
Kamal Shah

## UNITED KINGDOM

### YOUNG JAINS OF THE UK

Dr. L.M. Singhvi, the former Indian ambassador to the UK and one of the most prominent Jains in the world today once remarked that the work of the Young Jains of the UK is exemplary in bringing young people together and making Jainism relevant to modern concerns. This dynamic youth organisation recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and is growing from strength to strength. It has been instrumental in the founding of a number of major projects in the UK and Kenya including the Chandana Vidya Peeth School in London and Nairobi, the Young Jains of Kenya, and more recently, the launch of this international magazine **Jain Spirit**. Dr. Singhvi also remarked that the formula of the London Young Jains should be spread out throughout the world as there is an urgent need to make Jainism and its ancient wisdom appealing to young people. Why not visit its website today: [www.youngjains.org.co.uk](http://www.youngjains.org.co.uk)



### JAIN LEADERS

Over two hundred JAIN LEADERS and community workers from all over the UK gathered to celebrate Mahavir Jyanti at the offices of H.E. Lalit Mansingh, the Indian High Commissioner to the UK on Saturday 10th April. The High Commissioner remarked on the great wisdom of Lord Mahavir and his tremendous influence on the entire history of India. He appreciated the contribution of the Jains to the growth of India and recognised the unity and solidarity of the UK Jain community. Other speakers included Sadhvi Shilapi and Mr. Mahesh Shah and the event was co-ordinated by the Institute of Jainology. Children from the community gave a small variety performance and everyone appreciated the event.

### MEGHRAJ ART GALLERY

The Meghraj Art Gallery located in central London continues to provide a unique platform for artists from all over the world. Mr. Raju Shah, its Director, explained: "We thought there is scope for such a gallery in London, as there is no other gallery catering for such artists: Indian artists and British artists doing Indian subjects. We have a lot of western galleries and they do not give a platform for Indian



painting students. We had the space and we thought why not give it to the artists as a non-commercial gallery." Located at the Headquarters of Meghraj Bank in WC1, they have had two major exhibitions recently – one by Mrs. Jayshree Khimasia and the other by Kamal Shah, both of whom are Jain. The Bank is owned by the philanthropic Meghji Pethraj Shah family originating from Jamnagar, India. The gallery is a unique example of how some Jain businesses actively participate in encouraging community and cultural activities. Explained Mr. Raju Shah "When we opened the gallery, people came that had never been to a gallery before. They did not



know what an art gallery is all about. The fact that they have come here is an achievement really. We are trying to promote awareness amongst people about art." Certainly Mrs. Jayshree Khimasia was in tears when she expressed her gratitude to Meghraj for such a major platform for her art. For details about Gallery events and timetable, telephone 0171-2695500 during office hours. Website: [www.meghraj.com](http://www.meghraj.com)

*Print by:  
Jayshree Khimasia*



### CHANDANA VIDYA PEETH

On 3rd April 1999, a grand variety show including dances, plays and music was performed by students of Chandana Vidya Peeth at the Brent Town Hall in North London. Over a thousand Jains attended the celebration of Mahavir Jyanti – it is always special when children get together to celebrate his birthday.

### WORLD COUNCIL OF JAIN ACADEMIES LAUNCHED

The World Council of Jain Academies ("WCJA") has been formed by the Jain Academy of the UK and Jain Academy Foundation of North America (JAFNA). The aims and objectives of WCJA are the academic educational activities for the study of Jain culture and society in its traditional and contemporary aspects. The WCJA hopes to involve other Jain institutions world-wide in the academic study of Jainism. It will comprise of four administrative zones: Europe, North America, India and the rest of the world.

As its first activity, the WCJA will sponsor a Jain Studies course at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London that begins from the October 1999 and an annual lecture on Jainism at SOAS on 2nd November 1999. It is also planning: annual lectures at various universities, travelling scholarships, training of Indian scholars in English and presentation skills, and a conference in the year 2000, multimedia presentation projects and the teaching and development of educational materials, including Website projects and distance learning, publication of literature in simplified English, establishment of Jain libraries or the donation of books to various universities, and a bibliography of Jain books published in European languages. It will co-ordinate and promote various academic institutions in India and overseas, and will make representations to governments and non-government organisations.

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact either Dr Natubhai Shah, at the Headquarters and European Office, 20 James Close, London NW11 9QX (UK), Tel: (+44 181) 455 5573 Fax: (+44 181) 922 7619 or Dr Premchand Gada at the North American Office, 4410 50th Street Lubbock TX 79414 (USA), Tel: (+1 806) 793 8555 Fax: (+1 806) 793 8556



## INDIA

### DR. TATIA PASSES AWAY

Dr. Nathmal Tatia, an illustrious and eminent Jain scholar and a living legend in the field of Jain studies, passed away peacefully in a Calcutta hospital in February 1999. He has written and translated many books on Jainism, most recently, the 'Tattvartha Sutra – That Which Is', which was published by Harper Collins and the International Sacred Literature Trust in 1994. Dr. L.M. Singhvi commented in his foreword

to the book: 'Dr. Tatia's translation is at once simple, elegant, authentic, lucid and faithful. The result is a unique contribution to the sacred literature of the world.' In 1977 he became Director of the Jain Vishwa Bharti Research Center in Rajasthan, where he concentrated his energies on research in Jainism.



## JAINS AROUND THE WORLD MOURN LOSS OF A DYNAMIC LEADER - ASHOK JAIN

By Dr. Dhiraj Shah, President, JAINA

Eminent Jain leader, industrialist and media baron Ashok Jain died in Cleveland, OH on Feb 3, following complications arising from heart transplantsurgery. He was 65.

A devout follower of the Jain religion and respected leader of the Jain community was mourned by leaders and members of the Jain community around the globe. He was not only a pillar of the Jain community, but creator of the largest newspaper empire in India. He also owned the largest Jute mill in West Bengal and Rohtas industries in Bihar.

President K. R. Narayan, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Congress party President Sonia Gandhi were among the host of politicians, leading industrialists, heads of media organizations and religious leaders who expressed grief over Jain's death and praised his contribution to the field of media and literature.

National Institutions of the Jain community together held a memorial meeting on Feb 7 in New Delhi to pay homage to one of their community's most eminent members. The all India Jain revival Foundation conferred the community's highest honor - The JAIN RATNA - on Ashok Jain "in recognition of his services to the community and the nation." His memorable contribution as president of the 1993 Mahamasthikabhishekha committee would always be remembered.

He took keen interest in JAINA's activities and received JAINA leaders when they were in New Delhi. His other major contributions included his work as a managing trustee of the Bharatiya Jnanpith, an organization devoted to the promotion of creative writings in Indian languages. The annual Jnanpith award by the organization is the most prestigious in the country.

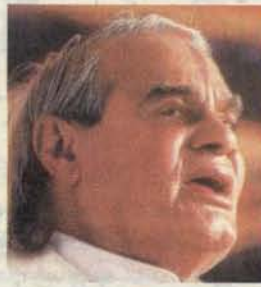
He was not only a Jain leader but also an eminent media personality, a businessman and a philanthropist. He was known for his social work and many charitable endowments.

Adlai Stevenson once commented about a man and his contribution: "It is not the years in a life that counts; it is the life in the years lived". We will miss him.

## MALAYSIA

For the first time this year, the Jains in Malaysia celebrated Mahavir Jayanti at their residence, with the Lord's Blessings and the support from friends and well wishers around the world. With this beginning they hope and wish to celebrate it every year now with different themes connected with Lord Mahavir's birth and life.

## 2600TH ANNIVERSARY OF LORD MAHAVIR'S BIRTH



Prime Minister Vajpayee has made a statement announcing the commemoration of the 26th birth centenary of Bhagwan Mahavir Swami (2600 years after the birth of Lord Mahavir), including the organisation of a major inter-faith conference to mark this historic occasion. India will host this major series of events in the year

2001. Jains from all over the world have been requested to take part in these celebrations. Present at the launch of the new Mahavir Aradhna Kendra in New Delhi were representatives from all the four major sects. The Kendra is a new development aimed to unite Jains and incorporates a museum of Jain Art, History and Culture. The speakers included Dr. L. M. Singhvi, former Indian ambassador to the UK, Mr. Deepchand Gardi, Acharya Vidyasagarji and Acharya Mahapragyaji. All the speakers emphasised the vital need for unity among Jains and congratulated the Prime Minister on his bold initiative. Mr. Vajpayee also announced his intentions to ban all mechanical slaughterhouses and the export of meat by India.

## JAIN ACADEMIES INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION (JAIN)

A federation was formed of various Jain Academies on January 1, 1999 in Bombay in the presence of Dignitaries like Shri L. M. Singhvi, Shri Deepchandbhai Gardi, Shri C. N. Sanghavi, Shri Kumarpal Desai, Shri Nemubhai Chandaria and various JAINA leaders, Drs. Dhiraj Shah, Manoj Dharamsi and Pravin Mehta. The Academy has centers at De Montfort University, UK; Bombay University, Rajkot University and M. S. University -Baroda.



*We are grateful to "Hinduism Today" magazine for pre-launch support and advice.*

*For more information please visit:*

*<http://www.hindu.org/ht/>*



# PROMOTING JAINISM TO FRENCH SPEAKING PEOPLE

By PIERRE AMIEL

French tourists, when going to India, find many remains of the development of Jainism such as cave-temples, temple-cities, stupas, pillars, sculptures. They are fascinated by what they discover at Palitana, Girnar, Sammed-Shikhar, Sravana-Belagola, Ellora, and many other places. They have never heard of Jainism before. Some, when seeing white monks and nuns walking with a handkerchief in front of their mouths, think it is because the air in India is as polluted as in Japan, or sometimes as in the large cities in France. Some are perplexed when they see a huge image of Bahubali, with nude monks at his feet praising him. They suppose it is the ancestor of some Indian king or some Hindu divinity, like Siva or Vishnu. If they ask somebody who this man is they will be told he is a Jain Saint, a model of self-denial for monks aspiring to moksha.

When returning home these tourists will perhaps be happy to learn more about Jainism or will forget forever what they saw in India, already preparing for new adventures in future holidays.

Surely you will think, why should French people, who are so proud of culture, ignore what Jainism is? It is a fact that they know nothing about it. The reasons for this are many. One of these reasons is that Jains are not interested in preaching as compared to a large majority of other religions, like Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and others. We find in France numerous books about Buddhism, about Christianity, Islam, Judaism, we see numerous Churches, Temples, Mosques, Synagogues, but no Jain temple, and very few pages to read about Jainism.

As French people don't learn religions of the world at school they are limited to their own culture. In the UK and the USA, in ancient English colonies, where Jain communities live, many books in English exist in the market and we find Jain temples in these countries. In France there is no established Jain community and no Jain centre can be found.

But, you will ask me, why are you attracted by such a religion, such a philosophy? My relationship to Jainism is the result of a long period of spiritual quest. It all started, by my practising yoga. I had the good fortune to have a young Indian Brahmin as my teacher, who also taught me plenty of things about India: its history, its philosophies, its religions, its arts and so on. I bought books about it and I read in them that Jainism is a philosophy that claims non-violence as a major principle. When going to the "Musée Guimet Library" in Paris, I found many books in English together with magazines like "Jain Journal"; I became fascinated by what I read. I discovered the long history of Jainism in India, its splendid temples and remains, its sacred scriptures, and so on.

With the kind help of Dr. Sulekh Jain, president of JAFNA, and of Alkit Malde and his family, I attended the "Young Jains Convention" in London, in 1996. What a success the event was! Dr. Sulekh Jain decided at that Convention to encourage me to give to a publisher in Paris my translations into French of two splendid books in English on Jainism. So last year, my translation of "Lord Mahavira" by Bool Chand and Sagarmal Jain was published and this year "Aspects of Jaina Religion" by Dr. Vilas Adinath Sangave, with the authors encouragement. With these two books it is largely possible for French speaking people to have easy access to Jainism. These books are now in bookshops and some even in libraries for students.

French people may now see that non-violence is the basic principle of Jainism. Such a principle may inspire governments to prevent wars in many countries where they tend to develop. French people also want to see less violence, especially in the larger cities where it is a common action from young people. They wish that violence were avoided on TV and in films. French people too are in favour of peace in the world and Jainism is a way in which this can be achieved.



Sulekh Jain with Mr. & Mrs. Amiel in France

The French are more and more for the defence of nature and the environment. Jainism with its "Declaration on nature", presented on the 23rd of October 1990, is a living example of what to do on that matter. Non-stealing and truth are also Jain principles and rules that can be applied in order to battle corruption. May the 21st century be inspired by the Jain spirit or living. Right faith in human values, in the teaching of Mahavira and other Great Heroes. Right knowledge of what is good for humanity. Right conduct as shown and preached by the Conquerors, the Jina and all leaders of peace. These are the true elements of the path to a better world, to a better existence, to a better confidence in our splendid destiny, if we make the necessary effort.

Jai Jinendra!

Books by Pierre Amiel in French: "Mahavira, le Grand Heros des Jains" by Bool Chand and "Le Jainisme, Philosophie et Religion de L'Inde" by Dr. Vilas Sangave.

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06140 Vence, France

Email: [contact@maisonneuve-et-larose.com](mailto:contact@maisonneuve-et-larose.com)





## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*The magazine sounds like a great idea and I'm sure it will be a great success. It is only in this way that geographical, social and age boundaries can be crossed.*

PAUL DUNDAS  
SENIOR LECTURER IN SANSKRIT  
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH (UK)

*The proposal for the Jain Spirit is an excellent one and I look forward to the first issue of the magazine.*

RAJU SHAH, DIRECTOR  
MEGHRAJ ART GALLERY,  
MEGHRAJ COURT,  
18 JOCKEY'S FIELDS,  
LONDON, WC1R 4BW.

*I feel that the magazine should very clearly put out the message to the whole world about the applicability of Jain philosophy in modern life. There is no alternative but to adopt the principles of Jainism if our civilisation is to survive.*

- a. Non-violence in actions (Ahimsa)
- b. Non-violence in thoughts (Anekantavada)
- c. Non-possession of matter (Aparigraha)

*These three precepts are urgently required to be put before human civilisation.*

*Jainism is a Social System of Life and we should bring out aspects of successful applications of the Jain way of living. I wish your new enterprise all the success.*

SHASHIKANT MEHTA,  
RAJKOT,  
INDIA

*The visions and objectives of Jain Spirit deserve appreciation from all who care for Jainism and its values. The planned feature articles have educational value. I hope that the articles will include the*

*matter for both the traditional and contemporary societies, awareness of true Jain values and their positive aspects, and research based articles. I also pray that the editors will be bold enough to give importance to the objectives of Jain Spirit. Wish you all the success in your venture,*  
DR. NATUBHAI SHAH, JAIN ACADEMY,  
LONDON

*I am in receipt of your brochure on Jain spirit. It is a bold and visionary move and I have noted your efforts with appreciative awe. I salute you and wish you good luck.*

DILIP V. SHAH, SECRETARY, JAINA  
PHILADELPHIA,

*All major religious traditions have scores of dailies, weeklies and monthly magazines in the English language but the non-violent Jain tradition hasn't had any so far. Your initiative is a constructive step towards attempting to fill this vacuum. I have read the plans with tremendous interest. I would request you not to label articles as contributions from a particular sect since it violates the very spirit of non-sectarian Jainism that you want to project. I am pleased to learn that your venture has been hailed by several international directors and financial support is trickling in. I am sanguine about its success since both Satish and Atul have considerable professional background, experience and above all the insight to the needs of the Jain world today.*

DR. S. L. GANDHI,  
JAIPUR,  
INDIA

*As a Jain, I am very disappointed about the continual practice of 'gheeboli' or auction-style fund-raising at all major Jain festivals. I believe that this 'ritual' takes up a lot of valuable time, bores most of the audience (especially the children and youths) and usually raises very little money.*

*There are many alternative methods of fund-raising which do not insult the precious time of the audience and I believe, can be even more successful. Lord Mahavir showed us a path of simplicity and charity which need not require us to show off our wealth or to make it the focus of all our events. Poor Jains who cannot afford to donate must feel quite awkward when they attend such events, and I am sure that as Jains, we do not wish to discriminate. Please let us resolve to adapt alternative methods, and also not give too much attention to money at our festivals.*

Jai Jinendra,  
JAYESH KOTHARI,  
HESTON  
UK

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## LIFESTYLE:

# WHY I ADMIRE JAINS

BY MICHAEL GIANNELLI

**L**IKE MOST STUDENTS of philosophy and religion, I have long been aware of Jainism, but my personal introduction to Jains resulted from my work as an animal rights activist. My admiration for these Jain friends and my respect for the profound tradition which they represent really began with our alliance to protect animals from exploitation. Over the years, however, my appreciation has expanded, based upon my growing awareness of the cultural values which Jainism has long offered to the world. I would like to mention a few of these elements as I understand them.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD** - In welcome contrast to the proprietary materialism so characteristic of Western cultures, Jains look at the world through the gentle eyes of humane stewards. Consistent with the fundamental principle of Ahimsa, Jains attempt to practice nonviolence in relationship to other people, to animals and to the environment as a whole. No other ancient tradition has more consistently resisted the unfortunate human tendency toward aggression and militarism. In this era of recurring wars, excessive consumerism, ecological destruction, and gross violation of human and animal rights, one would be hard-pressed to find a value which is more greatly needed in the modern world.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION** - Jains place an exceptionally high value on learning, knowledge and rationality. But unlike many other traditions which view science and religion as being in essential conflict, incorporated into the Jain world view are modern scientific thinking and regard for the potential benefits of technology wisely used. This outlook ensures that Jainism will remain relevant to changing times and is a great advantage in the perpetual struggle to adjust to new challenges.

**ELEVATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES** - Thousands of years before the French revolution, the American revolution, the U.S. Constitution, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement, Jains espoused and practiced the doctrine that all human beings should be treated as equals. Rejecting the historically concurrent and widespread infliction of slavery, the caste system, the subordination of women, and the sacrifice of humans and animals, Jains long ago set an egalitarian example which still serves as a beacon of enlightenment for advocates of a democratic philosophy.

**TOLERANCE FOR DISSENTING OPINION** - Most religious and philosophical traditions have shown a regrettable propensity for dogmatism and prejudice toward those who hold dissenting opinions and values. Although deeply rooted in solid conviction, Jains have resolutely cultivated a system which acknowledges the relativity of knowledge and which resists the temptation to arrogantly view one's group as the only people chosen to carry "the truth" to the world. The Jain perspective readily accepts that non-Jains have made important contributions to the development of ethics, religion, philosophy, social values and in many other ways.

**RESPECT FOR THE ARTS** - In societies such as the United States, the importance of artistic inspiration and expression are, at best, compartmentalized into a role

*I admire Jains because they seek to embody the best of seeming opposites: They are steeped in rich and ancient tradition, yet thoroughly modern in their outlook*



subordinate to that of science, technology and commerce. In the language of cognitive psychology, Westerners place greater value on "left brain" modes of thinking—which emphasize linear and analytic modes of perception—over "right brain" modes of thinking—which are characterized by holistic and intuitive modes of perception. Jains understand that these two forms of information processing need to be balanced for the optimal evolution of human potential. In the service of that ideal, art, sculpture, music, dance and even architecture have played a central and honored role in the manifestation of Jain tradition. Art is seen neither as the exclusive province of the elite, nor as a segregated activity of no practical relevance to daily living. Through artistic creativity, the sublime can be injected into daily activities, and the past may be kept alive in the present.

**HONORING SPIRITUAL VALUES** - My professional education is that of a clinical psychologist. Although I find substantial value in that discipline, in my view virtually all Western theories of psychology (from psychoanalysis to behaviorism and the many schools in between) have inherent limitations when seeking to address the complexity and the profundity of the human condition. Understanding the emotional, the behavioral and the cognitive elements within each human being is a necessary but not sufficient basis for forming a general theory of humanity. Missing from this equation is the recognition that people (indeed, all living beings) have a spiritual dimension to their identity. It would be highly presumptuous on my part to say what that dimension is precisely, or what others should believe.

Nevertheless, I think that Jainism has much to teach us about this spiritual quest because for thousands of years it has brought forth wise masters who have devoted their lives to this most important of inquiries: What is our ultimate identity and most fundamental relationship to the universe of which we are an expression?

In summary, I admire Jains because they seek to embody the best of seeming opposites: They are steeped in rich and ancient tradition, yet thoroughly modern in their outlook; they hold high regard for ancient wisdom, but have a healthy appetite for scientific discovery and rational debate; they are vigorous and consistent proponents of their values, yet they exercise humility and tolerance for persons of different persuasions; they are not preoccupied with materialism, but they are successful at securing the practical, financial means for quality of living, and most generous in sharing these resources with others; and while they are solemn critics of injustice and exploitation, nevertheless on a personal level they maintain the congenial attitude that life is a divine gift to be enjoyed by all.

My association with my Jain friends has enriched me in many ways and I hope to give back something of value. It is my earnest desire that the maximum number of other people and animals will benefit from the blessings which Jainism offers to our little planet, a world still so very much in need of peace, justice and ethical maturity.

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L. M. Singhvi:  
Global Ambassador of Jainism



Architecture has played a central and honored role in the manifestation of Jain tradition



Through artistic creativity, the past may be kept alive in the present.



People have a spiritual dimension to their identity





Illustration: Meditation by Kamal Shah

# JAIN MEDITATION – A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR BEGINNERS

BY CHITRABHANU

## Place

First, find a quiet corner in your house where you can meditate. Make it a plain and simple place with a little fresh air and very little noise. Pick a spot where you feel relaxed and comfortable. To avoid distractions many people just use a simple wall in their meditation spot. Or you may want to place a beautiful picture there, or a graceful vase with a single flower, or another inspiring image. Any arrangement or painting should be symmetrical and peace-giving. Modern paintings which are distorted or very stimulating may be good at other times, but not during meditation. The picture reflects

on the brain cells and they pick up what is in front of you. That is why the statues in temples are so beautiful and peaceful, with serene faces and sweet smiles. They create an atmosphere of peace, as you should do in choosing your place of meditation.

## Time

Next, select one special time each day for your meditation. It may be in the morning, in the afternoon or in the evening; it does not matter what time of the day as long as you have time for yourself and no other duties to perform just then so that you will not be disturbed. If you are busy with other things when you meditate, your mind will be loaded or bombarded with all your obligations. So make a peaceful time for yourself. Decide that you are entitled to twenty-four minutes a day just for you. Aren't you entitled to allow yourself one minute of peace each hour of the day? If you feel that it is absolutely impossible for you to find twenty-four minutes in a day, this does not suggest that meditation is not for you, but that meditation is a necessity for you. If our priorities are so arranged that you cannot carve out a brief period each day to come to yourself, your priorities need reordering. If you choose the same time every day to meditate, your body will gradually adjust to this new schedule.

## Posture

Now that we have a pleasant place and the right time for meditation; the next thing that we need is a good posture. If you can sit in the lotus pose, that is excellent, but do not feel embarrassed or inadequate if you cannot.

You may feel the need to sit in a chair or on the floor with your back against a wall, or you may even try lying down. The two main things to remember in the posture you choose are to have your back straight and to be relaxed and comfortable.

You will notice when someone becomes very angry or passionate, their breath is very rapid and shallow. In depression and emotional disturbances we see quick and jagged breathing. But when you are in meditation or



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thinking a beautiful thought, you feel calmness and the breath is very slow and deep.

Experiencing this, we realise how important the breath is to our mind and thinking, to our peace and calm. When we breathe properly, we don't have fatigue or depression. The body will receive the proper oxygen supply and flow of blood, and disease will not be able to take root. To enjoy proper breathing, we must have a good posture.

### *Beginning Meditation: Calming down and observing yourself and your breathing*

Now you have selected a quiet spot, a peaceful time and a relaxing posture for your meditation. Next close your eyes and watch yourself. See yourself with your mental eye. You may think, "What should I do with myself?" Then you may feel silly and think "What am I doing here? Why am I sitting here like this, doing nothing?" You will think of all the projects and chores that you did not finish - the bank, the groceries, the party, the job, the appointment - all will come to your mind now. It is natural because your mind is always engaged in some activity. If you have nothing else to do you turn on the radio and begin chewing gum. People go to the seashore and into the mountains, to nature's most serene and beautiful spots, carrying their radios and chewing their gum. You may know what to do with people and things, but you do not know what to do with yourself.

First, just sit and let your own thoughts come. What kinds of thoughts appear? How many kinds are there? What fancies and silly notions come to mind? See what tendencies and instincts are hidden in you. The first step is to sit and watch, to discover the habits and tendencies of your body. Watch as a neutral observer. Don't think of anything as bad or good, as right or wrong; stay judgement-free. Remember any adjective that any person has used for you is not here now. If someone has said you are ugly, leave it behind you. If someone has said he or she does not like you, let it go for now. Begin to see that you are beautiful. Begin to feel a pleasant feeling within yourself. Let

this feeling come over your face. Visualise yourself sitting for meditation with a pleasant peaceful expression.

You may now see all of your needs arise. Ask yourself, "Why do I have them? What are my desires? How do they manifest themselves?" From these questions you gain insight. Is there some pain which is disturbing you in your subconscious? Unnoticed or unnecessary nervous actions, like tapping your foot or biting a fingernail or smoking a cigarette, reveal your discontent or pain.

Because of anger and hatred, frustration and resentment, we become tense and ugly. Through meditation we are rebuilding ourselves. We bring the power of our mind to build new cells in our face and our whole body. If you watch your face in meditation for one year making it happy and smiling and presenting a good image to yourself in your inner eye, then a change will come in you and everyone will notice it. People will wonder what cosmetic you are using, but the real cosmetic is meditation. You will change yourself if you believe in yourself.

In life, what you conceive you receive. What you think, you become. Now our life is out of control because we feel sorry for ourselves and do not sincerely want to take steps to change. We only wish we could change. But a wish has no strength, no backbone. A wish is wishy-washy. We must use our will instead. Don't allow any doubt to counteract your will. Otherwise one thought will simply cancel another and you will go nowhere. A negative thought is a weed that can spoil the garden of your heart and mind.

Next direct each part of your body to relax, working upward slowly from your toes to your head. Make your jaw relaxed as you sit. We release any tension because the tension that we store in our bodies makes us unattractive and drives away our friends. Friendly faces are beautiful because they are natural and sweet smiling. No one notices whether their features are well shaped or in proportion because love flows from them. Now in meditation you are creating a new face and a new feeling. After you relax your jaw, relax your whole face, around the eyes and mouth and in your cheeks, taking away all frowns, grimaces and scowls.

Now you become calm and concentrate on your breath. Breathe only through your nose, not your mouth. Watch your breathing and, without controlling it, see how the breath comes and goes.

Our breath comes and goes in three levels, as you can observe. First it comes into the chest area; this is the shallowest part. Then the ribs expand as we draw air deeper into our body. Finally the diaphragm expands, causing the stomach to distend. Be aware of each of these three parts of your breathing as you sit down in meditation. Feel your body filling with fresh energy as you inhale. Then allow the breath to go out of your body and feel that you are removing any tension or fatigue or negativity as you exhale. In this way you rejuvenate yourself with every breath.



Spend the first two or three days observing these bodily needs and tendencies. Take your time with yourself. This is not a race or contest. After this period you will be ready for the second phase of this practice - bringing the mind to one-pointedness.

### *Developing One-Pointedness*

Sit and watch inside until you feel comfortable, quiet and calm. With your eyes still closed, imagine a beautiful flame in the centre of your brow. It is a clear yellow-white flame sprouting upwards. It is exactly at the centre of your brow. See it there.

If this is easy for you to see, make this practice part of your meditation and continue to do it every day. Some people find this visual imagery very difficult. If you do not see the flame, or if it will not come easily into your imagination, then light a real candle and set it at eye level in front of you. This is best to do in a darkened room. The background behind the candle should be very plain. Sit and watch the candle for two minutes. Now close your eyes and visualise the beautiful flame coming in the centre of your brow. Relax and bring it inside you. If you have difficulty, open your eyes and look at the candle for a short while again. Do this two or three times for a few moments each time, but no more than that. Be very careful not to strain or overexert your eyes.

For the first week, relaxation and concentration are your lessons. Relax your body, watching its needs. Observe your mind's vagaries and fancies. Then concentrate on this flame, remembering its deep meaning. This meditation will give you an understanding of your centre. With an understanding of your centre, you will then learn how to command the circumference.

*Extracted from: Realise What You Are: The Dynamics of Jain Meditation, by Chitrabhanu, Jain Publishing Company, 1978, Fremont, California. Puja Chitrabhanu is a writer and speaker of Jainism and has lectured all over the world. He is founder of the Jain Meditation in New York.*



A altarpiece with multiple Jinās -  
Jain Art from India Exhibition,  
V & A Museum, London

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# JAIN VALUES NEED TO BE PROMOTED WORLDWIDE

A PERSONAL VIEW BY  
BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

*One of the most popular speakers at the UK and North American conventions was Benjamin Zephaniah, a poet, actor, musician and artist extraordinaire. He appears regularly on radio and television. Benjamin is a real champion of the underprivileged and victims of any kind of discrimination. He regularly visits inner cities, prisons and street children, trying to instill hope into their lives. In this article he speaks straight from his heart about his views on Jainism. His books include 'Talking Turkeys' and 'Funky Chicken' published by Penguin.*

YOU ARE NOW READING the words of someone who is very suspicious of religions, many of my friends who work in community care and community politics find it hard to believe that I have any time at all for a religion. They know that I am a firm believer of God but they also know that much of the suffering I see is caused by religious intolerance or peoples' misuse of religion. So here I am, a person of African descent, whose family is half Christian and half Muslim telling the masses to beware of organised religions, but I see no contradiction in the promotion of Jain values. In fact when I was introduced to Jainism I was surprised at how many of its values I aspire to. Jains have always made me feel welcome, they have always had time to listen to the sometimes controversial things I've had to say but that alone does not win my respect.

The reasons why I have such respect for Jains are simple: they do not want to invade or physically conquer any people, they do not tell all non-Jains that they are doomed to brimstone and fire, Jain principles all seem to stem from compassion, be that for the earth, the environment or all living things and 'in practice' I see equality of the sexes. I say 'in practice' because I am not sure what is



*"Young people have  
very few role models  
to look upto"*

written about such matters but I do see women very active in Jain organisations, women who can be independent and strong without finding the need to grow a beard and wear boots as a sign of equality.

If I walked into a meeting of the Young Jains to find a section of the community armed with guns and a large portion of the members money being used to buy more arms, I would have to ask why a group of people who wish to promote peace need such an army. Ask yourself as a Jain, could you really respond by saying that you are keeping the peace? Would you be surprised if I went away and came back with my gun and my little army to keep my little peace? I think you would want to lead by example and that is why when it comes to 'reviving the community spirit' (and I mean world community) or making an environmentally friendly way

forward I have more time for the Jains than any political party or royal household. I really don't want to sound confrontational or simplistically anti-authoritarian but let's face it, there is a crisis of leadership in Britain and many parts of the world today. Young people have very few role models to look up to. In many ways young people are way ahead of politicians when it comes to issues concerning the environment, animal welfare and human rights, young people have to think ahead of themselves, it's called their lives. Politicians think that the most important thing is to stay in office, in planning a future you cannot be limited to a 4 or 5 year term of political office.

I say that Jainism itself has many pointers to the way forward, some of your age old principles have stood the test of time and are now being re-visited by intellectuals and scientists. Doctors are now prescribing yoga and meditation, nutritionists are advocating more vegetarianism and many scientists are now saying that the human race will never be victorious if it fights against nature and that working with nature is the most progressive way forward.

I am not advocating that Jains go out trying to turn everyone into Jains, but the Jain message is for everyone, it loses nothing if its language is adapted for modern times. From the day I met my first Jain I said we need more of this, a community that can be successful without being greedy and godly without being dogmatic is a community that can inspire us all. My question is, Why should you respect or look for leadership from people who are easily corrupted by power and wealth when you have the principles of great leadership within you? I say you can inspire leaders.

My dear Jains, your message is for Europeans, Americans, Australians and Africans too. B. Z.



# DARE I KILL THE SNAKE?

BY DAVID ROTHENBERG

**L**IFE THRIVES ON LIFE. It may not be possible to practice complete non-violence but we can begin by becoming mindful of the violence we inflict on the Earth.

MOHANDAS GANDHI, in 1984 asked the following question in a letter to Srimad Racjchandra, the famous Jain teacher: "If a snake is about to bite me, should I kill it, supposing that there is no other way in which I can save myself?". This is the classic question to test the firmness of a person's environmental ethics. After having expressed our deepest concern for the equal rights of all species to flourish, when push comes to shove, will we not always chose self-interest if we are mortally in danger?

This sort of challenge is used to put down environmental ethics into the rubbish heap of high and mighty ideals that no one in real conflicts could hope to adhere to. But the Jains have a profound perspective on this matter.

Padmanabh Jaini writes that "Himsa has ordinarily been understood in India as harm done to others; for Jains, however, it refers primarily to injuring oneself." Harming animals is wrong because it demands passion that grips us in the bondage of everyday life. Killing of other beings is shunned as part of the path to the most profound kind of non-violence, learning to see the full realm of yourself as a place where the hurting of others becomes impossible to conceive of.

This is compatible with the notion of animal rights, but it requires a wider and fuller concern for all of us as a part of a universal ecology.

SO, WHAT DID Raychandbai reply to Gandhi? "I hesitate to advise that you should let the snake bite you. Nevertheless, how can it be right for you, if you have realized that your own body is perishable, to kill a creature which clings to its own life with great attachment?... Anyone who desires spiritual welfare should let their own perish in such circumstances. If a person lacks a noble character, I might advise them to kill the snake, but we should wish that neither you nor I will even dream of being such a person."

What would I do in that situation myself? Kill the snake if I could and not feel it was yet my time to die. Perhaps that reveals me as someone who has not yet achieved noble character, a lifetime practice of aspiration.

Or: think of American desert ranger Edward Abbey, discovering that his house caravan in Arches National Monument is infested with rattle-snakes. What does he do? Trap a gopher snake, sworn enemy of rattlers across the sagebrush, and train it to keep guard over his home. If there is to be killing of snakes, let other snakes do it. An ecological way to watch death? There is no way to avoid the death of ourselves and of others here on this earth. But we must be mindful of it, not let it go by without taking a stand.

I still want to save this place while I am here, and that means I can continue to consider the vision of Jains stepping smoothly in and around nature as a virtuous ideal. This is so important because for most of us it will always be out of

reach, like the idea that a single self can encompass the cares of an imperilled planet. The challenge is to be able to act with conviction once these pure, seemingly inaccessible thoughts are inside us

We wish to tread lightly on this planet, but we still leave a trace much harder to erase than most species. Humanity has become a species that needs to leave a mark to realise our selves and ideals. Whatever we wish, that mark will still be left. There will be killing, some will live, some will die. It's not always the best who survive.

Should we all retreat from death, kill nothing but vegetables, rise morally into vegetarianism? It is a fine and noble path, but I would not insist that all follow it. As long as we do kill each other to survive we who feel a part of the more-than-human world as much as the human realm, we must not shun regret, but instead learn to take it most seriously, and share in the suffering that we inflict. It is part of being human, an inevitable part, to suffer and to cause suffering. Dare I kill the snake? Dare I identify with the snake? Dare I take the life of the snake as seriously as I take my own?

We thrive on life. We will have to take some other lives to continue our own. I do not know if it is right to say we should apologise before pulling peppers off plants or wrenching carrots out of the earth. It may be enough to begin by becoming mindful of the violence humanity inflicts on the Earth, such that we may see through the tunnel of tragedy to the bright light of peace, available to those who are truly ready to be attentive toward the world and all the riches it offers.

PAPERCUT: ELISA TRIMBY







# FOLLOW YOUR INNER DREAM

BY ANANTI MILAN SHAH

In modern society we have become very mechanical, knowing only our physical self and loosing our "real" self: our soul; our spirit. But, our soul or real self is such that it can never be completely forgotten even in this fast life. Occasionally, our higher self permeates through. Once in a while we do something that we truly believe in, something that we have always wanted to do. Some action that brings about a deep inner sense of satisfaction, a sense of value, serenity and silence. These sensations come through as we connect with our inner being, our higher self.

So, how can we tap into our inner self? How can we start to follow our inner dream, our inner journey?

By beginning to live a balanced life and giving time to our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self. It does not require some miracle but a discipline and perseverance:

- **Good Nutrition** – eating the right foods at the right time and in the right amount (a Jain diet). When George Bernard Shaw was asked why he was vegetarian he simply said "you are what you eat!" A healthy diet consisting of fruits and vegetables will help the body remain sensitive, supple and sharp.

- **Daily exercise** – This does not necessarily mean a daily work out at the gym! A few stretches or yogic postures for 15-30 minutes each morning will generate subtle energies from within and will keep the physical body from dis-ease. It creates a beautiful start to the day.

- **Daily silence** – meditation for 10 – 15 minutes each morning allows

the positive, inner feelings and thoughts to emerge and guide us through out the day. This helps our real self to communicate with our physical and mental self and will also help create a positive attitude in our interactions with people throughout the day.

- **Constructive Thinking** – We must remember that negative, destructive thinking stimulates a response from the lower emotions. This is the way much of our group prejudice is built up. Instead, if we can think constructively in all situations, without any attachments to the thoughts (aparigraha) and if we can respect other people's views (anekantvada) whether they are on religion or politics then we will be at peace with ourselves and send vibrations of peace to the world at large.

- **Inner Attitude** – Spirituality does not depend on our outer circumstances or environment, nor on vocation. It is an inner attitude. For instance, it does not depend on the type of work we are engaged in, but on our attitude in performing that work. We get the idea that priests and business people are at opposite poles as far as spirituality is concerned. Is their occupation a true criterion for judging the spiritual unfoldment of either? If their inner attitude is one of service to humanity then that in itself is spiritual.

- **Awareness** – We need to develop our awareness such that we live in the present moment. So, if we are washing the dishes then this is where our mind, body and soul should be. Our mind should not "run" and think about what we will do next, what we did yesterday etc. A great

philosopher once said "We are so burdened by the past that we have no time to look to the present. So the minds get heavy by the end of the day or by the evening of life. Only memories of pleasure and pain remain. The pains that are dead and the pleasures that are dead, we carry the burden of dead within us."

- **Daily reflection** – a daily reflection on the days events each evening to review the day and forgive any "wrong" deeds and any hurtful action will clear all emotions, quieten the mind, relax the body and lead to a deep refreshing sleep.

Daily life is the only life we know. It has to be lived sanely, healthily, wealthily and spiritually.

The above points are not asking for much but just a little time for all your bodies: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, and a positive attitude to life. If we can live our life in such a balanced way we will find ourselves in a web of energy that will enable us to achieve all our inner goals. If we can really open our hearts and be aware of the spirituality in everything that we do then life will be a great adventure and we will begin our journey on the great Jain path.

*Ananti is a pharmacist working in London. She is a committee member of Young Jains in the UK and has been very active in promoting Jain culture and values among young people for many years. She was winner of the Young Jain of the Year award in 1996.*



# YOUTH:

## Dear Mum and Dad: IT WAS NOT "ALRIGHT"

ONE YOUTH TELLS her story of life in the high-achieving Indian-American family

ANONYMOUS

**W**HAT DID WE DO wrong? It is a question frequently asked by parents faced with a child who is on the verge of falling apart. They put their kids through the best schools, lived in a safe area and hoped that their children would be spitting images of themselves - that they would be successful, respected citizens of this not-so-foreign country of America. So what went wrong?

The biggest, most prominent problem, the most obvious one, is we are Indian children immersed in America. In school, we tried to blend in as much as possible. We wanted everyone to like us, so we would talk like them. We wanted to "fit in". At home parents would push us and pressure us to do well. Often that meant tutorial sessions that ended in violence, or other tough forms of punishment when we didn't measure up. In our eyes and hearts we slowly became their medals. Any accomplishment was just a tool to brandish to their friends - to prove how well they were raising us. Nothing we did could ever have been based on our own merit; it was all their doing. In public we had to be the perfect submissive toy robots. We were constantly put down, told that we were not good enough, how incredibly stupid we were if we ever got a 'B', yet were expected to be the best.

You parents were never really affectionate towards us, and we could not find the affection anywhere else, so love became a foreign concept that we could only dream of. Some of us found secret ways to get around the problem. Some rebelled. Lying to you became a second nature.

Look at yourself and ask if the way you think, act and speak about your friends and children is really what you feel to be right. Realise that you are in a completely different world from where you grew up. Times have changed, and you have to adjust.

To those of you with younger children, try to understand some of their fears and embarrassments and try to teach them pride. Instill in them a sense of humor. Let your kids know how much they mean to you, and show it. Pay attention to your child's health. Teach your children those aspects of language, culture and religion that you think they would enjoy and appreciate. Do not mock them when they do not understand certain things. Explain. The pressure you put on a child to act a certain way or to get that 'A' can be so detrimental. The most important thing is that we, as children, as humans, and as young adults, need to grow. We need to be given choices in life and need to make those choices for ourselves. Your children are responsible, intelligent people, but not all can be doctors, lawyers or engineers.

The key to life is happiness. If you take that away from your children, and they have no way of getting it back it may be too late to do anything about it. If you take what we have said to heart and work things through with your children, they will want to forgive and forget.

We think ultimately we all want the same thing-respect. You parents want our respect for being the ones who raised us. We children know that and are grateful for it. But we also demand respect for views, ideals and individuality. If we find some meeting ground, then maybe healthy relationships can blossom and happiness will allow our community to not just survive, but thrive.

This article was published on the Indolink web site, from an anonymous writer expressing frustration over the way she was raised.



# I FOUND IT

*'I tried to find Him on the Christian Cross, but he was not there. I went to the temple of the Hindus and to the old Pagodas, but I could not find a trace of Him anywhere. I searched on the mountains and in the valleys, but neither in the heights nor the depths was I able to find Him. I went to the Caaba in Mecca, but he was not there either. I questioned the scholars and philosophers but He was beyond their understanding. Then I looked into my heart and it was there where He dwelled that I saw Him.'*

NEEL BHUVA

For the past few years now, I have been fascinated with Jainism, have striven to understand it and through Jainism and its guidance, I have started to believe. Born and brought up in London, UK, where the mix of ethnic cultures in society still astounds me I was simply told to be vegetarian, told to be peaceful, told to say my apologies and my thank you's. This was the norm; these were simply the 'done things'. People would ask me why I am vegetarian and blindly, almost automatically, I would answer 'religion'.

One word, religion. As we grow up, we are taught at school about many religions and cultures, there is not simply one. We realise life is not always black and white, we start searching, probing, the instinctive human curiosity takes over. Why is my answer religion? Which religion? What is religion? What is the reasoning behind its teaching? The answers do not come as easily as the questions.

Then through Young Jains and the benefit of a school devoted to the teaching of our culture and heritage, the answer came, Jainism! In a word, compassion. This one word helped me to understand and through understanding came belief. Belief in myself, belief in others, belief in the principles that Jainism, in their simplicity, so eloquently promotes.

What struck me was the phenomenon of a working religion based entirely on non-violence and harmony. A religion that in itself, its history and its myths, shows a way of life we should all follow. Not a life dedicated to ritual or an image of God, but a life dedicated to self-discovery, self-improvement, and motivation towards a world of complete equality amongst individuals.

As I probed deeper into the philosophies and began to put them into practice consciously, I

*"...Not a life dedicated to ritual or an image of God, but a life dedicated to self-discovery, self-improvement, and motivation..."*

found this motivation to naturally blossom from within myself. Jainism's perspective is far greater than the simple shell of our physical bodies, our essence is our Atma, and the karma bound to our Atma determines what we are and what we are to become. It is clear that only through self-discovery comes the realisation of who we are and thus a basis on how we can improve. With improvement comes perfection and with that harmony.

The clarity with which Jainism expresses this moved me. Throughout life we look at things materialistically, we have likes,

dislikes, and complaints. Through these we show emotions, we hurt and we harm mentally, physically, subconsciously. Yet, remember the words of Lord Mahavir, 'You are that which you intend to hurt, injure, insult, and torment, persecute, torture, enslave, or kill.'

One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water, and vegetation, disregards his own existence which is entwined with them.'

As Jains these words are part of us and these words, I have found through my study of Jainism, are Him. Jainism teaches us to find Him and use Him. The only place He will be found is within us, our hearts, and our

souls. If we can find it in our hearts to see our faults and our flaws and improve, then Jainism is working, the Jain spirit is being kept alive and if so, then the gift of life takes a new meaning.

In whatever we do, we should look to Him first. If we are ever unsure of what to do, we should look to Him first. If we have done wrong, we should look to Him and we shall find forgiveness, consolation, and compassion. Need we therefore look anywhere else...but to Jainism?

*Neel Bhuvu is eighteen years old and lives in London with his Jain family.*



# RENAISSANCE IN JAIN EDUCATION

Ever since Sadhvi Shilapiji arrived in the UK four years ago, she was determined to help educate our children about Jainism and Jain values. With the cooperation of Veerayatan U.K. trustees and the Young Jains, the first school was launched in North London at Canons High School premises, with classes every Friday night. Today, some 200 children have enrolled. What is the secret formula behind such a resounding success? Why has Sadhvi Shilapiji succeeded where others in the past have failed? What does this mean for our future as a community here in the U.K.? These are the questions addressed in this article.

Education is a basic necessity for human progress and development. In East Africa, our forefathers used their business success to build schools all over the country, and as a result of this, the UK Jain community is generally prosperous and successful today. When we came to the UK, the basic infrastructure of schools was already there, so there was no pressing need to build a network of schools. Instead, the need became one of retaining our culture, religion and values among young people, a task which requires a combination of vision, teaching ability, and financial resources. Without cultural identity, we would become totally lost in this world. Until recently, we did not have the leadership, will or determination to build such a Jain community school. We are now fortunate indeed to have Sadhvi here who has set us up on the road to great progress for the next generation.

It is worth examining her teaching approach. All classes are conducted in English. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children to ask questions, and the reasons behind everything is explained. Thus young people are not asked to follow blindly, but encouraged to criticise and question. In this way, their voices are heard, respected and never ignored. Young people everywhere love this approach because too often, elders tell them don'ts rather than do's, and rarely do they encourage questioning. For the teaching, Sadhvi involved anyone in the community who was willing to learn and committed to teach young children. She now has a group of 20 teachers, most of whom happen to be women. All the teachers work on a voluntary basis, and there are five additional administrative helpers.

In order to save time and effort for parents to pick and drop children, parent classes were also started, taught by Mr. Vinod Kapashi and Mr. Harshad Sanghrajka. To date there are some 90 parents who are

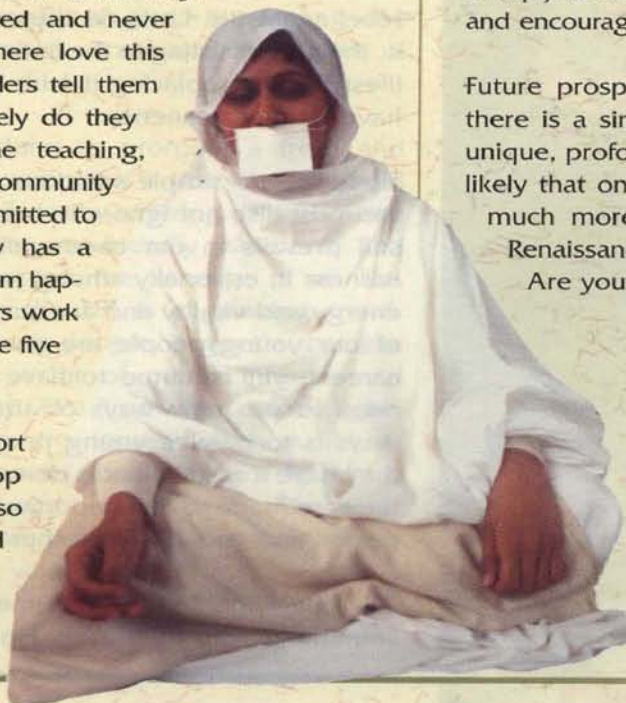
learning about Jainism because of their children. Mahatma Gandhi used to say that no community can call itself civilised if it cannot look after the well-being of its children. If we do look after our children, the rest automatically falls into place. If not, we will never attain lasting happiness.

The actual curriculum involves study of Jain history, development, philosophy, prayers and stories. As such ready material in English for such teaching is not easily available, so at present, it is being developed and taught at the same time. For example, prayers are written in English text (not translated) and the whole class sings at the same time. There are plans to organise and co-ordinate the syllabus, such that the material can be published and used more widely. The crucial thing to note is that the educational material is not developed in a vacuum: it is being tried and tested with our children at the same time, and this makes it very vibrant and relevant to the modern day. Contact is maintained with the Jain school in Nairobi so that the material and techniques can be shared. Nearly 200 children have enrolled in the Chandana Vidya Pith in Nairobi.

Every Tuesday evening, the teachers meet to prepare for the coming Friday, and obtain any feedback from the previous week. The lives of many of the teachers have been totally transformed after getting involved in the school. They have discovered a new joy in their lives, for what could be more fulfilling than conveying our heritage to the next generation? No amount of wealth can replace this fulfilment. Despite people leading very busy and hectic lives, many know that there is something missing, and want to do something about it, but lack the guidance and encouragement to do so. Sadhvi Shilapiji has high standards, but at the same time, she motivates and encourages everyone who wishes to get involved.

Future prospects for the school look very exciting. Already there is a similar school in South London. Jain philosophy is unique, profound, and worthy of deep study for everyone. It is likely that once the understanding is there, Jains will become much more committed to preserve their identity. A true Renaissance in Jain study is underway in the western world. Are you a part of it?

At present, the School has moved to new premises at Kingsbury High School, Stag Lane, Kingsbury, London N.W.9 and for further information, please call Mr. Mahendra Mehta on 0181-445 6625 (office hours).







# COOL TO

FOR A LARGE NUMBER OF young people in our community Jainism holds little appeal. It is an outdated tradition, out of touch with the modern world. For those people whose parents know little about Jainism and did little to encourage them to learn it, Jainism seems too remote, almost irrelevant to their lives. They know little about it, and do not have any interest in learning more. When asked, they often claim they are Hindu because to state that they are a Jain would invite further questioning to which they may not have answers. The little of Jainism they have seen at community events poojas or pratikramans, they find too boring and serious. In fact during the paryushan festival, many young people come in the late evening, when it is time for entertainment, and avoid the prayers altogether. One exception is young ladies, who appear to have a much greater inclination towards Jainism than young men in our community. It is also true that many young people find vegetarianism to be too boring and out of date. They do know that to be a Jain and to eat meat is not permitted, so because of their dietary preferences, they have no inclination to learn about Jainism, which may challenge their taste buds. There is also a certain amount of peer pressure to eat and drink, especially in countries like Kenya where a lot of young Jains are non-vegetarians and regularly consume alcohol.

Above all, many young people see Jainism as a philosophy of rules and obligations in which they have little independence; they should not question it, and simply follow it. Unfortunately, they experience this behaviour in other aspects of their lives too, especially in their relationship with parents. They constantly hear don'ts rather than do's and see Jainism as another extension of this. Instead of trying to embrace it, they rebel against it. Little do they realise that by rebelling against it, they are assisting in the extinction of a very old tradition and lifestyle, and replacing it with modern values, many of which have little permanence.

There are no simple solutions to this predicament. However, we must also not ignore it, because there is a lot of good that still prevails in our community. We need to preserve and harness it, especially among young people, who have a lot of energy and vitality and are our only hope for the future. Many of our young people are successful in their education and careers, yet continue to have a poor image of Jainism. We need to use new ways of attracting them. One of the best ways is to involve young people in various activities, where they have a say in what is done and how it is done. In this way, they are made to feel important, and their voice and beliefs are valued and encouraged rather than silenced and ignored.

All young people have a tremendous amount of energy to do something with their lives. However, the problem is that too



# BE JAIN!

often it gets misdirected by their parents, peers or television and the media. As a result, society pays a huge price when these young people grow up and are unable to be responsible to their families and their employers. We cannot say that this is not happening to our community because it is, and we have seen it through our experiences of talking to a large number of young people both in the UK and abroad. We need to work hard at promoting and encouraging positive role models who are living examples of people who practice Jain values and succeed at the same time, without compromising their beliefs. We need to think of very novel ways of promoting Jainism in the modern world.

One example of this new formula is to have a music concert in English with modern beats and rhythms, but where the songs have a distinctive 'Jain' message. For example, there are many songs about nature and wildlife which have a beautiful rhythm and express the sacredness of all life. Some of them are by famous singers we could play them at our concert. At the recent young Jains conference held at the Brahmakumari World Spiritual University in London, we commenced the day with a mime performed as a modern dance, and ended with a song by Lionel Ritchie performed by an English singer. These items provided variety and communicated important messages in different ways. They were great hits among the young people present. They did not realise that our ancient values can be learnt and promoted in such refreshing ways. Many young people hate speeches or lectures, partly because they hear too many of them, and hate the idea of sitting and listening without direct involvement or participation. Our workshop format used in conferences, where delegates are broken up into small discussion groups is consequently a great hit among the young. In most of our events, we emphasise this spirit of participation.

A lot of work needs to be done to promote a fresh and exciting image of Jainism. For example, it is true that Jainism is a very scientific and rational philosophy of living. It is also true that Jainism is one of the most eco-friendly traditions, and thousands of years ago promoted the sanctity of all life. The fact that vegetarianism in the UK is a growing trend, especially among educated young people, suggests that Jain ideas are presently receiving a lot of public interest and attention outside our community. At a time when animal rights and environmental protection are issues which a lot of young people feel very passionate about, we are failing to communicate these positive facets of Jainism to our young. Thus we need to connect Jainism with these positive images and actively promote it among young people.





Spreading light and fragrance through the torch of knowledge!

With the launch of this new publication, let us hope that we can spread some light and fragrance both in our lives as well as the lives of others.

**Kids Corner**  
by Narendra Shah

### COMPETITION

Can you Find the names of the five principles printed on this page? Ask your parents to help you write a short description of each of them.

### COMPETITION

Please send your entries by 1st September 1999 addressed to 'Jain Spirit' c/o 2 Lynford Gardens, Edgware Middlesex HA8 8UG, UK. The best entry will be printed in a future issue.

S  
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Why did the gardener plant bulbs?  
So the worms could see where they were going

### DID YOU KNOW?

Leaving you TV on standby costs nearly as much as watching it, and costs around £12 million per year in wasted energy.

APARIGRAHA ASTEYA SATYA BHRAHMACHARYA AHIMSA

Wishing to test the wisdom of his two sons, Ajata and Abhaya, their father gave each of them a silver coin saying, "Buy something with this which would fill the entire room". The thoughtless son bought a cartload of hay and scattered it all over the room. The other son bought a fragrant candle and lit it, filling every hook and corner with light and fragrance! Both of them filled the entire room, but one with rubbish and the other with light and fragrance.





# Just for laughs...

..AND THAT'S MUMMY WITH HER WEDDING RING...SHE PUT IT ON HER NOSE 'CAUSE SHE HAD A SORE FINGER..



WE USED TO BE STRICT VEGETARIAN  
... NOW WE EAT PRACTICALLY  
ANY MEAT — EXCEPT FOR  
GARLIC AND ONION ...

PANDITJI  
ASTROLOGER  
ONLY  
\$50  
PER VISIT



YOUR LINES ARE STILL  
CHANGING. I'VE TO SEE  
YOU AGAIN IN TWO WEEKS.



# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A JAIN TODAY

BY NEELU JAIN



What makes a young woman, age 24, say that before visiting India she felt agnostic but after spending a year there, she identifies more with Jains and would now like to pass aspects of Jain philosophy onto her children? What makes a young woman, age 20, who grew up in Idaho and was not surrounded by a strong Indian community decide to attend a particular university because it has a strong, pro-active Indian community? Why does attending a Jain convention make a young woman, age 20, begin to consider herself Jain because that's when she begins to understand and believe in the religion?

For Jains, the answers to the questions above lie in the formation of the Jain ethnoscape, the landscape of group identity whose place exists within the imaginations of Jains in India and abroad. In a world of increasing globalization and the migration that results, many people, including Asian Indian Jains move from one country to another. Their identity is no longer tied to one place or country but begins to exist within the imagination, or in the "new world," because of the ability for groups of people to settle and raise future generations in a country other than that of their ethnic origin. Regardless of where they live, Asian Indian Jains are inextricably part of this "new world" and always have access to it because of their religious faith and ethnicity.

The Jain religion continues to exist outside of India in the US through the institutional life of strong social organization and modified practice. Jains negotiate their type of practice to fit their social context. Growing up in a rural village in India, one may easily follow the practices of a strict Jain. After migrating to a city like Mumbai, the same kind of practice becomes more difficult as one's lifestyle changes and one feels the effects of westernization. Similarly, migrating from India to the US also forces immigrant Jains and their children to renegotiate their traditional practices to fit within the American milieu. After migration, Jains organize communities in US cities and practice a different version of the religion with an emphasis on main principles which allows for the religion to take root in the US.

Identification with the religion by young Jains living in both India and the US also reassures the existence of the "new world." Within India, being Jain is assumed. People consider themselves Jain and follow the religion because they are born into it, yet they do not regularly follow time-intensive traditional practices such as pratikramana, or samayika. From childhood, young Jains have been practicing the religion, so they do not have a need to access the meaning. It is easy for them to be vegetarian in India and they eat vegetarian food at home; thus, they continue with the practice as they grow older. If their parents are strict, then they practice strictly. In contrast, in the US, the younger generation has less access to the history, tradition, scriptures, and teachers of the religion. As followers of the Jain religion, their lack of exposure forces them to focus on main aspects of the religion that they may practice within the American milieu. For some, the practice of the religion and their interactions with the Jain community act as a substitute for Indian ethnicity in the US. This further reinforces the existence of the Jain ethnoscape because the religion truly becomes the landscape for group identity of young Jains in the US.

The US represents a cultural mix of many immigrant communities and their cultures. The status of minorities and minority issues oftentimes causes conflict within the racialized social context of the US, and Asian Indians occupy an ambiguous position making a Jain identity difficult to create. Asian Indian Jains have, however, created a place for themselves within the American milieu. As Western culture increasingly effects Indian society, Jains face the challenge of maintaining their way of life, yet the Jain community remains strong in both India and the US because of religious and social organization and a modification of traditional practices. As globalization effects India and future generations of Jains assimilate into American society, the culture of the "new world" will continue to alter based on the experiences and memories of its inhabitants.

*Neelu Jain is a 20 year old senior honours student at Dartmouth. This article is summarized from "The Jain Diaspora: Religious Identity and Practice by Young Adults in the US and India" her Undergraduate senior honors thesis.*

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*anugrahartham svasyatisargo danam*

7.33 (SS7.38) Charity consists in offering alms to the qualified person for one's own benefit.

## JAIN SCRIPTURES: CHARITY

FROM: TATTVARTHA SUTRA - THAT WHICH IS

The giver gives for his own benefit with a sense of gratitude to the recipient. Charity practised with a pure heart helps weaken karmic bondage.



*vidhi-dravya-datr-patravisesat tadvisesah*

7.34 (SS 7.39) The worth of a charitable act is determined by the manner of giving, the nature of the alms offered, the disposition of the giver and the qualification of the recipient.

The giver's motives and enthusiasm and the quality of the alms offered determine the worth of the act of charity. The genuinely monastic life of the recipient adds dignity to the act. The worth of the charity is enhanced if the giver gives with a sense of duty and the recipient accepts what is a bare necessity of monastic life.

Prints from  
The Peaceful Liberators: Jain Art from India  
Publishers: Los Angeles County Museum of Art

BY NATHMAL TATIA,  
HARPER COLLINS, 1994

The SVOPAJNA BHASYA clarifies that the manner of giving includes propriety of place and time of giving, the enlightened faith of the giver, the sense of honour and regard with which the offering is made, the priority and acceptability of the thing given. The nature of the alms offered relates to the good smell, taste and so on of the food and drink as well as their class

and quality. The disposition of the giver relates to his freedom from envy, feeling of pleasure and joy, sense of honour, good intention, freedom from expectation, deceit and eager desires.

The qualification of the recipient relates to his enlightened faith, knowledge, conduct and practice of austerities.

The SARVARTHA SIDDHI offers a slightly different explanation of the

four constituents of giving. The manner of giving relates to the regard or disregard in the mind of the giver for the recipient. The merit of the thing given depends on its usefulness in the practice of austerities and religious studies of the recipient. The merit of the giver is his freedom from envy and lack of depression. The fitness of the recipient is his commendable practice of the spiritual discipline of self-restraint.



# JAIN CDs MADE IN AMERICA

BY AJAY PUNATAR

Praveen Chaddha and Darshana Bhuta both come from India but have settled in California, USA. Both were accomplished musicians in their own right. However, it was only once they were settled in the USA that they came across each other. Very soon they became a strong musical pairing entertaining live audiences with Ghazals, Movie songs and Bhajans. Darshana was and continues to be supported by her husband Ramesh Bhuta in her musical career.

Around 1994/95, the Jain Centre of Northern California approached Praveen and Darshana asking if they would be interested in producing a CD in time for the annual Jaina convention. Although not Jains themselves, Praveen and Darshana had no hesitation in taking on this exciting project. This resulted in their first Jain CD – Bhajman 3. The success of this at the convention encouraged the Jain Centre to go back to Praveen and Darshana with further requests at subsequent Jaina conventions which has resulted in two more CDs to date.

In total, Praveen and Darshana have produced six CDs of which three are Jain related. Each of the three Jain CDs is very different. What they have in common is a professional quality of the final product – in every respect from the quality of composition music, recording, mixing and final production. All CDs are digitally recorded and produced.

The quality of Praveen and Darshana's singing is clear and well controlled. It does not have too many "twiddles" or variations in the singing style, which allows

the listener to appreciate the lyrics and the deep thoughts woven within the words sometimes. You know how some music you listen to you feel like the performers are telling you "listen to me – how accomplished a musician I am"? In this pair's case it is almost like they are saying, "let us just help you appreciate the beauty of some of the Jain devotional songs"

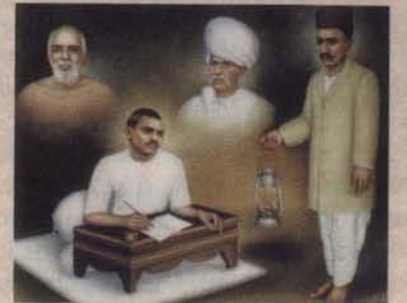
## Bhajman 3 – Jaikari Navkar

These are original compositions of Jain Stavans written by Gurudev Shri Amar Muniji. The CD was released during the 8th Biennial Jaina Convention in the USA. I have not heard any of the Stavans sung before, other than of course, the Navkar Mantra, but even that is sung in an original tune.

The Stavans are largely sung in duets by Praveen and Darshana. An interesting feature is a strong backing chorus of 11 singers which adds variety and makes you want to join in and be part of the chorus! Also a thoughtful supplement is the accompanying set of notes which provides all the words of the Stavans in English as well as Hindi.

The instrumental pieces throughout give a good variety and are enjoyable to listen to. Most instruments are authentic sounds rather than synthesised on keyboards. The combination of sarod, sitar, flute and dilruba works very well and complements the singing to produce well-balanced compositions which are easy to listen to. I would have loved more background instrumental chords with the singing, and perhaps more variety in the percussion instruments rather just Tabla and Manjira. Also I thought that some tracks could have been shorter – however that probably says more about me and my short attention span in my western life style than anything about the music!

For me the most impressive tracks were the Navkar Mantra and Pras-hsast-Prarthanaa. Both have wonderful tunes which are also easy to learn. They also seem to be the most creative compositions with strong supporting instrumentals and chorus.



શ્રીમદ્ રાજચંદ્રજી  
રચિત  
શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ

આ પુસ્તીકાને નીચે મુકી  
અશ્વાત્તા ન કરવા વિનંતી છે.



ॐ

ओम् मंगलम्  
Om Mangalam

Praveen & Darshana

Music: Ashit Desai



### Om Mangalam

This is a collection of some old and some more contemporary Stavans. For me this is the most accomplished and the best of the three CDs. The compositions are richer, more creative and varied with lots of interesting musical touches, all of which you cannot take in one listening.

The music has been composed by Ashit Desai who is one of the leading authorities and well-known contemporary composers of Gujarati music. The instruments include Flute, Vibraphone, Santoor, Sitar and Mandolin, but to me the best thing is the Bass Guitar which gives a stronger rhythmic feel.

Om Mangalam is the type of CD you can listen to in different environments. You can have it playing in the background for "atmosphere". You can also sit in a quiet room and appreciate the quality of music. Finally you could use it to meditate on the words and meaning behind some simple, easy to understand and well known Stavans.

Ajay Punatar is a Management Consultant and a musician who lives in London. With his wife Rajvee, he regularly performs at social events such as weddings and dandia-raas.

You can order CDs from either:

Media Officer, Young Jains, PO BOX 58, Stanmore, Middx, HA7 3YD, UK  
(See Young Jains Book Club page)

Or directly from Ramesh Bhuta on Tel +1(925) 426 1366  
or email: rbhuta@aol.com

### Shri Atmasiddhi – Self Realization

The original Gujarati verses of Shree Atmasiddhi Shastra were composed by Paramkrupaludev Shrimad Rajchandra almost 100 years ago. This 142 stanza poem has won very high praises within the Jain Community – some would even claim that in this epic poem lies the essence of Jain philosophy.

Pujya Shree Brahmachariji has rendered these in English Rhyme, and this accompanying English rhyme is also provided in the accompanying notes. I wish that the accompanying Gujarati rhyme was also provided in the English alphabet – to help people who cannot read Gujarati but would like to sing along to the words.

Praveen and Darshana sing the verses in a duet form. They alternate after each two verses and throughout are interspersed with Santoor and flute music. Also to add variety the tune alternates between two main tunes which breaks the monotony for what is a long rendition.

For those interested in listening to the Atmasiddhi, this is a very pleasant way to do it.



શ્રીમદ રાજચંદ્રજી  
રચિત

શ્રી આત્મસિદ્ધિ  
Self Realization

Praveen & Darshana

Music: Praveen Chaddha



# JAIN ARTIST OF DISTINCTION

JAYSHREE KHI MASIA



In March 1999, Mrs. Jayshree Khimasia was invited to display her art at the Meghraj Art Gallery in central London. Previously, she had coordinated a major exhibition of Jain Art at the 1997 JAINA Convention in Toronto. The Meghraj event was a most varied and successful exhibition, displaying a variety of paintings, masks and sculptures. Dr. Deborah Swallow of the Victoria and Albert Museum hailed it as a most colourful portrayal of the rich heritage of India. Atul spoke to her about her art, and her message to budding young artists.

I first asked Mrs. Khimasia how she came to be so interested in art. "Well, I think there is a little bit of art in my family. My brother also paints, and my mother is a great artist. I was trained as a fashion designer, I studied here in England and then went back to Africa. And after getting married we went to Canada and there I started to do a little bit of art. But seriously I have only done it for the last 15 years, in the sense that I have had the chance to sell my paintings to the Canadians. Also my customers in Canada are Canadians, because they really like the colour and the country themes are different. Canada is such a multicultural city and everyone wants to know about each others cultures and so I have been doing this particular kind of Indian Art theme for the last 10 years."

I was curious about the cultural influence in her art. "I think art has brought me closer to my own culture, my own heritage, because I was born and brought up in Africa, and although we were involved in a lot of cultural activities I never lived in India for a long time. As a result, I read a lot of books particularly about Indian women. This research has brought me a lot closer and I appreciate my culture a lot more now than I did 10 years ago. My culture

has influenced me tremendously. For example if you see the colours and the clothes the women wear, the activities of the women. When I went to Rajasthan and I saw these women doing their daily chores they looked so happy doing it. They have very little and we have so much and we are still not satisfied with what we have. We want more and more and more and they were the happiest people that I came across. I draw inspiration from the beauty and richness of our culture, in particular, our women."

We live in a world full of speed and technology, where time is a scarce commodity. How do you cope with art in these circumstances, I asked her. "I have all the patience for art and I think that through my art I have learnt to be patient with my life as well. I remember a few years ago I used to rush around doing things, but now I do not. I know where my time should go and I can divide my time equally, and I feel no matter what you do, whether you do it in a hurry or in a relaxed manner the results are two different things. I would much rather have better results in my life, rather than mass producing and finding out that I am not happy myself. I do not need to become stressed in producing a work just to sell it. I should be happy with my own work. For example, for this exhibition, I had fifteen paintings and I rejected eight because personally I was not happy with the results. I could have brought them and nobody would have found any difference in them but I was not happy with the way that they turned out."

I wondered what she had to say to budding young artists within the community where ever they live whether in Africa, America or in the UK or in India? "Well, I would really say go where your heart is. Do whatever your heart tells you to do. Do not do what everybody else is doing or what is the in thing. Personally I feel that I want to expose the flamboyance of the Indian woman all dressed up, that is what I want to show. A lot of people have asked me why I cover their faces and I say well they are so beautiful whether they are covered or not, I still find there is a lot of beauty to be seen in a woman and I want to expose that. You don't see the actual face of the person but you still see the form, the heart of the person and anybody that wants to go into art I would say do what you want to do. Don't follow anybody, be your own, and express your inner creativity by doing what you really want to do."

Pictures - clockwise: (from this page)

- 1) Gigyasa
- 2) Veiled Beauty
- 3) Maa
- 4) The Prayer
- 5) Yovani



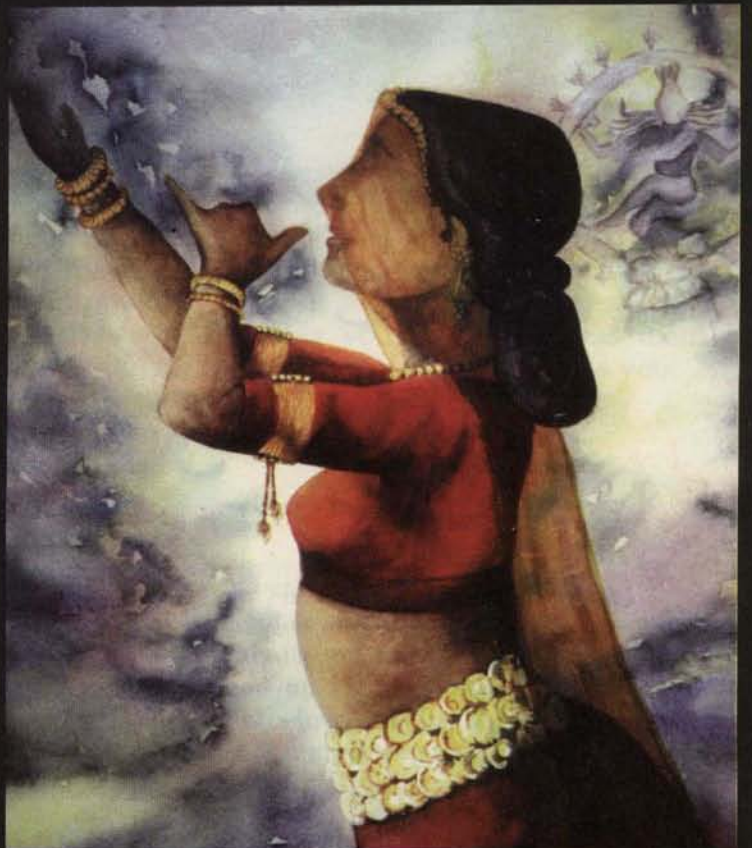






Photo: Sue Cunningham

# MUSIC & SILENCE

BY STING

*As a member of the world-renowned pop trio The Police, Sting established himself as one of the world's finest musicians. Indeed, his solo career has been equally successful. Sting was awarded an honorary degree in music from the famous Berkley School of Music and spoke to graduates to share with them his musical roots. He has a deep interest in Indian culture and regularly practices Yoga.*

I HAVE TO SAY I'm a little bit nervous. You might think this is strange for a man who makes his living playing in stadiums, but I often stand in the middle of a stadium full of people and ask myself the same question: "How the hell did I end up here?" The simple answer is: I'm a musician.

I BEGAN to aspire to the piano and would spend hours hammering away at atonal clusters in the delusion that if I persisted long enough, my noise would become music. I still labour under this delusion.

Melodies, chords, song structures fell at my fingertips. Somehow I could listen to a song on the radio and then make a passable attempt at playing it. It was a miracle. I spent hour after hour, day after day, month after month, just playing rejoicing in the miracle, and probably driving my parents round the bend. But it was their fault in the first place. Music is an addiction, a religion and a disease. There is no cure. There is no antidote. I was hooked.

I had no formal music education. But I suppose I became successful by a combination of dumb luck, low cunning, and risk-taking born out of curiosity. I still operate in the same way. But your curiosity in music is never entirely satisfied. You could fill libraries with what I don't know about music. There is always something more to learn.

When you watch a musician play - when he enters that private musical world - you often see a child at play, innocent and curious, full of wonder at what can only be adequately described as a mystery, even. Something deep, something strange. Both joyous and sad. Something impossible to explain in words. I mean, what could possibly keep us playing scales



and arpeggios hour after hour, day after day, year after year? Is it some vague promise of glory, money, or fame? Or is it something deeper?

Music is probably the oldest religious rite. The first priests were probably musicians, the first prayers probably songs.

Our instruments connect us to this mystery, and a musician will maintain this sense of wonder to the day he or she dies. I had the privilege of spending some time with the great arranger Gil Evans in the last year of his life. He was still listening, still open to new ideas, still open to the wonder of music. Still a curious child.

So we stand here today in our robes with our diplomas, our degrees of excellence. Some are merely honorary, some diligently worked for. We have mastered the laws of harmony and the rules of counterpoint, the skills of arranging and orchestrating, of developing themes and rhythmic motifs. But do any of us really know what music is? Is it merely physics? Mathematics? The stuff of romance? Commerce? Why is it so important to us? What is its essence?

I can't even pretend to know. I've written hundreds of songs, had them published, had them in the charts, with Grammys and enough written proof that I'm a bona fide successful songwriter. Still, if somebody asks me how I write songs, I have to say, I really do not know. I don't really know where they come from. A melody is always a gift from somewhere else. You just have to learn to be grateful and pray that you will be blessed again some other time. It's the same with the lyrics. You can't write a song without metaphor. You can mechanically construct verses, choruses, bridges, middle

eights, but without a central metaphor, you ain't got nothing.

I often wonder: Where do melodies come from? Where do metaphors come from? If you could buy them in a store, I'd be the first one in the queue, believe me. I spend most of my time searching for these mysterious commodities, searching for inspiration.

Paradoxically I'm coming to believe in the importance of silence in the music. The power of silence after a phrase of music, for example: the dramatic silence after the first four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, or the space between the notes of a Miles Davis solo. There is something very specific about a rest in music. You take your foot off the pedal and pay attention. I'm wondering if silence itself is perhaps the mystery at the heart of music. And is silence the most perfect form of music of all?

Songwriting is the only form of meditation I know. And it is only in silence that the gifts of melody and metaphor are offered. To people in the modern world, true silence is something we rarely experience. It's almost as if we conspire to avoid it. Three minutes of silence seems like a very long time. It forces us to pay attention to ideas and emotions we rarely make any time for. There are some who find this frightening. Silence is disturbing. It is disturbing because it is the wavelength of the soul. If we leave no space in our music - and I am as guilty as anyone else in this regard - then we rob the sound we make of defining context. It is often music born from anxiety. It's almost as if we're afraid of leaving space. Great music is as often about the space between the notes as it is about the notes themselves. A bar's rest is as significant as the bar of demisemiquavers that

precedes it. What I am trying to say here is that if I am ever asked if I'm religious, I always reply, "Yes, I'm a devout musician." Music puts me in touch with something beyond intellect, something otherworldly, something sacred.

It's very hard to talk about music in words. Words are superfluous to the abstract power of music. We can fashion words into poetry so that they are understood the way that music is understood, but they only aspire to the condition where music already exists.

Music is probably the oldest religious rite. Our ancestors used melody and rhythm to co-opt the spirit world to their purposes - to try and make sense of the universe. The first priests were probably musicians, the first prayers probably songs.

So what am I getting around to saying is that, as musicians, whether we're successful, playing to thousands of people every night, or not so successful, playing in bars or small clubs, or not successful at all, just playing alone in the apartment to the cat, we are doing something that can heal souls, that can mend us when our spirits are broken. Whether you make a million dollars or not one cent, music and silence are priceless gifts. May you always possess them. May they always possess you.

*The above edited excerpts are reprinted from Graduate Day: The best of America's commencement speeches. Published by William Morrow, New York, 1998, at US\$22.00*





Kamal Shah

## KAMAL SHAH - AN ARTIST FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

*In April 1999, Atul Shah interviewed Kamal Shah at the "Lotus Sutra" exhibition at the Meghraj Art Gallery. Kamal is a Jain by birth, and believes that his art is non-discriminatory. He is keen to practice values which are important to him rather than to preach them.*

### **How did you become interested in Art?**

We lived in an extended family so I had lived with my aunts, two of my dad's sisters, that were doing teacher training at that point and within their courses they had to do a whole lot of handicrafts and art. So they were doing the work at home, some tie dying and batiking and making baskets and I found that I could do that too. I started by just picking up the material that was there and carried on painting all the time. My parents were also very much interested in arts and music and they had contacts with some Indian artists who came and visited Africa and they used to mix colours for them and play around with them. In particular I recall this old man who from my child's eyes was really behaving like an overgrown child, throwing his paints around. I thought this is one of the few people I've seen who is an adult who is not so domineering and demanding and manages to play and paint – he became a role model for me. Art seemed to come naturally to me.

### **How did your family take to your interest in Art? Did they not force you into more mainstream professions, like medicine or business?**

In general, they were very liberal and supportive. I did really want to study fine arts but they did not really know what I would do after my degree or if I got my degree so I had to make a compromise and go and study the History of Fine Art and English Literature, which was still pretty

liberal of them, and I just insisted on painting. This is the whole thing, there is a certain point in your life when you get older where you realise that there is one life to lead and you have to do what you really want to do.

### **How has living in Kenya influenced your art?**

Well Kenya is not really any third world country. It's got a whole mixture of people from abroad because of the UN, as well as the pre colonial history that we've had and there have also been Europeans that live there, who have been in Africa for 3 or 4 generations and the Africans as well. My parents sent me to the more integrated schools, from kindergarten onwards. I didn't go to a Jain community school and I think that was an experiment. As a result, I have friends from all ages, races and cultures. And Kenya is very well part of the first world. I mean it is one of the few countries I find, that has more of an idea of what is happening in the world internationally rather than in an insular way. Most of the western countries and a lot of the bigger more important countries in Europe don't really know what is happening anywhere else in the world.

You know I am very Kenyan, I might have tendencies that are very Indian but I am very very much African and I love Africans. They are so misunderstood especially by the Indians. I find that the Indians in India really love African things but the Indians that are brought up in Africa have totally not understood what is happening in their surroundings. They are there to make a living and figure out ways of business and commerce and don't really notice what is going on around them and appreciate things. We now tend to hate the west because we sort of feel that it is the direction the world is taking but the Africans have resisted

Pictures

This page: Black Lotus  
Opposite: Moon Shadow  
Overleaf: Various







and held on to so many things just like the Asians in Asia. I am integrated in that sense, I work with a lot of African artists. I have my own gallery where I try and promote African art.

**Can you say a few words about your present collection?**

The present collection is basically a large percentage of my production for the last one year or so. Some of the paintings I started earlier. When I moved to India for about 4 months last year, I discovered Poona Paper which actually was a turning point for me. I think I am going to concentrate more on the paperwork now. I am still experimenting with a whole range of new techniques. A lot of the material and medium create the different feelings that you see on the canvasses.

**The Jain tradition is based on non-discrimination, and recognises the great creative potential of every soul. How did Jain values influence your art?**

These values definitely influence one's outlook to life but when you start seeing that in practice, the society doesn't really behave in a Jain way. There is a whole lot of inherent racism. I really do try to be integrated with the world. I love people and I want to learn from everybody. I hope to be a role model, I really do, because often I see youngsters being bullied by elders. As soon as people have

children they start formulating a vision for their children, so that they do not suffer economically. There are so many inherent abilities that children have that are aborted because the kids are subtly manoeuvred into other fields and ways of behaving and thinking rather than being themselves. As a result, young people lose their innocence and the playfulness of living is lost. Everything becomes too serious and young people become disabled rather than creative and artistic.

Even subtly when you are younger within your own family you see discrimination. I have a family that ranges in colour from very pale to very dark. I have a sister who is very dark and you would see granny comparing her favourite children and measuring the beauty by measuring the fairness of the skin. I am not blaming her, that is her perception. However a foreigner would come and see my really dark sister and think she is really beautiful. There are white foreigners as well as black foreigners. And as children we were made very much aware that these things exist and they destroy self esteem. I think the inner confidence of the person is the real beauty of the person. Physically everybody is beautiful. This is one of the reasons that even though I can paint very beautiful women and I can do very nice scenes and glamorous pictures, I don't want to do that. I try not to flash down on to people. This is why I have had a bit of a change

recently where I try to do blue people and green people and purple people rather than brown and white and black. So a lot of my faces, although they might look oriental have very African features and it is deliberate, I am trying to create this sort of synthesis. I have also used moons and suns in a lot of my pictures.

**So would you consider yourself a child?**

Yes and no, I would consider myself a comedian. I am fun and I have fun and you should be having fun with everything that you do and should not get bogged down by things at all.

**So what would be your message to young artists in the world, wanting to practice their art and wanting to develop their art?**

Well a lot of good art is about practice. You may have to do a lot of work that seems boring, like drawing and doing stuff you don't like, and it is boring, but once this is over, there is a point that comes where you have to know what you have to do and express your own creativity. You, should not wait for other peoples reaction to tell you 'wow that is beautiful' because then that is what you will end up doing all the time and then you will forget how to be yourself and express yourself.





# JAINISM ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

BY VASSILIKI TZOMAKA

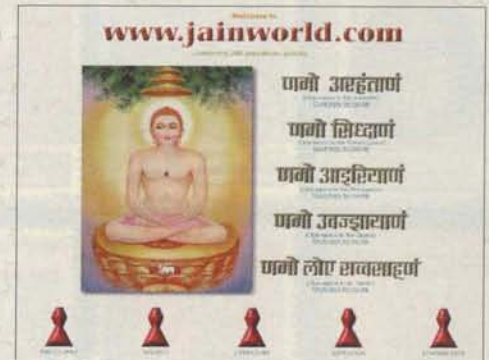
If you type in the words Jain and Jainism on the subject heading for a simple net search, up to 12,106 matches can be found. The variety is large and ranges from scholars essays to books, organisations as well as pages on the ancient principles of Jainism. However, even though there are so many titles to choose from, finding your way around the sites and looking up your topic of interest is quite simple.

## Jainworld

[www.jainworld.com](http://www.jainworld.com)

One of the largest web sites that can be found on Jainism is Jainworld. It is not only a well presented site, but also one that provides huge amounts of information for anyone interested. The first topic is Philosophy, it leads to a further 16 topics including: Anurvrat, Devotional Songs, Bhawana etc. The second is Society, subdivided into 10 topics, followed by Literature with a further 7 topics and Education with 16. The final topic is Contribution and this is subdivided in a further 10 topics.

This site also contains links where it is possible to find out about practical matters for example, Jain Food. This section not only provides a variety of explanations as to why Jains follow a particular diet, but also a link to the vegetarian Society (<http://www.vegsoc.org/>). It is also a useful site for obtaining contacts for people as it lists addresses of Jain leaders and scholars all over the world under the heading of Speakers/Scholars. Even information about Jain names to give to babies can be found on this site!



## Jain Spirit

[www.jainspirit.org](http://www.jainspirit.org)

Our very own website provides information about the magazine and contact email addresses of various people involved in the magazine. It is possible to also make a subscription enquiry or find out about advertising rates from this website. As the magazine grows, we will try to put sample back issues on this site. We also hope to create a Jain Spirit chatline where readers can email their comments on particular articles.

## Jain List : A major Jain bulletin board

[www.ddb.com/~raphael/jain-list/listfaq.shtml](http://www.ddb.com/~raphael/jain-list/listfaq.shtml)

One of the ways to communicate with Jains and people interested in Jainism is through the Internet. One of the most popular and active Jain conversation lists is Jain List. The subjects that are discussed vary from questions relating to diet to other more contemporary issues such as mixed marriages. Some people also send in regular news bulletins, and subscribers come from all over the world, especially India, North America and the UK. To subscribe all one has to do is send an e-mail to [jain-list-request@ddb.com](mailto:jain-list-request@ddb.com) with the words 'subscribe jain-list' in the subject line. The above web address gives instructions and FAQ of the list.

## Young Jains

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

Links to different Jain websites can also be found through other sites. These will also provide their own information and articles on a variety of topics. The Young Jains organisation is an example. From the Young Jains homepage, one can move on to the contents simply by moving to the bottom of the page. The titles that can be found are: Kids Page, Hot Sites, Jain Calendar, Membership, Education, Events, Articles, and Book Club. If you click on the Hot sites for example you are transferred to a page with a list of Jain related web sites. Clicking on one of these, links you to the site of the related topic.





# INDIA'S SACRED STAMPS

Pradip Jain's Devotional Collection



Stamp collecting is an improbable method of theological inquiry—except in India. Nearly every postage stamp initially issued by the newly independent country in 1948 and 1949 had a religious theme, carefully inclusive of Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. Most stamps issued since the 1950s have a secular theme, but about 100 are Hindu. They honor ancient sages such as Tiruvalluvar and Valmiki and saints from the medieval period, such as Dnyaneshwar, Chaitanya and Haridas. Many stamps carry modern saints, friends and scholars of Hinduism, including Ramakrishna, Swami Sivananda, Annie Besant and Ananda Coomaraswamy. Also included are temples, sacred dances and arts, scenes from the Ramayana and Indus Valley seals. Among the most striking is the double-size, five-rupee stamp issued in 1996 depicting the Vivekananda Rock Memorial at Kanya Kumari. HINDUISM TODAY was introduced to this heretofore unknown goldmine of devotion by Pradip Jain of Bihar State, one of India's leading philatelists.

Jain started collecting stamps in 1969 with an initial investment of three rupees, soon augmented by a loan of Rs.100 from his grandmother. "I live by stamps," he told the Hindustan Times in 1994. He has received many awards, especially for his unequalled collection of Indian airmail stamps, and has represented India at various international stamp shows—most recently in San Francisco, California.

What makes the Indian stamps with a religious theme especially useful are the "information sheets" produced by the Department of Posts when a stamp is released. Each





Courtesy Pradip Jain

Stamp Lover: Pradip Jain with antique mailbox



contains a short biography or story about the subject of the stamp, often in both Hindi and English. These synopses are very well done; in fact, a collection of them made into a book would form an excellent reference.

Mail service is an old concept—the earliest references are in Egypt from 2000 bce. According to Jain, there was an organized postal system during the Mauryan Dynasty in 300 bce that was mentioned in Kautilya's Arthashastra, a manual on statecraft. Postage stamps are a relatively recent invention, dating only to 1840. They allowed the sender to prepay the postage; previously, the recipient paid the messenger.

Assembling a collection of dharma stamps need not be expensive. Save for a few rare ones, like the 1948 ten rupee Gandhi stamp worth US\$60, most Indian stamps have a list value of US\$15€, though lack of availability may raise the price. Every stamp issued by India (and every other country) is listed in the authoritative Scott's Catalog, available at libraries. Each stamp has a "Scott's number," used by dealers to identify it. Especially for children and teens, India's religious stamps offer an entertaining and educational introduction to Hinduism's important people and places.

Stamps of India can be purchased from Pradip Jain, Post Box 128, Mithapur, Patna 800 001 India, or from Downtown Stamp Company, Post Office Box 329, Whitehouse, New Jersey 08888 USA.

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# WORSHIP: “MUM, WHY DO WE DO POOJA?”

JOHN CORT REPLIES

*One of the most common rituals is the 'Pooja'. Jain temples in India are very busy in the mornings with lots of Jain worshippers performing poojas. In this article, John Cort demystifies this profound ritual.*

The standard ritual is known as the eightfold worship, because eight offerings are involved. Having no prescribed form, it allows for much individual interpretation and personal expression. The symbolism of the different acts described below is neither universal nor mandatory, nor would all Jains immediately express these meanings. They do, nonetheless, represent the understanding of many contemporary Jains, as I have discovered in the course of extensive fieldwork as well as popular literature on Jain worship.

Before entering the temple, the worshiper bathes and puts on pure clothing, to emphasise the goal of purifying one's soul of the stain of karmic bondage. As an act of separation from the profane world some Jains will recite three times an ancient Prakrit phrase meaning "it is abandoned." The first act after entering the temple is to take darsana of the image of the Jina, a word that literally means "seeing." The worshiper imagines that he or she is not just in front of a stone or metal image but is in the actual presence of the Jina, who is a witness to the individual's spiritual efforts. To emphasise the emotional power of this act, most Svetambara images are adorned with large enamel eyes on top of the carved ones, so that even from the back of a crowded temple the individual can have personal interaction with the image. As part of the rite of darsana the worshiper bows down with folded hands and might even lie prostrate on the floor, as a sign of submission to the Jina's teachings.

The image symbolises the qualities of omniscience and dispassion that are the hallmarks of the liberated state. Many Svetambara images are elaborately decorated in royal regalia to indicate that the true king of the world is the Jina, thereby reminding the Jain of the superiority of the spiritual to worldly pursuits. Most images represent a single Jina seated in dispassionate meditation, though some depict a standing figure in the posture of abandoning the body. But images also come in a very rich variety of other forms, a fitting embodiment of the rich variety in Jain devotion. Some consist of four Jinas facing the cardinal directions in symbolic representation of the samavasarana, the universal sermon delivered by each Jina upon attaining enlightenment. Others show the twenty-four Jinas of our cosmic

period. Most temples contain additional images both inside and outside that are not designed to receive worship, but instead perform a more representative function, with scenes such as the birth of a Jina.

In temples where the central chamber is a separate room, the devotee circumambulates it three times, to symbolise right faith, right understanding and the right conduct, the "three jewels" of the Jain tradition that lead to one liberation. Throughout the ritual, devotional hymns are sung to the specific Jina whose image is in the temple or else the universal Jain prayer known as the Namaskara Mantra, or litany of reverence:

*Namaskar Mantra - The most sacred prayer of the Jains*

*I revere the Jinas.*

*I revere the [other] liberated souls.*

*I revere the monastic leaders.*

*I revere all the monks in the world.*

*This fivefold reverence*

*destroys all demeritorious karma*

*and of all holies is the foremost holy.*

The worshipper then commences the eightfold offering by entering the chamber in which the Jina image is enthroned. In allowing all worshippers, both men and women, to enter the sanctum and touch the images, Jainism is distinct from most Hindu ritual systems. (In most Hindu temples there is a strict physical separation between the image and the layperson with only professional male priests allowed into the sanctum.) A small amount of water is poured on the image - another symbol of spiritual purity. The second offering is the application of small dabs of sandalwood and saffron paste to different parts of the image. According to South Asian folk wisdom, sandalwood cures a person of fever and so here represents the need to cool off passions if one is to overcome karma. Saffron adds to the pleasant smell of the sandalwood symbolising the "sweet scent" of the Jina's teaching. Furthermore, the high cost of saffron underscores the attitude of sacrifice that pervades the ritual. The third offering consists of sweet-smelling, visually pleasing unbroken flowers, which declare that the worshipper has unbroken, satisfied faith in the Jina's teachings. The fourth offering is made by waving a stick of burning incense before the image, to symbolise the eradication of the "bad odour" of ignorance and worldly desire. The



fifth offering consists of swinging a lit butter-lamp to evoke the disappearance of the darkness of ignorance and enlightenment.

These five offerings are known collectively as the "limb worship," for in them the devotee touches the images of the limbs. Afterwards the worshiper steps out into the larger public hall for the final three offerings. These are known as the "facing worship" for they are conducted in front of the image rather than while touching it. We can see embedded in the ritual a gradual movement from dravya to bhava, from matter to spirit, that symbolises the spiritual path itself. The final three offerings are made on a small, raised platform. Sitting before it, the worshiper draws the Jain svastika with unbroken grains of rice. The four arms of the svastika represent the four possible states into which one can be reborn - human, celestial being, infernal being, and plant or animal; the three dots represent the three jewels of the path to liberation; and the dot crescent moon represent liberation itself by visually approximating the abode of liberated beings at the top of the universe. Onto this design is placed a piece

of fruit, meaning that the desired fruit of the ritual action is spiritual benefit, and a piece of cooked food, usually of a dry variety such as sugar candy. While the first seven offerings have a direct meaning, the food has a reverse symbolism. Because Jains understand the Jina to have overcome all karma and thereby to have ceased all activities, the state of liberation is called "the state of not eating." The food offering is thus a giving up of food that symbolises the liberated state. Most Jains will also place a coin on the rice, representing the renunciation of money in the pursuit of spiritual well-being. While this offering of money is usually quite small, on other occasions Jains will make large contributions for the upkeep of temples. Medieval sculptures show donors offering up money-belts or other elaborate gifts in a show of munificence.

*John Cort is a professor of Theology at Dennyson University, Ohio. He is a prolific author and eloquent speaker on Jainism.*

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Edited by: Pratapaditya Pal

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Photo: Chandu Shah



# FROM TOURIST TO PILGRIM

By LAVINIA PLONKA

I have spent many years on what some may call a spiritual quest, asking myself the questions, "Who am I? What am I? Why am I here?" Occasionally, I have had glimpses of truth, moments when, sometimes due to my own efforts, other times as if by chance, I am pierced by an understanding beyond the ordinary state. In these rare moments, I know my connection to everything that exists, I am no longer separate. Like a wave in the ocean, I am part of a greater reality, and yet myself. These rare experiences create a thirst for more, and yet, like most Westerners, I have always been far from willing to sacrifice my attachment to the very things that pull me away from my possibilities - comfort, egotism, vanity, passions and self-indulgence among others.

*I realized that I had spent most of my life trying to figure out the answers instead of just sitting and allowing myself to not know*

myself, while sitting quietly and looking for all the world like I was deeply in meditation. I couldn't have been more shocked when my wandering mind suddenly became silent. I realized that I had spent most of my life trying to figure out the answers instead of just sitting and allowing myself to not know. I had really never faced the mystery of life with an open mind. Just like planning my career, or what's for dinner, I had an attitude about how to achieve inner peace. In that striking moment of inner quiet, I decided to go to India. Without a plan, without a tour, or a seminar with a noted guru, without a companion. I took a small bag, a small map and prayed that I would be shown a direction. I made a pact with myself that I would try to listen for the way, instead of filling my trip with agendas.

One evening, I found myself in Palitana. I knew absolutely nothing about Jainism, except that there was supposedly an extraordinary temple I should visit. By chance. I met a Jain who insisted that in order to really experience Palitana, I had to begin at 4:30 AM. Right. The last time I had gotten up at that hour was....well, I actually couldn't remember. He offered to take me up to the temples, so I casually said, "Great, then you can wake me up," not thinking that anyone REALLY gets up at 4:30 AM.

The next thing I remember is an insistent knocking at my door. I couldn't even read my alarm clock, I was so clouded in sleep. I staggered out into the darkness with my Jain friend and began the ascent. Three thousand steps is an abstraction that the body cannot comprehend. You just start walking. I climbed in silence, ascending towards the black dome of sky, its millions of diamond stars piercing a blanket free of urban light pollution. The only sound was the soft scuff of pilgrims' bare feet, the clank of an occasional walking stick.

Conversation became pointless. The effort of continuing to climb upward and ever upward had silenced both my tongue and my chattering mind. I just put one foot in front of the other. The notion of pilgrimage had always seemed silly to me. Why walk when you can ride? I would read about

pilgrims walking hundreds of miles to come to a miraculous shrine, or the birthplace of a saint. What a waste of time, why if you drive there, you can see more shrines in one day. But you can't drive up this mountain. I continued skyward.

After about two thousand stairs, a shift occurred. My breath was no longer ragged. Although I could feel my heart beating, it was not pounding from effort. The air around me seemed to vibrate, my hearing and my vision became more acute. My mind was clear and with a shock, I realized that I was alive. I had come to that rare occasional place where there was no longer separation between what I call I and the universe.

I was overwhelmed by the wisdom of the ancient temple builders. Even though I had read nothing about Jainism, I suddenly understood sacrifice, simplicity, quiet. My instinct told me, and reading later confirmed that Jains built their temples near the sky in order to help the pilgrim use the climb to come closer to himself. This moment was just a taste, but it created a hunger for something that can't be satisfied with money, food or pleasure. I finally reached the top, the crimson sun was just beginning to paint the sky, its first brilliant rays softly illuminating the sea of temples.

*I had come to that rare, occasional place where there was no longer separation between what I call I and the universe*

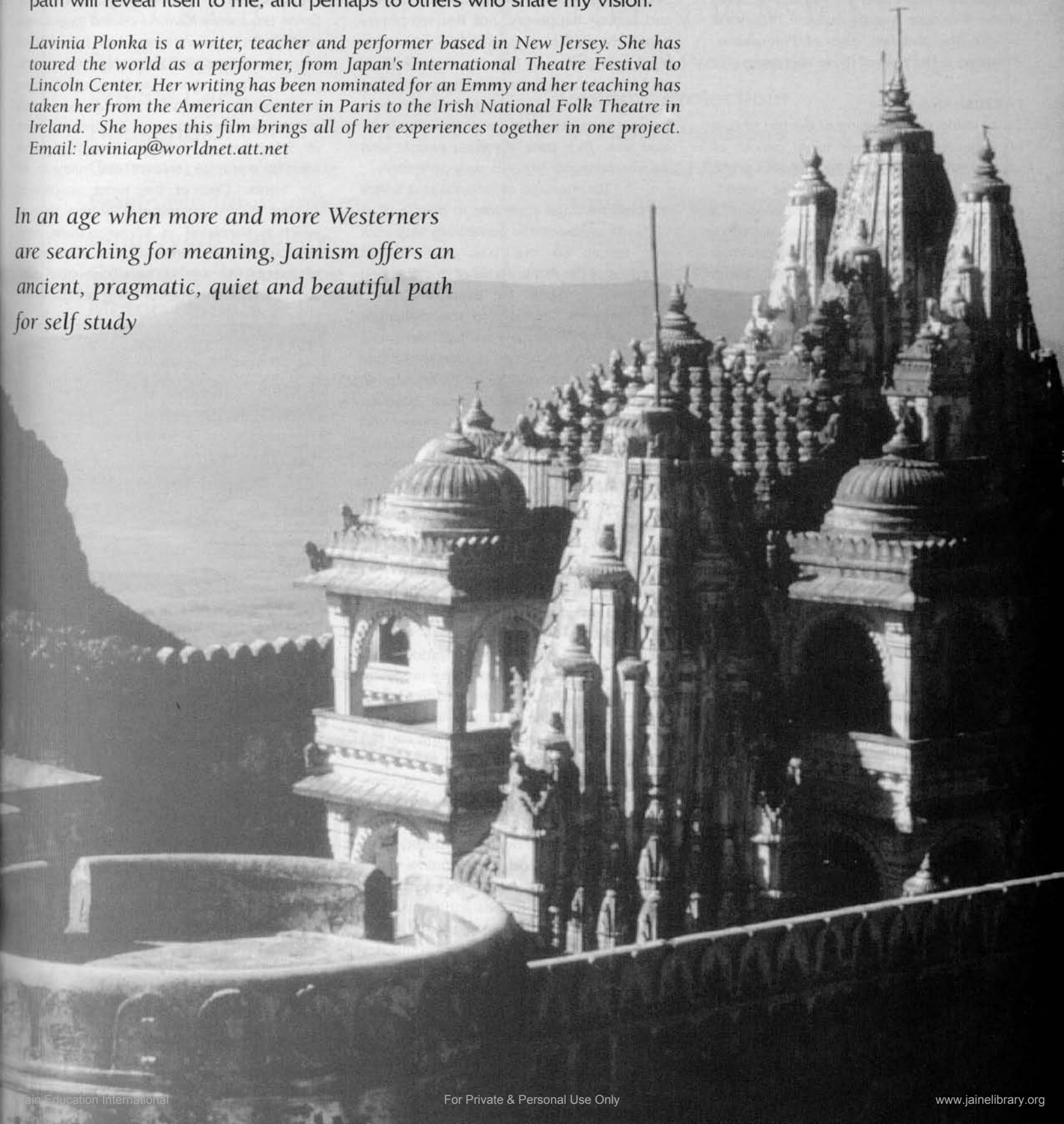
In an age when more and more Westerners are searching for meaning, Jainism offers an ancient, pragmatic, quiet and beautiful path for self study. Yet it is virtually unknown in the West. I have a dream - to make a beautiful and



inspiring film that teaches the West about the path to Moksha. Yet I find myself in a paradox - how do I raise money for a film about something unknown to Westerners among Westerners? And if Jains don't need to spread their word, how can I ask for support from Jains? My trip has taught me an important lesson - wait, listen, without attachment or expectation. Allow the experience of the unknown. I remember Palitana and trust that the path will reveal itself to me, and perhaps to others who share my vision.

*Lavinia Plonka is a writer, teacher and performer based in New Jersey. She has toured the world as a performer, from Japan's International Theatre Festival to Lincoln Center. Her writing has been nominated for an Emmy and her teaching has taken her from the American Center in Paris to the Irish National Folk Theatre in Ireland. She hopes this film brings all of her experiences together in one project. Email: [lavinia@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lavinia@worldnet.att.net)*

*In an age when more and more Westerners are searching for meaning, Jainism offers an ancient, pragmatic, quiet and beautiful path for self study*





# JAINISM ON THE BBC WORLD SERVICE

Atul Keshavji Shah was recently approached by the BBC World Service to produce a series of three Jain messages for their Words of Faith programme, which has an estimated audience of 20 million listeners worldwide. Two of the 4 minute messages were broadcast on the first and last days of Paryushana. Attached is the text of these messages.

## PARYUSHANA DAY 1

Today marks the beginning of the Jain festival of Paryushana, a week long period of spiritual refinement for the Jains. Jainism is one of the oldest religions in the world, dating back some 10,000 years, and a religion whose central philosophy is that of Ahimsa, an active love and compassion towards all living beings on the planet. One of its most famous recent practitioners was Mahatma Gandhi, who undertook a detailed study of Jain philosophy in order to translate Ahimsa into a practical doctrine.

For me, Paryushana provides a very important spiritual recharge. Living a very busy life, I look forward to Paryushana. During this week, I try to take a complete break from work, and spend the time in fasting, prayer, listening to lectures from Jain philosophers, and generally withdrawing from worldly life. For all of us, the daily struggles of life to work for our food and shelter tend to overwhelm us, giving us little space to reflect on the higher purposes of life. If all these struggles are inevitably going to end in death, then why do we allow them to be so overpowering? Jainism emphasises the importance of not sinking in worldly life but rising above it. And Paryushana is one of the most important religious festivals for doing so.

Jains from all over the world will be spending this week in prayer, fasting and meditation. Many Jains will fast for the entire eight day period, taking only pre-boiled water in the daylight hours. I personally have done that three times so far, and experienced a significant degree of spiritual energy during and after the fasts. I have not had any ill-effects, and to the contrary, felt much healthier after the fasts. Penance and fasting remind the Jains to develop discipline in their eating habits, and not to get too attached to food. Jainism

believes that real freedom comes from an active detachment from sensual pleasures, and food is one of these pleasures from which we should refrain from time to time. Such discipline will provide us with real and lasting happiness, not the temporary happiness which rises and falls from one meal to the next. In fact, the entire festival aims to encourage such spiritual discipline and self-reflection. The word Jain comes from the root Jin which means a perfected or liberated soul. Thus Jains are those people who ceaselessly aspire towards such perfection.

The message of Paryushana is a very universal message applicable to people of all faiths. All of us need to periodically step back and reflect on our past and remind ourselves of the real purpose of life. We need to actively recognise the limitations of the daily struggles, and rise to the challenges posed by the significant spiritual and moral decline in modern human history. Jains firmly believe in the importance of right knowledge and understanding and righteous conduct. A sustained period of reflection, prayer and discipline is a necessity, which will help make this world a better place not only for ourselves, but for all around us.

## PARYUSHANA DAY 8

Last week, I presented a message on the Jain festival of Paryushana, where I explained its central aims of reflection, penance and repentance over a period of eight days. Today is the last day of Paryushana and is the most auspicious day. Over the last week, Jains have been preparing for this great finale, a day devoted to forgiveness, or Kshamapana, in Jainism. It is believed that sincere fasting and prayer on this day can wipe out all the sins committed in our past year, and revitalise us to be more loving, compassionate and charitable in the following year.

The Jain idea of forgiveness is two-dimensional. It does not merely seek forgiveness from God, but requires us to seek and give forgiveness to each other, especially the close friends and family with whom we have had any arguments during the past year. It is not unknown on this day for Jains to write letters or make personal visits to these people to seek their forgiveness, a task which ordinarily would involve a

great loss of personal pride and respect. Kshamapana recognises that we are all minute elements in this vast ocean of life, and to have violent thoughts or opinions of others is to harbour pain and suffering for ourselves. Forgiveness not only strikes peace, but it cleanses our own souls, guiding us on to the path of righteousness in knowledge and conduct. Some Jain monks have conducted forgiveness ceremonies in prisons where even the relatives of murder victims have forgiven the murderers.

Apart from addressing human relationships, Jain kshamapana also emphasises the seeking of forgiveness from all living beings, explicitly recognising the need to minimise violence and injury to all life forms. One of the most auspicious prayers recited on this day is Iriya Vahiya, which is translated as follows. Please note especially the detailed description of the types of violence that we may have committed over so many different types of living beings:

With good wishes, Oh Lord, I wish to retract from this path,  
I wish to retract from sins  
While going to and fro  
Whatever types of lives I might have destroyed  
While walking  
While attacking  
While crushing  
On dew  
In ant holes  
In water  
In clay  
In cob-webs  
While cleaning or brushing  
Whatever types of lives I might have destroyed  
Those with one sense  
Those with two senses  
Those with three senses  
Those with four senses  
Those with five senses  
I might have kicked them, rolled them,  
touched them, scared them, displaced them, separated them from their own kinds or killed them  
In connection of all these things  
May my sins or faults be destroyed



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## INTERVIEWS:

# LIVE & HELP LIVE

### An interview with Mrs. Maneka Gandhi

BY ASHWIN MEHTA

Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, a former environment minister in the Indian Government, and daughter-in-law of Mrs. Indira Gandhi recently came to England to deliver the annual Schumacher Lecture. In July 1995, she also gave a keynote address at the JAINA convention in Chicago. One of India's foremost environmental and animal rights campaigners, Mrs. Maneka Gandhi is feared in many quarters. Recently, she succeeded in banning Kentucky Fried Chicken from entering India. Here she talks of the need for an active revival in Jain philosophy and practice, especially directed towards protecting India's animal and environmental catastrophe.

*In all your speeches at the JAINA convention in Chicago, you emphasised the need for active compassion amongst all Jains. Can you please elaborate on this idea.*

I don't believe that vegetarianism is simply about not eating meat. All the hidden ways in which Jains are involved in meat - leather shoes, leather belts, or animal-based toothpaste, vitamin pills, - should also



### ...I am not embarrassed about Ahimsa

be stopped if Jains want to be true vegetarians. I do not think Ahimsa is just about being vegetarian - it is much beyond vegetarianism. Ahimsa is not live and let live, but live and help live. Actually going forward and helping animals is a much more positive expression of Ahimsa. My experience with Jains has shown that they are much more keen to donate to causes like temple building or rituals than to active compassion towards animals. In India, there are very few Young Jains who have the sense to realise that Jainism is the most powerful and profound philosophy in the world. Jainism is also a very modern economic philosophy, and to understand it simply as a religion of vegetarianism is to trivialise Jainism.

*How can we convince elders to promote this positive image of Jainism?*

Unfortunately, most Jain elders also do not fully understand the social and ecological basis of Jainism. If they did, they could have a tremendous impact on the current changes sweeping India. If Jains start to use their pockets to influence change in the world, then they can move mountains. I definitely believe that their charitable efforts should be redirected towards helping actual living things rather than building more and more temples. Jains could fund legal cases to change the law. For example, next week I am going to court to ban animal dissection in schools. For my TV show, I get 200 letters a day. For example, Muslims have written to me, saying that I was a butcher and have now given it up because of your programme. One child took a razor and cut his hand feeling the pain and cruelty inflicted on animals in a slaughterhouse. He then vowed never to touch meat again.

*What about the panjrapoor tradition of the Jains. Surely that is a positive act towards helping sick and dying animals?*

Panjrapoors do not exist, or where they do, they lack the necessary management and expertise to care for sick and dying animals. I recently inspected one in Ahmedabad, and found that all the animals had died. They put them in the panjrapoors but then nobody feeds them, or the hired hands are incompetent at looking after these animals. There are very few new panjrapoors coming up - Mr. Dipchand Gardi's work is an exception rather than the rule. (In the Gujarat famine of the late 1980's the Jains mounted an enormous animal rescue operation entitled 'Jiv Daya').

*To what extent do you think have Jains been corrupted by their business success?*





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I think that Jains could make even more money by practicing active compassion. Profit without morality is always short lived - they may be rich today, but may become poor tomorrow. Jains are a moral community, but are forgetting the principles by which they became such a strong and united community. Since they do not fully understand their religion and appreciate it, they are unable to practice it and thereby influence real change in India. Jains should translate their business and financial acumen into real power e.g. by controlling the stock market. In India, political power in terms of joining parliament is meaningless. Real power lies amongst the businessmen and the corporations.

*How could we effect real change in the community?*

I think young Jains should get together and understand true Jainism. At the JAINA convention in Chicago, I felt that young people had such a low opinion of their religion that they were willing to pick on anybody to prove the weakness of their own religion. Many of them thought that Jainism was rubbish - it was not modern or progressive enough. I think this is very disappointing, and suggests that Jains need to do a lot of work to get their house in order and really turn into living ambassadors of Ahimsa.

*What is your opinion on the current wave of economic liberalisation that is sweeping India?*

It has already had catastrophic consequences, and the situation is getting worse. For example, all the new slaughterhouses in India are financed entirely by Non-Resident Indians, a majority of whom are Hindus. There is a strong scientific

link between a meat diet and environmental and economic destruction. For a country that is so overpopulated as India, the last thing we need is animals who destroy our land and forests purely because they can then be exported as meat to foreign countries. This is destroying India. Our own people do not have access to the food and the land which these animals are grazed on. India should urgently stop its animal export trade altogether, and ban slaughterhouses.

*In what way can women help towards change?*

Have a booklet made of all the things that are non-vegetarian and circulate

...there are very few Young Jains who have the sense to realise that Jainism is the most powerful and profound philosophy in the world

these to all Jains. Knowledge is power. Send it house to house in the wives names, and they will all read it. For example, silk is so cruel, yet women wear it. They have to learn to disrespect it, and happily accept it if they can understand the linkages. From my experience, most Jain women in India are very ignorant about the extent to which animal products are used in household goods and food products. Once they became aware however, they all began to change.

*What about the repercussions of political campaigning. Are you not afraid of the reactions to your views?*

I am not embarrassed about Ahimsa. That is the difference. If Jains were prouder of what they are, they will automatically effect real change. You have to feel proud of your beliefs, even arrogant if need be. You have to

have more attitude in your ahimsa. Some people will be irritated, but at the end of the day, you will achieve much more. For instance, in America when I asked Jains how many were involved in active compassion, only the British Young Jains raised their hands. What is the point of talking about ahimsa if you do not practice it. I can sit at home and be vegetarian, but for me, that achieves nothing.

*One interpretation of Jain philosophy is that we cannot do anything to help other animals - it is their karma, and they have to suffer for it.*

I think they should apply that philosophy to their loved ones also - why is it that when they fall ill, they fly them to America at huge expense to save their life? They should also stop feeding their children, because that would interfere with their karma. This becomes an absurd theoretical argument - it is a way of avoiding, a mere excuse for inaction.

*Maneka Gandhi is founder of 'People for Animals' in India. She can be contacted at A4 Maharani Bagh, New Delhi, India.*

*Jina with animals from Jain Art from India*





# A CALL TO ACTION

- DR. MICHAEL TOBIAS

Atul Shah interviewed Dr. Michael Tobias and here are his suggestions for the international Jain community.

*Q. You have travelled all over the world and met many Jains. What do you think are our strengths as a community?*

Ecology means housecleaning - and Jain homes are immaculate. Hence the ecological principles I have been espousing, I have detected in the Jain household and in their relationships to nature and other human beings. The Jains maintain the balance between giving and taking. Throughout the Jain community, I see a constant inclination to giving, a selflessness that is unique. The world needs such individuals and communities more urgently than ever before.

*Q. Do you think that our significant material success in business and the professions will lead to our downfall as a community?*

I do not think that wealth per se need violate the basic tenets of Jainism. However, the accumulation of wealth untempered upsets the whole balance to which I was just referring. To maintain a dynamic ecological balance, in business or in professional life demands this give and take. The more you take, the more you must give back. Jains have elevated giving to a very high level but this has traditionally been directed to temple building. The Terapanthi Jains led by Acharya Tulsi are an exception. They believe that money needs to be spent in caring and socially viable ways. Concern for womens' rights, the study of non-violence, the active participation in animal rights issues, in child and health care are things that the Terapanthi have been advocating in India. Hence Jain businessmen need to recognise that their wealth and accumulation violates the fundamentals of their faith unless they give it back to just causes which encourage greater harmony between all living beings.

*Q. The role of women in India has been very traditional - looking after the home and the family. This role is changing in the west, and many women are now having professional careers. How can we best encourage and motivate Jain women to take a greater role in community affairs?*

Jain scriptures have always promoted equality between the sexes. However, in many parts of the world today, women are being oppressed at an alarming rate. So Jains should provide an example and provide women with a platform to become politicians, lawyers, advocates, judges, scientists, etc. and it is up to the men to support them. It is up to the husbands to provide a setting where their wives can experience total liberation and dignity.

*Q. Jains have generally refrained from direct political action e.g. they rarely conduct public campaigns against cruelty to animals. What are your suggestions on how the Jain community can bring about greater awareness and practice of Ahimsa?*

We know that charitra (right conduct) has been cited by many Jain scholars and sages as the key to unlocking our liberation. In fact, it has been stated repeatedly that right knowledge and belief without right conduct are essentially useless. Right knowledge and right belief by itself can never liberate, but right conduct by itself can liberate. This tells us that political activism and animal rights initiatives were right in Mahavira's time and are more right than ever before in our time. Mahavira himself reminds us in the Acharanga Sutra that we must not only practice non-violence and love to all creation but




also actively prevent harm to living beings. This is a message that falls right into the lap of Greenpeace, of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), of Compassion in World Farming. I think the true practice of Ahimsa in this day and age requires Jains to:

- engage in political campaigning and marches to parliament;
- actively boycott against certain goods and practices;
- to present radical declarations of sustainability to world leaders;
- establish Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO's);
- set up schools and communities such as so passionately advocated by Satish Kumar;
- actively help rural communities to develop self-reliance and independence;

In sum, Jains should actively engage in efforts to reinvigorate the world. I keep arguing that we are not yet human beings. We are still labouring in dark-





ness, killing each other, slaughtering some ten billion life forms each year. We have a lot of work to do, and for this, the Jains are well placed to bring about a whole new renaissance in human ethics.

The late Sushil Kumar was a master at drawing outside traditions in and drawing himself out to interface with other groups. He went to Rio, Japan, met Gorbachev and even Saddam Hussein. You might say why would he have done that? As I have said, your greatest chance for inspiration is to meet your enemy head on. Let your worst adversary become your mentor. The yogi that sits under the volcano is prepared for the greatest liberation of all because he places himself in the path of disaster knowingly.

Throughout Jain history, there have been Jain kings and great leaders, not to mention the huge working collective of Jain lawyers, judges, even some members of parliament. The former UK Indian High Commissioner Dr. L. M. Singhvi is a perfect example of one who as a Jain has applied the principles to a much broader sphere of interactions with the world. I am not advocating proselytising or preaching and I am certainly not advocating violence, which often intervention is construed to be. Instead I am suggesting that you fight with non-violence as Sushil Kumar recommended. During the course of this interview, how many hundreds of thousands of animals will be slaughtered, how many children will die of starvation? We have no choice, we have to get involved, we have to do it now and if we don't, the whole notion of being a Jain is fraudulent. We must act now and decisively.

*Q. One of the challenges facing the Jain community is to pass their heritage onto the next generation. How can we motivate children to learn and practice Jainism and grow up to be compassionate and responsible individuals?*

Firstly, expose them to animals, not in zoos but in other arenas. Take them to wildlife parks that are more natural. Spend that extra money not on a car but taking your children to the rainforest.

Expose your children to nature. Urge them to hug a tree, to plant a tree as people like Nancy Jain in Toronto have done. Nature is our best teacher - we must help our children understand what bio-diversity means and what it is to become extinct. Not just through documentaries and films but through active participation in organic farms, like Satish Kumar is doing. Get them to understand why we must be vegetarian.

Let them see first hand what animal suffering is all about. Indeed it has been said that if slaughterhouses were out in the open in America, that would spell the end of every fast food place. Dogma which rejects reality cannot be sustained by many generations, because it becomes narrower and narrower, more and more obscure, divorcing the individual from the times in which they live. If we are to be good parents and to inspire our children, we have to truly educate them. We have to show them the darkness, not to make them feel daunted and overwhelmed, or made to feel useless or impotent, but that they should be so enraged by what's happening in our world and so reminded of the miracle of creation that their heart will overflow with abundant love, and that they will go out there and know what to do, to change the world for the better. Because we are loving parents, we will nurture them, give them the resources and the creative space so that they will make a difference, be enraged, get into politics, into animal rights, become environmentalists, starting vegetarian restaurant chains around the world to combat McDonalds and Burger King. Children need to understand the extent of damage being reeked by our species or they will be powerless to make a difference.

*Q. There are many Jain organisations and institutions that have been created in recent years, but Jainism is not really an institutionalised religion. What is the role of an institution within the Jain community and how can we prevent institutions from becoming an end in themselves rather than a means to an end?*

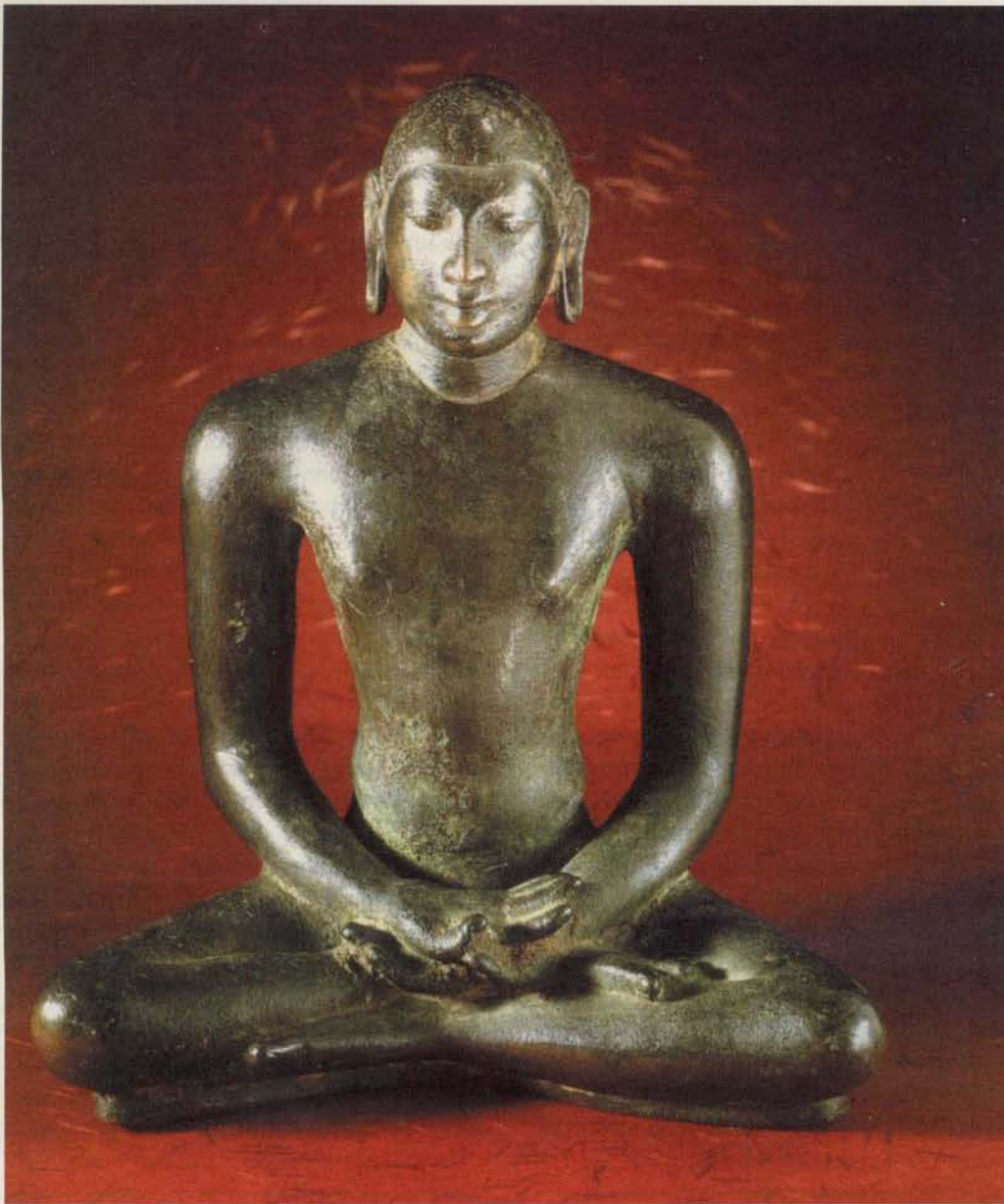
Institutions make me nervous. I have never been one to promote institutions.

I have promoted individuals contacting other individuals and before you know it, you have a community of like-minded spirits. Institutions are divorced from my reality. They don't communicate with me, they don't have a heart, they are not something I can touch or smell or laugh with. The Jain organisations, whether it is Young Jains or JAiNA in North America, should be good at propagating the principles of Jainism through action. As a social regime, the affairs of matrimony, dating and of young Jains getting together to make new friends are critical components to maintaining the unity of a community. Jains should become a dominant force that shape major aspects of the cultural, social, economic and political life of the country in which they live. Jains have been shy throughout history, but it is important that they own up to the power of their convictions.

*Q. One area through which the Jains could raise income to finance their activities and at the same time have an influence on their wider communities is through careful cooperative purchasing of 'Jain' goods and services. What is your opinion on this?*

A young housewife in Tokyo gathered her friends together and what at first must have resembled a tupperware party has now expanded into one of the most powerful cooperatives in Asia. They are now doing a half a billion dollars of business a year, and print their own catalogue of green products, selling them at great discounts. Even our investments could be restricted to companies practicing Ahimsa. At the 1993 JAiNA convention in Pittsburgh, we invited an investment expert from Merrill Lynch who spoke to the convention about how to choose ahimsa portfolios. Given their skills in business, Jains have the opportunity to come up with innovative goods and services and thereby influence other manufacturers and suppliers. The opportunities are endless. The Jains more than any other group have the responsibility and creative power to make those kinds of economic decisions amongst themselves and exercise real power in the marketplace. Jains constitute millions of consumers and we all have the ability to choose what we wish to consume. This power must be harnessed.





## PHILOSOPHY: JAINISM - A TRADITION WHICH JAINS MUST REVIVE AND REINVIGORATE

CROMWELL CRAWFORD,  
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Jainism is a religion waiting to be reborn. The likelihood, though, is that its rebirth will take place in the West, rather than in the East. Throughout the ages, Jainism has always been ahead of itself.

The ancient rishis possessed ideas and ideals which could not be fully understood or appreciated in the pre-modern world, and therefore they had to await present developments in order to come into their own. It is this historic fruition of Jainism to contribute toward the making of the new millenium that

supplies the motivation for Jains to revive and reinvigorate their tradition.

To illustrate the premise that Jainism has ideas and ideals that are eminently relevant to contemporary issues, we take a look at developments in the areas of ecology and theology.

It is common knowledge that people everywhere are facing an environmental crisis in the areas of global warming, biodiversity, waste, pollution, population, and nuclear proliferation. We have thrown ourselves all the way back to our primitive beginnings in which the dominant problem on earth was coping with the environment. The only difference between our tribal beginnings and the situation today is that the problems now are of our own making. We have found little difficulty to make the earth accessible, but never manageable. Now the price of our survival is the management of our planet. This calls for a new philosophy in the comprehension and management of our planet.

Jain philosophy has all of the elements to address the present crisis. These include: The Principle of Equality; The Principle of Non-Violence; The Principle of Consequentialism; The Principle of Responsibility; The Principle of Reciprocity; and The Principle of Restraint.

The relevance of these principles to the environmental problems cited above is clear, even on the briefest descriptions. First, the Jain religion is built on the bedrock of equality, which is not limited to socio-political considerations, but is a universal concept, including all selves: earth-bodied, water-bodied, vegetable organisms, insects,



birds, and animals. Second, the principle of equality provides the rationale for the second principle of non-violence. Ahimsa is the first of five anuvratas or minor vows a householder must observe. All religions accord a place of honour to non-violence, but when the Jain sages declared "ahimsa parmo dharmah," they were affirming ahimsa as the linch pin of all religion. Third, the doctrine of samaiya is also correlated with the doctrine of karma. Numerous scriptures warn of the consequences of doing harm by thought, word and deed. Fourth, karma underscores the principle of responsibility. Jainism grants homo sapiens a superior status, but since responsibility is seen as a dimension of human character, people are held answerable for their stewardship of the natural environment. Here superiority is not a license for the strong to exploit the weak, but an obligation for them to protect and to preserve. Fifth, the principle of reciprocity is rooted in Jain ethical notions of equality, individuality and mutuality. Recognizing that life forms occupy heterogeneous bodies, and that they are all individualized through their karma, it follows that our perceptions of others is bound to be inadequate, and efforts must therefore be made to overcome the inadequacy and to become aware of other beings in all of their idiosyncratic differences. This is the Jain version of the Golden Rule.

Finally, there is the principle of restraint which arises from the essentially ascetic ethos of Jainism. Restraint is not some masochistic form of aberrant behaviour. It grows out of an understanding of the human condition. Ignorant of the true nature of the jiva, humans identify with the ajiva and become immersed within it through the seduction of the senses. The

trouble here is that the senses can never be satisfied; hence cupidity and suffering go hand in hand. To save people from the pain and disappointment of looking into the bottomless pit of human wants, Jainism includes aparigraha into its five vratas or abstinences. It means freedom from slavery to avarice and unnecessary luxuries which burden the environment.

A second area in which Jainism has something important to contribute to the modern world is in respect to the way we think in matters of religion, given the emerging pluralism of global existence. Eminent scholars warn us of "the clash of cultures" in which fanaticism poses as the chief threat to world peace. Fanaticism wears three masks: racism, religious bigotry, and ethnic hatred. These three hatreds are the root cause of almost all of the fighting around the globe, as is most evident in the current atrocities of ethnic cleansing going on in the former Yugoslavia. Clashes between Hindus and Muslims in India, and between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Ireland tell the same sorry tale. In America, religious fanaticism is behind the bombing of abortion clinics, the burning of black churches, and the desecration of Jewish synagogues. The fanatic is usually a person who does what he thinks God would do if God knew all of the facts of the case.

What is needed to end all cultural wars is a Jain type of ethic of *anekantavada*. This notion highlights the role of relativity in all human thinking, especially when it comes to matters of religion. *Anekantavada* fosters a mind-set that says: things are not always as they seem; that contradictions abound in our everyday perceptions; that we all occupy subjective worlds; and that sincerity is no guarantee for truth and certainty.

The environmental and theological ideas of Jainism are but two examples of the rich legacy of this ancient religion which Jains must revive and reinvigorate, because it is in the present Western sky that its star can be seen in brightest

form. In a real sense it is only now that that star is born, for it takes a modern view of life in this universe, fully to appreciate its wisdom and worth. Moreover, though Jains are newcomers to the Western world, they are already among the wealthiest and best educated of North Americans and Britons. These communal assets and qualifications make the challenge of a Jain revival, not just a matter of opportunity but of obligation, for to whom much is given, much is required.

The land which has given us the gift of life and has nurtured us in faith, has sacrificed much to see its sons and daughters leave for distant shores. It is now our duty to make that sacrifice count for something, or else we will count for nothing.

*Jain philosophy has all of the elements to address the present crisis.*

*These include: The Principle of Equality; The Principle of Non-Violence; The Principle of Consequentialism; The Principle of Responsibility; The Principle of Reciprocity; and The Principle of Restraint.*



# THE ESSENCE OF AHIMSA

BY ACHARYA MAHAPRAGYA

It is necessary to keep in mind four core subjects while considering Jainism. Jain canonical texts are divided into four parts on the basis of the same four-fold classification:

*Dravyaanuyoga or philosophy*

*Charanhakaranhaanuyoga or ethics*

*Ganhitaanuyoga or mathematics*

*Dharmakathanuyoga i.e. stories, examples, metaphors, etc.*

The subject which influences society most is ethics. Philosophy forms its background. Human conduct and behaviour are directly related to society. Lord Mahavira propounded Anuvrata, a code of conduct, for man as a social being. Non-violence occupies top position in that code. Mahavira laid down the principle that non-violence is the same as righteousness. Violence cannot be an instrument of religious merit.

Mahavira proclaimed the complete unity of mankind. Racial or communal discrimination, hatred and untouchability constitute violence. There is no room for them in nonviolence. He emphasised the preciousness of all life, and the importance of minimising harm of any kind.

Mahavira pointed out three characteristics of Dharma or religious merit, viz. non-violence, restraint and penance. All the three are attributes of the individual and of his inner being. The individual character resulting from the practice of the above characteristics is truly moral. Non-violence means consciousness free from love and hate. It represents the spiritual aspect of Dharma. Its ethical aspect lies in non-indulgence in violence, refraining from falsehood, non-stealing, continence or chastity and non-possession. Consciousness free from love and hate is an individual self's characteristic. It is not oriented towards someone else and it is not related with anyone else. Not killing another sentient being is man's behaviour towards someone else. So, it is ethical. A moral law is the fruition of the spiritual form of righteousness or Dharma. Since it originates in the spiritual form of Dharma, it is no different from Dharma.

The basic technique of the social order is non-violence and non-violence implies developing fearlessness and non-aggression. It is the law of the jungle which permits a tiger to devour other animals. It

is the law of the ocean which permits a bigger fish devouring a smaller fish. Where there is fear, there is no society. For society to be formed and to function two conditions must be fulfilled - fearlessness and non-aggression. Both these together constitute non-violence. Hence non-violence is a necessary condition for human civilisation. It is not a choice.

A code for the step by step development of non-violence in a social being can be prescribed. Violence can be divided into three kinds: Aarambhajaa, i.e. violence committed while pursuing agriculture, commerce and industrial activity as a means of living; virodhajaa, i.e. violence resorted to in order to defend oneself from aggression; and samkalpajaa, i.e. wilful deliberate violence.

For man as a social being it is not possible to avoid the first (aarambhajaa). As for virodhajaa violence, avoiding it, though not impossible, is near impossible. Those embarking on the practice of non-violence should first of all give up wilful violence (Samkalpajaa).

Non-violence is an experiment in spirituality. It is as useful for society as it is for awakening spiritual consciousness. Violence does not merely mean killing a living being; quarrelling and fighting are also violence. Criticising, backbiting and condemning others are also forms of violence. Yet another form of violence is dishonesty in matters financial and commercial. They constitute samkalpajaa (wilful) violence. They are all extremely harmful to a healthy society. The non-violence anuvrat (small or basic vow) propounded by Lord Mahavira is very comprehensive. It is an experiment in building a healthy social order.

Lord Mahavira has provided a vow to restrain consumption (tapas) in order to reinforce non-violence and non-possession. Earning wealth can never remain untainted without putting a restraint on consumption. Without this restraint the problem of morality cannot be solved. More than five hundred thousand men and women joined Lord Mahavira's vrati (disciplined by vows) society. Their spiritual life became highly developed. Simultaneously general social life was also transformed. Two thousand five hundred years after Mahavira have not even slightly reduced the importance of a vrati society, a society where people take the vow to limit consumption and practise non-violence. Any step taken in the above direction will open up new vistas to both individuals and society as a whole.

Acharya Mahapragya lives and preaches in India. He is the head of the Terapanthi Sect and a leading proponent of the Anuvrat Movement, based in Ladnun, Rajasthan.





# THE JAIN SHALA OF AMERICA

BY DILIP V. SHAH, PHILADELPHIA

Philadelphia is known as the birthplace of the nation and as the cradle of liberty. The city is rich with many historical and monuments and cultural institutions. The Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Betsy Ross house are just few of the famous examples. Benjamin Franklin established the University of Pennsylvania in 1760 and hundreds of Indian students pursue undergraduate and graduate work there. Philadelphia is the site for the next JAINA Convention, but very few amongst us know that the University of Pennsylvania's Van Pelt Library is a repository of the largest and richest collection of Indian books and manuscripts outside of India. The library's 450,000-volume stock of Indic works is notable for it's collection of JAIN literature both old and new. These superb collections along with the University's Department of South Asia Regional Studies, the first of its kind in the world, and the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, which offers a Ph.D. in Jainology makes this institution the JAIN SHALA of America.

Have you ever seen a Prakrit-Hindi-Sanskrit Dictionary? A Bibliography for Prakrit language? Did you know about 12 volumes of an Encyclopedic Dictionary of Sanskrit on Historical Principals? Have you ever wanted to read works on classical and Vedic Sanskrit? Where would you send someone who wanted to read Jaina Puran Kosha or Jainendra Sidhanta Kosha? Jain literature in eight different languages is not a common site even in India. If you want to see nearly 5,000 volumes on Jainism and many more works on Hinduism in assorted ancient and modern languages you owe yourself a visit to this library.

This hidden gem of Indic literature is a life work of one Dr. W. Norman Brown. The story of the South Asia Collection at Penn revolves around the life and career of Professor Brown. Born in 1892 to missionary parents he spent his early childhood in India, I received his Ph.D. in Sanskrit from Johns Hopkins and returned to India as professor of English. With the help of one of his students, Horace Poleman, who was Chief of the South Asia Section of the Library of Congress, in 1962 he established the most remarkable library program ever.

Among the notable books one must look at is the multi-volume encyclopedia of Jainism, an extremely useful Abhidhana Rajendra Kosa (Prakrit and Sanskrit). Many rare books in the Singhi Jain Series; the handy two volume Agama collection, the Suttage, several multi-volume Agama editions; and many works on all aspects of Jain traditions in English, Gujarati, Hindi and many other Indian languages. There is a complete six-volume edition of Acharya Shri Hemchandracharya's "Trisastisalakapurusacharitra" translated in to readable English by Helen M. Johnson, describing the lives of all the Tirthankaras. There is a much-admired two-volume set on Lord Mahavir in Hindi by Osho (Rajnish Muni) and a recently published 600 page Gujarati book by Acharya Shri Rajyash Muni on Padmavati Devi (already out of print in India). The library receives many news-

papers, magazines and journals including Gujrat Samachar, Navbharat Times and both the English and Hindi editions of India Today.

All the above mentioned books are in the stacks and any visitor can browse to his or her heart's content. These books can be borrowed and are also available through inter library loan program from your local library. The entire collection is well documented and is available to you on the web

For scholars, there is a separate special collection of rare manuscripts. One needs to make special arrangement to visit this room. Everything is locked away and upon specific request, you can see some rare manuscripts. I was privileged to see a 17th century cloth scroll about 10' long describing DEVPRATISTHAVIDHI. It describes Adhivasna Vidhi, Devi Pratistha Mantra, Mata Marudevi and other devi's Pooja /Pratistha Vidhi, Dikpal and other Devta's Stapanavidhi etc. Of unknown Author and Date, in Jain Prakrit language and beautifully illustrated is "Kalakacaryakatha". The moral of the legend of Kalaka is that he who labors for the purity of the Jain faith obtains imperishable glory. This manuscript was most prized by Professor Brown and he called it a "jewel". As you study these rare manuscripts, you come to appreciate the rich traditions of our literature and come back with strengthened belief in Jain faith. Although special arrangements are necessary to handle the manuscripts, the library is making them available online, as scanned images on the library web page: [www.library.upenn.edu/etext/mss/index.html](http://www.library.upenn.edu/etext/mss/index.html)

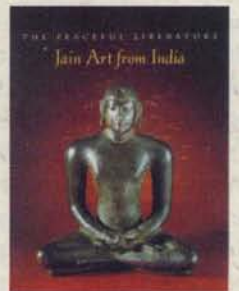
A visit to the library would be incomplete without visiting the collection of black and white photographs of (Hindu, Buddhist and Jain) temples of India. This 95,000 photograph collection is the only one outside of India and is a most comprehensive catalog of temples of India Hindu- Buddhist and Jain. It is a result of a project of American Institute of Indian Studies that started in 1965 and is just now nearing completion. The collection is sorted by states and alphabetically by cities in that state so you can easily find your cherished temple.

This fabulously wealthy temple of knowledge is sitting quietly in west Philadelphia waiting to be discovered by anyone who has interest in Jainism. Layman or scholars who visits for the first time will be soaked with sprinklings from ocean of Jainism at this JAINSHALA. So as you go to Philadelphia for the 10th Biennial JAINA Convention, plan to visit the Van Pelt Library at U. Penn.

Dilip Shah is Secretary of JAINA, and lives in Philadelphia.

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# PEACE THROUGH JAINISM

By REUBEN THUKU,  
Nairobi, Kenya

A great thinker once said "there is no political, social or monetary system capable of developing a harmonious civilisation, unless supported by constructive integral living". An integrated wholesome life requires a person to cultivate and flower physical, psychological and spiritual capabilities intensively; and then selflessly use them for the good of all. Thus each of us is entrusted with the duty and responsibility of either improving or degrading the world, since all are interdependent.

As indicated by many extensive researches based on global well being the major cause of world-wide suffering and sorrows can be attributed to human beings' irresponsible actions and negative attitudes. Some of this malpractice would include:

## SAVAGE HOSTILITY

According to written history, no war has ever been won. One war ends only to trigger another much complicated war. Our idea of peace is to manufacture and stock more destructive armaments. There is a highly competitive demand for improvising ultra-torturing methods.

Not only are animals subjected to excruciating cruelty during laboratory experiments, whether for medical, decorative or commercial purposes; but also by eating their flesh as part of our diet, lowers our life quality. We become vulnerable to many diseases and emotionally absorb crude beastly passions, such as consistent agitation, inexplicable fear and insatiable lust featuring mainly. Plants and other creatures are victims of carefree brutal destruction and an incessantly poisoned environment.

## HYPER INDIVIDUALISM

Plato argues: "Any civilisation overtaken by moral degeneration is heading towards disintegration." The immoral and unethical flood that is drowning the world today is due to *minesmyopia*. As the worldly wisdom declares: "mine is right." Social unity and integrity is nothing but a wild dream.

Old people are losing the will to live, and therefore die prematurely since nobody appreciates them. Youths feel frustrated because the elderly only preach but not practice what they teach. Widows and orphans are abandoned to ridicule and solitude with no consolation and very frequently their inheritance is viciously swindled by their would be protectors and trustees.

The handicapped people are treated as third-rate beings, left to survive on merciful alms and other casual meagre livelihood. As far as foreigners are concerned, they are subjected to cold malicious contempt and are converted into objects of exploitation. Needless to point out that children are pushed aside as nonentities... not worth attention. They can grow like wild grass.

## ULTRA-COMMERCIALISM

Greed is overpowering us. Our ancestors in the past observed rituals and spirituals ceremonies during religious festivals, whilst we, their much learned offspring today, enthusiastically expect expensive commercial gifts from our acquaintances, during Dipawali, Christmas and other days of festivity. Grinding poverty all over the globe is originating from the famous motto: "Turn around three times and grab what you may." However, gluttony, hoarding and frivolous wastage also contribute to this unpleasant dilemma which is very dehumanising.

## UNBRIDLED TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

Sad to relate, too much reliance on sophisticated computers and other machines has diverted human beings' attention from the real goal of life. Our eternal quest has been side-stepped. The brilliant technician has replaced the vulnerable Jina. And now in such a treacherous and stormy sea is it Jainism that provides the 'radar' to endure safe steering towards our cherished destiny?

Jainism is a philosophy and science that includes self-reliance and universal responsibility. By translating the teachings of Jainism into one's lifestyle, the person becomes a dynamic agent for solving the environmental, moral, social, psychological and spiritual problems of the world.

Besides the elaborate and grand knowledge available in Jain literature regarding the nature of the universe and countless sentient beings existing therein, Jainism offers four very influential and soul nourishing principles.

### 1. Ahimsa (Harmlessness)

Since all life is one, harmony has to be expressed and practised at various levels.

a) Physically no creature should be deliberately harmed – vivisection should be avoided and vegetarianism practised.

b) One's speech has to be truthful, helpful, kind and above all pleasant.

c) By thinking positively frequently, the mental atmosphere of the world will be purified and freed from destructive and negative ideas.



## 2. Anekantawada

(Respect for other peoples opinions and views)

Every being in the universe is important, unique, and useful. Thus for right living, be accommodative, adjustable and adaptable to other people's views – distribute your joy freely to others, whether friends or strangers. This will heal the moral and social ills, as well as developing global cordial relationship.

## 3. Aparigraha

(Non-possessiveness)

Psychological depression is destroying many peoples lives world-wide. This is due to endless uncontrolled

desires and greed. Human beings are currently expressing a culture of purposeless pleasures. This makes us victims of anxiety, worries, and tension. Jainism recommends simple living, governed by contentment in the mere necessities of life. Such a practice will develop tranquillity in the mind and charitableness will also become spontaneous.

## 4. Karma

(Law of cause and effects)

The goal of Jainism is to facilitate the soul to attend Universal Intelligence, blissful immortality and serenity. This is achieved not only by rituals and ceremonies but also by right

action. The soul's progress – whilst good, noble actions accompanied by regular silent meditation, creatively hasten the process of liberation. Therefore spiritualising one's life and becoming a missile for radiating peace to all beings, is the key to universal happiness.

Ever, remember that Jainism and peace are synonymous!

*Reuben Thuku is a member of the Theosophical Society of Kenya and resides in Nairobi, Kenya.*

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# SHADES OF GREED

BY PADMANABH S. JAINI  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

*An eminent authority on Jainism, Prof. Jaini provides a simple yet profound analysis of the Jain principle of Aparigraha or Non-possessiveness.*

Jain texts enumerate four instincts (samjnas) universally found in all forms of life including the vegetable kingdom. Craving for food (ahara-samjna) is the most primary of these instincts. No being other than the liberated soul is exempt from it. This desire for food sets up competition between one living being and another, which gives rise to the second instinct, namely that of fear (bhaya-samjna). The consumption of food sets in motion the third of the instincts, the desire for reproduction (maithuna-samjna), which produces further desire for food. This, in turn, produces a craving to accumulate things for future use, the instinct called parigraha-samjna, which invariably goads the souls towards volitional harmful acts (himsa) inspired by attachment and aversion (raga and dvesha). The Jains therefore see the craving for food and other requisites as the very root of all bondage, the uprooting of which is essential for the elimination of the other passions.

While the physical needs as well as their capacity to fulfil them varies from one being to another - and within humankind between one human and another - there is no limit to what the mind may indulge in wanting, securing, and defending. One may eat only so much food, yet one might wish to accumulate enough to keep a storeroom filled with provisions. What is legitimate, therefore, for

maintaining one's body and health, and the primary safety for one's existence, may not be the same as one is capable of wanting. This desire for the excess amount of provisions, whether of food, or means of pleasure, or instruments of defence, can so overwhelm a person that it will necessarily translate into actions that cannot but be destructive of the legitimate interests of others.

The Jains have a technical term used to describe this type of mental world of greed and other passions: leshya, a certain psychological stain with which a soul in bondage can be identified at any given time. These leshyas are seen as colorations, as for example, in the English expressions "red with rage" or "green with envy". Depending upon the grades of greed, the Jains have marked six shades, naming them as black (krishna), blue (nila), grey (kapota), yellow (pita), pink or lotus coloured (padma), and shining white, like the moonlight (shukla). Generally speaking, the denizens of the hells and animals have the former three unwholesome (ashubha) colours while the gods in the heavens have the latter three wholesome (shubha) colours. However, humans are capable of experiencing all six shades of anger, pride, deviousness, and most of all the passion of greed. It is this last passion that produces ambitions to appropriate the possessions of others and the delusion that one thereby has control over others.

A beautiful passage in a Jain text called Gommatasara Jivakanada (circa tenth century, verses 507-508) illustrates these shades of greed in the following metaphor.

Here, these leshyas are comparable to six men who in the course of their travels are lost in a forest with nothing to eat. Seeing from a distance (probably, as in a mirage) a tree laden with fruits, each person entertains a different thought. The first person thinks, "I shall cut this tree from the base of its trunk," while the second one thinks, "I shall cut it where it begins to branch." The third one thinks, "I shall cut a branch from it", and the fourth one, "I shall cut a twig." The fifth one thinks, "I shall pick enough fruit from the tree to eat", but the sixth one thinks, "I shall pick up those fruits that have fallen on the ground." The picture illustrates the above verses.



It is to be noted that in the above story the physical violence against the tree has not yet started, and yet these six men have entertained different varieties of desire that will define their instinct for possession (parigraha-samjna). While the Jains stress the importance of non-violence in action, they at the same time emphasise that the desire for possessions, which starts at the mental level, is the seed of evil, and the seed of samsara. The Jain spirit is manifest only when an aspirant searches the soul for the grades of greed and moves from the darker shades into the lighter ones.



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## JAIN ECOLOGY

By SATISH KUMAR

*A paper presented to the conference on Jainism and Ecology at Harvard University, July 1998.*

I LEARNT THE principles of Jain Ecology from my mother. She had never heard of the word "ecology". She would not see things in isolation, or by naming. But ecology was implicit in the way she lived.

I was then six years old and was educated by my mother. Again, as she was not conscious of the term "ecology" she was not conscious of the idea that she was "educating" me. But looking back I can say that perhaps my mother was the greatest and most important of my teachers.

We have to learn from nature, mother would say. We humans think that we are very clever but that is our arrogance. Look at the honey bee: she goes from flower to flower taking only small amounts of nectar from each flower; a flower has never complained that a honey bee came and took all of its nectar away.

What do we humans do? When we see something beautiful or useful in Nature we take it, take it, take it until it is depleted and exhausted. If we were to follow the way of the bee we would learn to take only a little and be contented.

When the honey bee has taken the nectar from the flower, what does the bee do with it? She transforms the nectar into sweet, delicious and nutritious honey which has great healing qualities. The greatest teacher of transformation is the honey bee.

The worker bee works diligently and dedicatedly to show us that not only should we take little from Nature, but what we take should be transformed into something greater than what has been taken - into something which is replenishing, nourishing and nurturing to life.

The honey bee knows not how to create waste! The bee not only teaches us the way of transformation but also the way of pollination. We do not find the fulfilment of our full potential by ourselves, we depend on each other. Man depends on woman. I depend on you. I am grateful to you my son that you have come into the world through me. You needed my body to be born. I needed you so that I could be a mother. We humans depend on trees and rain and on the fruits of the earth. We need to work to enhance the relationship between us and all life. This is the meaning of pollination.

The great teacher and founder of the Jain religion for our time was Mahavir and he taught us to be like the honey bee. He went, begging for his food, from door to door and from household to household, always taking just a little. If someone offered him two pieces of bread he would accept only one. No householders could ever say that the begging monk had taken all their food, that they had been left hungry, that they had been forced to cook again. Mahavir would go once a day to a dozen doors to get enough for a single meal.

It was as though he had learnt the great virtue of restraint from the honey bee. Mahavir was like the bee, a great pollinator of wisdom. He went alone, always walking

barefoot, carrying no possessions, not even a begging bowl, and he brought stories and dreams, myths and meanings to peasants and princes, to poor and wealthy. Walking the earth was a most sacred act - a form of continuous pilgrimage. There have been twenty-four Jain masters or tirthankaras in the history of Jain religion and they all walked up and down the land of India, covering thousands of miles. The tirthankaras, communing with and meditating upon nature, roamed through the wilderness with a deep sense of the wonder about the mystery of life. Countless mystical experiences in the natural world brought them enlightenment.

My mother used to say to me, "How do you think the tirthankaras became enlightened?" To which she would answer, "Because they lived in the wilderness, sat under the trees and communed with nature. How is it that we do not have tirthankaras, enlightened beings, these days? Because we have cut ourselves off from nature and live in towns and cities. Even the monks no longer go to the mountains and sit under the trees." The Tirthankaras spent long periods meditating in caves in the mountains and all of them went to the mountains to die.

When Mahavir walked, he walked barefoot: treading lightly on the earth. He kept his eyes on the ground to avoid stepping on any living creature. And if by mistake he stepped on any form of life the harm would be less because he walked barefoot. Not injuring any life was his greatest concern and passion. Such was his reverence for life that he taught his disciples to refrain from eating any kind of meat. His concern for life went



even further. He asked his followers to avoid eating root vegetables because in order to eat a root one has to dig up the whole plant; thus grains, beans, peas, pulses and fruit are suitable foods, whereas onions, garlic, potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables are not. The principle of limiting one's consumption is the bed rock of Jain ecology.

Such restraints did not mean that food was a dull affair in our home. In fact each time mother prepared a meal it was a minor feast. The aroma of spices, the colour of the foods, the manner of presentation, the ritual of eating and the care given to each member of the family made every day an occasion of celebration. Mother believed that if you have bad food in your belly, you cannot have good thoughts in your head. I remember the delights and pleasures of home cooking: the fewer the ingredients, the greater the challenge to the imagination and the art of cooking.

Mother followed the example of Mahavir and always walked barefoot. When we touch the sacred earth and feel the cool of the soil we know that we have come from the earth and will return to the earth. Walking barefoot in Nature in solitude brings you in contact with your soul as well as in contact with the soil. There is no better way to health and happiness than a daily practice of walking barefoot on the earth. The minerals and herbs of the earth enter the body through the soles of our feet and heal our souls. Moreover fear and frustration, anger and anguish, tears and tribulation quickly disappear, blowing away with the wind when we walk among the trees and listen to the humming of bees.

Mahavir taught his disciples that the earth has soul, water has soul, fire has soul, air has soul and of course all plants and animals have souls. As humans love life and do not wish to be harmed, non-human life, including insects and mosquitoes, worms and spiders, butterflies and bees also long to live. Therefore compassionate human beings should be making a continuous effort to reduce the damage they inflict on other forms of life.

The aim of Mahavir was to take as little as possible from the natural world and to live in harmony with nature. The compassion of Mahavir was so apparent that when he preached his sermons, which would always take place in a grove of trees or in a forest, not only humans would come to hear him speak, but also lions and tigers, eagles and doves, peacocks and parrots, elephants and bullocks, would all sit at his feet.

Jain ecology insists that we must learn to respect the water body, the fire body, the earth body and the air body. These natural bodies are not distinct from human bodies; human bodies contain earth, air, fire and water. These elements sacrifice themselves to nourish and sustain the human body. Therefore it is only right that human beings should take responsibility to sustain the natural order and preserve the integrity of the elements. This is the principle of ahimsa, non violence. It is the most fundamental principle of Jain ecology. But ahimsa, or non-violence, was not just a dogma for my mother: it was a way of life.

As a traditional Jain family we did not live as isolated individuals, we were not taught to stand on our

own feet and fend for ourselves; ours was a relationship of mutuality, mutual sharing, mutual caring, no privacy, no private possessions, no private wealth, everything belonged to the family. My three brothers worked together in the family business and shared the family home. Nobody knew or evaluated who earned what and how much. It was all one and shared. A family security system operated. The extended family, which included my mother, her sons, their wives and children, as well as my father's brother and his family, lived in a house built round a courtyard. With the inner courtyard was connected an outer courtyard where cows were milked, herbs were grown, rainwater was collected, guests were accommodated and corn was dried, threshed and winnowed. The whole set up was simple and sustainable. Everything was in good order and seemed amply sufficient for our needs. The family business, which was based on trade in grain and jute, brought enough income in cash to keep the needs of the family amply supplied. We were not rich, we were not poor and we never thought of these categories. A sense of satisfaction and "enoughness" prevailed.

*Satish Kumar is editor of Resurgence magazine and a director of Jain Spirit*



*Illustration: Vassiliki Tzomaka*



# EKENDRIYA BEINGS SEEN AS NATURE

BY KRISTI L. WILEY

*Are plants only useful to the extent that they help other living beings, or are they important in their own right? Kristi Wiley presents the Jain perspective.*

Over the last quarter of the century, environmental ethicists have questioned the appropriateness of an anthropocentric world view of nature in which humans are the bosses of nature and they are free to deal with it as they please. They have observed that life is being severely impacted by the ever-increasing rate of development and industrialisation and that such activity is polluting the earth, water, and air to such a degree that the survival of many life forms is in doubt. In an attempt to move beyond this position of dominance by humans towards an environmental ethic, some environmentalists suggested that "one should be able to do what he wishes providing that he does not harm others and that he is not likely to harm himself irreparably".

Other environmentalists have taken a more global perspective and have attempted to postulate "ecosystem centred ethical systems" (ecocentrism). In this view, nature is seen as a community or ecosystem, for example, the biotic community composed of plants and animals, soils and waters - no single species has overall power or domination. Proponents of these theories believe that biocentric criteria are inadequate for justifying that moral consideration be given to an ecosystem in part because it includes entities that do not meet any of the above conditions since in their view, earth, water, and air are not living. For this reason, a system of values has been proposed whereby "natural wholes, such as species and ecosystems, possess an intrinsic value derived from the baseline intrinsic value of living organisms and thus enjoying only derivative moral considerability".

From a Jain perspective, a justification for the preservation of the environment need not be based on earth, water, and air having only derivative value in their support of life for plants, animals, and humans. Rather, along with fire, they should be accorded moral consideration in their own right since they can form the gross (audarika) body for a soul (jiva) and a soul, so embodied, is one-sensed (ekendriya) living being. Thus, these individual elements constitute "others." Jain texts state that earth-bodied,

water-bodied, fire-bodied, and air-bodied beings, as well as the numerous forms of vegetable life, develop four life-forces or vitalities (pranas): the vitality of the strength or energy of the body, the vitality of respiration, the vitality of life span, and the vitality of the sense of touch. In addition to binding new karmic matter from volitional activities, these one-sensed beings are constantly experiencing the effects of previously bound karmic matter as it comes to fruition. And it is clearly stated that one-sensed beings experience suffering through the sense of touch. At Bhagavati Sutra 1.2.85, the question is raised, "Do all earth-bodied beings have an equal feeling of suffering?" Answer: "Yes, they have an equal feeling of suffering." Why? "All earth-bodied beings are devoid of a mind and so they experience pleasure and pain (vedana) in an indeterminate way or with the absence of positive knowledge." And like other beings who have not attained omniscience and perfect conduct through the destruction of all destructive (ghatiya) karmas, rebirth is a certainty for all one-sensed beings since at some time they must bind longevity (ayu) karma which must come into fruition for the next life.

Thus, according to Jain sources, whenever matter in the form of earth, water, air or fire is embodying a soul, it constitutes a living being that is able to breathe, nourish its body, sustain life in its body, and experience pain through the feeling of touch. And, as described in the opening lectures of the Acaranga Sutra, even though hurting a one-sensed earth being may not be readily apparent through observation, a person can hurt them and can cause them to suffer by cutting, striking, or killing them even though the suffering generated from such actions is indeterminate. In contrast with an anthropocentric or speciesist view where "the interests of others matter only if they happen to be members of his own species" Jains have maintained that "All beings are fond of life, like pleasure, hate, pain, shun destruction, like life, long to live. To all life is dear" (Acaranga Sutra, tr. Jacobi, Jaina Sutras, 1884, p. 19).

Illustration: Sofia Botzios



# A WOMAN OF TREES

BY STUART FRANKLIN

*Julia Hill lived in a tree for twelve months to save the giant redwoods of California.*

IN THE CANOPY of a 200-foot ancient redwood, Julia Hill, aged twenty-four, nicknamed "Butterfly", gazes out over the sinuous Eel River near Scotia in northern California. Second-growth forest and the burnt out stumps of trees, residual remains of recent clearcutting, are ranged on the slopes and in the valley below. It's been a year. And, like Italo Calvino's "Baron in the Trees", Julia won't come down. Her feet won't touch the ground, she states emphatically, until the tree known as Luna is safe from the chainsaw.

For the giant Pacific Lumber Company, which employs 1,600 workers and whose warehouses and lumber stacks stretch out along the valley below, the tree that it owns – Julia's adopted home – is money: US\$100,000 to be precise. Julia hopes that her action, tree-sitting, will not only save Luna, but draw attention to the many other ancient trees and forests under threat.

The long journey, from small larva in Arkansas to inspired and inspiring "Butterfly" in a California giant redwood, has been painful, certainly beyond the scope of ordinary endurance. Before seeing Julia in person, I watched her phone-in voice generating applause at a public hearing in Oakland near San Francisco. She was addressing journalists, bureaucrats, concerned citizens and FBI agents through an amplified cellphone held out by her stalwart supporter, Robert Parker. From the tree, 250 miles to the north, her message rang out, bold and clear. "I was raised to believe that when something is rare you preserve it..." she began. "Do your job" the voice in the tree commanded. Enforce the Endangered Species Act and the Forest Practices Act to preserve the last ancient redwoods in private hands, it implied.

Next day, Julia is in the tree descending. I, sweating profusely after hiking upslope to the base of the tree and ascending by rope-climbing, meet her midway to the top. The jingling sound of seven small brass ankle bells and a welcoming hug greet me a hundred feet up. Julia "Butterfly" wears no safety harness, uses no rope to climb in the canopy, and wears no shoes. Picture a small, wan face laughing on an impossibly high branch. Picture her gay with abandon, speaking on her white cellphone, drawing back long hair, preaching tree-love to the press. Picture her in a small plastic dome reading fanmail from Greece, from Indonesia, France, Japan; from Tasmania, Turkey and Italy; eating salad and sweet pickles. Nowadays letters arrive simply addressed to Julia butterfly, in Luna Tree, Stafford County, California. The postmen and women deliver her mail, not to the tree, but to friend and supporter Robert Parker.



*Julia Hill camping in the tree*

*Photograph: Stuart Franklin/Magnum*

In July 1997, stopping to view ancient redwoods at Grizzly Creek in northern California, Julia became converted: "I felt spirituality like I never felt it in any church. I dropped to my knees, crying and laughing. There is no way to describe a part of yourself you never knew was missing. I knew nothing would be the same again." Then, following the path of Ralph Waldo Emerson and John Muir, Julia sought to redouble her joyful experience in a treetop: not to experience the sublime, but to save the tree. Briefly back in Arkansas she sold everything she owned and moved out West and to the top of the tree.

Pacific Lumber have made several attempts to entice her down. They have attempted to stop supplies by sending guards to the base of the tree and menaced her with a twin rotor helicopter. Additionally, she has received lewd abuse from loggers, a cacophony of air horns to keep her awake and, worst of all witnessed the clearcutting of trees all around her.

The weather too has shown little mercy. Two and a half weeks of furious winter storms left her with mild frostbite after four large branches destroyed her shelter. Through prayer and meditation she learnt the tree's secret: to bend and to relax. That's when she gave up shoes and wearing a harness.

Many people living in northern California no longer trust the administration, still less the growing power of corporations. As Humbolt resident Rosemary Wolter testified: "I think that corporations are not only destroying our forests but are also destroying our democracy." In a State that, according to economist Robert Ayers, spends more on prisons than in schools, and where a protestor can wind up in jail for unfurling a protest banner without the permission, those who do speak out are the courageous few.



## WORKPLACE:

# JAINISM IN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

BY SHASHIKANT MEHTA

JAIN INDUSTRIALIST AND PHILOSOPHER, RAJKOT, INDIA

How can we practice Jainism in our everyday working life? is the crucial question we will address today. Jainism is a religion and philosophy of everyday living. The word Jain means a person who has conquered his inner greed and selfishness. In management today, there are so many modern and fashionable concepts that it is interesting to see how quickly they change with time. For example, time management is a current fad, but I would argue that we should talk about life management instead. I feel Jainism has given us some concepts which are eternal. How can we uplift our livelihood to bring happiness to ourselves and our fellow human beings is the real issue we face today.

Why do we do business? We do it for our prosperity and economic well being. But the real question is how do we achieve success and where does the prosperity come from? Jainism has argued that prosperity comes from punya (luck/karma) and not purushartha (effort). We can see many living examples of this e.g. why is it that some people make a lot of money in a few hours and others cannot even achieve this in a whole lifetime?

Punya comes from serving others (paropkar). Lord Mahavir had showed us that the path to real happiness is through service. There are nine types of punya, and anyone who practices these types is bound to prosper and succeed.

1. Anapunya - feed others who are hungry.
2. Jalpunya - means to quench the thirsty.
3. Vastrapunya, to clothe the clotheless.
4. Vastipunya - to provide shelter for the poor. We should not neglect the poor and unfortunate in all our actions. concepts take us to the root of prosperity.
5. Manpunya - to take genuine concern for others.
6. Vachapunya - to keep our promises.
7. Kayapunya relates to self-sacrifice.
8. Namaskarpunya recommends the respect and regular recital of the navkarmantra. This eight-fold path, if practised with sincerity, is the core to happiness and prosperity in our working life.

If we examine the history of the prosperity of the Oswal Jain community, there are ample examples of good punya. An eminent philosopher has said: 'If we want to raise our standard of living, we must raise our standard of giving.' In all our actions,



*"If you serve others genuinely, the prosperity is bound to come. That is a law of nature."*

we must remember that the foremost aim is to serve others. I would like to give examples of business practices in ancient Indian history, where happiness and prosperity was achieved without a profit motive.

In ancient India, Brahmins were the teachers and the preachers; Kshatriyas were the warriors in charge of law and order and defence; Vaishyas were responsible for feeding and looking after the welfare of the society; Bhamasha was a great example of a vaishya who truly cared for his community. One day, he heard that there was going to be a large famine in the following year. Immediately, he summoned his workers and ordered: 'Go and buy as much food as you can and fill our warehouses.' Did he do this to hoard and maximise profits during the famine? No. He did this to look after the people during the famine - he just opened the warehouses to feed the poor and the hungry at no cost. He understood then that what was the point of his own wealth if he could not help his own people?

In 1899, Devji Kara and Jetha Anand were the first Oswal Jains to leave India for East Africa. One by one, they invited 4000 other Oswals and helped them set up in business. 1200 years ago, the social system had a rule - where a worker serves his boss, it is the duty of the boss to help the worker become a boss one day as well. A true leader or manager was a person who did not rest until his workers had acquired similar skills and considered it part of his duty to train them in such a way. In Antwerp, one of the most prosperous Jain diamond merchants, Kirtilal Manilal, has helped 1800 other Jains to set up their own in the diamond business. There was no fear of competition or threat - it was done with a big smile, and seen as a matter of pride to help others become as skilled as oneself.

Do you want to keep this ancient heritage of yours or do want to forget it? I would like to make one small suggestion - we should try and help all our brothers and sisters who are unemployed to get a job. This is Jainism in practice. Raja Vikramaditya went into debt and all the businessmen gave their wealth to him. As a result, the King forgave all the debts of his people - this is why we celebrate Vikram Samvat. To save the prosperity of their homeland, the businessmen emptied their own pockets. If we talk about corporate finance, corporate culture, corporate success, then please remember that in our own heritage, the profit motive was never there. It was simply to serve, serve and serve again.



I have heard about the UK business of 'The Body Shop' and their ethical achievements. In Ahmedabad, the 'Amul Dairy' is another revolution - they have set up a co-operative of all the dairy farmers in the area and the milk is collected and pasteurised and distributed centrally. The profits are then distributed to the farmers. This is the basic principle of Jainism. We should not separate our working life from our other life - all our principles are relevant to both and should be practised throughout.

What can business do to achieve prosperity and do the maximum good to the maximum people? We should refrain from businesses which involve violence such as meat or meat products. Instead we should focus on other trades such as law, accountancy, medicine, and minimise violence. There is ample evidence of how wealth creation has brought unhappiness as opposed to prosperity. We should not engage in non-eco-friendly businesses. In America, research has shown that only the eco-friendly corporations have survived more than a hundred years. Mr. Nitin Mehta states that in the UK, all Jains who have entered meat-related trades (such as nursing homes or English grocery) have experienced serious problems. We must engage in business and work that does not damage the environment. I would like you to set up a directory of eco-friendly businesses and professions that could be done by Jains. It would be a landmark achievement, and I think you are capable of it.

In India, holistic medicine is becoming very popular and western medicine (allopathy) has really proven to be unhealthy. Time has come to rise against allopathy - often the medicines give rise to new illnesses. 70% of all illnesses are healed naturally within 3-4 days, if we rest and change our diet. It is said that there are no incurable diseases - only incurable people.

A unique opportunity awaits the Jain community. In India, of the total charity given, 50% comes from the minority Jain community. What a significant achievement. Prosperity comes from giving. Care for the others - never produce something which is not useful to others. We should not engage in any business which is artificial e.g. propped up by advertising alone. The advertising culture aims to confuse the needs of the customers - a big crime for society. With respect, the west is nothing but a sunset civilisation. Lord Mahavir's path can create a sunrise civilisation.

To professionals, Jainism requires you to serve with your special skills and not concern yourself with the monetary rewards. If you serve others genuinely, the prosperity is bound to come. That is a law of nature. Unfortunately, we all want power and money. A true professional does not look up but looks down. Looking up there is only competition and aggression, but looking down, there is opportunity to serve and help others. You should endeavour to train ten people so they can prosper on their own.

Instead of competition and conflict, the Indian way strives for co-operation and collaboration. If we do this, our own life will be an example to others. There are five virtues for a successful manager.

1. Be simple. Do not have any sophisticated values and approaches.
2. Be sincere. Say what you mean and mean what you say.
3. Be servant. Aim to serve the customer, and you will pick up the tricks of the trade.
4. Be ready to sacrifice. Do not try and snatch other peoples customers.
5. Be spiritual. Do not forget your religion and your lord.

If you follow these virtues, I guarantee that you will succeed. Try to raise the purity of your own consciousness. In three sentences, the essence of Jainism has been given by Lord Mahavir:

- If you are pure, you will save others and you will save yourself.
- If you are pure, you will win and let others also win.
- If you are pure, you will live and let others live. Raise the purity of your consciousness and you will be protected. Please claim this Jain heritage and practice it. Experiment with it, and I guarantee in the long term, you will be a winner.



*"To raise your standard of living you have to raise your standard of giving"*

Mr Shashikant Mehta is a Jain Industrialist and has given lecture tours on Jainism all over the world. He lives in Rajkot, India.

Photos: Vanik Business Group, a highly successful network of Jain entrepreneurs based in London. Further information available from [www.vbg.net](http://www.vbg.net)





## INTER-FAITH:

# IN THE JOY OF OTHERS, LIES OUR OWN

*In the spirit of Anekantavada (Inclusive Thinking), we celebrate the achievement of our fellow Swaminarayan devotees*



*The work of the Swaminarayan community inspired by Pramukh Swami Maharaj*

One of the most vibrant and successful community groups in the United Kingdom is the Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purshottam Sanstha led by Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Founded in India in the late eighteenth century by Lord Swaminarayan, this Hindu sect has grown from strength to strength, and today boasts a large international organisation with headquarters in Gujarat, India and major branches in East Africa, United Kingdom and North America. Here in the United Kingdom, it has suddenly acquired significant fame through its building of a large and artistic temple complex in Neasden, North London, which is attracting thousands of visitors every week from all over the country and abroad. Anyone who visits this temple feels a sense of complete awe and leaves making some connection with God, with their own spiritual self. It is a monument to the existence of God, because if we examine the logistics and efforts required to build and finance it, we cannot help but admit the influence of a higher order.

So what is the reason for the success and unity of this community? Why is it that it has succeeded in attracting such smiling and committed young volunteers, when many other community organisations have utterly failed? Why is it that this group has prospered in the West, when its beliefs and values are directly at odds with the prevalent values of greed, materialism and selfishness. When Mrs. Margaret Thatcher said that there is no such thing as society, only individuals, she clearly had not heard of the Swaminarayans. Here is a living and vibrant community, proving that not only is it possible to create a society, but it is likely to be much more effective than any

government or democracy can ever be. They don't need the government, but the government definitely needs the Swaminarayan community, as Mr. Nani Palkhiwala, a senior lawyer in India recently commented.

A successful community provides its members with a sense of belonging. A successful community directly looks after the welfare of its members. This means that members will not engage in crime, are unlikely to need financial support from the state, and such a group will generally lead to a strong positive influence on other people or communities who come into contact with them. The government would prefer people not to commit crime, not to be unemployed or not to require financial support. The government would also prefer not to deal with too many sick people, not to cure mental illness or depression through loneliness or isolation. Thus not only do they save millions of pounds of public expenditure, but such communities can lead to a happier lifestyle for one and all.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj has made God the focal point of all his endeavours. This may sound odd to the modern rational western student, but this community cannot be understood in any other way. The



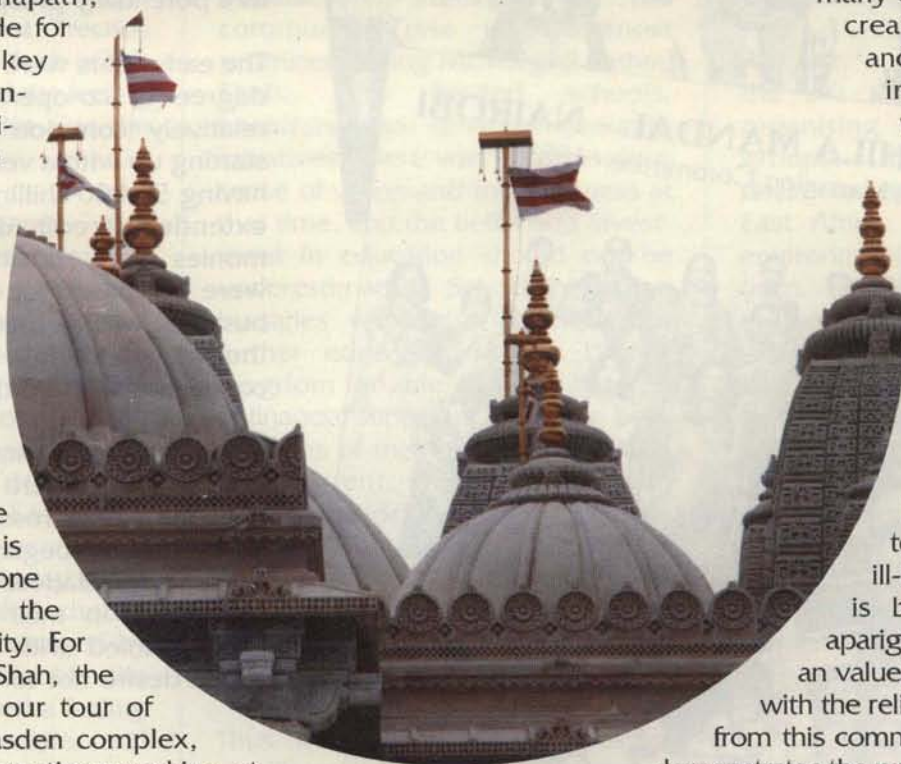
Swaminarayan's believe that religion and community cannot be separated, and in fact the two are directly inter-twined. There is a firm belief and respect for spiritually elevated souls such as saints and God. As an individual, Pramukh Swami is worshipped by his followers like a God, and they listen to his every wish. When several years ago he requested the temple project to start, even when enough funds were not raised and the task seemed very complex and ambitious, his followers listened, and the outcome is there for all of us to see. Even children joined the campaign to collect aluminium cans and recycle them to raise funds for the temple.

Discipline and ethics are also central to the Swaminarayan philosophy. Their sacred book of ethics, the Shikshapatri, prescribes a moral code for everyday life. The key principles include non-violence, pure vegetarianism, and avoidance of alcohol. Service is central to the ethical code, and helps significantly towards personal well-being and happiness. Service is an act of selflessness, a recognition that all life is inter-dependent and worthy of love, respect and support. Self-sacrifice by people of all ages is very visible whenever one meets members of the Swaminarayan community. For example, Mr. Mahesh Shah, the principal coordinator of our tour of the Swaminarayan Neasden complex, spends most of his spare time working at the temple. Despite being a father of two, and having a very demanding job at times requiring weekend work, Maheshbhai finds that by serving the community, and involving his whole family, they all find personal happiness and fulfillment. He feels that the ultimate purpose in life is to achieve union with God, and all else is secondary and should be seen to be so. In Pramukhswami, Maheshbhai believes that he has discovered a unique Guru and mentor.

The central institution which revives and energises this community is the Mandir. It is a social centre, where people celebrate festivals and happy times and seek shelter in sad times. It is an educational centre where there is a continual learning of scriptures and languages, ideals and experiences. It is a moral centre where ethics and values are reinforced through the practice of purity. It is a spiritual centre where the philosophical truths of man, nature and god are understood and attained. It is a cultural centre where artists offer their talent and trade, music and dance, sculptures and designs in the service of God.

The Jain community has through the ages imbibed many of these principles and created a large number and variety of community institutions. However, we in the West are currently at a threshold, when many of our age old values, activities and institutions are coming under threat of extinction. There is significant evidence that the material and acquisitive culture is not leading to happiness but instead to pain, loneliness and ill-health. Our philosophy is based on ahimsa and aparigraha, and communitarian values are directly connected with the religion. We can learn a lot from this community, whose success demonstrates the practical relevance of such values in the modern day. They have shown that the rewards of united community endeavours far outweigh any sacrifices. They elevate our lives and provide a renewed sense of purpose and fulfillment. That surely is the aim of life.

Swaminarayan Temple is located at Brentfield Road, Neasden, London NW10 8JP - Tel: (020) 8965 2651  
Photos: Chandu Shah





## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UK OSHWAL JAIN COMMUNITY

BY PRITI SHAH

THE JAIN COMMUNITY is now scattered all over the world. However we all have common roots in India, a homeland which we only started to leave in the twentieth century. At the turn of this century many Jains emigrated to East Africa from India, in search of a better life. They travelled by dhow across the Indian Ocean, facing the hardships of such a sea voyage, to find themselves in an alien country not speaking the language. Although there was some initial nervousness, East Africa was viewed as a potentially prosperous new opportunity.

The early years were marked by a remarkable degree of co-operation and trust. It was relatively common to hear of businesses starting up with a very small capital base, but having 50,000 shillings worth of stock on an extended credit of 120 days. Usually, monies were repaid in 60 days as goods were purchased for cash. Thus another new business was formed and flourished due to the assistance of business associates or connections within the community.

As roots were established in East Africa, entrepreneurs were in a position to invite their families across the Ocean. More and more people began emigrating to Africa, invited by relatives who required greater manpower in their expanding businesses. Accompanied with this growth there was also a desire not to lose the traditions and

Photos: Atul Shah

From top:

- 1) Early pioneers (c. 1950)
- 2) Mombasa Jain Temple committee (c. 1970)
- 3) Women were the heart of the community (1983)
- 4) Nairobi Jain Temple Oshwal committee (1983)



**OSHWAL MAHILA MANDAL - NAIROBI**  
Trustees & Managing Committee - 1983





values that were part of life in India, hence the community also gained strength. This was expressed at many levels and in many different forms. For example, it was not uncommon for people travelling west from Mombasa towards the more remote areas of Kenya to stay at the home of strangers whom they had only heard of merely because they were part of the same community. No compensation or even reciprocity was expected. For example, it was accepted that if you were travelling through Moshi, accommodation was always available at someone's home. Car transport was not the norm as it is now, hence if one was required to travel from one place to another then they would enquire whether anyone would be travelling in that direction and hence obtain a lift. Much of this was based upon trust and the feeling that to help someone else was the norm, not the exception.

To build and enhance the community, several community centres and institutions were built between the 1950's and 1960's. One of the first to receive attention was the provision for schooling and education. Even though many of them were uneducated, Jain parents had a strong desire that children brought up in East Africa should have a good education. In most of the big towns today there exists one or more Jain schools, which were built and managed by the community. In Nairobi, the boarding school provided a facility for children living in smaller and faraway towns to stay and obtain education. Large and vibrant community centres (mahajanwadis, as the Oshwals called them) were also built. It is noteworthy that one of the first and prettiest Jain temples outside India was built in 1961 in Mombasa. This served as a significant focal point for the community in the years to

come. Modern community centres in Mombasa and Nairobi are very large and include a sports complex, reception halls, libraries and administration offices. Many



*Meghji Pethraj: One of the most prominent benefactors*

benefactors invested in the community, one of the most prominent being Mr. Meghji Pethraj Shah, who funded schools, hospitals and other community initiatives. There was a tremendous sense of vision and togetherness at that time, and the belief and investment in education should not be underestimated. Scholarships and bursaries were also provided for further education in the United Kingdom for able students in need of financial support. One of the beneficiaries of this was Mr. Rati Shah, the current president of the Oshwal Association of the UK. He feels that he owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to the community. This shows that small investments in people can reap much larger rewards.

Thus the community progressed significantly from a largely farming base in India, with little direct commercial experience, to migrating and settling in East Africa and achieving significant commercial and social success through hard work and cooperation.

The 1970's saw the next mass migration of the community from

East Africa to the United Kingdom. This entailed its own hardships of finding accommodation, the need for suitable UK references for jobs, and not being able to buy the food and ingredients that we were accustomed to. Racial prejudice was also a real problem, and it was very difficult to get into white collar jobs or even businesses which required non-Asian custom. Again, here in the UK the community network was utilised. Those who had settled here earlier were able to offer advice and guidance, and even job introductions and openings. Often financial assistance was available from within the family to buy a house. In the early 1970's the Meghraj bank was launched as a community financing initiative.

As our numbers increased in the UK, the community began organising itself into formal groups. There was a strong desire to repeat the successes of East Africa, albeit in a different environment and climatic conditions. The UK did not prove as easy to settle into as East Africa, where there was a much greater degree of tolerance and acceptance by the local community, and business and financial success came very quickly. Religious and social events were planned, gujarati classes held during weekends, and youth and women's organisations were formed. As a community we have successfully integrated into UK society and have enriched this country with our rich tradition and culture. Many of our members have progressed into highly respected professions and businesses, and perhaps as an ethnic community, we have the largest per capita number of professionals in the UK. The simple but profound values of our forefathers have helped us to succeed. We must never forget this great legacy.



# Jain Poet of Great Distinction

## SHRIMAD RAJCHANDRA

BY VINOD KAPASHI

Shrimad Rajchandra was born on 9th November 1867 in a small village (called Vavana) in the state of Gujarat. His father's name was Ravjibhai and mother's name was Devabai. He was named Raichand when he was four years old. His grandfather was a staunch devotee of Lord Krishna. His mother grew up in Jain religious traditions. Shrimad writes in one of his books: "In this apparently short span of life, I have experienced much about the soul, the nature of mind, the speech, the physical body, the wealth... many worldly ups and downs and the causes of interminable misery and unhappiness. I had no attachment to wearing clean clothes, selection of good food, good bed, etc.... For four years, from seven to eleven, I devoted myself to study. At that time I remembered all what I once saw or read. My recollection was faultless, as my mind was sinless."

Shrimad possessed the knowledge of his previous births. It is called Jati Smarana Jnana. Shrimad says in his own words: "Once when I was seven years old, an elderly neighbour called Amichand suddenly died of a snake bite. I did not know what was death. I asked my grandfather but he did not give a proper reply." Rajchandra then went to the cremation ground, climbed a tree and saw the whole process of burning the deceased body. He started thinking about the nature of death and there and then recollected his previous lives - Jati Smarana Jnana.

At the tender age of 16, Shrimad composed a book called Mokshamala containing 108 short lessons. This book is also read by thousands of people in regular satsangs. It was first published in 1887 when Shrimad Rajchandra was 20 years old. He has written scores of poems and his letters to various people (including Mahatma Gandhi) are very famous and a source of inspiration for many people.

Shrimad could understand and memorise books in a very short time. His power of remembrance developed further and he managed to do the hundred avdhan (paying attention to hundred different things simultaneously).

Shrimad wrote out his famous 'Atma-siddhi' in the form of a poetic dialogue in 142 verses, at the suggestion and request of Shri Sobhagyabhai. One of Shrimad's admirers, Shri Ambalal stood with a Lantern in his hand while the composition was written. In this composition Shrimad has explained the gist of Jainism and of all true religion namely the six fundamental truths:

They are - The soul exists, that it is eternal, that it is the author of its activities, that therefore it is responsible for the results of its activities, that it aspires for liberation and that this is achieved by following a right kind of religion.

Shrimad starts the poem with a beautiful verse:

*Je swarup samjya vina, pamyo dukha ananta  
samjavyu te pada namu shri sadguru bhagvant. (1)*



*"I have suffered eternal pain because I have never understood the true nature of my self (my form and my soul). I bow to my true master who has preached and explained to me the real self."*

In the first 44 verses the subject is introduced - the truth that without self-knowledge, the worldly pains cannot be completely removed. The blind attachments to the rituals and the dry path of scriptural knowledge are analysed. Shrimad stresses the need to resort to the advice of an enlightened self-realised Guru and says that scriptures should be studied and followed under the guidance of such a Guru.

He explains the attributes of an *atmarthi* (one who is a true believer of atma- soul) in the following verse:

*Kashayni upshantata, matra  
moksha abhilash  
Bhave khed, prani daya, tyan  
aatmartha nivas (38)*

*"He is the true knower of self whose passions are subdued, who only wishes for the true liberation, who has developed aversion to all the worldly matters and who is full of compassion."*

Later on, Shrimad puts forward the six fundamental truths as mentioned above and dispels the doubts of the aspirant. Regarding the nature of the soul it is said that



as it is quite different from the body, no bodily sense organ can perceive the soul. The soul is neither a body nor the senses, nor breath. The soul is conscious, knowing and blissful in nature. Such a soul eternally exists, it has no beginning and no end. The body, which is composed, has an end but the unique soul is neither composed nor decomposed. The soul and body are two different realities but they help or hinder each other. The soul is the author of all activities. It is not the nature of the soul always to act, though no activity can be without it, it can cease to act also. Shrimad has also explained the doctrine of karma and its various categories, and has shown that no principle of God is needed to explain animal and human activities. Activities naturally bring the fruits enjoined with them and no divine force is needed for this arrangement.



In the end, in nine verses Shrimad has described the effect of this soul-saving knowledge on the disciple and the disciple pays his grateful homage to his Guru for his help and advice.

*Aho aho Shri sadguru, karuna-sindhu apar  
Aa pamar par Prabhu karyo aho aho upakar (142)*

Shrimad's ascetic life style and strict code of conduct took its toll and he was in poor health. He did not care at all for any material gain in his life and his weight had gone down to only 45 lbs. when he was 32-33 years old. He was in a perfect blissful state though and there was an aura of spirituality around him.

He died peacefully and in the state of samadhi at the very young age of 33 in AD1901. For his followers he is a Krupalu Deva (ever-merciful god) and revered with utmost respect and devotion.

The poem 'Atma Siddhi' is available on a beautiful CD. Tel - USA: (1) 925 426 1366 or email: rbhuta@aol.com

*Vinod Kapashi is a writer and speaker on Jainism, based in London. He is the president of Mahavir Foundation.*

*With best wishes to the Jain Spirit  
team on their first issue from:*

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4. To nurture a Jain renaissance;
5. To foster a Jain solidarity, through a non-sectarian outlook;
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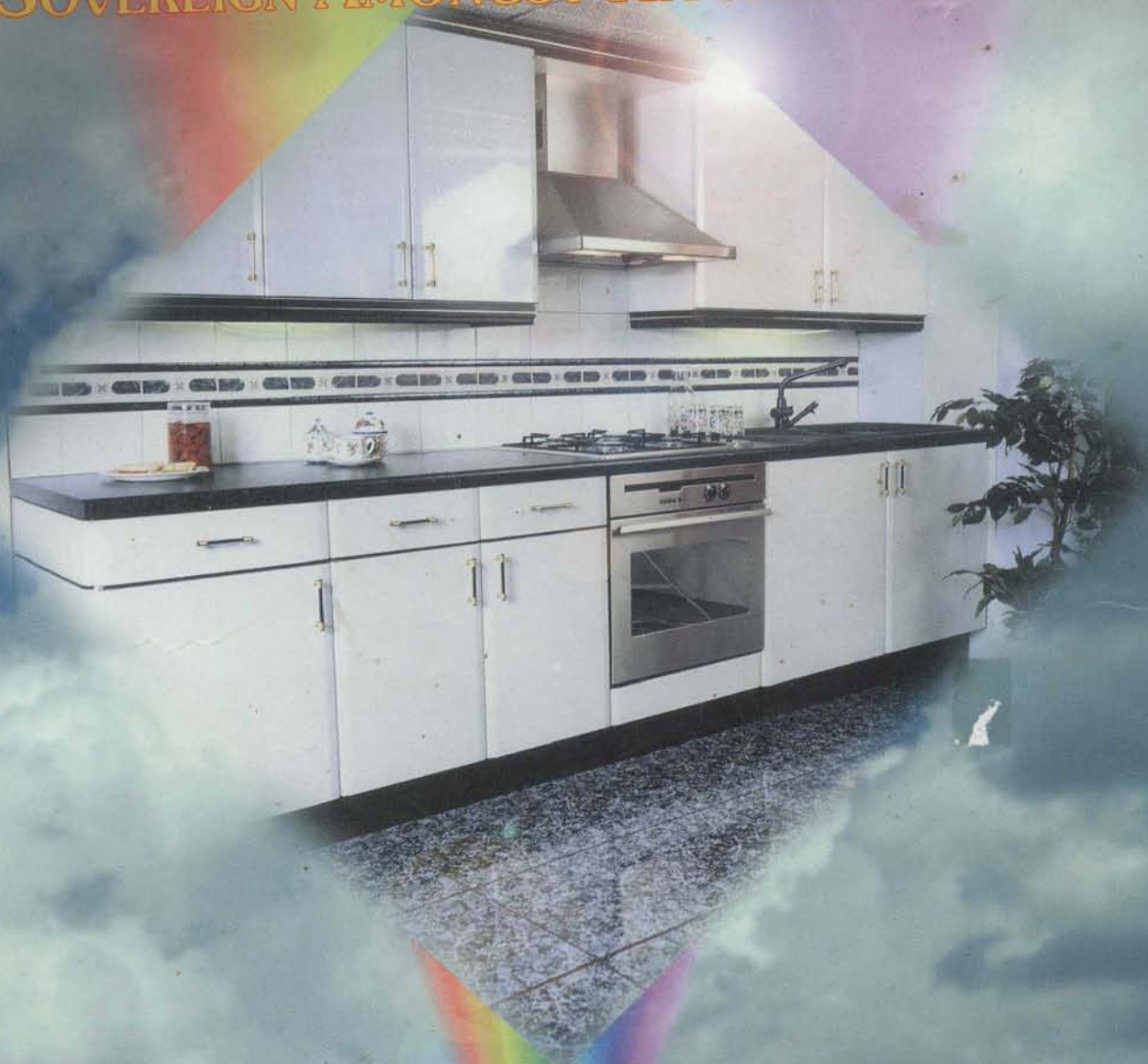
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