



YOUNG JAINS

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A non-profit making society dedicated to the promotion of Jain Dharma in the western world

20 Years of Pursuing Progress

Spiritual

Personal

Ethical

Organisational

20th Anniversary Souvenir Issue

Young Jains

A non-profit making society dedicated to the promotion of Jainism in the western world.

CORE OBJECTIVES

- ☆ To create a better understanding of Jain philosophy, practise and culture.
- ☆ To address the problems faced by young Jains in the UK.
- ☆ To take a further step towards adapting to a multi-cultural environment and living in multi-racial harmony.
- ☆ To prove that each one of us is talented and by working together, we can learn to respect ourselves and all around us.

Young Jains is an organisation that encourages the discussion and exploration of Jain philosophy, spirituality and its practical importance to life, in an open and friendly environment. Formed in 1987, it is an independent charitable organisation.

Events include discussions, retreats, debates, quiz nights, musical evenings, etc which are held on various themes and topics including; understanding Jain principles, ethics, the environment, debating social concerns, health matters, visiting temples and increasing awareness about other faiths.

Young Jains provides an opportunity for its members to be actively involved in delivering events and develop skills that are applicable to all aspects of life.

Events are ideal for young professionals, predominantly delivered in English, although everyone is most welcome (regardless of caste, age etc). ■

Young Jains

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Check out the pictures from events on our web site, which is designed & developed by the Internet Sub-Committee.

If you want regular information about Young Jains events via email, then join the Young Jains E-Chain by writing to the address below, stating your full name: ✉ bulletin@youngjains.org.uk ■

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Jai Jinendra and welcome to this very special issue of the Young Jains Newsletter. It is with pleasure that I invite you not only to read, but to treasure this 20th Anniversary commemorative issue.

As well as looking back through the colourful history of YJ as an organisation, I hope that this issue will encourage us to look forward and consolidate our goals, both personal and organisational. It is for this reason that we chose **PROGRESS** as the theme of this publication. It is no accident that the first article in this newsletter is on the *Gunasthanaks*, which is a Jain model to map and assess our spiritual progress towards self-realisation and *Moksha*. As Jains, this is surely our ultimate goal and thus it deserves to be foremost not only in this publication, but also in our minds. This topic is also discussed in this issue in archive material on Pujya Chitrabhanuji and Pujya Minalben, and even in the stories in the Kids' Korner. It is certainly one of the founding principles of Young Jains to act as an organisation that can aid us in our progression and this issue commemorates that very goal. As you read this issue I hope you consider the progress you aspire to for yourselves and for our community.

This souvenir issue has also provided an excellent opportunity for Young Jains to congratulate and thank those who have aided the progress of the organisation, and this is commemorated in a very special and unique feature on all of the previous Presidents of YJ. Previous recipients of the Young Jain of the Year Award also pay homage to how YJ has helped with their personal, academic and spiritual progress. There is profound discussion on the very term 'progress' from the Living Jain team and Dr. Dan Lyons. We also have the opportunity to read about some very original models through which to understand Jainism by Professor Kantibhai Mardia.

In addition to your favourite regular newsletter columns, this issue brings you special features on the history of YJ's events and activities here and abroad. But a commemorative issue would not be complete without some quality archive photographs - some which you might have wished had remained in the archives! ■



We, the newsletter team, would love to hear from you. Please send your thoughts, feedback and articles to:
Jyoti: yj_newsletter@yahoo.co.uk

Best Wishes,
Jyoti Mehta.
Editor, Young Jains Newsletter.

Jai Jinendra and Pranam,



This year marks one of Young Jain's biggest milestones. 20 years ago, Young Jains started out as a small seed, and by watering this seed in various ways, this organisation has now grown into a tree, with 700 plus members.

With the help of our dedicated volunteers, we have delivered hundreds of events, from the big rocks such as Mahavir Janma Kalyanak, Paryushan, Raas Garba and Diwali, to the small pebbles such as quiz evenings, Sunday slots, Sweet Harmony, retreats and conventions.

Young Jains has provided the opportunity to learn, share, discuss and ask questions about Jainism, as well as offering the chance to get involved with our events, increasing personal development and meeting people and having fun.

So, from a seed, Young Jains has evolved into this tree, and is now one of the UK's leading service providers of Jain dharma, thanks to our devoted volunteers and members who continue to attend, volunteer and take part in our events. The past 20 years would not have been possible without all of you and we extend our sincere gratitude to you all. As the current president I would like to send my personal congratulations for helping us during these past 20 years.

So let's take Young Jains through to the next 20 years and beyond. ■

Prakash Shah

Prakash Shah
Young Jains President

We now do Crown and Carrera bedrooms

Congratulations to Young Jains on their 20th Anniversary
from Kantibhai and Neelam Haria



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Photo by Chandu Shah

Messages from Spiritual Leaders

Dear Young Jains of UK,

I am very happy that you are celebrating 20 years of YJ of UK. The members of YJ of UK are blessed because you are born in a culture, religion and tradition which respects life. You carry reverence for animals, plants and human beings and practice Ahimsa, Anekantavada and Aparigraha in thoughts, words and actions. You are fortunate to have a living heritage which nourishes your life with its profound teaching of "living by giving".

Now, you are the torchbearer of tomorrow who are capable of using your time, energy and awareness to continue this heritage; adding from your education and understanding to modernize the culture in the Western atmosphere. You have brought our ancient teaching to the threshold of modern life. This is progress. Progress is embodying our aspirations within an eco-friendly lifestyle.

What is *Ahimsa*? Ahimsa is awareness of life within and life without and so carrying the kindred feeling of love, compassion and consideration for others as we would for our own selves.

What is *Karma*? It is not only a philosophy, it is a practice. What you sow, that you grow. It is to "act the way you want to become and you will become the way you act".

You are living the ideal of help ever, hurt never, give ever, grab never, love ever, hate never - this will give you the confidence that today is good and tomorrow will be the best.

What is *Anekanta*? Anekanta is to allow other people to express their feelings. Creating room in them, you can pour your understanding and once blended, it becomes a mutual understanding. Anekanta is an open space where all opposites and paradoxes are integrated by the light of acceptance: You get their wisdom and they get your wisdom.

What is *Aparigraha*? Aparigraha is defining one's need and bringing the beauty of simplicity in our lifestyle in words, thoughts and actions. Simplicity imbues all our relationships with the befriending tone of equality. The stumbling block is always ego so if you are humble you will never stumble.

Progress ultimately is not only a manifestation of material prosperity, but realizing the potentiality that we admire in others within ourselves and realizing that what we see in temples we perceive in our own selves: in this way Atma becomes Parmatma.

In 1970 April, I was in London and the welcome they gave me is unforgettable. Since then I have been watching how the Jains in London are progressing. However, the Young Jains of UK have taken that progress to new dimensions, realizing my dream to make Jain Dharma universal and not parochial. I am sure you will be pioneering examples of Jain Dharma in the modern world by practicing the teachings of Ahimsa, Anekanta and Aparigraha and realising the potential of Atma to become Parmatma!

Love and Blessings,
Chitrabhanu
Young Jains of UK,

Today in a hi-tech modern world man has made progress by leaps and bounds changing the face of the world, but man has yet not made progress in his personal front and become civilized in his behaviour and approach to life. His brutal nature exploiting all that exists has made him the worst enemy of nature and environment. He has blindly pursued material prosperity at the cost of his and other lives and ignored his spiritual world. He has little time to ask himself the one question that humans have wrestled through time, that is - who am I?

Young Jains of U.K. has for past twenty years provided a platform for its members to probe into this question deeply by arranging conferences, seminars, retreats, lectures etc. on subjects related to the core values of Jain Dharma like Ahimsa, compassion, love, amity, truthfulness, relativity in thinking, theory of karma, principle of non- accumulation, celibacy etc. These core values help shape individuals and inspire them to move forward on the path of self knowledge.

Through these opportunities that is offered to them if what they have been given inflames in them a spark of inspiration and aspiration to dedicate their life to evolution of consciousness, both personal and planetary, then it will have served its purpose and bear the fruit it is intended to.

We all know that the ultimate goal of human birth is self-realization. This can be achieved through introspection and self purification. It is through our negligence and self indulgence that we acquire karmas which lead to bondage and rebirth. Our ultimate aim is to be free from these shackles. This understanding seeks to offer an integrated and balanced approach to self and God Realization which then makes material gain meaningless.

The Young Jains of U.K. have through their twenty years of dedication and service contributed to the betterment of individuals, its members and the society.

I would like to wish them all success in their endeavour to help people steer their life in the right direction and pray that the light of Lord Mahavir guide their path to peace, progress and prosperity.

Blessings
Pramoda Chitrabhanu

Inspired? Want more? If so, turn to pages 32 and 33 for an interview with Chitrabhanu from the YJ Archives.

Messages from Spiritual Leaders

Jainism has given equal stress on gyana (knowledge), darshana (faith) and charitra (conduct). The Young Jains should try to obtain more and more knowledge about Jainism, to have deep faith in the Jain Philosophy and to observe the conduct as much possible as they can.

In order to gain more knowledge, they should read the literature, especially the Jain Agamas and other Adhyatmik books so that they will be able to understand Jainism more deeply and also become true Adhyatmik followers of Jainism. They should also strengthen their faith in Jainism so that they do not go astray by adopting perverted faiths. Samyag-darshan (enlightened world-view) is the powerful foundation on which they can build their religious life. Thirdly, they should put into practice the high precepts of Jainism so as to make their life free from excessive anger, pride, deceit, greed etc.

For this, the practice of Preksha Meditation is very helpful. The Young Jains should first learn how to meditate and then make daily practice of meditation which would help them in bringing about the transformation of their inner consciousness at subconscious and unconscious levels, which ultimately would bring about their bio-chemical or hormonal transformation also. Scientifically, such transformation would result in overcoming the negative emotions like anger, fear etc. and ultimately they would be able to live happy and healthy life. Also, their family life would become congenial and free from conflict.

Acharya Mahapragya

(spiritual head of Terapanth school and JVB)

My heartiest Congratulations to all of you at Young Jains for growing open-mindedly, uniting the community, living without limit and without division.

This progressive organisation has been enthusiastic, energetic & passionate for the right things in life. Adopting Jain spirituality, Young Jains has successfully helped every generation in its personal and professional development.

Jainism can be a way of life for all living beings. Our individual efforts can collectively influence many around us. I am happy to see you all committed to your objectives as commitment is the power to change the face of things. Let happiness be the voyage and not merely the destination in our life.

With a smile on our face and the strength of our heart let us have friendship for all and care for the world at large. May the lord's sublime divinity enlighten our spirit and bless us with bliss.

Nalin Kothari na Atma Bhave Vandan

Nalinbhai Kothari, affectionately known Bhaishree, is the spiritual head of the Raj Saubhag Ashram, Sayla.

When I see young people working so passionately for the cause of Tirthankar Mahavir, it brings me special joy and happiness. People who truly understand and can spread Tirthankar Mahavir's wisdom are needed more now than at any other time in our history. His lessons concerning the environment, ahimsa and compassion convey the path by which the 21st century may survive and prosper. I am overjoyed to see that Young Jains has taken a leading role in understanding these teachings and is spending time now in their propagation. In my opinion, this generation of young people is very special in many respects and their brilliance can be seen in their creative innovations to education, technology and even the arts. This generation can become even more extraordinary by applying their creativity to teaching and sharing the powerful, timeless lessons of Tirthankar Mahavir. I convey my congratulations to each and every member of the Young Jains for their commendable achievements and blessings for a very bright spiritual future.

Acharya Shri Chandanaji (Veerayatan).

Thousands of years ago, Tirthankar Mahavir was asked: 'How do we ensure that our community has a bright and prosperous future?' The great saint replied: 'The community in which older generations raise questions and younger generations provide solutions has the most promising future.' It is commendable to see how Young Jains has fulfilled the role of creating solutions and providing answers for the past 20 years. Although targeted toward younger people, the programs designed by Young Jains are done so in a way which meets the needs of everyone in the community. Young Jains is a unique, dynamic organization that presents a special spiritual platform for the young, so that never again can we say religion is the prerogative of the old. Spirituality is not something to begin practicing when you are old. Instead, it needs to be imbibed in life from the very beginning. Young Jains has made the practice of religion available so beautifully and pragmatically in the context of the modern world. We convey our best wishes for the success of the 20th year celebration and pray that every young member of the community should be touched by the spirit of Young Jains.

Sadhvi Shri Shilapiji (Veerayatan).

Progress Through the Gunasthanaks

By Ashik Shah

As we celebrate and contemplate the last twenty years of the work of Young Jains, we look forward to the organisation sharing the values and eternal truths of our dharma to future generations with characteristic flair.

Over the years, we have tried to understand, nurture and inspire an exploration of the key themes of the dharma. Several thousand souls have been touched by their encounter with Young Jains and its initiatives, so as to better their immediate lives and to enhance the quality of their spiritual quest.

This article will explore the journey of the soul on this quest, ultimately culminating in Mokshaⁱ, whose realisation must permeate the practice and understanding which the soul strives to cultivate and perfect. Jain texts describe progress towards this goal in fourteen steps, known as the gunasthana(k)s. We will use the framework they provide as guide to discussing certain key steps in spiritual development.

The table below will facilitate our discussion, and while this essay will inevitably become a little technical, we will gain insight into the process of unleashing the soul's infinite, abundant, eternal bliss.

The most familiar term in this "ladder" of spiritual development is Keval Gnan, Omniscience, a state of boundless consciousness. The pure joy of this state is indescribable and yet its majesty is celebrated in our devotional songs, as well as worshipped in the first two lines of the Navkar Mantra. It is this unconditional and unconstrained happiness which inspires the seeker.

Moksha is freedom from the bondage of Karma and progress to Moksha can be considered in these terms. The Tattvartha Sutra states: "*Mithyadarshan Avirati Pramad Kashay Yogaha Bandhahetavaha.*"ⁱⁱ "Delusion (false belief), non-restraint, spiritual laxity, passions and activities: the cause of bondage."ⁱⁱⁱ

The primary cause of bondage is Mithyadarshan or Mithyatva. This corresponds to the very first Gunasthan, known as Mithyadrashti. In this state, the soul is deluded about its true nature and the chief manifestation of this delusion is our misidentification with the body which is our temporary abode. This in turn causes our worldly hankering and materialism.

When we pierce through the veil of delusion, we progress to the state of Samyak Darshan, Self-Realisation. Often described as Right Faith, this potentially mundane definition fails to portray the tremendous spiritual importance of this state.

'Any undertaking or venture must have a clear goal and this must be inspired by a clear vision...'

Professor P.S. Jaini has described it as the "First Awakening."^{iv} It is the moment when we experience the soul for the first time and it is key to the transformation of our spiritual future. Samyak Darshan is one of the three jewels which constitute the path to Moksha.^v

Gunasthana(k)	Darshan Mohaniya (Perception Deluding) Karma	Charitra Mohaniya (Conduct Deluding) Karma	5 causes
First: Mithyadrashti	3 types in operation	All 25 types in operation	Mithyadarshan (Delusion)
Fourth: Avirati Samyak Darshan	3 suppressed or eliminated	The most intense types, causing the most intense (anantanubandhi) passions, overcome	Mithyadarshan overcome and Avirati (Non-restraint) and others still in operation
Fifth: Desh Virata Samyak Darshan	n/a	The next most intense types (apratyakhyan-avaraniya), overcome	Avirati (Non-restraint) partially overcome.
Sixth: Sarva Virata Samyak Darshan	n/a	The next most intense types (pratyakhyan-avaraniya), overcome	Avirati overcome, but Pramad (Laxity or carelessness) in operation.
Seventh: Apramatta Virata Samyak Darshan	n/a	The next most intense types (sanjvalana), causing smouldering passions and carelessness, overcome	Pramad overcome and kashays still in operation.
Twelfth: Kshina Moha	n/a	All eliminated	Kashays finally eliminated, but yoga still in operation.
Thirteenth: Sayogi Keval Gnan	n/a	All eliminated	Yoga, functions of mind, speech and body, still in operation.
Fourteenth: Ayogi Keval Gnan	n/a	All eliminated	All five causes of bondage eliminated.

Progress Through the Gunasthanaks

By Ashik Shah

Before we explore the karmic process more deeply, we might consider the message more intuitively. Any undertaking or venture must have a clear goal and this must be inspired by a clear vision, which then informs the plan, which must then be executed. If our goal is to realise our full potential as spiritual beings, then our vision must have clarity and direction. These are most easily understood from people who have walked this path before and realised its truth for themselves.

In terms of karma, the mohaniya (deluding) type of karma plays a central role in the state of delusion, mithyatva. This mohaniya karma has two categories: vision deluding (darsha n-mohaniya – 3 sub-categories) and conduct deluding (charitra-mohaniya - 25 sub-categories).



The Fourteen Steps, Gunasthanaks, to Moksha. Display at Tasting the Mango 2, 2004.

As the soul progresses from delusion, and realises its true nature, even if momentarily, by experiencing the soul, in the fourth gunasthan (avirati samyak drashti), it suppresses or eliminates seven types of mohaniya karma.

As the soul purifies itself, through the purification of its perception and of its conduct, it increasingly overcomes the other sub-categories of deluding karma as described in the table. Eventually, as all the kashays are finally eliminated, Keval Gnan is attained,

and, when all activity ceases and all karma is shed, the glorious state of Moksha is attained.

'...the conquest of mohaniya karma is key to the soul's progress.'

It should be clear from this discussion of the gunasthanaks and the mechanism of bondage, that the conquest of mohaniya karma is key to the soul's progress. No other karma plays anywhere near as important a role. When we consider our religious striving, its efficacy must be measured at the outset by its impact on Mohaniya karma.

The two categories of perception and conduct-deluding karma are overcome respectively by insight into our true nature, as provided by a self-realised true guru, and by the cultivation of detachment, as we overcome the duality of like and dislike and the passions.^{vi}

So, to boil it down to essentials, the genuine seeker should focus her or his energies on mohaniya karma and strive for self-realisation under the guidance of one who is self-realised. Many times we hear that the bliss of Moksha is not possible in this place and time. However, the transformative stage of Samyak Darshan, in which we can experience the ecstasy of self-realisation, is possible here and now in this rare human form.

Yours to squander and yours to take is the golden opportunity for spiritual transformation which this rare human birth has placed in your hands. Good luck in your choice and good luck in your journey of progress! ■

ⁱ The use of the diacritical system which gives precise spellings for English transliteration of technical terms has not been used.

ⁱⁱ Tattvartha Sutra verse 8.1

ⁱⁱⁱ As translated on page 157 of PS Jaini's The Jaina Path of Purification.

^{iv} Chapter Five of Jaini.

^v Samyak Darshan, Gnan, Charitrani Moksha Margaha. Tattvartha Sutra 1.1

^{vi} Shrimad Rajchandra's Atma Siddhi verses 102-103.

Messages from Friends...

Young Jains will be celebrating their 20th year soon. It gives me a great pleasure to send message of Greetings as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of Jainology.

You have grown from a small acorn to a wonderful tree and have promoted Jain values all around. You will be our leaders in years to come and on this occasion I extend my compliments and best wishes.

Yours Sincerely,
R.P. Chandaria
Chairman Board of Trustees, **Institute of Jainology**

I am very pleased to note that Young Jains is celebrating its 20th Anniversary this year since its launch in the year 1988 and is publishing a souvenir to commemorate this auspicious occasion.

My warmest greetings and good wishes to Young Jains for publishing this souvenir.

The vision, the desire and the commitment to promote Jainism speaks by itself through the values of your organisation and on behalf of the Oshwal Association of the U.K. and all the members, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Young Jains team for promoting the Jain Dharma for the past 20 years since its inception here in the UK.

I very much hope that the work you all undertake will go from strength to strength and wish Young Jains every success in all your endeavours. Jai Oshwal

Mr Ashwin Dharamshi Shah
President – **O.A.U.K.**

On behalf of Shishukunj, I congratulate Young Jains on its 20th anniversary. It is truly a fantastic and memorable achievement. Wish you all the best and may you continue to flourish.

Rajeshbhai Dhanani and the children of Shishukunj.
President, **Shishukunj**.

Jai Jinendra
On behalf of the board of trustees, Executive Committee members and all other members of Mahavir Foundation, I would like to congratulate Young Jains for its remarkable achievements. Young Jains has now completed 20 years and has provided sterling services in promoting good values of the Jain faith. It has brought Jain youths from all denomination together on one platform and has created an atmosphere of harmony and spiritual peace. Young Jains has also provided clean wholesome entertainments to our young people.

Our best wishes are always with you and we will support all your activities in whatever way we can.

Vinod Kapashi
President, **Mahavir Foundation**

20 Years of Young Jains UK is an exemplary success story which has inspired young Jains all over the world to set up similar organisations. The original vision of Dr Atul Shah and his collaborators withstood the test of time. Young Jains in the UK will go from strength to strength. I wish the organisation a great future.

Dr Peter Flugel
Chair, **Centre of Jaina Studies, SOAS**

Congratulations on your 20th anniversary. How the years have flown! Young Jains can be proud of the positive, creative and constructive work done over the years to promote Jain values not only amongst Jains but also amongst the wider British public. A higher profile in the form of campaigning for the core Jains values on environment, animal welfare and vegetarianism is something Young Jains can work on in the coming years. Well done and keep promoting Lord Mahavir's values fearlessly!

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Atul Shah for his commitment and dedication in making Young Jains the successful organisation that it is.

Nitin Mehta MBE
Founder President, **Young Indian Vegetarians**

On Behalf of the Board of Trustees, Members of the Executive Committee and members of Jain Samaj Europe (Leicester), we wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Young Jains for having completed 20 Years.

The achievements of Young Jains over the years have been very impressive and have made a very important contribution worldwide. We extend our heartiest congratulations to all the sincere dedicated and selfless workers of the organisation over the last 20 years for the contribution to the great success of Young Jains for achieving what it is now.

We sincerely hope that the firm foundation laid over the last twenty years will give a good basis for future achievements and will be stronger than ever not only in the near future but forever and ever. May Lord Mahavir shower his blessing on all to make this world a better place to live and let live. Let us all be part of that beautiful world.

Jai Jinendra.

Pradip Mehta (editor Jain Samaj Europe), On Behalf of President Dr Ramesh Mehta & Executive Committee and Members.

Jain Samaj Europe (Leicester)

Thank you to all of the organisations and individuals who sent their congratulatory messages. We received about twenty messages and regrettably could not print them all here. Log on to the updated Young Jains website and the special 20th Anniversary pages to read the other messages that we received.

■

Working with the Jain Community

Young Jains, over its 20 years, has worked together with many other organisations and the wider Jain community. These collaborations have helped to extend the expertise and experience within the community, and in doing so has enriched all the individuals and organisations involved. Here is just a sample of organisations that YJ has worked with over the years...

Jain study sessions are organised in conjunction with the **Institute of Jainology**. Ioj and YJ members have been speakers and hosts at each other's events. In 1991, YJ participated in a Jain delegation which presented the Jain Declaration on Nature to HRH Prince Philip. Ioj has also offered YJ members numerous opportunities to represent Jainism at local and global high profile events such as Queen's Golden Jubilee, House of Commons Ahimsa Day and even at inter-faith events hosted by the Vatican.



Hosted Geet Gamat, a children's show, together with YJ in 2000. Raas Garba 2007 was a joint event with **Sansaar**.

There were YJ representatives at a Vegetarian Rally in Hyde Park organised by the **Young Indian Vegetarians**. Hosted a joint event with YIV in 2006 entitled 'Save the Planet, Go Vegetarian.'



YJ takes great inspiration from the life and writings of Shrimad Rajchandra and are helped by members of the **Raj Saubhag Satsang Mandal**. In 2001, YJ held a joint shibir with Param Pujya Bhaishree (Nalinbhai Kothari).

In 2003 and 2007, Pujya Sudhaben led a series of swadhyay sessions and in 2004 Pujya Minalben was a keynote speaker at TTM2 convention.

YJ's links with **Oshwal Association of UK** are very profound and historical. Paryushan 2007 was a joint event with OAUk and SCVP. Oshwal have also organised joint *chopda poojan* with YJ and Jain Spirit. YJ have delivered events for Oshwal Northampton and Oshwal West London.



Volunteering for Crisis (see charities page) is often a joint venture with **Navnat Vanik Association**.

YJ is truly grateful for the spiritual support from **JVB**. YJ often use JVB premises



(Sayer Centre) for events, such as the recent One Day Conference, where the Samanijs were panelists. The Samanijs have also been guests at YJ Student events.

YJ have been using the Mahavir Foundation's base at Kenton Derasar for Sweet Harmony sessions during August. The Derasar was also the venue for Paryushan 2006. YJ started the very popular English Pratikraman sessions with **Mahavir Foundation**.



YJ works closely with **Veerayatan** and **Shree Chandana**

Vidyapeeth (SCVP). SCVP was actually established together with YJ. There have been numerous shibirs with Acharya Chandanaji, Sadhvi Shilapiji and other Veerayatan spiritual leaders. The most recent such shibir was in April 2006. YJ has also raised considerable money for Veerayatan in the past.

Pujya Chitrabhanu, founder of the **Jain Meditation International Centre**, has been a good friend of YJ since its inception. Pujya Chitrabhanu and Pramodaben have often spoken at events hosted by YJ.



Members of the **Shree Digamber Jain Association** have been speakers at YJ events and YJ held an event at the Digamber Jain Mandir in 2001 with Hemantbhai Gandhi.

In the early 1990s and 2001, YJ has held events with Pujya Atmaanandji, from the **Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Kendra**, Koba.

YJ has undoubtedly had the honour of working with many other organisation and individuals, who are too numerous to list in full. This page is an opportunity to thank all of the Jain organisations and individuals who have supported YJ over the last 20 years.

Inspirational Conventions

By Priti Shah and Sonal Shah

The Young Jains' conventions are unique Jain events in the United Kingdom. The first such convention was held in 1994 and since then they have been held every two years and continued to inspire delegates long after the convention is over. Previous conventions have included:

1994 – Jainism in the 21st Century

Focused upon bringing about an international ethical revolution through Jain action. Recognising that Ahimsa (non-violence) and Aparigraha (limiting one's possessions) are central solutions to the environmental concerns of the Global Village, delegates signed a declaration to live by these values.

"I was very moved by what I saw and heard at the Convention. I enjoyed listening to Dr. Singhvi and Dr. Tobias and the film interview of Maneka Gandhi was very moving. Please convey my congratulations to all the organisers and helpers." Anant M. P. Shah, London UK.

1996 – Reviving the Community Spirit

All over the world communities are becoming extinct. For the Jains, the community spirit has been central to their success in business, professional and social aspects of life. This convention served as reminder of the value of this and discussed ways in which it can be reinvigorated. It highlighted the role that communities play in society and how, by working together, so much more can be achieved.

"I am planning to revive the Jain youth of Manchester because I now realise the importance of reviving the community spirit" Suken Shah, Manchester, UK

1998 – The Art of Living – a Jain Perspective

This convention brought things to a personal level, as each individual explored their own art of living. Looking at Jainism as living philosophy and exploring spirituality as the tool for self-development, workshops looked at the Art of Positivity, of Letting Go and a Treasure Hunt for the Art of Self Discovery.

"My friends and I (all teenagers) really enjoyed it. The ideas used were really innovative and inspirational. I found the visualisations of our fears made me feel more burden-free. I would like to thank my facilitators, Rodney and Ajay for making the whole experience so liberating and enjoyable" Amit Vipool Gudka, Student, London UK.

2000 – Freeing the Spirit

At the heart of Jainism lies the concept of Self. 'Until I have come to understand and accept myself I will never be at peace with the world around me.' Central to this convention was the exploration into how we perceive ourselves. As the level of stress in our homes, schools and in our work places reaches new heights we looked for ways in which we could maintain a sense of stability and inner calmness. We focused upon our inner resources such as love, strength and wisdom and learn to make better use of these treasures whenever and wherever we need them most.

"I looked forward to the weekend and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. The first striking thing I noticed was that the majority of participants were young people who showed a lot of interest and were eager to learn more about Jainism. Through the Convention you have done a wonderful job in lighting a spark of curiosity for Jainism in them.In a casual / informal fun way you beautifully managed to convey the message of how important it is to identify the body as separate to my soul." Anila Mahendra Shah, Nairobi, Kenya.



Inspirational Conventions

By Priti Shah and Sonal Shah

2002 – Tasting the Mango (TTM)

"Just as a mighty mango tree is hidden within the stone of the mango, even so, O man, divinity itself is hidden within you. Rest not until you uncover it." Bhagwan Mahavir



The opportunity to develop your understanding of the fundamentals of Jain Philosophy such that you can use it consistently and use it every day. Focus upon the Jain Jigsaw puzzle consisting of the following pieces – Atma, Mithyatva, Samyak Darshan, Moksha, Karma, Nav Tattva, Kashyas and Upsham and understand how these are part of the Path to Moksha, and experiencing the divinity within. Workshops allowing individuals to look at their own lives were very powerful.

"Excellent convention. I was very impressed by the effort gone into coming up with such brilliant ideas and methods of conveying concepts which are complex and abstract in such a beautiful enjoyable and truly inspiring way – well done and hats off to the team!" Anjali Shah, Manager, London UK

2004 – Tasting the Mango 2 - the Next Slice! (TTM2)

The previous convention, "Tasting the Mango", saw the laying of foundations of the Jain path, and a refresher of these cornerstone sessions was delivered. Tasting the Mango 2 focused on the "next slice", the 12 Bhavnas (Reflections or Facets of Reality) where participants were encouraged through plays, discussions and workshops to understand how Jainism can be applied easily to our daily lives and used to help overcome difficulties we face.

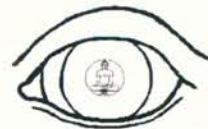
The delegates were fortunate to hear the wisdom of Samaniji Pratibha Pragyaji and Samaniji Punya Pragyaji (of Jain Vishva Bharati, London) and Pujya Minalben (of Raj Saubhag Ashram, India). Pujya Minalben delivered an excellent speech that inspired delegates to "act now" with regards to meeting their ultimate goal of Moksha. She told the BBC World Service that as a result of the convention, "young people will have a wider horizon" and "understand the religion much better". The guest speakers also took part in a panel discussion together with members of various organisations.

"It was a really cathartic experience, I talked about things I haven't yet plucked up the courage to talk about even to my closest friends and maybe they did too." Feedback from a delegate

2007 – Everyday Hero – A Change of Perspective

We all face challenges in our daily lives, but how do we deal with them?

- What perspective do you work from?
- Have you stopped to consider another point of view?
- Do you deal with matters heroically?



This one day conference allowed delegates to explore their own challenges, and empowered them to respond to those challenges heroically.

The keynote speaker, Aidan Rankin (PhD in Political Science, London School of Economics), a writer, researcher and stress management consultant spoke very eloquently on Anekantavada. There was also a panel Q&A session with a variety of panellists, which led to a very interesting and informative session. ■

Photos L-R: Convention 1994, Convention 1994, Art of Living, Freeing the Spirit organisers, Jain Jigsaw at TTM1, Panel Discussion at TTM2, Creche at TTM2, Lunchtime at Everyday Hero.



Jainism: A Personal View

By Vinodbhai Kapashi

I was giving the finishing touches to my book on the Jain idea of forgiveness, when my daughter got hold of the script, and started reading it. She knew that I had gone through several original hymns and translated them into English. She liked the writing and layout but she obviously had a few comments to make. Instead of talking at any great length she merely said to me: "But the book should be user-friendly". Those who use computers are familiar with the term. This phrase is used to describe a computer that the user finds enjoyable to work with, easy to use and from which they derive benefit. My daughter had said so much in so few words. I was beginning to think on a completely different line. Is Jainism, I asked, a "user-friendly" religion?

"Is any religion a user-friendly religion?"

Is any religion a user-friendly religion? In this modern day and age, it is fashionable not to believe in any established religion. This is perhaps the modern trend. People give different reasons for pursuing all kinds of different activities, often denying that religion plays an important part in their lives. For example, some people practice "Yoga" but will not admit as much, preferring to give a different name, even claiming that they have invented certain postures and breathing practices. But those who know Yoga, know well that these people are merely presenting us with old wine in a new bottle, furnished with a fancy new label.

So when I talk about religion in general and Jainism in particular, I always think that religion should move with the age and the times. A religion like Jainism has much to offer. It is this religion that told us that even small plants have life and feel pain when cut. (*Acharanga Sutra* 1/5/44). This religion gave us a cardinal principle of Ahimsa (nonviolence). It categorically said that all living beings want to live and that it is our duty to help them to live. Whilst saying this Jainism has mentioned 8.4 million types of living beings - vegetables, birds, animals and human beings included.

This message of Ahimsa that was explained and preached by Lord Mahavir (599 BC - 527 BC) is a message for humankind. Lord Mahavir, who was a contemporary of Buddha, became the 24th Tirthankar and was the propagator of this religion. He explained Ahimsa in very minute terms. Violence, he said, is not just killing - violence is committed by careless behaviour. You cannot only harm plants, animals and humankind by your actions; you can damage the earth, surroundings and the environment in your ruthless pursuit of greedy motives. You can break the principle of Ahimsa even by proclaiming that your faith alone is the right and just faith. It is hard to find a definition of Ahimsa so all encompassing as that found within the Jain

religion. Mahatma Gandhi learned and accepted the idea of Ahimsa into his own lifestyle. He was a rare and unique man who chose to practice non-violence both in politics and in everyday life. Gandhi always said that injustice, inequality and the careless use of resources are different forms of violence. Individuals he claimed, should act with due regard for and with responsibility towards their surroundings. This in Gandhi's view was the real truth. It is more than 2500 years since Lord Mahavir attained Moksha, but his message still holds good. The light he has shown still shines through the dark clouds of despair and hopelessness.

There are only 10 million Jains in the whole world. Around 35,000 Jains live in the USA and Canada and around 30,000 Jains are now living in Britain. Though they are small in numbers, they have an 'advanced' philosophy. The immense literature of the Jain religion talks of almost any conceivable subject. There are books on Jain cosmology (which even deals with such subject matters as black holes), Jain logic, Jain mathematics, Jain botany and Jain dictionaries. Virtually hundreds of ancient books on codes of conduct are also to be found. The theory of Karma is explained with the help of atomic movements consisting of logarithm and algebraic functions. There is literally a wealth of knowledge for western scholars to explore.

"Why haven't many people heard of the Jain religion?"

The question remains, however, as to why this religion lost support over the years? Why haven't many people heard of the Jain religion? Providing an answer here is a difficult task. Maybe it grew too complicated. People were not ready to talk about the environment and saving rain forests 2000 years ago. Though Jain monks have always insisted on 'doing as much as you can', people felt that the Jain idea of Ahimsa was too difficult to practice and it contributed in the decline of the Jain faith.

The Jain concept of Anekantvada (many sided approach, relativity) - the idea that one should be extremely tolerant of everyone's point of view has also led to a certain decline of the faith. Jainism also lost ground to Hinduism where pomp and ceremony in religious practices attracted many common people for whom the theory of relativity or complex Karma theory was too difficult to grasp. The foreign invasion of India in the medieval period also led to a drastic decline in the number of Jain followers. What remains for a Jain like myself is the heritage of systematic books of knowledge to guide oneself. What remains for millions of others are more than 10,000 Jain temples symbolising Jain architecture and faith in the divine. What remains in the state of Gujarat in India, is the overwhelming practice of vegetarianism, which is a direct influence of Jainism itself. And what remains for animals in India are hundreds of animal-sanctuaries where sick and

Jainism: A Personal View

By Vinodbhai Kapashi

invalid animals are looked after until their natural death.

Within all ideologies and religions there are divisions and hypocrisy. Jainism cannot claim to be an exception. But it is a religion that has an assured future. Although one of the oldest religions, Jainism has a startling modernity and a wealth of concepts and ideas which have transcended time.

As time marches on and humankind continues to scar the earth, surely a religion which taught of a Green Movement more than 2000 years ago will retain its foothold as a world religion. Maybe today's computer kids will show the world that Jainism is a user-friendly religion after all.■

On the 20th Anniversary of Young Jains, seventeen years after he wrote the article that has been printed here, we asked Vinodbhai if the computer generation has indeed made Jainism a user-friendly religion. This is what he said:

"Today's young generation has tried to understand the philosophy from a different angle. Young people use modern techniques and try to bring the precious gems from the bottom of the ocean - which is Jainism. They use computers for learning and teaching. They will definitely put everything in front of us in a new light. This new light surely will guide the future generations." ■ January 2008.

Article first published in YJ Newsletter, April – August 1991 Issue.

ALTHOUGH SMALL IN NUMBERS, JAINS HAVE A LOT TO GIVE TO THIS COUNTRY

During a trip to Kenya a few years ago, I asked the following question at a Jain gathering in Mombasa: Jains have been in Mombasa for at least 100 years - how many Africans have heard the word Jain? The answer is hardly anyone. In this country we have been around for almost 30 years – how many English people have heard the word Jain? The answer is very few. As inheritors of Lord Mahavir's teachings we have so much to offer and share with others. Let us look at the concept of *Abhay Daan*, which means giving someone protection from fear – fear of death. This is the highest form of charity for Jains. Compassion towards all living beings, vegetarianism, animal welfare, serving the needy, feeding the hungry - all these fall under the concept of *Abhay Daan*.

The question people normally ask is how do we practically inculcate *Abhay Daan* in our daily lives? In our personal lives we have to ensure that we are not involved, knowingly or unknowingly, in any hinsa or violence. An example I always give is that you are sitting in your bath and you see an insect at the other end. There is a race to shut the water tap and gently move the insect to a safe place. We can further practice *ahimsa* by avoiding meat restaurants, avoiding wearing leather shoes, not buying shares in companies which exploit animals and not buying goods which have animal ingredients like tooth paste and soap. We should strive to protect trees and forests and to grab the opportunity if it came along to feed or give water to animals or birds - this could be anywhere home or abroad on holiday. This is how we can practically live by the principles of *Abhay Daan*. Sometimes there is *dharam sankat*. For example you are in a place where you can't find anything to eat - one has to try his or her best to come out of this 'test' successfully. The Lord always comes to your assistance, you just have to stand firm on your principles!

There are tens of thousands of Englishmen and women who are strict vegetarians, who run animal sanctuaries, who protest against companies which carry out cruel experiments on animals, who go and stop fox hunting, who expose the cruelties perpetuated on animals in slaughterhouses and chicken farms. For me they are all Jains! Indeed we have given Mahaveer Awards to many of these individuals and organisations. We should build strong links with all these groups. We should open our homes and community centres and invite them to enjoy Indian vegetarian food.

The key word is generosity - generosity of the mind and spirit. Let's do it! Let's make our presence felt. Let us preach Lord Mahavir's teachings and make Britain a truly compassionate nation - a nation in which every one will have heard of Jains! Jains living in different parts of the world can do the same in their respective countries. *Ahimsa* is the very root of our very existence - nurture it well!

Nitin Mehta MBE
Founder President of the Young Indian Vegetarians
9th Sept. 2002

Presidents' Wall of Fame

On this momentous occasion of YJ's 20th Anniversary, we asked those who helped mould and shape YJ as it is today, the previous presidents, about their memories from their time on the committee. It was also a great excuse to see how much they have changed (or aged?) over the years! It is an opportunity for us to thank and congratulate not only these leaders, but also their respective committees for all their success and enthusiasm over the past 20 years. Today's teams continue to build and progress on the foundations you have laid. Thank you.



Atul Keshavji Shah 1988-2000

What is most memorable from your time as President?

Hard work but fun, the Shibirs were excellent and real team-building events.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Lots of new ideas which have now become mainstream – like the newsletter, the Bi-annual Conference, the regular retreats/shibirs, varied events and varied speakers, many of whom were totally new to the community.



Sailesh Premchand Shah 1992 - 1995

What is most memorable from your time as President?

My most memorable event was the shibir to a small village called Sutton Courtney near Oxford. We thoroughly enjoyed it and it was very important whilst we were laying the foundations and building Young Jains. On one of the shibirs we were very fortunate to have with us the Late Dr L M Singhvi who was then the Indian High Commissioner to UK. We also made a trip to attend the JAINA Convention in San Francisco held at Stanford University where we took a small team with us and made presentations about Young Jains and empowered the North American Jains to set up a similar organisation.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

When we set up Young Jains there was no similar organisation of this kind which tried to teach the principles of Jainism to the younger generation in a more modern setting. Setting up a new organisation was both enjoyable and a fantastic challenge. In its early stages it was difficult to attract an audience to our events. However we persevered and it paid dividends. Some of the new innovations that we made were the shibir and a quality newsletter. We made the overseas trips during the early stages and hope it has now become an international organisation. We left Young Jains in a phenomenal good state and with a vision for youngsters and hope that as a result, that youngsters and people are able to learn more about Jainism.



Dina Shah 1995- 1996

What is most memorable from your time as President?

Most memorable memory was meeting the Pope at the Vatican as a representative of the Jain youth.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Being the 1st female president of Young Jains was very empowering for me as a woman; and strengthening links with other organisations by holding joint events with the Young Jains.

** Dina has left Harrow for sunnier climes! In the past eight years, she has lived in Jakarta (Indonesia), Seoul (South Korea) and is now living in Perth, Australia. [Ed]*



Presidents' Wall of Fame



Ila Narendra Shah 1996-1998

What is most memorable from your time as President?

We hosted the largest mehfil and collected over £6K for sponsoring children's education in India.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Introduction of children's party, bhakti, yoga and meditation classes. We set up trustees and re-wrote the YJ constitution and introduced standards and procedures in YJ, including the logo. We worked with Veerayatan to set up and launch Shri Chandana Vidayapeeth School and saw the launch of the Jain Spirit magazine.



Ushma Shah 1998-1999

What is most memorable from your time as President?

Two memories come to mind. 1) Shibir/team building with the committee at Oxford...it was educational, a valuable experience and extremely good fun as well. 2) The convention that was held in the summer of 1998 - again an event which I will remember forever.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

The legacy me and my committee left was the strengthened foundation laid by my predecessors for the benefit of the future Young Jains generation.



Shaileen Lalji Shah 1999-2001

What is most memorable from your time as President?

Joining as President at AGM and having no idea who else was going to join the team.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Giving Sweet Harmony its name and being on the teams that developed /introduced the YJ Paryushan evenings and Navaratri Garbas.



Priti Kishore Shah 2001-2002 and 2006-2007.

What is most memorable from your time as President?

My strongest memory is of being President and having an idea shared with me of having English pop songs, dancing involving all participants and delivering an interactive convention, not just with guest speakers, but also with speakers from Young Jains. I had the pleasure of working with really committed people who shared their talents and developed skills in themselves and in others, in seeking to understand and share Jain dharma. Working and learning with people like this has been and continues to be the real pleasure.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

In my first instance as President, and with that team, it was continuing to build upon things, looking at growing the organisation geographically outwards. We had a strong focus ensuring that Young Jains activities met the mission statement and were guided to always think about the Jain spiritual as the base foundation of anything that was planned. I think that is enduring and core to Young Jains.



Continued overleaf...

Presidents' Wall of Fame



Nishad Himatlal Gudkha 2002-2004

What is most memorable from your time as President?

The buzz at the AGM when we can reflect and celebrate on the phenomenal achievements.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Demonstrated that a team that shares the same passion and effort, and has a real vision can achieve what is considered the impossible and set new standards. The team(s) achieved 70+ unique events each year in different parts of the UK! The team ensured that there was something for everyone (all ages, genders, knowledge and backgrounds), and this was demonstrated by attendance levels and level of support from volunteers.



Deepa Mahendra Shah 2004 - 2005

What is most memorable from your time as President?

That's a tricky one as there were so many. One which does stand out was during the Raas Garba of that year where I was asked to do a speech at the interval, and it was very well received, the atmosphere was vibrant and exceptional! In amongst the buzz I felt immense peace within.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

Being on a committee is a fulfilling yet challenging task, yet every moment is worthwhile. Knowing that whatever little a contribution, it is making an impact to someone somewhere. What is touching is when people remain with a deep passion of duty within and make the organisation what it is and should remain - one of love and understanding, growth and excelling!



Sawan Dinesh Shah 2005-2006

What is most memorable from your time as President?

That's a tough one. I think the bonds that were created with the whole team and the supporters. The feelings will always be with me.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

The knowledge that anyone can achieve anything they want to go for. The '05 committee were all new to being on an EC and, although the road was tough, we really pulled each other through.



Prakash Saradkumar Shah 2007-2008

What is most memorable from your time as President?

My most memorable time in this year's presidency is the Diwali show where we are able to host a multi-faith Diwali event with the Hindu and Sikh communities.

What legacy do you feel you and your committee have left YJ?

We have revived the Friday night socials by introducing a great team called Small Pebbles. This team initiated a series of fun game show events where people were able to meet up and have fun but also learn and share some of the Jain drama.



You?

Could this be you?

Become a part of YJ history and join the committee.

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Congratulations to Young Jains
on their 20th Anniversary

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Congratulating Young Jains
on their 20th Anniversary



"There is nothing so small and subtle as
the atom, nor any element so vast as space.
Similarly there is no quality of soul more subtle than
non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life."

Lord Mahavir



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Act Now!



What would you choose: Temporary worldly pleasures or Eternal Internal Bliss, which, in the language of TTM2, is Infinite, Eternal, Abundant Bliss?

A review of Puja Minalben's speech at TTM2 in 2004.

Puja Minalben began with this very simple yet powerful question. Dressed in white and radiating energy and joy, she went on to inspire many of the delegates during her address.

In our search for permanence in life, we often rely on empty promises such as: "You will always be my best friend." Realising that worldly pleasure is temporary while eternal bliss is possible, we should surely opt for Eternal, Internal Bliss, noting that:

- This bliss is within us and so we need not search for it outside.
- It is only in a human form, that we can experience this bliss. Luckily for us, we have already been born in this human form.

Puja Minalben shared an insight from Bhagwan Mahavira's last sermon, as conveyed in the Uttaradhyayan Sutra. Bhagwan told us of the difficulty of four things:

- *Manushya Janma* - Birth in a human form
- *Shruti* - Listening to religious texts
- *Dharma ma Shraddha* - Faith in religion
- Strength to follow Dharma and the energy (*Virya*) to practice self-control (*Sanyam*)

We all have the great fortune (*Punya*) to be born in human form. However, we do not realise the tremendous effort we have made in past lives to attain it. This is because we cannot see into our past lives. To understand this, consider the hard-won earnings of our parents. We spend it all easily, as we have not experienced the work behind it.

'It is said that our Atma has spent an eternity in Nigod, born over and over...'

Puja Minalben then related what the scriptures tell us about our past lives. It is said that our Atma has spent an eternity in Nigod, born over and over clustered together with many other microscopic life-forms with

only the sense of touch. Spiritually, this is heart-breaking. When one Atma attains Moksha or Nirvana then it is said that another Atma leaves Nigod. From this the Atma progresses from single-sensed beings to plant and animal forms with an increasing number of

senses and finally to the state of human birth with senses and a mind. Puja Minalben reminded us, if we ever went to the zoo, to consider that we too have once been in those HELPLESS states too, unable to do anything to free ourselves from the cycle of life and death!

'...From this the Atma progresses from single-sensed beings to plant and animal forms with an increased number of senses and finally to the state of human birth with five senses and a mind.'

Rather than being disheartened, we should rejoice and ACT NOW: we have all the amenities and facilities now to realise our true selves and then liberate our souls! The human form is said to be the highest form as in it, all the tools for spiritual effort are present:

Heartened, we can now consider the human body. Is it merely an integration of flesh and bone? NO. It is the abode of our Soul! Our Soul has potentially: *Anar Darshan* – Perfect Perception; *Anant Gnan* – Perfect Knowledge; *Anant Virya* – Perfect Energy; *Anant Sukh* – Perfect Bliss

The body is a temple in which Bhagwan ATMA resides. Bhagwan Mahavir said: "O Man! Awake! Don't you understand that it is very difficult to obtain RIGHT KNOWLEDGE after death, in the next birth." Puja Minalben jokingly asked why this did not refer to women too, and then reiterated that the path is open to all. Shrimad Rajchandra, who lived 100 years ago attained Self-Realisation (*Samyag Darshan*) and who greatly influenced Gandhiji, said: "It is only now in this body and form that we can achieve our TRUE SELF - OUR ATMA."

Only in this very important human form - not plant, animal, hellish nor heavenly forms - do we attain Nirvana or Moksha. There is something that makes our body walk and talk. Once this Atma leaves, the eyes cannot see, and we feel neither the chill of ice nor the heat of a funeral pyre! We have forgotten our true self, Bhagwan ATMA, and mistakenly identified with every form we have entered. We have forgotten Atma, the essence of life itself.

Act Now!

This human life is a golden opportunity to experience and realise our True Self. It is NOW or NEVER. BUT HOW? We must turn to God: Satdev–Satdharma–Satguru.

- Satdev – Lord Mahavira – the last Tirthankar of our times;
- Satdharma - we take complete shelter in the religion professed by HIM with true faith and devotion;
- Satguru – Then we turn to SATGURU. The best and most powerful healer is the TRUE GURU who works through our immune system in miraculous ways.

If we take shelter in the True Guru, then we are accepting all three, as it is through the True Guru, that we can understand the Satdev and Satdharma. If we follow with full faith and devotion, we will be amazed at the results.

We must thus search for a True Guru who is the embodiment of bliss, who will guide us with experience. We all understand the need for a teacher. Even if we read a textbook, we need someone who knows the subject to help us understand the more detailed meaning. In the same way, when it comes to ATMA, we must turn to someone who knows ATMA, who has realised his Soul, Bhagwan Atma, and is thus a Living God. We seek solace in him and he can show us our faults and guide us how to remove these faults, and to our final direction, if we surrender ourselves unconditionally. His Soul will thus light up our lives too!!

Scriptures say, by having a human body, we are half way there, and so should follow Lord Mahavir: “A person should properly practice religion before old age inflicts us diseases become chronic, the senses become powerless,” and: “Just as the withered leaf of

*‘Scriptures say, by having a human body,
we are half way there...’*

a tree falls down after some nights go by. Similarly the life of a man comes to an end.” This human body is not immortal and so we must ACT NOW!

Lord Mahavir warns even an ardent, capable and knowledgeable devotee, such as GAUTAMSWAMI, not to waste a single moment. “A drop of dew remains suspended on the top of a blade of grass just for a moment. Human life is also like that. So we should not be careless even for a moment.” Pujya Minalben gave a number of examples from the scriptures on the rarity of human birth. She asked us simply: “This is a real awakening for us, isn’t it?”

She then explained difference between being born human and true humanity, Manushyatva. We must strive to attain the qualities of serenity, gentle sensitivity, humility, and compassion. For a peaceful life, we need a True Guru and a good character. Only through purifying our lives, can we hear the truth (Shruti) from our Guru and the scriptures. Repeatedly hearing this Truth gives us True Faith, Samyaktva, the very basis of Jainism. That faith leads us to and gives us the energy to follow the Dharma, and practice self-control. We will thus have all four things which Mahavira Bhagwan described as difficult. Pujya Minalben stated: “One who knows the five senses, knows the world: one who overcomes the senses, will attain internal eternal bliss.”

*“Meditation is the missing link between
Mithyatva and Samyag Darshan”*

Pujya Minalben later added: “Meditation is the missing link between Mithyatva and Samyag Darshan.” A True Guru helps us overcome our Rag and Dvesh, our Kashays, preparing the soil of the mind before planting. Mind and body become fertile by cultivating Upsham (calmness) and Vairagya (detachment) and contemplating the Bhavnas. Meditation is the Beej (Seed) Mantra taught by the True Guru, a method that gives divine eyes: Divya chakshu! Usually our eyes look out, but when we close our eyes, using the method that the Guru has given, we look inside for our soul.

Meditation induces detachment from name and form, making us aware of the changing nature of the body and all around. We forget the past and future, concentrating on the “I am,” the eternal now. The Atma’s function is to always know (Gnan). When the mind is concentrated, far from concepts of “my car, my family” and so on, we are closer to Atma. Deep within is this experience of abundant eternal infinite bliss, which we all must strive to attain.

Pujya Minalben told the delegates that she had really enjoyed the convention and that, instead of thanks and appreciation, she wanted us to make a change in our lives, to make this human life meaningful by the pursuit of self-realisation: to ACT NOW! ■

This is an abridged version of an article first printed in the Young Jains Newsletter in October 2004 reviewing the TTM2 convention in September 2004.

Param Pujya Bhaishree, Minalben and Vikrambhaj will be visiting London from 1st to 15th May. To find out more about the programs or the spiritual and humanitarian work of the Ashram, please visit www.rajsaubhag.org, look up the Facebook group RajSaubhag, or e-mail or call Ashik Shah, on ashik@youngjains.org.uk, or 020 8950 3397.

Interfaith Activities

YJ has always strived to engage with other religious organisations in order to build respect, understanding and friendship between different faith communities. This has taken the form of numerous interfaith activities and memorable events organised with other faith groups. The concept of Anekantvad is pivotal to Jainism and hence the opportunity to understand and respect different philosophies and perspectives is a rewarding and highly valued aspect of YJ's work. Here is a taster of some of the interfaith work conducted by YJ and the lasting friendships built between communities.

BRAHMA KUMARIS



YJ has developed a long-term friendship with the Brahma Kumaris. The two organisations have hosted joint events on spirituality and Brahma Kumaris' spokespeople have been guest speakers at the famous YJ conventions.

NHSF



NHSF and YJ have worked together on numerous occasions. For example, they co-hosted a lecture by Rueben Thuku in December 2002 and Janjeriya Garba. At a student level, the YJ Student Nodes work closely with

the university NHSF nodes, often collaborating on events. NHSF were invited to the recent YJ Diwali celebrations (see left).

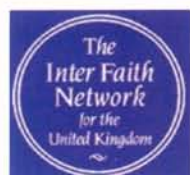
ISKCON



for Krishna Consciousness.

In October 2000, YJ organised a trip to Bhaktivedanta Manor, the Hare Krishna temple in Hertfordshire. The event was also attended by the Pandava Sena members, who form the youth wing of the International Society

INTER FAITH



YJ has firm links with the Inter Faith Network. Representatives from the Network have attended events in the past and formed part of the panel discussion at the convention in 2004.

SHRI SATYA SAI SERVICE ORGANISATION

Young Jains represented Jainism at 'Non-Violence Interfaith – Role of World Faiths' hosted by this organisation in 2003.

DIWALI 2007

In November 2007, YJ demonstrated its continuing dedication to inter-faith and inter-community links. The Diwali event brought together the **Jain, Hindu and Sikh** communities to celebrate this festival, which is revered in all three traditions. Furthermore, YJ also reached out to a wider demographic with a stall at the Diwali on the Square celebrations organised by the Mayor of London.



NHSF rep, Ajit Singh (Havelock Road Gurdwara), Sanjay Kundalia (NHSF), NHSF rep, Roshni Gudhka and Kirpa Shah.

Message from NHSF:

Jai Jaynendra (sic) and Namaste,

On behalf of NHSF, I would like to congratulate Young Jains UK on an amazing event. Bringing three faiths together in unison and to celebrate Deepavali is no easy task and to my knowledge has never been done, but you managed to do it and successfully. When I came, I saw a lot of hard work and effort being put in to the day and so much more hard work went on behind the scenes to provide a dharmic and entertaining evening. One which the whole crowd were enthused about. Showing unity in diversity and unifying all three beliefs in the sense that all 3 have a commonality, a similar root that makes us different also makes us the same and it is that unity in diversity which allows us to coexist in society and that was portrayed beautifully. It was a privilege to be a part of such a wonderful and unique event and we look forward to working with you in the near future.

Kindest Regards

Sanjay Kundalia, NHSF ■

LOSS TO COMMUNITY & JAINS

Dipesh Shah, of Southgate, London, an optician aged 29, passed away on 27 December 2007. He was ambitious, hard working and family oriented. His passing will be a loss to everyone who knew him, especially his parents - Chandan and Navin and brother, Rupesh. May he rest in peace.

From his friend of last 26 years – **Prasit Shah**.



Prasit Shah, Dipesh Shah, Sameer Budhev.

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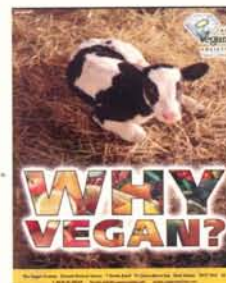
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Founded in 1944, the Society has members all over the world, including increasing numbers of Jains. Our staff and trustees work with local, national and international bodies to promote a cruelty-free lifestyle and the interests of vegans in all walks of life.

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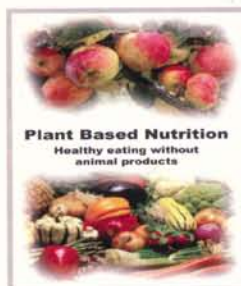
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Compassion - The Unifying Idea of Progress

By Dr. Dan Lyons

**YJ ETHICAL
VOICE**

Last October, I was invited to speak at  the Indian Vegan Festival in Murdeshwar, Karnataka, about Uncaged's campaigns for animal rights. To prepare for the trip, I started to investigate the history of India and the more I learned, the more inspired I became by the culture and ideas of the country. Although I had been vaguely aware of the Jain faith and its underlying philosophy of 'ahimsa', I was now discovering the profound importance and influence of Jain philosophy to the history of not just India, but the whole world. At the festival, my partner Angela and I had the pleasure of meeting Mahersh and Nishma Shah from the Young Jains and learning more about Jainism.

This engagement with Jains opened my eyes to the fact that the animal rights cause and Jainism share many fundamental principles. In this article, I want to explore an intriguing phenomenon: although the animal rights and Jain philosophy stem largely from different cultures, we have in many ways arrived at the same place in terms of how we define 'progress', a definition which reflects our shared underlying values. I hope that by discussing this common ground, the potential for deeper empathy and relationship between the animal rights movement and the Jain community may be realised, which offers hope for the future of humankind and the other animals with whom we share this planet.

It seems to me that both Jains and the animal rights movement recognise that the only valid or meaningful understanding of 'progress' is one that ultimately rests on ethical and spiritual development. This contrasts and, inevitably, challenges the dominant cultural paradigm in countries like the UK, which elevates technological progress and commercial activity as ends-in-themselves. Just as Jains recognise the dangers of attachment to physical objects, animal rights advocates reject the sacrifice of animals in toxicity tests for the sake of new products. We would rather go without as the moral principles of compassion and peace are more important than material gain.

The alignment between Jains and animal rights extends - for me at least - to teleological notions of human

purpose and wellbeing, which inform our views on what constitutes progress. The reason I devote my life to campaigning for animal rights is that I believe that humans can only achieve their potential and live meaningful lives by seeking to make the world a better place. By 'better' I mean more ethical - more respectful of others and the world around us. If we deny our ability to take moral choices then we deny our very humanity.

At the same time, a concern for others also promotes our own wellbeing. At the everyday level, it is surely significant that those who are violent to non-human animals tend to relate to humans in a similarly abusive way.

Moreover, the concept of animal rights rests on the deeper idea that we are not separate and superior from nature, but intimately connected with it. Egalitarianism implies kinship and relatedness - an acceptance that we are natural beings. As the inspirational Satish Kumar, the former Jain Monk and ecological thinker, says:

"Sadly, the human species considers itself as a superior species - and, in that, we try to control nature, manipulate nature. The way we treat our animals... forests... our oceans and rivers, and land and soil - that appears as if we are at war with nature. And in waging war against nature, we create problems for ourselves, because we ARE nature."

One of the practices that Uncaged campaigns against - animal-to-human transplantation (known as 'xenotransplantation') - illustrates the dangerous hubris of the exploitation of animals. There are currently long waiting lists for organ transplants, and with people dying for want of an organ, there is a social demand for solutions to this perceived problem. Many possible solutions exist, such as preventative health measures or increasing the supply of human organs. However, in practice, over the past fifteen years very cruel research has been conducted to try to develop pig organs for transplant, which would represent a whole new category of violence towards animals. Opinion polls show that this is the least popular option, but because xenotransplantation is

Compassion - The Unifying Idea of Progress

By Dr. Dan Lyons

potentially the most financially lucrative approach, it has until now dominated the efforts to solve the organ shortfall.

Our bodies naturally attack foreign cells, so to try to circumvent the very strong rejection of pig organs, scientists have resorted to genetic engineering. But despite confident predictions of success, it has proved impossible to unravel the enormous obstacles to cross-species transplants. Furthermore, investment in xenotransplantation research has taken place at the expense of more feasible, if less technologically spectacular, solutions. As a consequence, people will have died while hopes have been foolishly pinned on pig organ transplants.

What's more, it has emerged that retroviruses related to HIV lurk in pig cells, and they can infect human cells. Should pig organs be transplanted, such viruses will have a unique opportunity to establish itself in the human population, with potentially catastrophic results. Interestingly, the genetic modification of pigs appears to heighten this danger by concealing the pig viruses from the human immune system.



It is the prioritisation of moral values and the recognition of ecological interconnectedness that combine to produce the notion of progress that is common to Jainism and animal rights. From an Indian background, this is famously expressed in Gandhi's famous quote: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." While the Czech novelist and thinker Milan Kundera observed in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*:

"True human goodness, in all its purity and freedom, can come to the fore only when its recipient has no power. Humanity's true moral test, its fundamental test (which lies deeply buried from view), consists of its attitude towards those

who are at its mercy: animals. And in this respect humanity has suffered a fundamental debacle, a debacle so fundamental that all others stem from it."

An essential, salient feature of the animal rights movement is its political activity. Animal rights are an ethical issue, and so it is not just a personal matter. In order to protect animals, we believe that we must go beyond our personal lives to campaign peacefully for the social and political changes that advance and enshrine animal rights in our society and culture.

Our wonder and admiration for animals and the natural world has an inevitable flip side – our sorrow and despair at the cruelty and destruction wreaked by humanity. In a few cases, such anguish leads animal rights advocates to become aggressive in the pursuit of their ideals. Unfortunately, with a media that values sensationalism and wishes to condemn an ideal which contradicts the dominant anthropocentric cultural norm, such aggression is highlighted at the expense of the vast majority of purely non-violent and democratic work for animal rights that is carried out by groups like Uncaged. For me and the vast majority of animal rights advocates, the principle of non-violence is fundamental for both moral and strategic reasons. We cannot encourage deep acceptance of animal rights by force.

I therefore hope that readers apply the Jain principle of *Anekantavada* to their relationship with the animal rights movement. In particular, I hope that together we can explore the possibility that animal rights is one of the path that Jains could take in pursuit of the ultimate truth – that progress can only be measured in terms of compassion towards animals and nature. ■



Dr Dan Lyons is Campaigns Director of Uncaged.

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For a full report on the Vegan Festival in India mentioned in this article, please see the previous newsletter, Volume 32 No. 3/2007, Nov 2007-Feb 2008, for a report by Mahersh and Nishma Shah. Young Jains also promoted and publicised the peaceful candlelit procession for animal rights (pictured) organised by Uncaged in December 2007.

Progress in Jain Academia

By Dr. Peter Flügel

THE ANNUAL JAIN LECTURE OF THE CENTRE OF JAINA STUDIES AT THE SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON



Research in Jainism has a long tradition at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. It is associated with eminent Indologists such as Sir Ralph Turner, John Brough, Arthur Llewellyn Basham, Duncan

Derrett, Padmanabh S. Jaini, Robert Williams, John Gray and J. Clifford Wright, who during their spells at SOAS published extensively in the field of Jaina Studies. Yet, until recently, Jainism was never taught at SOAS nor anywhere else outside India. Interested students had to turn to general courses on Indic religions or advanced classes in Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi or Gujarati to gain a glimpse of the rich Jain cultural heritage. This unsatisfactory situation began to be redressed in 1999 when Jaina Studies was launched as an independent field of inquiry in the newly formed Department of the Study of Religions. The initiative was inspired by the late Dr Julia Leslie (1948-2004) and rendered viable through seed funding from the Jain Academy for the teaching of two courses on Jainism. For some time, Julia Leslie had invited visiting samanīs and samans (neophyte Terapanth Jain nuns and monks) to give guest lectures to her classes on Hinduism (sic) and nurtured relationships with the growing Jain communities in London.

At the time, Jaina Studies were still in the early stages of their transformation from a purely philological and archaeological endeavour to the multidisciplinary exploration of a lived religious tradition, which it is now. The changes were triggered by a series of field studies in the 1980s and 1990s, which contributed not only to Indology and comparative religion, but also to anthropology, art history, history, linguistics, and to cross-disciplinary fields such as gender studies and diaspora studies. The new focus on contemporary Jainism also injected a breath of fresh air into a then stagnant and inaccessible academic sub-discipline, Jainology and Prakrit studies, and attracted a new generation of students to the then largely unexplored but now rapidly developing multidisciplinary field of Jaina studies.

Scholars at the University of Cambridge played a central role in these new developments, together with their counterparts at the Divinity School at Harvard,

and the CNRS in Paris. Despite the brilliance of their pioneering research, these efforts had no lasting structural effects on the field as a whole, which remains fragmented and discontinuous due to the lack of an institutional base.

From 1999 onwards, SOAS took the lead in the field through infrastructural innovations that culminated in the establishment of the Centre of Jaina Studies (CoJS) in 2004. This centre offers, for the first time, the prospect of a stable anchor and forum for the global network of Jain scholars collaboratively to develop Jaina Studies as an independent interdisciplinary field of inquiry. The initiatives were financed almost entirely through successful bids for competitive research grants, notably a project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRC) on Jaina law and the Jaina community in India and Britain. This reflects not only the quality of the applications but also the growing academic and public interest in Jainism, which is one of the least studied of the ancient Indian religions.



Academics and the Jain community at the 9th Jaina Studies Workshop at SOAS in 2007. Many are YJ members.

Highly specialised fields in the arts and humanities such as Jaina Studies can survive in the current economic climate only if previously isolated researchers create regional and global networks to strengthen their voice and to bid collaboratively for research funds. At present, SOAS is the best placed institution, maybe the only one outside India, which can turn this strategic necessity into reality without further infrastructural investments.

This fact is widely recognised both in academic circles and within the global Jain community. Within a short period of time SOAS became one of the most important venues for Jaina studies in the world. It already functions as a central node for multiple collaborations with scholars in Britain and North America and within the European Network of Jain

Progress in Jain Academia

By Dr. Peter Flügel

Studies, which was established at SOAS in November 2004, with the Society for Jaina Studies in Kyoto and a great number of Universities and Jain research centres in India, such as the American Institute of Indian Studies in Gurgaon, the Jain Vishva Bharati Institute in Ladnun, the P.V. Institute in Varanasi, the B.L. Institute in Delhi, and the L.D. Institute in Ahmedabad. Jain scholars and members of general public with an interest in Jainism from all over the world drift naturally towards SOAS as a gateway to the unique and vast resources in the museums, archives and libraries of London.

Yet, the recent successes of SOAS in the field of Jaina studies would not have been possible without the local presence and the global connections of the London Jain community, which is the largest outside India and strongly supportive of the Centre of Jaina Studies. It is a paradigmatic example of how links between academic institutions and religious communities can stimulate interest in the study and research of small but significant academic fields of study that are endangered by changing policies of government funding.

The main meeting point and public focus of the activities of the CoJS are the Annual Jain Lecture and the Jaina Studies Workshops in March, which are popular with both academics and the public, including members of the Jain community, which have the opportunity to keep themselves informed about the latest advances in Jaina studies, to share Jain food and to exchange views with leading scholars in the field. The interaction with the Jain community at the annual meetings is also one of the main attractions for Jain scholars. Young Jains UK and the Centre of Jaina at SOAS will have a great future together.



Peter Flügel is currently at the Department of the Study of Religions at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. He has published extensively on the history and ethnography of contemporary Jain schools and sects, Jain stupas, Jaina-Vaisnava syncretism, and the social history of the Jain tradition. He is the founding chair of the Centre of Jaina Studies at SOAS and editor of the Jaina Studies Series (Routledge Advances in Jaina Studies), of the International Journal of Jaina Studies and of Jaina Studies: Newsletter of the Centre of Jaina Studies.

www.soas.ac.uk/ijjs

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6th March 2008

Maruti Nandan Tivari, Banaras Hindu University

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YJ International Introduced - Kenya and Perth

One of the biggest achievements of YJ as an organisation is that after a birth in humble Harrow, YJ is now a worldwide organisation with thousands of members. From the very start, there were links with these international nodes, and these are explored here. Yet as the internet and cheap travel continue to open up the world, these links are likely to become stronger. At this 20 year mark, it is fitting to congratulate the histories and successes of these international nodes and look forward to a long and strong friendship and collaboration with our colleagues and communities across the world.

History of Jain Community of Western Australia

Australian Indian Immigrants once again have the privilege and opportunity to mark a new chapter in the settlement history of Jains in Australia. In March 1998, discussion begun between Dr Pravinbhai Mehta, Amu Shah and Dinesh Sheth to form a Jain Association in Perth, Western Australia. Although informally about eight to ten families were gathering in 1997 and 1998, finally, in October 1998, it was decided that the Jain Community needed to have religious, social and cultural gatherings for the Jains of Perth.

The Youth of Jain Community under the umbrella of Jain Community of WA, Young Jains Perth (YJP), started in April 2000. The initiators (founder members) of Young Jains Perth were Rajal Shah, Rakesh Shah, Darshini Sheth, Dhimal Shah & Ashish Shah. The coordinator was Yogesh B. Shah. The first issue of In Touch Magazine for Community was published in November 2000.

The first Young Jains Camp was held between 13th April 2001 and 16th April 2001 at Bickley Recreation Centre. There were 52 youth participants at this camp. The Young Jains Camp has now become one of the biggest bi-yearly activities. YJP are also involved in voluntary services to various organizations such as Activ Foundation, RSPCA etc. Looking at our social activities, the Jain community organises an entertainment evening each year. The first entertainment evening was held on 22 September 2001.

Our main strength is the volunteers, who are tirelessly putting their efforts since inception of JCWA making all events successful and thereby building a stronger community. ■

Submitted by Rakesh Shah, Perth.

Young Jains Kenya

What was the original vision of the people who got together to start Young Jains Nairobi? Has the organisation lived up to its original expectations and was the vision at all realistic? Imagine if you will, 12 years ago, members of a newly formed organisation gathered in a room somewhere in Nairobi. Unsure of their purpose but passionate about the future, they began to set a course for destiny. Seeking the inspiration from Dr. Shashikant Mehta and Dr. Atul Shah, borrowing a leaf from the charters of Young Jains UK and calling on their own intuition they wrote out the objectives of Young Jains Nairobi.

Perhaps the jewel in the crown, much charity has been taken up by our organisation. The water projects, food distribution, clothes collection, scholarships and many other projects have had a significant impact on the community around us. YJ Nairobi has changed the lives of thousands of beneficiaries by bringing water close to them. To date, 150 projects have been completed in various areas around Kenya. Close to 500,000 families are benefiting from the wells and the total funding is nearly US\$ 1,100,000.

We have developed within our organisation and communities an extremely strong bond and to some extent crossed borders to foster international friendships. Hidden potentials have been discovered and creativity, talent and skills have been allowed to flourish in this organization. And the story goes on... Today, 12 years later, our organisation continues to grow from strength to strength. As we know, the success of any community is in the hands of the youth. The Kenyan Jain youth have become an instrumental part of the organisation and continue to develop an intense desire to keep the torch of Jainism burning bright globally for eons to come. ■

By Hiten Shah, a very dynamic and creative founding member of the YJN team who now resides in Perth, Australia.



Priti Shah and Atul Shah in 1996 with a newly-formed YJ Kenya committee.

YJ International Young Jains India

Submitted by Manish Kasliwal, on behalf of YJI.

Young Jains of India, an organisation started in 2005 by Dr. Manoj Jain (Memphis, USA) and Manish Kasliwal (Mumbai), is dedicated to promoting the Jain Way of Life through the three A's of Jainism viz, **Ahimsa (Non-Violence), Aparigraha (Non-Possessiveness) and Anekantavaad (Non-Absolutism)**. Membership to YJI is open for every individual irrespective of religion, caste, sect, gender or economic status.



YJI Conventions

The YJI annual conventions at Delhi (2006) and Indore (2005) have provided a great platform in uniting and networking the Jain youths from across India. They have provided an opportunity to the youths to meet and discuss on the 3 A's of Jainism with renowned speakers from India and abroad. The 2nd Young Jains of India (YJI) Convention concluded on a high note with two key revolutionary resolutions that are expected to transform the Jain community in the coming future. The key resolutions passed as a part of the convention are - *"To exhibit humanity and compassion in all fronts by denying dowry system and practicing ahimsa by not promoting abortion"*.

Significant Projects

- Distribution of leaflets propagating Ahimsa and spreading the teachings of Mahavir on Mahavir Jayanthi – across India
- Creating awareness against wastage of food, ahimsa and vegetarianism.
- Interactive audio-visual presentations on Vegetarianism & Beyond.
- Creating a positive outlook using the principles of Jainism – Children's Remand Home, Dharwad
- Young Jains of India, in association with Mrs Maneka Gandhi's organisation 'People for Animals', runs an animal rescue team in Pune.

Significant Projects – Social

- 4000 Pledge for Eye Donation post death.
- Distribution of food, chocolates, games among physically challenged and destitute children – Shanti Dham, Mumbai
- Distribution of food and clothing at Astha Vridha Ashram.
- Long term education and food funding for 3 children from economically backward sections.

- Distribution of clothes, health & hygiene education at Mother India Orphanage, Hyderabad
- Distribution of woollen and warm clothes to the poor living in huts and on streets across Delhi
- Distribution of plates & spoons for mid-day meal, floor mats and trash cans at Rajawadi Municipal School – Mumbai
- Blood Donation Camp in association with Sarvodaya Hospital and Holy Spirit Charitable Blood Bank- Mumbai

Planned Projects for the Future

- Adoption of Mother India Orphanage, Hyderabad – Ensure availability of basic requirements such as clothes, food, education and medical help
- Adoption of Rajawadi Municipal School, Mumbai – Transform it into a model school equipped with basic infrastructure, educational tools, functional classrooms and superior education to underprivileged children at affordable low cost
- Projects on Educational (AAA), Social and Spiritual track that will be undertaken across the country all throughout the year
- Women Empowerment Projects to be undertaken in collaboration with the Times Foundation
- Paathshalas to promote Jain Way Of Life and improvement of inner self utilizing spiritual methods.



Chandan Shah, Jyoti Mehta, Kirpa Shah and Kewal Shah with the Young Jains of South India in Bangalore, December 2006.

Global Young Jains

Young Jains of India is also working on collaborating with other Young Jain organizations world wide. In an attempt to build a global network YJUK and YJI have agreed to work together to establish communication with YJ Australia, Singapore, Nairobi and YJA and collaborate on social projects globally. ■

YJ International Young Jains of America

Submitted by Neepta Shah on behalf of YJA team

Young Jains of America (YJA) is a committee of Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA) who puts emphasis on projects relating to Jain youth from ages 14-29. Started in 1991, the mission of YJA is to "be recognised as a national and international umbrella Jain youth organisation for establishing a network to share Jain heritage and religion through young people."

The Young Jains of America Executive Board is comprised of 15 individuals from all around the continent. There are 6 Regional Coordinators, 7 Directors and 2 Co-Chair persons. The roles of each person vary according to their position, but in the end everyone comes together to form the core group of people that initiate activities and stimulate the youth of the country.

YJA organises many events and activities tailored to youth and young Jain professionals. These include ski trips, picnics, and regional conferences, just to name a few. Most important of these events includes a biannual youth convention, to which approximately 600-700 Jain youth from across the nation (and even globe!) attend. YJA also promotes education in Jainism through developing materials for youth, in print and online at www.yja.org. ■



Above: Kirpa Shah, Shilun Shah and Saggar Shah with friends from Young Jains America at the JAINA Convention, July 2007.



YJA Timeline

July 1991 – YJA is born!

July 1994 – First Convention organised in Chicago, IL

July 1995 – YJA unveils its website – www.yja.org.

July 1996 – Second Convention organised in San Francisco, CA

July 1998 – Third Convention organised in Houston, TX

July 2000 – Fourth Convention organised in Los Angeles, CA.

April 2001 – Mahavir Jayanti 2600 Celebration Play: The Past Lives of Bhagwan Mahavir is played around nations across North America.

June 2002 – Annual Habitat for Humanity projects organised.

July 2002 – Fifth Convention organised in Mahwah, NJ

December 2002 – YJA partners with Veerayatan to send youth to needy places.

July 2004 – Sixth Convention in the Bay Area, CA

July 2006 – Seventh Convention hosted in Stamford, CT

July 2008 – Eighth Convention hosted in Chicago, IL

Bottom left: American delegates at the Young Jains convention held in 1994 in UK.

Bottom right: A few familiar YJ UK faces at the 1st YJ convention in America, 1994.



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Chitrabhanu's Wisdom



Below is an inspiring interview with Pujya Shri Chitrabhanu, who has been a long-term supporter and friend of Young Jains. He was the keynote speaker at the Young Jains International Convention in 2002.

Q. What has inspired you to follow Jainism as a religion?

That is a very long story - mine was a search. There was no Jainism in Tumkur, in South India, where I was brought up. When my mother died, followed by my sister and then the girl whom I was studying with, I thought I must find out where people go after death. Thereafter I told my father I don't want your money or your business. I needed to find the 'answer' so I left home. On this search, I met Anandsagarisuri Maharaj (he built Agam Mandir in Palitana), who gave me an insight into Jainism. Meeting him helped me lift the huge sorrow that filled my life. After this, I became a monk, as I had no interest in life. Five years later, I realised that people do not die. It is all a change and when I got this experience through meditation, my questions were answered. Along the way, I found many, many insights and those insights helped me to shape my life, my vision and my perception. Further more, they guided me to come out of a sectarian belief.

Q. How do you gauge the spiritual progress of the Jains?

You cannot measure with anything, because it is not a material thing. It is based on *Gunasthanaks* or the 'spiritual ladder'. (NB: There are 14 *Gunasthanaks* in all).

Q. So are we on the first *gunasthanak*?

No. it is not that. Depending on the level of your perception, one could also reach the seventh *gunasthanak*. Generally, those who question and are ready to renounce something are on the fourth (*Samyak Darshan*) & fifth *gunasthanak*.

Q. What is the importance of the 12 reflections? (referring to his book — '12 Facets of Reality'.)

Life is composed of opposites. If we do not have the relativity of thinking, we will always take sides. With the help of these reflections, we are able to maintain the balance and differentiate between real and unreal, see what is pure and what is impure. There is purity in the impure and impurity in the pure. So many people keep on harping about impurity of the body, of life itself, but remember that there is the purity of the soul in it. It is through that impurity, that we are going to achieve purity. This process of purification is understood through these reflections (*bhavanas*).

Q. The youth of today are being rapidly influenced by the Western world. How can we inspire the younger generation to follow Jainism and generate more interest in them?

It is difficult to separate the mind from the influence. 'When in Rome, do what the Romans do'. Let them live so that they fit into their surroundings, but at the same time, make sure that they do not lose their culture. Make them aware of the pitfalls in the West: how alcohol, drugs, smoking and other vices affect the mind. They become materialistic hence, forgetting the more important immaterial things in life.

Q. Most people have a pre-conditioned idea that Jainism is a very rigid and ritualistic religion. Can we change this?

No. Anybody who has a pre-conditioned idea is going to argue no matter what. So it is like talking to a brick wall. Talk to the people who are open; people who want to know. It is their life, we do not have the monopoly to change everything and everybody.

Q. What happens when they become a majority?

I think it is not the majority. 'Baat ke bhut laot se nahin mante, aur laot ke bhut baat se nahin mante...' Some people when they are young they become rebellious but as they grow up time shapes them. Try and be open to the focused people. Those who are not, let them be. For example, if there is a knot that does not open and one tries hard to open it, it will only get tighter. Whereas, when left alone it will eventually open up.

Chitrabhanu's Wisdom

Q. Who is a true Guru?

The person must have several qualities:

- His/her life must be simple, because if he indulges in luxury, shows off, etc., then he / she has not been in touch with the beauty of simplicity
- The person will show you, out of compassion, the path of Bhagwan Mahavir's teachings
- Their knowledge must be based on his/her own experiences.
- There should not be any dichotomy between preaching and practice — no hypocrisy of any sort.

These few things can help you decide whether he / she is a reliable person and that individual should not have a vested interest either, i.e. he should want nothing from you, but rather give and disappear leaving no trace behind.

Sometimes, when we put faith in a particular person or belief, we tend to put others down. This is why Jainism stresses that you always keep your attention on Bhagwan Mahavir and not get deviated by personalities. If you are a sincere seeker, you will always give prominence to Bhagwan Mahavir, because we are all moving in the same direction. So, any Guru who comes between you and Bhagwan is not real. A sincere and true Guru introduces you to Bhagwan and then continues on.

Q. What was your mission when you went to America and have you achieved it? How did you advocate Jain religion to the Western world?

Well, mine was personal. I left India because I started having visions from 1965 onwards. I kept on dreaming about living in a country where there were a lot of white people. Then I had a vision that I was speaking at the United Nations; I also dreamt that a wife and two children would help me to liberate from all my desires. This made me think that if they are visions, I have to pursue them; I could not remain a hypocrite. So in 1970, I renounced my monk hood. Around the same time, I got an invitation from the 2nd Spiritual Summit in Geneva and I thought "hmm...how come an invitation comes specifically for me, while other people strive to go there." I realised that this was a sign to fulfil my dreams. When I went to Geneva and spoke before an audience of 4,000 white people, something moved inside me, something that came from enthusiasm that also moved the audience. In 1971, the Dean of Harvard approached me, inviting me to another conference.

After giving up my monk hood, I went to live in America, where I was also offered a job at the university. I felt that my vision was slowly unfolding. Many white Americans came to listen to my lectures, which encouraged the Indian University students to come too. I started the first Jain Centre in New York, followed by another one in Boston. After this, in 1975, I invited Sushil Kumarji to join me in my work and now we have 57 centres and 80,000 members. I felt that everything took off at double my expected speed, with twice the strength. To date it continues on to flourish in the same way.■

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The stunning front cover of this souvenir
issue was very kindly designed by Chloe
Miller. Our compliments and deepest
gratitude go to Chloe for her excellent
work.



Modern Science and the Four Noble Truths of Jains

By K. V. Mardia

At the outset of my exposition, I cite the motivating quotation of Albert Einstein (*Nature* 1940, the topmost scientific journal) that

*"Science without religion is lame,
Religion without science is blind."*

Jain Dharma has developed through many centuries and has provided a rich inheritance of universal thinking/philosophy on a scientific basis, which means many Jain concepts have more relevance now than ever before. However, the ancient Jain texts are written in an obscure technical language that makes them almost impenetrable to modern times. Some of the concepts are very deep and to us now it is surprising that these could have been propounded in a non-scientific era. To interpret in a concise way what is written in Sanskrit and Prakrit needs a quantum leap. However, the need to re-interpret the concept is extremely urgent so as to make it palatable to the present generation and the generations to come. An attempt to synthesise and summarise Jain Dharma would be worthwhile to clear the confusion caused by rituals and obscure interpretations.

With this in mind, after research work for many years, I composed **Four Noble Truths** (*Chatvari Arya Satya*) of Jain Dharma with help of many prominent Gurus and Scholars. These were published in my book (Mardia, 1990) which has attempted to explain Jain science, logic, and philosophy in terms of modern concepts and ideas. The axioms (Truths) are formulated from various old scriptures and translated into English here, but for the original source see the book. Here we make a new attempt to explain these very briefly in terms of the basic modern science.

The Four Noble Truths are given in the diagram here as concentric circles that show the gradual evolution to the central aim to become a *siddha*, that is, to achieve *moksha*. These are:

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS OF JAIN DHARMA

- Truth 1:** 'The soul exists in contamination with karmic matter and it longs to be purified.'
- Truth 2:** 'Living beings differ due to the varying density and types of karmic matter.'
- Truth 3:** 'The karmic bondage leads the soul through the states of existences (cycles).'
- Truth 4A:** 'Karmic fusion is due to perverted views, non-restraint, carelessness, passions and activities.'
- Truth 4B:** 'Violence to oneself and others results in the formation of the heaviest new karmic matter, whereas helping others towards Moksha with positive non-violence results into the lightest new karmic matter.'
- Truth 4C:** 'Austerity forms the karmic shield against new karmons as well as setting the decaying process in the old karmic matter.'



"The Four Noble Truths of Jain Dharma"

These Noble Truths respectively represent:

- Truth 1. Interaction between Soul and Karmic Matter
 Truth 2. Hierarchy of Life
 Truth 3. Cycles of Birth and Death
 Truth 4A. Karmic Fusion in Practice
 Truth 4B. Activities and Absorption of Karmons
 Truth 4C. The Path to Self-conquest.

Truths 1-3 set out the science of the soul, and the three parts of Truth 4 give their Jain applications. The foundation of Jainism starts from the first Noble Truth that believes in the existence of karmic particles or *karmons*; these are unusual elementary particles in the sense that they interact with the soul. That is, Jainism explains life through the interaction of such small invisible atomic particles and the soul. Invisible particles such as photons which give light became known only at the beginning of the last century. So it is surprising that *Tirthankaras* could propound such a concept of 'spiritual photons' so many centuries ago. If they are physical particles then it is still a challenge for science to hunt their existence. These particles form what is called karmic matter, which is embedded in the soul, and this matter obscures inherent key properties of soul such as infinite bliss.

The second Noble Truth implies that this karmic matter is responsible for different species. So in some sense karmic particles are far more subtle than DNA. It has only now become clear through genomics that there is hardly any difference between DNA / genes in human beings and chimpanzees and many others. There are also questions that prompt a further look into Jain belief and cloning. The Jain belief is that all souls are separate entities, that is individuals, whereas one feels that cloning would imply a new life can be born. But this is a misunderstanding

Modern Science and the Four Noble Truths of Jains

By K. V. Mardia

because cloning only provides a surrogate mother, so the fundamental Jain principle is still valid.

This concept in turn leads to an explanation of the cycle of birth and rebirth through the karmic matter (Truth 3). We keep on absorbing these karmons through activity, and throw some out after their effect has taken place. Thus the soul has a *Karmic Computer* attached to it. This personal karmic computer keeps all the records – it also dictates some tasks from previous records, i.e. past lives. The fundamental aim in life is of removing this old karmic matter as well as stopping the inflow of the new karmons which results in new karmic matter. So this karmic process can be stopped and rehabilitated through *Jainness*. One of the key negatives responsible for (heavy) karmic matter (Truth 4A, 4B) is *kashaya* (destructive emotions); *kashaya* is composed of Anger (A), Greed (G), Ego (E), and Deceit (D) which has an apt acronym AGED (introduced by Gurudev Chitrabhanu). Indeed, the term *Jain* stands for the one who has conquered these inner enemies. Surprisingly, Albert Einstein's idea of a true religion is as follows (in *Nature*, 146, 1940):

"... a person who is religiously enlightened appears to me to be one who has, to the best of his ability, liberated himself from the fetters of his selfish desires"

There has been considerable work on understanding these emotions in the present time, including the rise of interest in emotional intelligence or EQ (Emotional Quotient) versus the old Intelligence Quotient (IQ). One of the key factors in EQ is to achieve emotional intelligence (this is similar to *samvayaktva* or first awakening, the fourth purification stage in Jain *gunasthana*). One of the key qualities in EQ is empathy, that is, the ability to sense how other people feel. It is the ability to accept another person's feelings. We may call it the ability to listen to others without getting carried away by personal emotions, to be able to distinguish between what others do or say, and one's own personal judgments. This is the definition of a *shravak* (term used to name a Jain layman and meaning 'a great listener').

The question arises whether there have been previous attempts to synthesise Jain principles. Indeed, these noble truths are connected to the three Jewels of Jains. Noble Truths 1, 2 and 3 deal with Right Knowledge; Noble Truth 4 deals with Right Conduct; belief in these four Truths taken together represents Right Faith. In *deva-puja* (temple-worship) a composite Swastika is used where the cycle of birth and rebirth, and the four different states of existence is the first layer (Truth 3), the second layer (depicted as three dots) is the representation of the three Jewels (four truths as a whole) and the last (shown as a crescent with a dot) is Moksha (Truths 1, 4). Note that there are other symbolic summaries. For example, *Siddha Chakra* (Circles of Jinas) which has the nine dignitaries (*Navapada*); five supreme beings of Jains, and the four

essentials (the three Jewels plus Right Austerity). These four essentials are analogous to the eightfold path of Buddhism. Thus the aim to provide a symbolic representation of key ideas for focus is very traditional. Further these four noble truths of Jain Dharma are reminiscent of the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism (Suffering exists, suffering arises from attachment to desires, suffering ceases when attachment to desire ceases, freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Eightfold Path).

I have given here only a few insights but there is also a whole field of Jain logic. For example, Jainism believes in the principle of conditional predication (*Syaadvaada*) so that everything is conditioned by our knowledge at a particular time - and there is nothing absolute. Non-absolutism principles in science have been propounded by one of the greatest logicians of the last century - Karl Popper. Also Jain logic recommends relativity in thinking on the holistic principle called *Anekantavada*. In fact, relativity in thinking and open-mindedness is needed for a true Jain and thus the label Jainism is a misnomer for what is *Jainness*/ Jain Spirit. It is extremely important to reinterpret the foundations of Jainism with new scientific findings. This correlation is very vital between old works and new since some of the answers that we seek now were given many centuries ago but it can only be made once we understand the basics of Jain science as well as understanding basics of modern science. All this can only be achieved by young beautiful minds! ■

Further reading:

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© K. V Mardia, University of Leeds



Kanti Mardia is Research Professor in Statistics at Leeds University, eminent scholar of Jainism and a leader of the Jain community in Yorkshire. He has been involved with Young Jains since its inception in 1987.

Living Jain on Progress

By Suraj Dinesh Shah and the Living Jain team.

“Little progress can be made by merely attempting to repress what is evil. Our great hope lies in developing what is good.”

- Calvin Coolidge

Living Jain
Several hundred people have signed up at www.livingjain.com to receive a free daily inspirational quote by email every morning to inspire them as they gently tread along the Jain path to freedom.

The quotes are from a variety of sources, such as novels, scriptures, film, cartoons and speeches, and this article was specially written for the Young Jains 2008 Souvenir Edition to explore a quote on the topic of ‘progress’ from several different perspectives. Here’s what one subscriber has to say...

“The daily quotes have really kept me going at these hard times we are facing in our beautiful country Kenya. Thank you so much Sol.” – Rasila Shah, Kisumu, Kenya

Of Living Jain’s expanding team of writers, four specific individuals, all YJ members, have contributed to this article.

Sonal Shah

This is a quote of substance, perhaps a little simplistic as it implies it’s much better to develop the good than suppress the bad. Whilst in many situations this could be true, a more pragmatic way to look at these two actions could be by viewing them as complementary. After all, there are interdependencies between various courses of action.

Take a gardener, for instance: when he gets rid of weeds in his garden he is giving his plants a better chance of growing; however, that alone does not suffice and he would have to provide the right nutrients and conditions for his plants to grow. So, it is the combined effect of these actions that will allow his plants to flourish.

We all strive to become better at specific aspects of our lives: careers, relationships, health, spirituality, etc. By acknowledging and containing our limiting negative

traits we would be moving in the right direction. To gain great results though, we would have to also work on utilising, improving and maximising our positive attributes.



Sonal is an actuary in her mid-20s working in London. She is an active member of Young Jains UK, interested in the philosophical and mystical facets of Jainism.

Binit Tejani

This quote is quite fascinating in that the first sentence states a problem and the second offers a solution! Each sentence carries a key word – ‘repress’ and ‘developing’, both lying at opposite ends of the progress spectrum. Repression is a process by which something (in this case, evil) is limited/suppressed with the aim of denying or making it inaccessible to memory. Evil in its many forms begins in the human mind and is a thought-virus, which may affect the mind if not held in check.

My interpretation of the quote is limited to oneself, i.e. evil symbolises kashaaya like anger, pride, deception, greed. As human beings, we have been gifted with a beautiful mind; we can consciously choose our actions. But this can only happen when our internal development of our good points is strong, i.e. choosing to live humbly, freeing the mind of desires, of greed, jealousy and violence, being considerate of others. Hey, thinking about it, development of such positive points resonates with the Jain doctrines of Aparigraha (limiting possessions) and Anekantvaad (multiple viewpoints)!

At the end of the day, we are the ultimate bearers of responsibility of our actions – no excuses. To cultivate our positive points and keep working at eliminating our negative points is very possible once we seek to be constantly aware of our actions.

Binit is a 28 year old living in London. He works for Paper Cellar in business development and marketing, and is studying a part-time MBA at Brunel University. He is really proud to be a Jain and wants to help to spread awareness of the religion.

Living Jain on Progress

By Suraj Dinesh Shah and the Living Jain team.

Rishma Shah

Evil is a strong word and is very often considered by most to be related to problems on a bigger scale, problems which are usually out of our control. However, in this context, I think it is very much related to all of us. If we relate evil to be our bad thoughts, actions and behaviour, then indeed there is some degree of evil in all of us.

By putting effort into trying to repress our bad thoughts and actions, we will definitely help to develop ourselves. However, it is like squashing something into a bag to make more space for something else. But then what is the empty space filled with? We have developed ourselves by making the space through repressing our negative energy, but that's as far as we have gone.

This is where the second part of the quote comes in, 'our greatest hope lies in developing what is good'. By putting our energy into developing our good qualities, we will automatically repress our negative thoughts and ultimately remove them completely. Our soul has infinite qualities which are being suppressed and it is us alone who controls how many of them come to surface. We all have the capacity to let the qualities of our soul shine, but are so often undermining our own capabilities.



helping others understand how they can benefit from the teachings.

Rishma is currently a student at SOAS university learning more about Jain studies. She has a Maths and economics degree from the LSE and worked in an investment bank before starting her masters course at SOAS.

She has recently become more active with Young Jains with the aim of

Sol Shah

It's always the case that whenever you put your attention to something, you receive more of that in your life. Have you found that the moment you bought your car, suddenly you saw that many cars with a similar colour and model popped up all over the road? Have there been moments where you've felt the lack of money or love, and due to that lack thinking, you've very rarely receive those very things you've craved? How about moments when all you've felt is gratitude for the world around you and blessed for the situations you're encountering – what have you received then?

As you go through your daily tasks, while being aware of the limitations that life greets you with, insist on focusing your attention on the very things that you seek to enhance further. Focus on what's good – you'll simply get more of it.



Sol founded Living Jain in March 2007, using his internet marketing background (www.cynergise.com) to contribute to the global Jain community. Sol has been an active member of Young Jains UK since the summer of 2000, having previously served on the executive committee for two years, and been involved in the development and running of

several events including conventions and residential retreats. ■

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING...

The YJ newsletter, and this special issue in particular, would not be possible without the continued help and support of numerous people and volunteers. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of these people, who are too numerous to be named, for their spiritual, financial and moral support over the years. A few in particular:

CAPRIN PRINTERS

Caprin have been printing the YJ newsletter for many years and are also regular advertisers. Our sincerest thanks to them for their professionalism and help over the years. In particular, the most recent issue was done in full colour and has raised the standard of this publication considerably.

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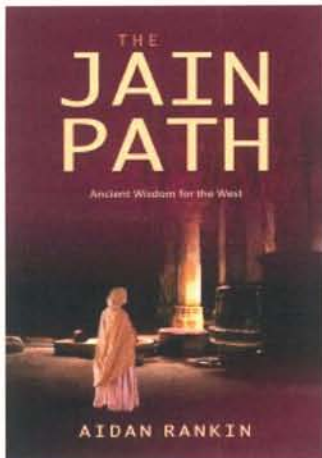
Thanks to those who have been on the newsletter committee over the years. Also thanks to all the advisors, contributors and proof-readers who maintain the quality of this publication.

ADVERTISERS

A very big thank you to advertisers of the Young Jains newsletter, both in the past and our current advertisers for their continued financial support. Thanks also to those who have supported this commemorative issue by advertising.

The Jain Path, by Aidan Rankin

A Review by Atul Shah



BOOK REVIEW – THE JAIN PATH, ANCIENT WISDOM FOR THE WEST

by Aidan Rankin.
O Books, 2006

Reviewed By Dr. Atul K.
Shah.
www.diverseethics.com

We are living in a time of severe stress from many sides – environmental, lifestyle, fundamentalism, over-population, greed and inequality. It seems the ‘progress’ of modernity requires severe qualifications, and even though we have nice sounding slogans like light footprint, sustainability, green living, we are more confused than ever. In the high-tech instantaneous world that we inhabit, most ‘solutions’ we seek require immediate results and returns. We are truly at a loss as to the lasting and sustainable way forward, although we may not want to admit it.

Fortunately, there is one *dharma* which has been living and promoting an ethical lifestyle for thousands of years, quietly and determinedly. It is so different from Western world-views and philosophies, and written and practiced in ancient Indian languages of Sanskrit and Prakrit, that few have had the skills and resources to understand it and translate it to a Western audience. Those who have studied it have often misunderstood and misrepresented it, as its depth and wisdom have been so radically different.

Educated and trained in the UK, Aidan Rankin came across the Jain path through his friendship with me when we were doctoral students at the London School of Economics. He was always interested in spirituality, but resistant to fundamentalist belief systems – be it religious, political or social. Whilst working for six years as freelance writer for the Jain Spirit international magazine, he came across a range of different dimensions of the faith, met various people from the community and began a personal study and investigation. He was appointed a Guest Editor to one whole issue of the magazine, something that he was initially very surprised by, but a task he took on with great gusto. This to him was one of the boldest signals of the openness of the faith – that no-one feels that

they are rightful owners or guardians of the faith, and that truth has multiple facets and should be sought from all directions and peoples.

‘The Jain Path – Ancient Wisdom for the West’ comprises of eight chapters. The first three chapters introduce the faith, its history, leaders and core values to novices, putting them in the context of western thinking and philosophical training. Here he shows how radically different the entire world-view is as it starts from the position of embracing nature in all its forms fully, and revering all living beings. None of this was a reaction to stresses such as global warming – they were seen by the *Tirthankaras* as a path to righteous living and analysed and presented in a rational and scientific way. Here he critiques the western attitude of control, domination and exploitation of nature and the mindsets that have resulted. This is a key difference whose wider ramifications need to be really understood for readers to see the wisdom of Jain dharma. As an example, the dependence on crude oil as an energy source, and its impact on global warming is now widely seen as disturbing. The Jains would never even have conceived of digging underground for energy. That is a major difference between the scientific thinking of the modern world and the wisdom of ancient India.

The following chapters analyse the core value of ahimsa or non-violence and how it is interpreted and practiced by Jains in all its manifestations. For the Jains, violence begins from the mind, from possessiveness of people or objects and from an intolerance to different viewpoints and belief systems. In possessing others, we allow ourselves to become possessed and enslaved by our own base instincts. The Jain Path shows that choices and freedoms can provide temporary happiness but also bind us in chains. The second half of the book discusses these features in great details and with a crisp and beautiful use of the English language. Chapter 4 is an analysis of Karma philosophy in Jainism, one of the most difficult and complex aspects of the faith, but also one of its core pillars. This is the science which explains the qualities of the soul, records its actions and charts its journey of transmigration in the universe. By evaluating karma through the lens of western philosophy, Aidan shows how the Jain explanation of soul and matter has many layers of depth and subtlety and a consistency within the overall faith. For example Mohaniya Karma is associated with self-delusion and the conviction of absolute truth. It is one of the most challenging karmas to destroy in the journey towards moksha and liberation. Aidan shows how the complex psycho-analysis of the Jains has a

The Jain Path, by Aidan Rankin

A Review by Atul Shah

huge message for modern fanaticism and totalitarianism, both of the left and the right.



Aidan at Everyday Hero

When he tackles western modes of economy and political organisation, Aidan really comes to life. In *Capitalism*, he sees an active promotion of greed and subjugation of nature, not only of other living beings but also our own. Possessiveness is a base expression of the self, and the quest for endless economic growth a quest for our own spiritual emptiness and self-destruction. Jains have always emphasised quality over quantity, and the highest quality is the purification of the soul and the attainment of *moksha* or liberation. Even in the analysis of truth and its multiple facets, there is a constant quest for wisdom rather than a desire for one-upmanship and rational murder of alternative wisdoms and viewpoints. This gives Jainism significant importance as a social and political theory of living and existence. He challenges the commonly held worldviews of dualism and linear progress as compared to the circular and spiral thinking of the Jains which are often set in the context of long time cycles of the universe.

It has taken Aidan years to write this book. He has done his homework patiently and with great care and scholarship. He has praised the faith and justified this through reasoned analysis and comparison with other modes of thinking, belief and action. The words used have been chosen with care and precision, and the prose flows very nicely so even complex ideas appear easy to grasp and interpret. The subject he has tackled is vast and as a first book, a very ambitious one. As a Jain, what I found most impressive was his desire to be authentic to the faith and not to misrepresent it. Of course, I am deeply touched by his flattery, but then he is not doing so to impress on others his ego or scholarly acumen, but instead to share the wisdom that has profoundly influenced him. It is a very timely book in an age of ecological and human stress. Those who choose not to read it, will sacrifice some precious insights of truth and wisdom. ■

Dr. Atul K. Shah is a writer and broadcaster and Chief Executive of Diverse Ethics Ltd. He was also the founder president of Young Jains. (See Presidents' Page). (www.diverseethics.com).

Aidan Rankin is an author and was recently the keynote speaker at the Young Jains 'Everyday Hero' conference in December, (pictured) where he spoke about Anekantvad.

'The Jain Path - Ancient Wisdom for the West', is published by O Books, Winchester UK and Washington, USA, 2006, 258 pp.

Not To Be Missed – A Jain 'Fun n' Learn' Day

This is an invitation from **Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth** to all the readers and their family and friends to attend the **'Fun n' Learn' Day** on Sunday 4th May 2008 (see details in the advertisement on the next page). Please engage this date right now in your diaries and if need be, reschedule other engagements and free up this day! Bring your friends – they don't have to be Jains!

The day will commence at 10.00 am with several parallel sessions for the adults – you could attend *swadhyaya* with Pujya Sadhviji Shri Shilapiji, or a workshop where you can participate in discussions or just listen, or you could release your stress practicing Preksha Meditation, or watch a multimedia presentation. Your children will have a choice of activities throughout the day in a dedicated area – art and craft work, stories, songs and poetry reading, games and quizzes. You can surely stay with them in this area if you please, or leave them here under adult supervision; then you can be free to gain benefit from the other activities. Unfortunately, children under the age of five will have to remain with their parents at all times. You will also have an opportunity to see the DVD of the excellent 'Tyagveer Shalibhadra' play (in Gujarati) that the Vidyapeeth staged at Ashcroft Theatre, Croydon, in April 2007. The event is **free** of charge, and guaranteed to be a superb fun-filled day for the whole family. And you will be treated to some light refreshments to replenish your energy. You will also be learning while having all this fun. All that will remain for you to do after the event will be to ponder on what you have learnt and put it into practice should you choose to do so!



VEERAYATAN (UK)
Shri Chandana Vidyapeeth

*A non-sectarian Jain School
Working to uplift Spirituality, Compassion and Values*

A Jain

Presents

Fun n' Learn Day

*Preksha
Meditation*

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*Workshops
for Adults*

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Presentation*

*DVD Show
Shalibhadra Play
(Gujarati)*

Art n' Craft

Games n' Quizzes

*....and much more...
including
Light refreshments*

For the whole family

**On Sunday 4th May 2008
10.00am to 7.00pm
At Oshwal Mahajanwadi**

**1, Campbell Road, Croydon,
Surrey CR0 2SQ**

*A dedicated fun area for
Children*

**Contacts for further details of the event:
Prakashbhai - Tel 07956243352
Ashwinbhai - Tel 07904943021**

a free event not to be missed!

YJ Working With Charities

In addition to working with other organisations to deliver excellent events, YJ has worked to help other organisations doing exceptional seva, charity work. In doing so, YJ has demonstrated a firm sense of social responsibility and demonstrated *maitri* (universal friendship), *daan* (the giving of alms and charity) and compassion (*karuna*) in action. Furthermore, YJ members have individually conducted exemplary charity work, so congratulations to all of you who have been excellent ambassadors of Jainism and Young Jains. Here is a taster of charities YJ has helped...

CRISIS

'It was with this objective of actively practising *ahimsa*, a declaration we signed at the Young Jains convention in 1994, that Young Jains launched the 'Help the Homeless' project and helped out at the Crisis (the charity for the homeless) Open Christmas. The CRISIS projects demonstrated there is undoubtedly a considerable need in Britain for active voluntary work and therefore regular community service should be a core part of Young Jains, enabling us to actively practice Jainism.'



Excerpt from article by Hasmita Shah, April 1998 issue.



"It is wonderful to do something for another person. To do it in the company of such well meaning, committed and enthusiastic companions makes it all the better." – volunteer

"Don't miss out on an unforgettable experience"
2000 volunteer



Asian Foundation for Philanthropy

An YJ event was held in February 2007 where the Asian Philanthropy Foundation introduced opportunities for British Asians to volunteer abroad and make a lasting difference.

Harrow LinkUp



'A smiling face and a helping hand outweigh the riches of the world. It is this thought that inspired me about Link Up from my experience. On 12th February 2004, Young Jains began their first service project by working with Link Up at a Junior Club to help with various activities for disabled children. Link Up is a registered charity, which supports and promotes friendship between people with learning disability and others in the community.'

By Kavita Haria. Excerpt from article published in April 2004.

£750 was raised for this charity at a mehfil.

Money Raised

- A hugely successful Young Jains Mehfil in 1996 raised £6001 for Veerayatan.
- YJ became a member of the Gujarat Earthquake Relief Fund (GERF), to raise money for the earthquake project in 2001.
- £53.53 was raised for Shishukunj's "Food for Children" (F4C) Project during Diwali 2001.
- An impressive £355.25 was recently raised at Sweet Harmony for Oxfam's Oxjam Appeal in November 2007.
- Ongoing donations given to Kenton Derasar and Jain Vishva Bharti.
- YJ's latest campaign is to raise money for Burfi the Bull, who has been given a home at Huglett's Wood Farm.
- Money has also been donated to Late Reuben Thuku's Family Fund, Sansaar and Great Ormond Street Hospital.

Other Charitable Activities

YJ hosted a disability awareness event called 'No Barriers' held in November 2000. Informative articles to support this awareness drive have also featured in the YJ newsletter.



An event entitled "Choose Your Opportunities" was held in 2003 to introduce YJ members to charities and the work that they do in order to present them with an opportunity to practise seva, charity. Make A Wish Foundation, Nirvana Coaching, Sense, Shishukunj and Young Jains were charities that were featured and introduced at this event. ■

Keshi Swami

YJ PROFILE

Name: Keshi Swami – also known at various times as Keshi Kumar, Keshi Shraman and Acharya Keshi.

When: Lived between 166-250 years after Bhagwan Parshvanath attained Moksha.

Role: Last known spiritual head of the Parshvanath lineage.

Famous For:

- King Prasanajit (also known as Pradeshi) was a staunch non-believer who became a highly devoted Jain Shravak under Keshi Swami.
- Famous philosophical and theological discussion with Gautam Swami.

Recorded in:

- Rāja-prashniya Sutra – part of the *Upāṅga-āgams* (twelve ancient scriptures).
- Chapter 23 of the *Uttradhyanan Sutra*.

Keshi Swami was a revered and learned Acharya who was the last listed spiritual leader of Tirthankar Parshvanath's order. Keshi Swami was believed to have been a contemporary of Tirthankar Mahavir.

According to lore, there was a King named Prasanajit who was a hedonistic non-believer who was cruel to animals and disrespectful towards ascetics. He once sent his charioteer to a neighbouring city where Keshi Swami, a staunch Parshvanath disciple, was delivering a sermon on the four vows of restraint, as propagated by Parshvanath Bhagwan. The impressed charioteer soon became a disciple of and even persuaded King Prasanajit to visit Keshi Swami.

The cynical King had many questions about the nature of the soul, but Keshi Swami was able to answer all of his questions to satisfaction. King Prasanajit became a Jain Shravak and exchanged his hedonistic life for the vows of the mendicant. It is believed that the King was reborn in heaven, and it has been prophesised that he will eventually be reborn as a mendicant and attain Nirvana. Despite his mistakes and behaviour earlier in his life, this was the nature of King Prasanajit's spiritual progress after fully accepting and practicing the teachings of Parshvanath Bhagwan, as learnt from Keshi Swami.

Keshi Swami was the spiritual leader of Parshvanath Bhagwan's church. At the same time there were many followers of a similar doctrine that was being propagated by Tirthankar Mahavir, who lived at that time. The disciples of these two different Tirthankars were troubled and confused by the small differences in clothing and vows between the long-established teachings of Parshvanath Bhagwan and the more recent Mahavir Bhagwan.

The chief disciple of Mahavir Bhagwan, Gautam Swami, met with Keshi Swami and in true Jain style these two leaders discussed and debated these issues in a very respectful manner to provide their followers with an explanation about these differences. The followers of Parshvanath Bhagwan had four main vows – not to kill, not to lie, not to steal and not to have attachment / possession (*aparigraha*). Bhagwan Mahavir was preaching the same vows and restraints, but with the addition of chastity/celebracy. Gautam Swami explained that the fifth vow of Mahavir Bhagwan was not the addition or creation of an entirely new vow, but rather a clarification of the vow of *aparigraha*. Whilst people in Parshvanath's time would have undoubtedly understood celibacy to be part of the *aparigraha* vow, Mahavir Bhagwan knew that the changing times and society needed this to be stated explicitly in order to maintain the sanctity of the vows.

This famous dialogue is described in the Chapter 23 of the *Uttradhyanan Sutra*. According to this source, Keshi Swami was satisfied with Gautam Swami's answers and explanations and after this point Keshi Swami and the other monks and nuns of the Parshvanath tradition came to accept the leadership of Mahavir Bhagwan. It is significant to note that the Digambar tradition rejects the authenticity of this dialogue.

It is believed that the Jain philosophy is timeless and that each Tirthankar comes to revive the same philosophy. This philosophy might be given a slightly different form and expression to suit the time, place and behaviour of society at that time, yet the core philosophy remains the same. Indeed it is this flexibility and non-absolutist attitude that keeps the Jain religion as a philosophy in progress that can respond to rapidly changing societies. ■

Young Jain of the Year - Award Winners' Alumni

Every year, YJ honours a member of the organisation with a Young Jain of the Year Award for their outstanding or exemplary contribution to the organisation. There have been fourteen recipients so far and this felt like a great time to catch up with the previous winners and ask them three questions:

1. What has YJ done for you? What do you feel you have gained from it?
2. Where are you now? What are you doing?
3. Briefly explain your current involvement in YJ, if any.

Rajvee Punater – 1993

1. YJ has given me and my family a wonderful way to learn about Jainism and its teachings in a modern and practical way. I think, 20 years on, it is still the most forward thinking and innovative Jain organisations around.
2. I still live in London and am married to Ajay and have 3 beautiful children: Tanvi (13), Rishav (9) and Shairi (4). I am trained as a Molecular Biologist and currently work for Cancer Research UK. Myself and Ajay are also trustees and committee members of Sansaar - a charity dedicated to the learning of Gujarati through fun and music. We recently launched our third album of children's songs, Masti Maja, and are in the process of creating a new Gujarati pantomime for Diwali 2008. I still love to sing and perform with Ajay and the rest of my band for bhajans, lagna geet and raas garba, though obviously this now has to fit in around my family and Sansaar.
3. My band has been providing the music at the JY Garba Extravaganza for the last 10 years. It's a great event and the atmosphere and crowd are fantastic. Unfortunately, due to my busy schedule, I am not able to attend as many YJ events as I would like. However, I do enjoy the following events with my family: the YJ paryushan, the YJ conventions, Mahavir Jayanti celebrations and of course the YJ Garbas.



Ananti Shah – 1994

1. Young Jains will always have a very special place in my heart. I had been active with the organisation ever since its conception in 1988 and had the opportunity to serve on the committee in 1995 and 1998 and also on various convention committees and sub-committees. But, most importantly Young Jains has been instrumental in helping me in my early adult years: by providing a platform to discover and express my creativity and build my confidence; to help develop organisational skills; found life long friends and fundamentally contributed to my finding a path to spirituality and deepening the meaning of life. I congratulate Young Jains, all its members, committee members; past and present and its founder members for I remember times when there were only 5 to 10 people at a meeting but this never deterred the founder members in continuing their work and fulfilling their vision.
2. Currently, I am a wife and mother of two beautiful children: Shyam - 7 years and Vyaan 4 years. I work part-time as a Complimentary Medicines Pharmacist and also have my own Homeopathic Practice.
3. I am currently not actively involved in YJ but I keep in touch with activities and events via the fantastic newsletter. My children also go to "Magic Touch" classes and these are also run by ex YJ members / Committee members. Young Jains has achieved a tremendous amount in these 20 years and enriched many lives!



Shailan Shah – Winner 1995

1. I was shocked to receive the award and it spurred me to join the committee and work under the leadership of Dina Shah, then president, as Newsletter officer. I gained many skills in creating interesting and well produced newsletters, as well as public speaking and organising events. I will always treasure the immense fun I had on the committee and the teamwork we employed to pull off so many great things. The memories are some of the most important things I have gained from YJ, as well as, of course, knowledge of Jainism, but the spirit was never 'what can YJ do for us', but 'what can we do for YJ'.
2. I'm now busy parenting and working in a German bank.
3. I attend the odd event - I went to the English Pratikraman event last year jointly held with SCVP and took my two girls (9 and 10) who enjoyed it. Although I am not directly involved anymore, my nephew Pareen and his wife Preena are quite active, so that will do me! It's great to see YJ develop and move with the times. It's needed more than ever in the world we live in.

Continued overleaf...

Young Jain of the Year- Award Winners' Alumni

Minal Shah – 1996

1. YJ for me was a great life-time learning experience that has broadened my horizons in many ways. Coming over from Kenya in 1990, I felt that I had lost many of my friends. Well, I joined YJ and made many new friends and still keep in touch with them. As a graduate from university, joining the committee and supporting events as a volunteer helped boost my confidence in public speaking, juggling many activities, team work and time management.. I met new people e.g Sadhvi Shilapiji, Acharya Chandanaji, Shree Chritrabhanuji, Michael Tobias etc. On a personal note, YJ enforced by belief in Jainism, allowing me to experience the depth of Jainism and deepen my interest in Jainism.

2. Now, I am a mother to a lovely little girl, Tulsi, and I also work as a part-time community pharmacist in Stanmore. Both roles are equally demanding, but life would be boring without them!

3. I am currently not involved with YJ actively, but enjoy reading the newsletter and attending the Paryushan events and events where Tulsi can attend. I enjoy reading Jainism books and listening to stavans when time allows me.



Priti Shah – Winner 1997

1. Helped me really understand Jain dharma. YJ has also helped given me opportunities to participate, lead, think creatively, share, contribute and make fantastic friends.

2. I run my own business.

3. I'm still involved with Young Jains, particularly enjoying working on developing workshop/interactive session to share the wisdom and beauty of the faith.



Ketan Varia – Winner 1998

1. YJ has given a great introduction to Jain values and its significance in today's world. I have gained real insight from the different events and speakers that YJ has run over the years as well as long lasting friends. Most importantly the initial years of involvement with YJ helped me have confidence to be myself.

2. I have my own business in consulting as well as sitting as a non-executive on a hospital trust.

3. I continue my involvement with YJ as a non executive and continue to be inspired by Young Jains, even though the 'Young' title no longer fits!



Devi Savla (nee Devi Shah) – Winner 1999.

1. YJ not only has given me a lot of spiritual guidance, but I have been able to understand more about the life we all live and how Jainism fits into that awareness. I feel that YJ really does reach out to make people aware of the Jain values and how to live them in the Western World but only if people want to know.

2. Currently I am a working part time mum in Central London for the pharmaceutical industry. I'm working as a medical sales representative for a company called Schering-Plough Ltd.

3. None currently - but having said that I support them as much as I can even if that means taking time to just do the simple things like a quick email of hey well done on that event, or great article in the newsletter.



Paras Shah – Winner 2000

No information available.

Shital Shah – Winner 2001

1. YJ as an organisation has given me opportunity to further my skills in Computer Studies, also provided team working skills, good opportunity to meet fellow people. I have gained team working skills, enhancement of communication skills, web-design and development skills, I have also made friends and contacts.

2. After my time with YJ, I am now a Finance Officer with Harrow Association of Disabled People. I am a disabled person but am a really an outgoing and quick learning person.

3. Currently I do not have any involvement with YJ.



Young Jain of the Year- Award Winners' Alumni

Priya Kothari – Winner 2002

1. Working with others in YJ is a constant source of inspiration. The passion and dedication of each active member is (to borrow a YJ word) phenomenal, and I am blessed to be discovering dharma in this environment. Not only have I strengthened my understanding of the Jain philosophy through participating in YJ events, but by growing up in the organisation, I have formed strong bonds with so many people, who provide me with strength and encouragement in all my activities.

2. After graduating from Cambridge, I completed a Masters in Economics at UCL and am now working as an economist at the Bank of England. I am also an active volunteer, and have just finished putting together a child poverty campaign pack for Save the Children UK

3. Although I am not actively involved in YJ activities at the moment, I still spend time mentoring the YJ students who are involved in the various nodes across the country. I also enjoyed representing YJ at the UN's recent International Ahimsa Day celebrations in London and at the JAINA convention in New Jersey.



Paarul Shah - Winner 2003

1. Young Jains gave me an opportunity to grasp the essence of Jain dharma, which inspired me to find ways to learn more. Through it, I met many like minded people from whom I have learnt a tremendous amount. Young Jains also helped me develop. I also developed a great deal of confidence in volunteering at events.

2. Oxford University Studying Mathematics.

3. On the committee for YJS Oxford.



Kavit Haria – Winner 2004.

1. YJ has been a safe and open platform for me to grow and has played a part in shaping me in who I am today. I have learnt many skills from presentation to leadership, co-ordination to facilitation. I have also learned a lot and taken a lot of value from the dharma side of things in terms of the Jain content I have learnt and also learnt to deliver. I am grateful for the experiences I have had within YJ.

2. As of writing this (January 2008), I have five months to go in completing my BSc Medical Genetics. I am also involved in setting up my own health and wellness education business.

3. Within the last 12 months, I have organised a few game show evenings.



Sawan Dinesh Shah – Winner 2005

1. YJ has really built my confidence and my skills to what they were before I joined or interacted with the organisation. I now have many skills such as acting, public speaking, training, PA system operating, organising events, managing people, making new friends and introducing different people to each other. Some fantastic skills for life.

2. Right now I'm running my own company, PremAtma Ltd (www.prematma.com) which deals in video editing and video productions, as well as online marketing.

3. I am the current Communications Officer, looking after the website and bulletin, and an Executive Committee Officer.



Jayni Gudka – Winner 2006

1. Provided opportunities to develop myself in areas, given me an amazing network of friends, (have met amazing people!). Increased my knowledge and enthusiasm for Jainism.

2. Studying 'The Study of Religions' at SOAS.

3. Currently helping with the newsletter, photography mostly. Trying to set up a Jain Society at my university (SOAS).



Parita Shah – Winner 2007

1. Within Young Jains I have gained a range of knowledge and understanding about Jain dharma, which has made me more confident in talking about Jainism to others.

2. I am currently doing a Diploma in Childcare at college.

3. As well as an active member of Young Jains I am a co-op on the committee. My role is to help the other committee members to develop and deliver successful events. At the events I also manage the membership desk. ■



Celebrating 5 Years of YJ Students

Compiled by Pooja Jain

YJS: A History

Contributors & Founders: Suraj Shah, Amil Tolia, Bhavin Shah & Priya Kothari

YJS started in January 2003 as the *Jain Student Network*, with the intention of forming a national network of like-minded university students who were exploring Jain Dharma in their own unique way, and felt the need for Jain representation at university. Various nodes began at Manchester, Warwick, Cambridge, Oxford, Aston and Leicester, with more on the way. *Young Jains* took JSN under its wing so that the right resources would reach each of the nodes. This collaboration led to the *Jain Student Network* transforming into *Young Jains Students* with a network today of over 700 students!

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

www.sunion.warwick.ac.uk/jain

Contributors: Namrata Shah

Year of founding? 2002

Reason for founding? Allow people of similar interests and backgrounds to interact.

Past Presidents? Anokhee Shah, Namrata Shah & Shraddha Mehta

Biggest Challenge? Raising money for events.



Warwick students visit Leicester in 2005

Proudest Achievement? Holding the Diwali Ball 2005. It was a successful large-scale event with more attendees than expected. The number of members doubled in 2005-6 as a result.

Events? Events range from socials where members can meet and interact casually to formal talks on Jainism with speakers from London.

Number of members / attendees? We have 60-80 members, and of those 20-30 are active.

Other facilities offered? We offer YJS newsletters and have a YJ Warwick website with regular updates of socials and events as well as information on Jainism and past events/ photos.

Future goals? To become more integrated with the Jain societies around the country. ■

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

<http://groupspaces.com/yjso>

Contributors: Minesh Shah, Palvi Shah & Paarul Shah

Year of founding? 2003

Founders? Palvi Shah

Reason for founding? We set out to provide an informal environment where Jains and non-Jains could come together to discuss various topics and consider the Jain opinion on the subject matter.

Past Presidents? Palvi Shah, Minesh Shah, Sagar Shah & Siddharta Haria

Biggest Challenge? Attracting students to events throughout the year. As with most societies in Oxford, there is always a lot of enthusiasm in the first term but attendance gradually drops as the year progresses.

Proudest Achievement? The society was given a huge boost in April 2004 when it received a visit from Samanjis Pratibha Pragyaji and Punya Pragyaji to discuss Jainism in the modern and business world.

Events? Topics cover different Jain principles in today's society including the relevance of rituals and the Jain view on drugs and alcohol. We have collaborative events with other religious societies in Oxford including a meditation session with the *Buddhist Meditation Society*. Last year, the society was able to organise a successful event in conjunction with a restaurant in Oxford which prepared Jain food especially for the society. YJS has participated in wider YJS events.

Number of members / attendees? YJSO has often seen as many as thirty-five people at the initial event with as few as five towards exam time but in recent years, the society has seen at least fifteen people attending events on a regular basis.

Other facilities offered? We establish a sizeable mailing list each year at the University Freshers' Fair. ■

Something different in London...

Jayni Gudka, a second-year at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), is in the process of setting up a Jaina Studies Society at her university. Hoping to hold events in conjunction with *Young Jains*, they will also be open to other universities in London. At present the group has 16 members, most of which are non-Jains, but students of Jaina Studies. The group will take part in the annual Jain Conference at SOAS, as well as contribute to the Jaina Studies Newsletter published annually at SOAS.

Jayni's efforts are supported by Ashik Shah and Rishma Shah and we wish her luck in this venture!

Celebrating 5 Years of YJ Students

Compiled by Pooja Jain

ASTON UNIVERSITY

Contributors: Vikash Shah

Year of founding? 2001

Founders? Pujna Shah & Vikash Shah

Reason for founding? Inspired by the shibir and events organised by Young Jains UK, we wanted to carry this into university.

Past Presidents? We have a new president each year who wants to do something different for the students. From 2001, we have had Pujna Shah, Vikash Shah, Dhilen Shah & Gemini Kamdar.

Biggest Challenge? Recruiting members during the Freshers' period and ensuring they come to events. Also, liaising with other university nodes.

Proudest Achievement? Encouraging members to attend events.

Events? Every Wednesday, we hold an *arti* and *mangal divo* and discuss a certain topic. We also visit the *derasar* in Leicester annually, and the Jain *ashram* in Birmingham once a term.

Number of members / attendees? On average, 5 people attend events, but it requires personal encouragement. ■

A message from a founding member, Priya Kothari

Why do I think YJS is so important to the Jain community? Because it allows students to explore Jain dharma in an environment where they feel most comfortable. It allows them to question and articulate their worries without fear of being criticised for not believing 'blindly'. Most importantly, it allows their own belief to grow and be nurtured. By discovering, or more accurately rediscovering, the innate truths of Jainism, their understanding is cemented, and this will allow students, once they graduate, to confidently share the Jain teachings with their friends, family and the community.

UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

Contributors: Ajay Sanghvi

Year of founding? 2004

Founders? Ajay Sanghvi & Jyoti Mehta

Reason for founding? A lack of discussion on Eastern philosophy and a need for a Jain society.

Past Presidents? Ajay Sanghvi, Jyoti Mehta & Reme Shah

Proudest Achievement? Collaborating with the Hindu Society for regular discussions and with the Chaplaincy to create an interfaith forum.

Events? Regular discussion groups, lectures, videos, a Tsunami remembrance event, interfaith events.

Number of members / attendees? 5-15 members

Other facilities offered? An e-newsletter

Future goals? Society continuity, cultivate inquisitive and questioning minds. ■

UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

www.srcf.ucam.org/cuyjs

Contributors: Amar Shah & Pooja Jain

Year of founding? 2003

Founders? Priya Kothari

Reason for founding? To provide the opportunity for students in Cambridge to learn collectively about the religion through various educational, social and cultural activities.

Past Presidents? Priya Kothari, Priya Chandaria, Pooja Jain, Alpa Shah & Amar Shah

Biggest Challenge? Finding and attracting new members. Since the society's creation, the number of Jains studying at Cambridge seems to have declined.



Samanijis visit Cambridge in 2005

Proudest Achievement? The current committee's proudest achievement so far is hosting the annual CUYJS Garden; we pulled together as a team to deliver a great afternoon event despite the time constraints exam preparation was putting us under and the rain.

Events? This term, we intend to host a range of events including a talk based on the history and main principles of Jainism and an interfaith social event. In previous years, we have held a well-attended inter-faith debate with the University's Jewish Society. We also represent Jainism in the community (we had a stall at the Cambridge Inter-faith Fair in 2006).

Number of members / attendees? We currently have approximately 20 members studying at Cambridge.

Other facilities offered? The society produces a regular newsletter and also holds a library of publications. The society's website is a source for information about the society and Jainism itself.

Future goals? Maintain the interest of Jain and non-Jain Cambridge students in the society. ■

Annual YJS Events

- Diwali Trip to Leicester Temple
- Jains @ Uni
- YJS Shibir

PUNYA, PAAP & PROGRESS

Karma = the effects of a person's actions

Punya = good karma

Paap = bad karma

Punyanubandhu punya = punya which we accumulate now will bring us comforts and leads to a life where we will accumulate punya again

Papanubandhu punya = punya which we accumulate now, also will bring us comforts, but leads to a life where we will accumulate paap instead of punya

Story One

A long time ago, a poor widow had a young son. She had to work hard to maintain herself and her son. Once there was a day of great festival and neighbouring families prepared a tasteful pudding of milk and rice called *kheer* in order to celebrate.

Seeing other children enjoy their *kheer*, the boy went to his mother and asked her to make *kheer* for him too. He did not realize that his mother did not have enough money to buy the required milk, rice, and sugar. The mother tried to explain the situation but the boy started crying for *kheer*.

The mother could not tolerate his crying, so she said, "Don't cry, my boy, I will cook *kheer* for you." She went to the neighbours and borrowed the ingredients to make the dish. She served him the *kheer* and told him to wait until it cooled. She then left to get water from the well.

While the *kheer* was cooling, a monk came to the boy's home to ask for alms. The boy felt very happy



and invited monk to come in. He served all his *kheer* to the monk. After the monk left, he ate whatever *kheer* was stuck to the plate and the pot. He remained happy with his offering to the monk.

As a result of this action, in his next life, he was known as Shalibhadra born into a very wealthy family with all luxuries. During this life, he attained self-realisation and renounced, becoming a monk of Lord Mahavira.

Picture: Shalibhadra offering *kheer* to a monk at the 'Tyagveer Shalibhadra' production by students of South London in May 2007.

Story Two

There lived a man who one day offered *laddoos* (a dessert food) to a monk who came to his house for alms. Later, he sat down to eat the left over *laddoos* and realized how sweet those *laddoos* were. He felt sorry for giving away such *laddoos*.



He left to track down the monk to ask him to return those *laddoos*. By the time he found the monk the *laddoos* had already been eaten. The man kept regretting offering the *laddoos* to the monk.

As a result of giving alms to the monk, the man was reborn as a rich man, but because he had regrets about his offerings he became a miser in this life. He could not use his wealth and lived unhappily.

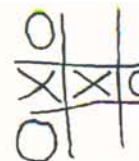
Question: Which type of karma is being bound in each story?

Answer: In story one, the boy binds *punyanubandhu punya*
In story two, the man binds *papanubandhu punya*

These stories remind us of a very important fact: anytime we offer something not only should we offer it happily, but we should never have regrets about offering it.

KIDS' KORNER

Compiled by Pooja Jain and Rakee Haria



WORDSEARCH ACTIVITY

s	m	e	p	e	n	a	h	s	r	a	d	n	a	c	n	e
n	a	i	n	a	j	g	n	-	h	r	o	a	s	n	a	j
a	n	d	g	a	r	i	k	s	r	t	n	s	o	f	i	g
w	g	o	h	i	n	m	k	j	t	n	a	m	k	o	g	n
g	l	g	n	u	i	o	a	o	u	a	s	i	m	r	t	a
a	i	o	n	-	m	l	o	t	a	m	t	b	e	a	a	a
h	k	a	r	i	v	a	h	a	m	r	p	r	a	m	g	v
b	d	d	a	t	t	i	h	a	a	a	j	i	h	k	d	b
r	e	h	n	o	n	s	o	a	e	k	r	r	a	l	a	r
a	e	o	f	r	a	o	a	l	r	v	v	g	v	j	p	b
k	v	o	i	e	a	a	c	f	e	a	g	n	r	a	h	h
n	o	p	m	l	i	c	a	-	l	n	j	j	n	r	i	o
a	v	p	t	i	d	l	n	u	f	n	c	r	s	a	n	i
h	n	o	i	g	n	i	e	b	-	l	l	e	w	d	h	i
t	l	o	d	i	i	s	v	b	c	d	e	r	a	s	a	r
r	a	j	o	o	p	a	g	i	a	o	u	s	l	g	n	m
i	j	a	i	n	i	s	m	i	t	e	a	a	i	t	i	a
t	c	r	v	a	d	r	a	s	i	n	a	a	h	f	n	p

Try this special wordsearch themed on progress, created by Rakhee Haria, aged 11.

Words are hidden horizontally, vertically and backwards.

Jainism
Sadhu Maharaj
India
Aarti
Mahavira
Well-Being

Manglik Deevo
Derasar
Parmatma
Jain
Religion
Values

Non-Violence
Tirthankar Bhagwans
Moksha
Self-Control
Belief
Fasting

Pooja
Navkar Mantra
Dhoop Pooja
Darshan

NITISH SHAH, AGED 14, REVIEWS THE RECENT YOUNG JAINS CONFERENCE, EVERYDAY HERO



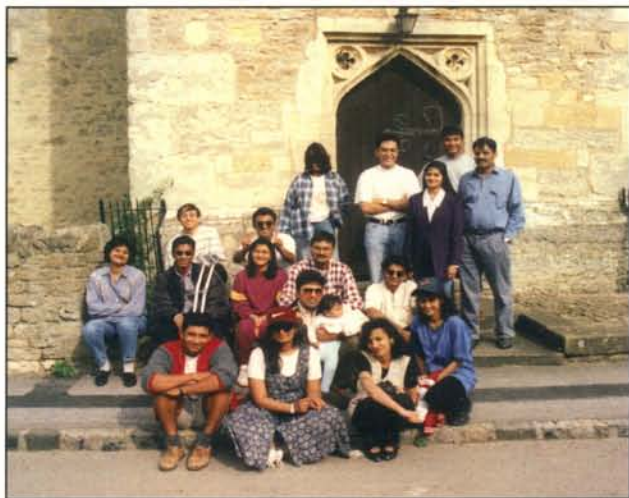
When I first heard that I was going to spend my whole Sunday at a Jain convention, I was a bit reluctant to go; I didn't know what to expect or what was going to happen or even why we had to attend it, but in the end I went along and thought it might be interesting. Also as I'm 14 I thought not many people my age were going to turn up. When I arrived at the venue I realised that it was at the JVB (*Jain Vishwa Bharati*) centre, where I took a few Jain classes, and made my way up the stairs to where the room was. As soon I came in the room I saw lots of people gathered together, mingling and talking, it was quite exciting because I had never met half of the people and I first got my folder and book and then started to mingle and get to know a few of the people.

We started with an icebreaker, which was very effective, and I got to know a few more people (the name stickers really helped). Afterwards we carried on with the main topic, which was *anekantvada*. In one session they told us to think of a lemon and then asked if we thought of the smell, look and taste of a lemon. Then they said that even with one lemon, there are different perspectives. Then we had a talk on *anekantvada* from a special man and he gave an amazing insight to the idea of all perspectives making up a bigger, wider truth. So more exercises and workshops on *anekant* then the question and answer session, some people came up with really useful questions and great ideas were brought up. However, some of the questions asked were said without any understanding of what they might be asking about but on the whole, I say, a day well spent! ■

The YJ Shibir Experience

By Priya Kothari

The growth and development of Young Jains in the past 20 years has been incredible. It has changed and evolved to meet the new and varied demands of its members. But one type of event that has remained constant is the organisation's annual *shibirs*, providing successive committees and active members with a truly unique YJ experience. In the past 20 years, YJ has organised many *shibirs* for its members, in countless venues across the country. But what is a *shibir*? And what is the Young Jains *shibir* experience?



Shibir group photo c. 1996

We all lead incredibly hectic lives, and juggle daily our work, social and other commitments. Young Jains hosts regular events, to take a small amount of time out to reflect on spirituality, and which are incredibly valuable to its members. But it is easy to switch back into "normal" life almost immediately and the inspiration felt at events is often buried in a pile of other thoughts. So how, asked Young Jains a long time ago, can we really cement spirituality and community into our thinking? How can we explore aspects of Jain dharma to develop our own understanding, and as a result, discover new and interactive ways in which to present these ideas to our members? How can we strengthen the bonds between the Committee members and active Young Jains members? And how can we truly appreciate the beautiful countryside that surrounds London? The answer Young Jains found was the *shibir*.

In 1997, Atulbhai Shah, founding President of Young Jains, wrote:

"The shibir...is the backbone of Young Jains, the event where friendships are built, and a feeling that community

service is more fun than sacrifice is created. It is this spirit, when it has reached young people over the ages, that is behind the success of Young Jains."

And, 10 years later, Sonal Shah, writing about the 2007 *shibir* said:

"Truly inspiring...today, I was glad to have just my thoughts, reflecting on the shibir and all [the] wonderful people"

Shibirs can be 1-day events, or more often, 3-4 day residential weekends held in venues against a backdrop of stunning English countryside, to remind participants of the beautiful nature which surrounds us and invoking our respect for it. The overriding theme is an exploration of Jain dharma to create a better understanding of philosophy and practice, but interspersed with these sessions, will be physical activities such as walks and games, personal time for reflection and of course some legendary Jain-style cooking with every participant contributing in some way.



Legendary Jain-style cooking – Shibir 1995. Pictured is Apul.

Sessions are planned so that participants really feel as if they are going on a spiritual journey, for example, exploring each piece of the Jain jigsaw in turn. They are intense, as skilled facilitators lead each participant through complex Jain philosophy. But practical sessions towards the end of *shibirs* means that participants leave with clear, tangible goals to achieve and an understanding of how Jain principles can be applied in the achievement of these goals, to address specific problems which they face in their lives. *Shibirs* provide an invaluable opportunity to train and develop each participating member, so that they too can confidently and articulately promote Jain dharma. Indeed, whilst external speakers may be invited,

The YJ Shibir Experience

By Priya Kothari

sessions are delivered predominantly by Young Jains members who are keen to share their understanding. So, it would seem the best way to summarise a *shibir*'s aims is to look at the Young Jains objectives because each event meets these 4 aims perfectly!



Shibir photo, 2001.

I have organised, presented at and participated in many Young Jains *shibirs*, and each time, have had what can only be described as a unique experience. The power of such a small group of people is immense and the willingness to share, spiritually and personally, is moving. In fact, I would say that *shibirs* provide nourishment for the soul (as well as the body!).

They provide a safe, comfortable environment in which anyone, even first-time presenters, can stand up and share. Each participant is usually asked to prepare a short piece in advance. For example, an innovative way in which to understand a *bhavna*, or a story whose moral reflects Jain principles. Through presenting at *shibirs*, my confidence in delivery has grown immensely. I have also been privileged to learn from the way in which long-serving volunteers stand up and share, and have drawn on these experiences when organising and presenting other YJ events.

The beauty of being so isolated in the countryside, without mobile telephones or televisions to distract you, is that there is time for conversation and, more importantly, for listening. In this environment, I have formed strong friendships, often with members I had not even met before! The environment also encourages brainstorming of new and exciting events and material which can be presented to YJ members. Recently, one member, who was relatively new to the organisation, was so inspired by a Young Jains Students *shibir*, that they went on to be the lead organiser for the next YJ *shibir*, a phenomenal achievement in such a short time!

The feedback received from *shibirs* also illustrates perfectly the sheer magic of these events:

"An 'ACE' shibir, inspiring, motivating and encouraging, not only for the organisation and the team as a whole but from a personal angle, leaving myself on a high with a buzz, and feeling refreshed and ready for Revision and Exams!!!" - Zeel Shah. 2003.

"By having an open-minded approach to the shibir, this was an excellent opportunity all round to learn from other like-minded people. It was an ideal place to share and explore, in the peaceful and tranquil environment of the Abbey" - Deepa M Shah. 2003.



Shibir in Oxfordshire, 2007.

I hope that YJ *shibirs* will continue to have a permanent place in the events calendar. They bring together dedicated volunteers, strengthen understanding of our Jain dharma and encourage the formation of lifelong friendships. Even though they are only held over a few days, their power is timeless, and I hope that every member will be able to share in at least one *shibir* experience in the future. ■

Priya Kothari is an active YJ member. To find out more about her, turn to the Award Winners Alumni spread on pages 43-45.

**Many Congratulations
on your
20th Anniversary**

**Harshad & Urmila Sanghrajka
Mehool & Arshna Sanghrajka
Haseet & Ameeta Sanghrajka
& Family**

**"A wise person does not cause suffering,
nor asks others to,
nor consents to suffering caused by others."**

Bhagwan Mahaveer

Congratulations to Young Jains on their 20th Anniversary

Best wishes from the Directors & Staff

at

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*Congratulating Young Jains
on their 20th Anniversary*

Kashayas: The Inner Enemies

Compiled by Kavita Haria

In an issue focussing on progress, it is perhaps equally important to consider those things that will hinder our progress. In this article from our archives, Kavita Haria describes the Kashayas which pose a great challenge to our progress and also presents the antidotes that will help us to conquer these challenges.

The word Kashaya (passions) can be broken down into the word kasha, meaning worldly life, and aya, meaning worldly gain. Thus the literal meaning of kashaya is to gain worldly life again. This means that as long as we have the kashayas, the cycle of life and death will continue. There are four types of kashayas namely Krodh (Anger), Maan (Ego), Maya (Deceit) and Lobh (Greed). These four can be grouped into two categories: 1) Raag (Attachment) and 2) Dwesh (Aversions). Deceit and Greed is formed from Raag and Anger and Ego is formed from Dwesh.

‘...when we grow attachment, hatred or passions for worldly objects, we hinder the spiritual progress of the soul.’

Spiritually, our goal should be to get rid of worldly life and become liberated. However when we grow attachment, hatred or passions for worldly objects, we hinder the spiritual progress of the soul. Whilst we are under the influence of passions, our intellect becomes irrational, we become vicious by nature. Thus, the greatest enemies to our soul are the kashayas and we should save ourselves from coming under the influence of them.

We humans are opportunistic and when we are deprived of what we want then we react with anger. In the same way, if we do not get the fame we think we deserve, our ego hurts and we react accordingly. Therefore in reality even the anger and ego are caused by the liking and liking is nothing but one form of an attachment (Raag).

These passions stem from the maturing of previously accumulated Mohaniya Karma, “BIG MO”, which delude us from the experience of our innate nature of the permanently blissful soul. Therefore, instead of reacting with more passion to the situations we should stay tranquil or calm in order to break the cycle, which causes the new karmas. Our aim should be to stop the new karmas from coming in and get over the

effect of old karmas calmly. If we can do that, the door to the liberation will open.

Spiritually we should aim to conquer these inner enemies in order to further on the path to Moksha. To conquer this karma, and experience the soul (*samyak darshan*), we must take the guidance of someone who has already conquered their inner enemies and is self-realised. This is only possible with Upsham bhav - bringing positive qualities to ‘war’ against kashayas. We use:

- Forgiveness to conquer Anger
- Contentment to conquer Greed
- Humility to conquer Ego
- Straightforwardness to conquer Deceit

There are nine items which trigger our passions. They are:

1. **Hashya** – laughing and joking
2. **Rati** – pleasure for sensual activities
3. **Arati** – displeasure for sensual activities
4. **Shoka** – sorrow
5. **Bhaya** – fear
6. **Jugupsa** – disgust
7. **Prurushved** – cause of sexual desires for women
8. **Strived** – cause of sexual desires for men
9. **Napumsakaved** – cause of sexual desires for both men and women

Manifestation of the above decreases as spiritual uplift begins. Therefore, we should be careful not only of kashayas, but of the items that trigger our passions.

The Four Kashayas:

ANGER

When anger flares we lose our sense of judgment. The virtues like love and forgiveness are destroyed. The anger triggers if someone acts against our wish, causes obstacles in the fulfilment of our desires, or breaches our trust. Everyone wants to stay away from those who become angry easily. Due to anger, friends become foes. Not only is anger harmful in this life, but it can bring the bitter consequences into our next lives too. Sometimes, the virtuous people become angry, but they immediately calm down and ask for forgiveness from the people involved. In such situations, that is the right way to act and we should do the same. This way, the sin (*paap*) caused by anger would be removed. We should cultivate virtues such as forgiveness, penance, and repentance.

Kashayas: The Inner Enemies

Compiled by Kavita Haria

GREED

A greedy person is not satisfied with what he has. To get more, a person may use all the means without caring for the others. Whatever we gain is someone else's loss. The greed prevents us from giving and sharing. We should be content with what we have and only accumulate to meet our needs. We should learn to help others by sharing what we have. By being greedy we are destroying the peace but by being content and caring we are bringing the peace back.

EGO

One who is full of ego loses his sense of judgment and politeness. A proud man invites his own destruction. We can obtain the knowledge only if we are humble. Humility brings good thoughts where there is no room for the pride or ego. Humility is at the root of religion and it is rather difficult to develop religious feelings as long as ego exists.

"A proud man invites his own destruction..."

DECEIT

Deceit is responsible for a dishonest life. Due to deceit one loses friends but honesty is the key to realize the truth. A deceitful person has little understanding of religion. □

Kavita Haria is a young writer, active YJ member and soon-to-be geneticist. See Award Winners page for more details about Kavita.

This is an abridged version of an article first printed in the Young Jains newsletter in October 2003.

Message from the YJ Founder...

Reflecting on the past twenty years of Young Jains, there are two words which strike – innovation and creativity. Young Jains was and is a youth charity run by and for young people. And that gave us a tremendous opportunity to experiment and translate Jainism to the twenty first century. We were the first Jain organisation in UK to have a quality newsletter, to organise regular shibirs (training retreats), to have international conferences, to build bridges between Jains in UK and North America, to invest in children's education, to globalise our reach and of course to produce the unique Jain Spirit global magazine. We were daring, intelligent and determined. Above all, we strived to be honest and true to our ancient wisdom. And this had a very wide impact – Young Jains Nairobi has grown leaps and bounds, there is a thriving Young Jains organisation in India (something which started in UK!) and through inviting eminent speakers from outside the community, we opened new networks and horizons for Jainism. We also broke narrow sectarian boundaries and tried to live and work as one culture and community.

However, the early days were very, very hard. Very few could understand our vision and dedication. There was little support from 'elder', more mature organisations. Many dismissed us as dreamers. We raised our own funds, developed our own activities and delivered them with high quality. We cultivated leaders and teams, and made sure no one leader dominated the organisation. Presidents served a maximum of three years – even though there was no such rule in the constitution. Other organisations emerged through Young Jains. Even some marriages arose from young Jains members – helping them start a new family and life. As we look back, we must also look forward. There is huge talent and resource in our community. I find it shocking that so many young Jains are not members of this organisation. We need to reach out more and involve more people. The campus branches are an excellent leap forward, but they need to be supported and sustained. The next twenty years pose very exciting challenges but we must tackle them and rise.

Atul Shah

The YJ Calendar

By the Current Committee Members

After 20 years, YJ is still going strong and the momentum is kept alive by regular events and fixtures in the YJ calendar. Here, the current committee members describe the YJ take on Jainism and its enduring appeal...

SHIBIRS



Young Jains offers annual residential retreats for its members, active volunteers and Executive and Non-Executive committee members. YJ also host one-day shibirs for smaller groups and students.

The residential retreats are a time to step back from the

hectic of daily life. It is a time to take 3 steps back, breath the fresh air of the countryside venues, do plenty of outdoor activities and spend quality structured time learning about Jainism in a fun, relaxed atmosphere. For a full report on shibirs, see article by Priya Kothari on pages 50-51.

Above: Learning not to attach labels to the body!

SWEET HARMONY

Over the past many years, Sweet Harmony has vibrated the energy munchkins of creativity in the young and less young. The event called Sweet Harmony was first created within the walls of Jatin Shah's home where a need for stavans and singing was fed. From the 20 or so people who attended, the numbers grew and grew with the ever increasing popularity of the lead-and-follow style. From a Kenton home, it moved onto the current base of Young Jains, Canon High School. A monthly Monday session of music and rhythm in a peaceful and tranquil environment, Sweet Harmony can let your vocal chords experience the creative talents within you through music and song.

So what's so good about Sweet Harmony? Well, Sweet Harmony has enthused and uplifted many people throughout its time, and continues to nourish and feed the culture and bhakti within all types of souls. Bhakti plays an important part in our lives.

If you have never sung, then this is a great way to learn - in a comfortable, friendly atmosphere. Stavan

sheets are in English and Gujarati. Meanings are explained and musical hints are provided by the talented group leading the evening.



The Sweet Harmony Team would love to see you and sing with you. Through these events, you can also celebrate a special occasion with your family and friends, in a friendly atmosphere – you can even dedicate that evening to loved ones. Bring your family and friends to join and celebrate your occasion through music and song.

MJK

Mahavir Janma Kalyanak (MJK), celebrated in March/April, is a very special festival for Jains. Christians celebrate Christmas because that is when their saviour Jesus Christ was born. In this way, Jains celebrate MJK because that is when our inspirer, Mahavir Bhagwan, was born. Mahavir Janma Kalyanak is a time to look over Mahavir Bhagwan's lives. There is so much to learn from the stories of Mahavir Bhagwan. These true stories allow us to reflect on the mistakes he made when he was deluded and believed he was the body and not the soul, and when he overcame his passions and revealed that he is actually the soul.



A Young Jains MJK event will portray Mahavir Bhagwan's lives in a truly Young Jains style, complete with skits and musical interludes. It has all the ingredients of a perfect birthday party, with Mahavir Bhagwan's lives presented in a way that is easy to understand, but also fun and comical. This event allows our Young Jains volunteers to show off their talents in a comfortable setting. It is a

fun evening for the whole family and is one of the events that Young Jains will always be well known for.

The YJ Calendar

By the Current Committee Members

As well as bringing to life the traditions of more than 2600 years ago, the audience of 400 adults and children participated in the modern custom of blowing out candles and cake cutting.

Above: YJ members show off their dramatic skills at MJK.

PARYUSHAN

The soul, in its pure form, has infinite perception, infinite knowledge, infinite vigour, and is non-attached. These attributes are not seen in a worldly soul because it is soiled with karmas. By following religious principles and activities, we overcome our karmas and uplift our souls to liberation. There are various kinds of religious activities, sometimes called rituals, and among them Pratikraman is the most important ritual. During Pratikraman we repent for our non-meritorious activities on a daily basis. We realise our mistakes and ask for forgiveness which helps us to minimise the intensity of the karma's bondage.

In 2007, YJ teamed up with Oshwal Association UK (OAUk) and SCVP later in the week to bring an exciting and informative 'English Pratikraman' led by YJ's Jaineel Shah. He explained the essence of Samayik, providing translations of prayers in English and discussed the importance of Pratikraman and Samayik for a Jain householder. The event was indeed successful, with a turnout of more than 100 people of all ages. It was especially inspiring to see children as young as 8 attending, with their friends and family, some of whom had never before performed Pratikraman, who were then geared up for Samvatsari Pratikraman with a much better understanding of this significant Jain ritual. Gaining a profound and enduring understanding of Jainism is, and remains, at the heart of YJ.

RAAS GARBA



The annual Young Jains Raas Garba is always sold out within the first two weeks of tickets going on sale! Over the years we have seen over 400 people, members, non-members, young, old, families and friends come together every year to celebrate this colourful, entertaining event.

In 2007, a skit about the story of Bhagwan Parshvanath was performed for the first time in YJ history to explain the Jain significance of celebrating Navratri. One Garba attendant described it as "an event for all – all are made welcome" and another regular said, "it gets better every year!"

DIWALI

On Saturday 17th November 2007, around 300 guests gathered at Canon's High School for an 'Evening of Enlightenment'. All were greeted by smiling volunteers and a colourful vibe was created by the wonderful decorations, including two mind-blowing rangolis. This year, Young Jains celebrated Diwali with a difference; three different faiths who celebrate Diwali came together under one roof to share the meaning of Diwali for them. We were lucky to have the National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF) to share why Hindus celebrate this auspicious festival, and the Havelock Road Gurdwara to show us why Diwali is so important to Sikhs. Both of these organisations portrayed the meaning of Diwali through educating & interesting presentations, full of culture & history.



Young Jains depicted Diwali with a skit (truly Young Jain style), with a modern twist. We saw Khush, a young, rich investment banker, realise how attachments were affecting his life, and recognising that by shedding these attachments, he would be one step

The YJ Calendar

By the Current Committee Members

closer to attaining the main Jain goal of Moksha – abundant, infinite, eternal bliss.

Young Jains closed the show with a very patriotic and uplifting dance, which left the audience on a high. But it wasn't over yet... a few mouth-watering dhokras and tasty mithai later, there was still time for a disco, for those that had caught the dance fever from the Young Jains dancers!

To sum up, YJ's Diwali events are faster than a Catherine Wheel and will leave you feeling higher than a rocket.

QUIZ NIGHTS

The Friday night events have been part of Young Jains long before I (Kavit Haria) first attended an event in 2002. In fact, they were what made me attend more and more events because they were such modern, well-organised and interactive events where I could have fun learning and make new friends. Since then, I have helped in organising a few events and more recently working with Roopal to organise game shows that are modelled on existing television shows to allow participants to learn more, play more and meet more friends.

To date, we've had three gameshows called The MBA game, Wheel of Fortune and Who Wants To Be A Jainnaire? It has been fun, exciting to prepare and present and inspiring to learn more as we prepare questions.

The purpose of the gameshows was first to include content previously covered at the Young Jains shibir in April 2007 so that those who attended the games after the shibir could refresh and learn things they missed out on and for those who attended for the first time or without attending the shibir to learn some important concepts. Another objective of the gameshow was to help use the event and its interactive and true YJ-style to bring in new friends, friends of friends and other people who would be interested in taking part in what YJ has to offer.

NEWSLETTER

The YJ Newsletter is a high quality, colourful, fun and informative quarterly publication that provides the community with the latest news, reviews of YJ events, information about forthcoming events, feature articles and articles about Jain dharma. The newsletter was the first regular Jain publication of its kind in the UK, and is still going strong. It is an invaluable communication tool for the Jain community. ■



With all this and so much more, how could you possibly bear to miss out? If you aren't already, fill out the enclosed membership form and become a YJ member today. If you already are, pass the form on to family or friends!

Top to Bottom: YJ garba, Shibir in Oxfordshire and One Day Conference (Everyday Hero), all in 2007.

20 Years of Young Jains

To conclude this souvenir, here are some photos that capture the famous YJ spirit. We have resurrected many photos like these from the archives and they are now on our website. Visit the 20th Anniversary section of the website and let the celebrations continue...



Freeing the Spirit team, c. 2000.



Punya Points game, 2002.



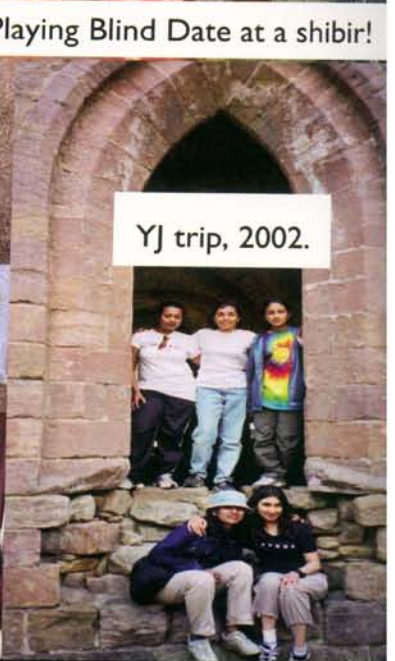
Playing Blind Date at a shibir!



c. 1992.



Farming 2003



YJ trip, 2002.



With L. M. Singhvi, 1998.



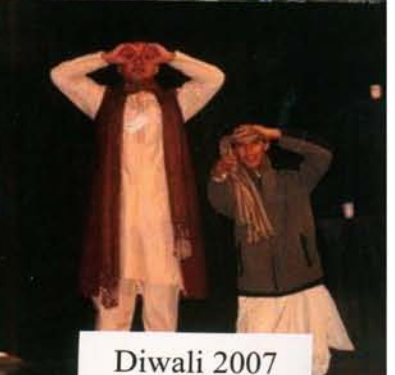
Shibir 2005



2006 Committee



Shibir, 2002.



Diwali 2007



Convention, 2004.



AGM 1997.

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*The Langley extends their heartfelt well wishes to all members of the Young Jains
for their 20th Anniversary*

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