

JUNE 2018

Volume 8

JainDigest



A Publication by the Federation of Jain Associations in North America

**MAITRI
Bhavana**

**ASHUCHI
Bhavana**

**ASHARAN
Bhavana**

**ASHRAV
Bhavana**

**PRAMOD
Bhavana**

**ANYATVA
Bhavana**

**SAMVAR
Bhavana**

**ANITYA
Bhavana**

**SAMSAR
Bhavana**

**DHARMA
DURLABH
Bhavana**

**NIRJARA
Bhavana**

**MADHYASTHYA
Bhavana**

**BODH
DURLABH
Bhavana**

**EKATVA
Bhavana**

**LOKSWARUP
Bhavana**

**KARUNYA
Bhavana**



JAINA's Quaterly Publication

The Sixteen Bhavanas in Jainism

The Picture shows King Shrenik and Anathi Muni depicting Asharan Bhavana

JAIN DIGEST

A Publication of the
Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA)
email: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

JAINA is an umbrella organization of local Jain Associations in U.S.A. and Canada. The purpose of the organization is to preserve, practice, and promote Jain Dharma and Jain Way of life.

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On the Cover:

Bhagwan Mahavir gave us 16 Bhavanas for contemplation to help us with our spiritual progress. The bhavanas covered in this issue are shown in orange colored circles. Bhavanas shown in green colored circles will be covered in the next issue. The picture shows King Shrenik and Anathi Muni depicting Asharan Bhavana. You can read the story in 'Children's Corner.'

Disclosure

The Editorial Team endeavors to publish all the materials that are submitted but reserves the right to reduce, revise, reject, or edit any article, letter, or abstract for clarity, space, or policy reasons. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editorial Team. These articles are published with the authors names. The articles written or published by the Editorial Team are published as a joint contribution of the entire Editorial Team, and not necessarily represent the views of JAINA

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Promise yourself
today to be just as
enthusiastic about
the success of others
as you are about
your own.

-Christian D. Larson

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Editor's Note



Om Shri Veetragey Namah
Jai Jinendra,

The Jain Digest team is pleased to bring you this June 2018 issue of Jain Digest. This is the 8th issue being published by the current editorial team and we could not have done this without the continued encouragement from our readers and support from our sponsors. Thanks!

After covering most of the Ten Supreme Virtues that Jainism teaches in the past few issues, the theme for this and the next issue is "Bhavanas". Jain religion has put a heavy emphasis on our thought process because it has a close link with how we act. Our intentions or 'bhav' while doing anything is more important than the act itself. We can study a lot of scriptures and become very knowledgeable in Jain philosophy, but for any real transformation, introspection, contemplation is necessary.

To help us with this transformation, Bhagwan Mahavir gave us 16 Bhavanas or Reflections. 12 of these are contemplative and explain us the reality of our existence; whereas the other 4 are related to virtues we need to develop in order to improve our relationships with people.

In this issue, we bring you articles on the four virtue related bhavanas – Maitri, Pramod, Karunya and Madhyasthya – and four contemplative ones – Anitya, Asharan, Samsar and Ekatva. The remaining bhavanas will be covered in the October 2018 issue.

In order to provide you with meaningful content that is relevant to the topics we have covered, we are always looking for various resources. One such resource is UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center. Recently, we received their permission to publish articles from their website. In this issue, we are pleased to bring you an article related to Karunya bhavana – "Six Habits of Highly Compassionate People". We certainly hope you find this article interesting and educational.

In addition, we have an article from our youth on Jain Activism which provides some insight into the challenges we face in practicing and promoting Jain religion and what can be done about it.

In another article you can read about a plan to serve Vegan food at the Jain Center of Southern California. We hope that other Jain Centers in North America will be motivated and decide to serve Vegan food also.

We certainly hope you enjoy reading this issue & provide us your valuable feedback by writing to us at jaindigestpublication@gmail.com.

In Seva,
Dilip Parekh

Jain Digest-Chairman's Message

Jai Jinendra,

Thanks to all the members who sent emails complimenting the February publication of Jain Digest. The credit goes to the Jain Digest editorial and graphics team that contributed their valuable time and effort.

It gives me a great pleasure to announce that the upcoming 20th Biennial JAINA Convention to be held in Los

Angeles at the Ontario Convention Center from July 4th through July 7th, 2019. The theme of this Convention is "Jain Religion in the 21st Century". We are working hard to make sure this convention will be the best and are building upon the great conventions from the past: Education/ Culture:

- The daytime programming committee is coordinating coveted scholars, dignitaries and respected professional speakers
- The organization is working to get stunning programs lined out

Organization/Registration Fees:

- The Convention Board has created 42 Committees with more than 300 Volunteers for efficient management
- The hotels contracted for this convention are all walking distance for convenience to all.
- The registration fees are going to be affordable and low in comparison to past conventions.
- Registration fees for youth is brought down quite a bit to encourage more participation.

Stay tuned for further information. The registration will open on August 1st, 2018.

Your input and suggestions on what you would like to read in the Jain Digest publication will help us in creating themes of interest. You may email us, articles and any information that can be shared with our community members.

We are always looking for volunteers that are interested in contributing their time and talent in designing/content development.

You may email us at Jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

Peace, Love & Happiness,
Mahesh Wadher
Chairman, Jain Digest Committee
JAINA First Vice President
Convener JAINA 2019 Convention



JAINA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Hope you and your family had wonderful Oli and Mahavir Janma Kalyanak celebrations!

It is my privilege to share with you a number of accomplishments JAINA and our community has attained over the last 3 months. With your support, JAINA continues to make progress in achieving its vision to evolve and promote Jain practices, educate Jains and non-Jains to create a strong North American Jain community, create awareness of Jainism by spreading the message of Bhagwan Mahavir and energize our community by evoking social changes. Here are some of the highlights:

Youth Exchange Program - JAINA and JITO are back with its 4th edition of Jain Youth Exchange Program after the immensely successful previous 3 editions. The program is an intensive international experience that enables youth to learn, explore and indulge in a journey of infinite opportunities. The tentative dates for the program are June 15 to July 10, 2018, when youths from India will be attending YJA Convention in Chicago and visiting New York, Washington DC and San Francisco.

Interfaith Dialogue - JAINA First Vice President, Mr. Mahesh Wadher accompanied Jain Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni at historic interfaith dialogue with Supreme Religious Leader His Holiness Pope Francis at Vatican City on March 7, 2018. He presented a JAINA 2018 Calendar to His Excellency Bishop Miguel Ayuso. International issues like World Peace, Religious Harmony, Environment Protection, and Human welfare were discussed. While addressing the delegation, His Holiness Pope Francis said "I hope and wish to come to India soon. Inter-religious dialogue is necessary for the protection of humanity, World peace, and harmony".

Workshop At Atlanta - After two successful workshops in Raleigh, NC last year, JAINA Education Committee and Jain Society of Greater Atlanta jointly conducted the third Jain workshop from March 2 to 4, 2018. The theme for the workshop was "Striking a Balance: Examining Social, Cultural, and Spiritual Environment" that our youth face while growing up in North America. The main purpose of the workshop was to educate both adults and youth with regards to the fundamental principles and philosophy of Jainism and how to apply these principles in all walks of life through practical examples.

The University of North Texas (UNT) conducted one day conference on Jainism and the Environment on April 14, 2018. The conference had three sessions: 1) Jainism, Environmental History, and Built Environments, 2) Jainism and Ecology Revisited, 3) Jainism and the Global Environment, where various speakers talked about Jainism, Ecology, Bioethics, Social Role of Jain Architecture, Orthodox Diaspora Jain Perspectives and many other interesting topics.

Installation and Unveiling of Statue of Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi - The installation and unveiling ceremony of a life-size statue of Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, the learned Scholar and Thinker of Jain Sangh, was held at 11 AM on Sunday, 1st April 2018. The Ceremony was held at the premises of Shri Vallabh Smarak in Delhi.

JAINA Convention 2019 - JAINA warmly invites you to attend JAINA Convention 2019 at Ontario Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA from July 4 to 7, 2019. The theme of the Convention will be 'Jain Religion In The 21st Century'. Please consider joining us for an amazing experience. Registration will start soon at www.jaina.org.

Special Mahavir Kalyanak Newsletter - We published a special newsletter on 2018 Mahavir Janma Kalyanak highlighting various events from Bhagwan Mahavir's life.

JAINA Canada Office - JAINA team is working towards establishing JAINA Canada office.

YJA Convention 2018 - Young Jains of America (YJA) will be hosting 700+ youth for 2018 YJA Convention in Chicago, IL from July 5 - 8, 2018. The theme of YJA Convention is 'Reconnecting With Our Roots'. Please encourage youths in your community to register at www.yja.org.



YJP Update - Congratulations and Welcome to new Young Jain Professionals (YJP) Board Members. Recently, YJP hosted 13 National Events across 9 different cities while connecting over 150 Jains. They are also looking forward to YJP conference in October 2018.

Jain Milan – Jain Milan has been very active hosting meetup events like bowling, golfing, picnic and other networking events in Northeast and will be expanding to other parts of the country this summer to provide our community an opportunity to meet with other singles in their local area. It encourages singles to create their profile on www.jainmilan.org where over 1600 profiles of single men and women from all over the world are available.

JAINA try to keep you updated through weekly Newsletter and social media about Jain news, religious articles/videos, and other updates. Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube for Jain Photos, Stories, News, and Updates. Please visit www.jaina.org for the links and to register for JAINA Newsletters.

Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni visits the Vatican

Jain Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni visited the Vatican for a historic interfaith dialogue with Supreme Religious Leader His Holiness Pope Francis at Vatican City on March 7, 2018. International issues like World Peace, Religious Harmony, Environment Protection, and Human welfare were discussed.



Acharya Lokesh Muni said that violence and terrorism cannot solve any problems. All conflicts can be resolved through dialogue. We must respect other's point of view and thoughts along with our own. Environmental pollution and conceptual pollution both are harmful. He said that Indian culture is based on unity in diversity and European culture emphasizes interreligious harmony. Both together can give important contribution for world peace and harmony. Acharya Lokesh Muni said that India is a multicultural country, where people of different communities, religions, faiths and cultures live together with love and harmony. He said that Jain philosophy based on unity in diversity, non-violence and non-possessiveness can solve many global problems like violence, terrorism, environmental pollution and inequality.

While addressing the delegation, His Holiness Pope Francis said "I hope and wish to come to India soon. Inter-religious dialogue is necessary for the protection of humanity, World peace, and harmony". Acharya Lokesh Muni expressed hope that by participation of honorable Pope at International Interfaith Conference to be organized in New Delhi by Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti, message of World Peace and Harmony will have a global impact. He informed that honorable President of India Mr. Ramnath Kovind, Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi and top leaders of major world's religions will be invited to the conference.

Acharya Lokesh Muni was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising of Senior Vice President of JAINA Mr. Mahesh Wadher from California, Mr. Anil Monga from New Jersey, Mr. Karamjeet Singh Dhaliwal, Dr. Raj Bhayani, Mr. Kamlesh Mehta from New York, Mr. Subrata Ganguly from Kolkata and Mr. Bhavya Shrivastava from New Delhi.



INTRODUCTION TO BHAVANAS

(The theme of this issue of Jain Digest is Bhavanas. This article summarizes the purpose and benefits of the bhavanas in our spiritual journey. Of the 16 Bhavanas, in this issue, we have covered 8 bhavanas with more in-depth articles. This summary has been compiled using the perspectives provided by our authors.)

Every activity whether good or bad, invariably gets associated with its respective karmas. Yatana, that is 'carefulness with an intensely genuine intention to protect maximum living beings during one's actions with unavoidable violence reduced to minimal levels', would help restrict the inflow or even stop the influx of karmas (samvara) into the Soul; allowing it to remain light and become lighter. With so much of activity going around, it is very difficult to keep track of the morality/immorality of each action, let alone their consequences.

More than action, Jain religion has put a heavier emphasis on our thought process because it is closely linked to how we act. It says that higher the quality of thoughts, better the behavior; lower the quality, worse the behavior and greater the suffering.



Sages, philosophers and writers have also emphasized the importance of thoughts. William James, father of American philosophy said, "A man is what he thinks about all day long". Eckhart Tolle, author of New York Times bestseller book "The Power of Now," states that on a typical day, human mind encounters more than 60,000 thoughts, and 95 % of these thoughts are compulsive in nature which are repeated again and again and this is how people end up saying "I have lost my mind!" The author further advises: "Learn to quiet your mind with wisdom of the sages and become an observer to find your true authentic self". Dr. Wayne Dyer had created a life changing program titled "Change Your Thoughts – Change Your Life" based on practical teaching by Tao Te Ching.

Bhagwan Mahavir gave us 12 Bhavanas or Reflections to help us drive out the evil thoughts, and invite the pure ones. These bhavanas explain us the reality of our existence. These contemplative bhavanas are:

- | | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1) Anitya Bhavana | 2) Asharan Bhavana | 3) Samsar Bhavana | 4) Ekatva Bhavana |
| 5) Anyatva Bhavana | 6) Ashuchi Bhavana | 7) Ashrav Bhavana | 8) Samvar Bhavana |
| 9) Nirjara Bhavana | 10) Lokaswarup Bhavana | 11) Bodh Durlabh Bhavana | 12) Dharma Durlabh Bhavana |

Importance of the 12 Contemplative Bhavanas:

To begin our inner transformation, we need to understand and contemplate on these Bhavanas. Introspection of the activities that took place throughout the day, with respect to the Bhavanas is said to be Anupreksha; to be done every day is a must, as each and every daily activity binds the Soul with karmas.

Anupreksha enriches the Soul with spiritual self-awareness. Worldly thoughts that lead to tension, stress, depression result in bondage of inauspicious karmas, while the spiritual thoughts that lead to self-awareness and inner peace of mind, empowers the Soul with its attributes. According to Acharya Siddhasena 'repeated pondering develops in suitable mental states'. Pondering on negative aspects of life, hindrances faced, weaknesses of one self, develops that kind of energy uprising those kinds of karmas to surface and materialize into corresponding situations. But if one becomes aware of what to contemplate, the pool of problems can be sorted out easily. Right contemplation (Anupreksha) should be an integral part of every aspirant to attain eternal bliss. It is conducive to shedding of karmas as it involves two kinds of penances – swadhyay (study of the Self, by the self, for the self) and Dhyana (meditation). Anupreksha is the pathway to meditation. One cannot obtain butter without churning or blending the curds. Similarly, one cannot obtain knowledge without Anupreksha i.e., contemplation.

Many of us live our lives with delusions, clinging to the past and fantasizing about the future. We create beautiful mirages and imaginations in our mind and then we run after them only to find that they were just plain illusions, far removed from reality. This state of mind prevents us from seeing the life as it is. Just as a computer can be afflicted with a virus and crashes the system, the conditioned human mind afflicted by habit of dwelling on past memories may cause guilt or misery. Worries about future uncertainty may cause depression from fear of unknown resulting in loss of enjoyment in the current moment.



In addition, Jain religion provides us with 4 other Bhavanas that are action oriented. Whereas the 12 contemplative bhavanas explain the reality of our existence, these four bhavanas guide us about the virtues we need to develop. They are more action oriented and can be instrumental in improving our behavior and relationship with others. These 4 virtue related bhavanas are:

- 1) Maitri Bhavana 2) Pramod Bhavana 3) Karunya Bhavana
- 4) Madhyasthya Bhavana

These 4 bhavanas also require us to do introspection. Daily practice of reviewing our actions during the day to check if we have made changes in our behavior to develop the virtues of friendship, appreciation, compassion and equanimity is necessary for spiritual growth.

Jain religion encourages us to evolve within and develop our virtues. Thoughts and feelings play an important role in this inner journey. The sixteen bhavanas guide us on how to be careful with our thoughts, focus them in the right direction and how to improve our relationships with others.

In this issue, we have included articles on the four virtue related bhavanas and four contemplative bhavanas. The remaining bhavanas will be covered in future issues of Jain Digest. We hope you enjoy reading them and find them educational as well as elevating. Please provide us your candid feedback on these articles by sending us an email at: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com. Our authors will love to hear from you and highly appreciate your feedback !



Maitri Bhavana

By Jatin Shah

The Sanskrit word 'Maitri' means 'friendliness', or 'loving-kindness', while 'Bhavana' means 'virtue' or 'quality'. So 'Maitri Bhavana' is the practice of expanding loving-kindness without limits, or 'unlimited friendliness'.

Maitri Bhavana is not a new concept to Eastern culture, in fact it has been there for centuries in Jain, Hindu and Buddhist scriptures. However, Bhavana is becoming more relevant in the Western world in recent years, especially after issues like wars, global warming, school shootings, suffering, etc.



Maitri Bhav, friendship, is not to be with just a few; but everyone. Jina's teachings say that we should be a friend to all living beings. And it begins with love, compassion for all – the basis for Ahimsa.

Maitribhav can be categorized in 3 ways:

1. Friendship with yourself
2. Friendship with all human being
3. Friendship with all living being

1) Friendship with thyself:

In order to be friends with others, first we need be our own friend. For various reasons, we are our worst critics. We need to learn to forgive ourselves, accept ourselves the way we are, focus on our strengths, stop comparing with others, be true to ourselves and stay in peace.

2) Friendship with all human beings:

Pure happiness arises only from wishing for others' happiness. If we contemplate on Maitri Bhavana, our thoughts, words, and actions will not be harsh, and we will not hurt anybody. On the contrary, we will support everybody. Friendship will lead us to be tolerant, forgiving, and caring for one another.

3) Friendship with all living beings:

What we become in our next birth will be completely dependent on how we act in our present life. Not only showing friendship to thyself and human being is important, but it also correlates to how we create friendship with all living beings. Jain philosophy teaches us that there are 5 kinds of Jeev based on the number of sense they have – one sense, two sense, three sense, four sense and five sense. Each and every living being has a right to live just as humans do. Hence we minimize any violence to these beings and show kindness and compassion.

In order to avoid influx of bad karma, it is important to stay in peace by developing a friendship towards all living beings, admiring their success, holding their hands when they are in distress, and leaving them alone at times when they do not understand what is right or wrong. Our friendship needs to be unconditional and non-judgmental. To develop a long lasting friendship, we need to let go of any resentments, old hurts, our ego and replace it with love. Love is like growing a tree whereas hate is like cutting a tree. All of us have been together from eternity in various forms, various roles and relations; so why have any animosity towards others? Let us wish that everyone nourishes the love for each other and grow together spiritually.

I have lived in the USA for the last 20 years and have felt that seeking help/favor from someone is not the norm, as self-reliance is a big part of this culture. In my experience, Maitri bhavana is practiced with ease in India “. People in small cities and towns are amazingly kind and the support system is just awesome there. Recently I had a family incident for which I had to go back to India and I found that some of my old friends stood by me in this time of need and helped me with everything that I needed. I have not been in touch with them but their act of kindness & friendship left me speechless.



फैले प्रेम परस्पर जगत में मोह दूर हो राह करे
अप्रिय कटुक कठोर शब्द नहीं कोई मुख से कहा करे
बनकर सब “युगवीर” हृदय से देशोंनती रत रहा करें
वस्तु स्वरूप विचार खुशी से सब संकट सहा करे || 11 ||
रहे भावना ऐसी मेरी...

May there be mutual love in the world; May delusion dwell at a distance;
May no one ever utter unpleasant words; Or words that are harsh;
May men, heroes of the time; whole-heartedly work for the country's cause;
May all understand the Laws of Truth; and endure sorrow and suffering joyfully.

Om, Shanti ! Shanti ! Shanti !

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MAITRI BHAVANA - FEELING OF FRIENDSHIP

Lord Mahvira said, "We must be friend to all living beings." The feeling of friendship brings love and respect to others. It also initiates a feeling of brotherhood among all and in turn leaves no room for the harm, deceit or animosity with anybody. If we contemplate on Maitri Bhavana, our thoughts, words, and actions will not be harsh, and we will not hurt anybody. On the contrary, we will support and protect everybody. Friendship will lead us to be tolerant, forgiving, and caring for one another.

Pramod Bhavana - The Power and Practice of Appreciation

By Hema Pokharna, PhD



(Dr. Hema Pokharna is a Certified Nonviolent Communication (NVC) Trainer. As an Executive Coach and Consultant she works with leaders and their teams to improve personal and organizational collaborative leadership. Hema is also an interfaith peacemaker and mediator, and has served on the board of Parliament of World Religions, Play for peace and presently serves on the board of Council of Religious Leaders of Chicago and also on JSMC and the JAINA Interfaith Committee. Email: hemapokharna.phd@gmail.com)

Pramod Bhavana guides us to recognize virtues in others, to occupy our minds with appreciation and awareness of virtues in others. Pramod means to joyfully, gratefully appreciate, value, respect, cherish, treasure, admire, have regard for and esteem for the virtues of others. These feelings harness the force of love - the power to everything good in life.

In fact the Jain prayers are not to a person but are an adoration of the virtues. Namokar mantra is the adoration of the virtues of Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyays and Sadhus. The attention on these virtues allows us to envision and emulate them in ourselves.



Pramod or appreciation can be understood as a posture of Namaste where our focus is on the potential and possibility of the other. It is like bowing to the divinity of the other. With the practice of pramod, life becomes a sacred adventure. Pramod becomes a signpost that points to the active presence of the Spirit in the world around us. With pramod comes a sense of spiritual literacy, a skill to be cultivated to discern and decipher meaning and purpose of human life, almost a glimpse into the soul. This ability to locate within our daily life points at connection to the sacred possibly increasing awareness and protect against accumulation of karmas. The art of pramod teaches us

to choose our thoughts, rather than our thoughts choosing us, leading to more inner freedom and peace. Appreciation is about paying attention. Appreciation requires discipline and practice. Appreciation requires us to see with receptive eyes and discover a world of ceaseless wonders. The practice of pramod enhances spiritual intelligence, which is our drive for meaning and connection with the Infinite.

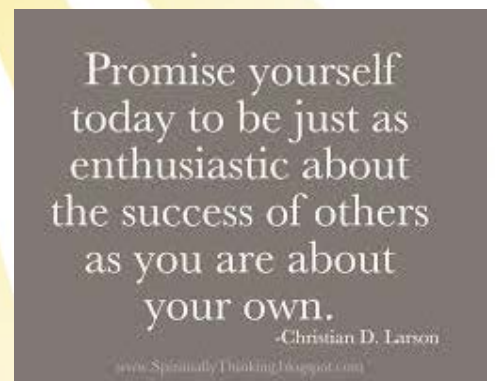
Daily practice of looking out for virtues in the most pervasive of contemporary situations like using the internet or watching commercial entertainment media can provide spiritual nourishment by encouraging us to learn more about ourselves and others.

Appreciation is love. Love is delighting in others' qualities. Appreciation breeds joy. A little honest appreciation can go a long way in our relationships. As Mother Teresa said there is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than bread.

Appreciation is humility. It implies deep respect for the intrinsic worth of every human being. Deep respect for every individual, regardless of their status, helps banish feelings of inadequacy, encourages forgiveness, reduces a feeling of entitlement, and boosts gratitude.

The ability to appreciate someone's capability to rise and grow beyond the mistakes, gives us a chance to heal and learn. Mistakes are not seen as confirmation of worthlessness anymore.

What Happens When You Don't Appreciate the People in Your Life?



We often have greater awe for the trinkets and treasures that a human being possesses than for the person. When we don't appreciate others, our relationships suffer in the following ways:

- Friends and family feel unimportant and may withdraw from you.
- One of the most destructive forces in our lives is jealousy, and without appreciation, our relationships can easily build jealousy and resentment.
- When your partner feels unappreciated, any talks result in arguments and complaints. It becomes hard to build a future with someone who doesn't appreciate you.
- Animosity may build up in the relationship on both sides.
- The person feeling unappreciated may find other places, things, or people to seek appreciation from. One of the main reasons for extra-marital affairs is lack of appreciation from the partner.
- Lack of appreciation may completely ruin and end a relationship at home or at work.

**If You
Always Have
Relationship
Problems,
This May Be
Why...**



How to Start Appreciating the People in Your Life

Appreciation is not just a mental exercise; it's important to vocalize or show your appreciation. Appreciation brings love to life. Even some otherwise boring or challenging people, at work or at home, can light up with meaning through appreciation.

You can start appreciating others in your life by:

- Developing a stronger sense of your own uniqueness and core values. This way, you'll more easily celebrate others' virtues and successes.
- Dedication of a notebook solely for this purpose. Start your day by jotting down three things you value about this person. At the end of 30 days, give them your notes of appreciation.
- Greeting family members with a smile when they arrive home, instead of working on the phone and not looking up.
- Saying thank you and acknowledging the little things they do every day.
- Giving specific examples of what they have done and how that has enhanced your own life.
- Appreciating their flaws and quirks. The little imperfections are what make people unique. They may feel insecure about them; let them know how you appreciate their imperfections and why.
- Giving someone a hug when they help you out or putting a smile on your face.
- Doing something unexpected. Brighten their day by buying them a cup of coffee or stopping by to let them know that you love them and appreciate them for being in your life.
- Trading your criticism for appreciation. You'll see your whole world change in an instant.

Appreciation strengthens the bonds you have with others, no matter what the relationship. It replaces a mindset of scarcity with being grateful for everything you have. And most of all, it creates space to be thankful for the people and things in life.

My deepest gratitude and appreciation to the greatest human beings in history, who have ensured that the knowledge and truth of life was preserved for future generations.

PRAMOD BHAVANA - FEELING OF APPRECIATION

In this bhavana, we admire the success of our friends, spiritual leaders, and the Arihants. One of the most destructive forces in our lives is jealousy. However, friendship combined with the admiration, destroys jealousy. As jealousy subsides, negative impulses are turned into positive ones, and in due time, we will be at peace.

Karunya Bhavana

By Ramesh K Khandhar



Ramesh Khandhar is a former secretary of executive board and a past Pathshala teacher at Jain Center of Southern California. His current activities are: conducting swadhyay on various Jain scriptures, reading and contemplating on spiritual scriptures, listening to the spiritual discourses and visiting several religious ashrams in India for 3 to 4 months every year. E-mail: ramesh.khandhar@gmail.com

Karunya Bhavana is having sympathy towards others and attempting to alleviate their pain. This is compassion – not just towards your loved ones but for all living beings. From the moment of birth, every human being wants happiness and does not want suffering. Neither social conditioning nor education nor ideology affect this. From the very core of our being, we simply desire contented happiness. Both animals and human beings have a “compassionate instinct.” In other words, compassion is a natural and automatic response that has ensured our survival. Compassion may indeed be a naturally evolved and adaptive trait. Without it, the survival and flourishing of our species would have been unlikely. Poverty, violence, disability, unhappiness, disease, death, etc. are some situations that evoke compassion in people. When you see a person in such a situation, you might want to help that person to get away from that plight.

What is Compassion?

Compassion is a spiritual quality. It is love in action. Lord Mahavir's said that “True compassion is summation of sympathy, emotional feeling for their pain and/or suffering, the desire to help the less advantaged people and help them in any way that can be”. Buddha defined compassion in this way: “Compassion is that which makes the heart of the good person move at the pain of others”. It crushes and destroys the pain of others, shelters and embraces the distressed. Compassion literally means “to suffer together.” It is defined as



the feeling that arises when you are confronted with another's suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering. It refers to both an understanding of another's pain and the desire to somehow mitigate that pain.

True compassion is not just an emotional response but a firm commitment founded on reason. Therefore, a truly compassionate attitude towards others does not change even if they behave negatively. Compassion is the litmus test of spirituality. It is the embrace of the heart. Your heart moves to touch the heart of another and rather than dwelling in

their pain, you seek to alleviate it as best you can. Care giving is compassion in action. It is a virtue we admire and welcome when we witness someone sacrificing something beyond the ordinary in order to give to someone else. In most instances, compassion requires a degree of sacrifice. Loving compassionately doesn't mean you abandon yourself. It means extending yourself with some limits.

The need for Compassion

It is because our own human existence is so dependent on the help of others that our need for love and compassion lies at the very foundation of our existence. Therefore, we need a genuine sense of responsibility and a sincere concern for the welfare of others. In Jain tradition, Umaswatiji gave a wonderful magical stanza through his experiential knowledge:

“પરસ્પર ઉપગ્રહો જીવાનામ” - પ. પ. આચાર્ય ઉમાસ્વાતિજી

People become instrumental in each other's social and spiritual work. It results from the profound interdependence we all share with one another.



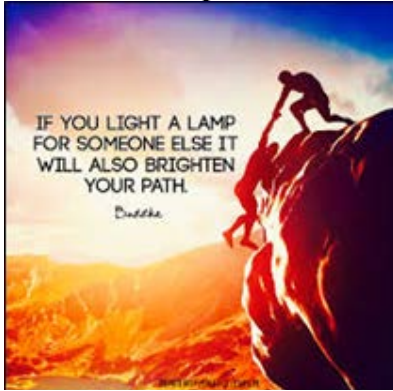
One of the most important keys for spiritual progress is 'Love and compassion' for all sentient beings.

‘સર્વ જીવ છે સિદ્ધ સમ’ - શ્રીમદ રાજચંદ્રજી

This is an essential understanding to develop compassionate attitude. When we touch that space of absolute oneness, compassion is something that arises naturally, as a surge of light from the well of divine consciousness itself.

True compassion is a prerequisite to opening the gate for higher energy to flow-in. This deeper feeling is crucial which unlocks higher energy field and leads you to advance on a spiritual path. The vibration is crucial to take us through the spiritual path. This deeper feeling resounds from the core which will shatter roots of the vices (chronic habitual tendencies) in our subconscious mind. The way to access this deeper feeling of compassion is to remove all blockages such as anger, hatred and other lower paradigm.

Benefits of Compassion:



1) Compassion is the quality that takes us closest to the Divine within each of us. It makes our lives meaningful. When we practice compassion, when we go out of ourselves to reach out to others and alleviate their suffering, we rise to the Highest Self in us.

2) The negative feelings of strife and disharmony are totally nullified in our hearts and minds. It is the source of all lasting happiness and joy. And it is the foundation of a good heart, the heart of one who acts out of a desire to help others. Through kindness, affection, honesty, truth and justice toward all others we ensure our own benefit - the spiritual growth.

3) The compassionate lifestyle leads to greater psychological well-being because of the fact that the act of giving appears to be as pleasurable, if not more so, as the act of receiving. It enhances social connection and strengthens our immune system, helps us recover from disease faster, and may even lengthen our life. People who feel more connected to others have lower rates of anxiety and depression. They also have higher self-esteem, are more empathic to others, more trusting and cooperative and, as a consequence, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them.

4) The medical research revealed that people with compassion, altruism and greater meaning had lower levels of cellular inflammation - the root of cancer and other diseases. Several scientific studies have proved beyond doubt that compassion and kindness lead to direct medical benefits. For instance, truly compassionate people have shown a 100 per cent increase in DHEA, a hormone that counteracts the aging process, and 23 per cent less cortisol, also known as the "stress hormone".

5) It can also reduce the intensity of physical pain and the anxiety caused by it. Emotionally, it provides the individual with a sense of wellbeing and joyfulness.

6) Compassion may boost our well-being is that it can help broaden our perspective beyond ourselves. Research shows that depression and anxiety are linked to a state of self-focus, a preoccupation with "me, myself, and I."

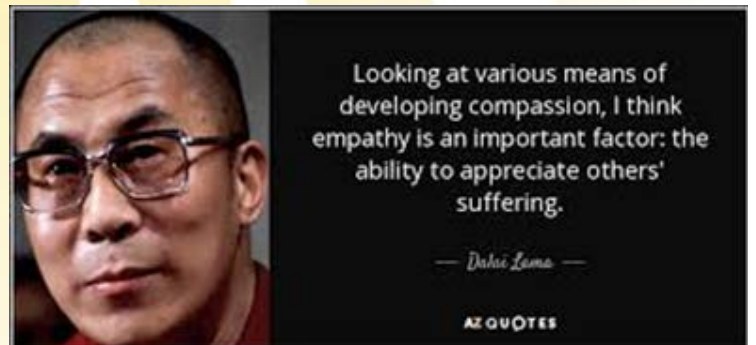
7) When you help someone it creates a state of 'elevation'. That is why, the lives of people like Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Desmond Tutu are so inspiring. It's a gift. It's a response from the Soul.

Gandhiji was an excellent example of this. He stood with unwavering compassion, non-judgement and love for all sentient beings. He didn't shrink in the face of adversity. He stood fast with honesty, integrity and an open heart. As the metaphoric walls crumbled around him, an unmistakable light permeated from the center of his Soul. This light is within us all. It is an unattached, unwavering beacon.

Lord Mahavira stood with unwavering compassion against Sangam's misconduct. Christ did not give up compassion against those who were crucifying him. Buddha maintained his compassion while food poison was offered to him. It is this deeper feeling of 'oneness' that takes you to the fringes of infinity.

8) Compassion entices the person to do introspection. You notice that helping others out of good heart is contagious.

The acts of generosity and kindness beget more generosity in a chain reaction of goodness. The happiness' spreads and that if the people around us are happy, we, in turn become happier. The greatest degree of inner tranquility comes from the development of love and compassion.



9) The more we care for the happiness of others, the greater our own sense of well-being becomes. Cultivating a close, warm-hearted feeling for others automatically puts the mind at ease. As a result, our own serenity and inner strength will increase. Compassion is the code of Divine Language, and when you are able to use it within your prayers, meditations



and visualizations, the answers and solutions come in. Compassion creates synchronicity. It creates your reality. It creates healing in your body.

How to develop compassion and practice?

When you move toward others with compassion, you are likely to bump into some common attitudes, just waiting to close your heart again. The usual suspects are judgment and all its associated “isms”: racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and nationalism. It is true that we all have an innate self-centeredness that inhibits our love for others. However, we all desire the true happiness that can be brought about by only a calm mind, and such peace of mind is brought about by only a compassionate attitude. We need to make a concerted effort to develop it. We must use all the events of our daily life to transform our thoughts and behavior.

There are practices and understandings that come from spiritual traditions (such as meditation, inter-dependence, non-violence, acceptance of ‘oneness’ or ‘maha satta’ and many more) which were designed to develop compassion, and which simultaneously support Higher Self.

True compassion is something to be experienced. It is an unmistakable resonance from the center of your Soul. We can strive gradually to become more compassionate, that is we can develop both genuine sympathy for others’ suffering and the will to help remove their pain. It is within our power, given patience and time, to develop this kind of compassion. True compassion can be experienced only when self-centeredness is eliminated or greatly reduced. There are few virtues that Lord Mahavira emphasized to develop spiritual compassion, among others:

- 1) **Devotion:** Devotion to Bhagwan, to the spiritual Master will help develop compassion toward all living being. That is because they are the embodiment of compassion! It is because of their compassion towards us that we are on a spiritual path. The devotion makes our heart soft, gentle and sensitive to others needs. We become connected to Higher Self from which the divine energy will flow into you. We start to appreciate sunrise, flowers, rivers, mountains, ocean waves and all other nature’s wonders. We perceive ourselves as an integral part of entire universe. It will propel us forward and give us the strength to do whatever we are divinely given to do.
- 2) **Satsang:** The communion with Master and listening to his spiritual discourse will help develop the detachment and equanimity to all external happening. The regular study of scriptural books definitely reinforces those virtues. Equanimity helps one to perceive all events without any personal motive. We rise above the happening which helps us solve other’s suffering. The preconceived notion, judgement and all its associated “isms”: racism, sexism, ageism, classism, and nationalism start to dissolve. We recognize that all beings are equal in both their desire for happiness and their right to obtain it. We automatically feel empathy and closeness for them. We must cultivate our mind to this sense of universal altruism and develop a feeling of responsibility for others.
- 3) **Commitment to covenant:** We must follow the spiritual Master’s teaching without any personal bias or opinion. Total, unilateral and unconditional commitment is a must for development of compassion.
- 4) **Self-restraint:** We need to do introspection, reflection and contemplation to understand our own motive, stick to our objective and eliminate any ulterior motives. It will help purify the internal thought process and understanding; which is the root cause of all external behavior.
- 5) **Burning desire and love for Higher Self:** Let us forgive ourselves, love ourselves the way we are. We can’t even begin to feel true compassion whilst harboring guilt, resentment and self-depreciation. We can only help others to the point we have helped ourselves. We should assume that every individual in need who enters our life was placed there by divine hands, ones extended out to us so that we could learn the joy of compassionate giving.

The above virtues will help overcome the greatest hindrances to compassion: anger and hatred. As we all know, these are extremely powerful emotions and they can overwhelm our mind. Nevertheless, they can be controlled. The compassion virtue counteracts these negative emotions. It is a powerful antidote to anger, hatred, and other lower paradigms. Compassion is by nature gentle, peaceful and soft, but it is very powerful.



It is true that we all have an innate self-centeredness that inhibits our love for others. However we all desire the true happiness that can be brought about by only a calm mind, and such peace of mind is brought about by only a compassionate attitude. We need to make a concerted effort to develop it. We must use all the events of our daily life to transform our thoughts and behavior.

For a person who cherishes compassion and love, the practice of tolerance is essential, and for that, an enemy is indispensable. Hence, we should feel grateful to our enemies, for it is they who can best help us develop a tranquil mind!

Conclusion

Become compassionate and marry your Higher Self! Compassion is a pathway to realize Higher Self. 'True Compassion' in you should be as natural as Higher Self's hidden presence in you. It should be an integral part of your way of life.

Compassion is the root of every religion. Because compassion brings with it kindness, love, fellowship, and it brings service. A man whose heart is filled with compassion is a friend of all, he is kind and loving to all. Such a man is kind not only to human beings but even to birds, animals and insects. Compassion, will be the key to the new social order in the coming years. True compassion builds bridges of peace, erect towers of hope and construct a world of joy and cooperation.

As Dalai Lama says, "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." The Jain meditation and prayer tradition ends with:

सर्वथा सङ्गु सुखी थाय्यो, समता सङ्गु समायरो;
सर्वत्र द्विव्यता व्यापो, सर्वत्र शांति विस्तरो.

Let all beings be happy, practice equanimity, spread divine feeling and inner peace. This is the foundation of True Compassion.

KARUNYA BHAVANA - FEELING OF COMPASSION

Karunya Bhavana is having sympathy towards others and attempting to alleviate their pain. This is compassion – not just towards your loved ones but for all living beings. Compassion is a spiritual quality. It is love in action. Lord Mahavir's said that "True compassion is summation of sympathy, emotional feeling for their pain and/or suffering, the desire to help the less advantaged people and help them in any way that can be".



Madhyasthya Bhavana

By Reena Shah



Reena is one of the Jain Digest editors. She is a USC graduate and currently teaches English and US History in middle school and high school. Her industry experience includes Market Research, Non-Profit and educational institutions. She practices deeper aspects of spirituality and is a follower of Shrimad Rajchandra Atma Tatva Research Centre, Mumbai.

Madhyasthya (Equanimity) *bhavana* is one of the four and most sublime *bhavanas* in Jainism. It is the foundation for wisdom and freedom and the protector of friendship (*Maitri*), and compassion/mercy (*Karunya*) *bhavana*. While some may think of equanimity as dry neutrality or cool aloofness, true equanimity produces a radiance and warmth in *jeev* (soul). In *Patrank* 62 *Krupalu Dev* calls *Madhyasthya* or *upeksha* as a state where one makes oneself worthy of sustaining the strength to remain devoid of *raag* (attachment) and *dwesh* (aversion) to be able to see things/other souls the way they are. In other words, a mind filled with equanimity is exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill-will. It is also the attitude towards other souls that help develop the worthiness in our life as emancipation aspirants. It is a sentiment of indifference (unconditional love) towards those who may be perceived immoral, inconsiderate or unjust. In the word “*Upeksha*”, *Upa* means ‘over,’ and *iksh* means ‘to look.’ You climb the mountain to be able to look over the whole situation, not bound by one side or the other. It refers to the equanimity that arises from the power of observation, the ability to see without being caught by what we see. When well-developed, such power gives rise to a great sense of peace. *Upeksha* can also refer to the ease that comes from seeing a bigger picture. Colloquially, in India the word was sometimes used to mean “to see with patience.” We might understand this as “seeing with understanding.” For example, when we know not to take offensive words personally, we are less likely to react to what was said. Instead, we remain at ease or equanimous. This form of equanimity can be compared to grandmotherly love in worldly terms. The grandmother clearly loves her grandchildren but, thanks to her experience with her own children, is less likely to be caught up in the drama of her grandchildren’s lives.

Madhyasthya bhavana is one of the four foundational *bhavanas* that has been recommended to be followed by everyone. We normally jump to twelve *vairagya bhavana* without addressing these four *bhavanas*: *maitri*, *pramod*, *karunya* and *madhyasthya*. We fail to value the root or foundation of a spiritually meaningful life that could



become pure and stable by following *madhyasthya* and the other three *bhavanas*. Once we establish purity and stability by strengthening focus on *atma*, contemplating on twelve *bhavanas* will become easier. Having said this, I do not mean to undermine the challenges one faces while practicing this *bhavana* since *jeev* is used to getting involved and giving one’s opinion (good or bad) on everything and everyone. Life after life, soul has only known to be involved in worldly matters. Either there is prejudice or insistence of rigid ideas on a soul’s part. In order to not have this state of bias we need *vairagya* or *udasinta*, where *raag* and *dwesh* are absent. It is difficult to attain this state but one must not give up and should continuously strive to achieve it.

Madhya in the word *Madhyasthya* means “to stand in the middle. This “standing in the middle” refers to a balance that comes from inner stability--remaining centered when surrounded by turmoil. We are constantly being pulled in one direction or another by things or conditions we either want or hope to avoid. These include praise and blame, pleasure and pain, success and failure, gain and loss. A soul practicing *Madhyasthya bhavana*, accepts all without approval or disapproval. This forms the core of this *bhavana*. This *bhavana* also teaches the mind to train and decide that failure to understand on others part needs to be left alone without further involvement. By observing *Madhyasthya bhavana*, we remain in equanimity, instead of provoking turmoil in our minds. Staying neutral and uninvolved helps one to stay away from *karma*.



Krishna told Arjuna to “Do your duty without thinking about the outcome”. This line in itself is perhaps the best explanation for *madhyasthya*. State of being free from desire protects *madhyasthya*. A worker building a house never ever thinks of living in that house on completion. He does not even take credit for excellent workmanship. There

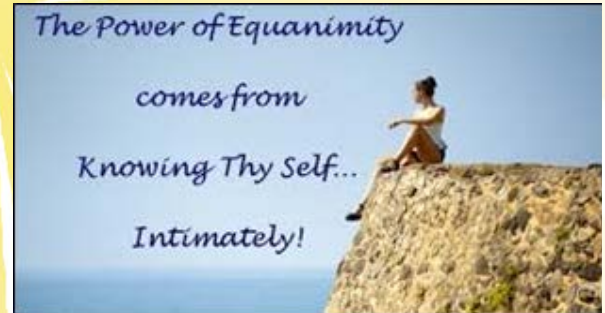
is absolutely no ownership on his part. If one could develop such detachment from ownership, doership, love, hatred, one would develop a true state free from desires, *raag* and *dwesh*. There are four types of *madhyasthya bhavana*: 1. *Mohjanya Sambhaav*, 2. *Shubh Sambhaav*, 3. *Shuddh Sadhan Sambhaav*, and 4. *Shuddh Sambhaav*. Understanding these four subtypes of *madhyasthya bhavana* will help us identify our own state of *madhyasthya*.

1) *Mohjanya Sambhaav* as the name suggests is the one that is produced due to attachment with near and dear ones. There are times when we do not say anything to older family members or a *mumukshu* due to embarrassment, shame, respect, or hesitation and try to maintain calm by not reacting. The soul believes that it is better to let go and not get involved in this matter. However, it is false *madhyasthya* as the person decided to not speak, not due to correct understanding, but to avoid conflict among close friends or family. Feelings of attachment and aversion (*raag* and *dwesh*) continue to remain in their heart and there is absence of equanimity. But the flip side is that the *bhaav* of not hurting the other person remains.

2) *Shubh Sambhaav* is the feeling or emotion to maintain unity among family and close relationships. One realizes that within a family each person thinks differently and they might disagree on lot of matters. It also happens that when one is

working as a team or a group of people, they decide to give up their opinion for the well-being of the group. Therefore, in order to avoid conflict, one acts matured, and patient and gives up their opinion and honors the other person's wishes. The predominant *bhaav* here is to accept and embrace everyone even if someone is less capable and not as sharp in understanding, to keep the group united.

3) *Shuddh Sadhan Sambhaav* is the state of understanding where an aspirant realizes that if it continues to do *raag-dwesh* it would be doing *bhaav hinsa* (violence in thoughts). The aspirant considers himself/herself as a true disciple of *Bhagwan* and *Krupaludev*, is patient, has the strength to sustain, is capable enough to decide and take resolve to attain salvation. The aspirant also thinks that pondering over others'



affairs is a waste and that the best refuge and protection he/she can get is from his/her own *atma*. He/she is aware that anyone else's support is not needed. This *jeev's* entire focus is to prepare one's eligibility by strengthening one's *upadan*.

4) *Shuddh Sambhaav* is the ultimate *bhaav* where the aspirant knows about its innate quality of *sambhaav*. He/she refrains from doing *vibhaav* and continues to remain within. This is complete *madhyasthya bhaav* where *jeev* stays equanimous in happiness, sadness, attachment, aversion, like, dislike, decision, and indecision. The aspirant stays above these feelings and reside within. One must aspire to attain the fourth type of *madhyasthya* which is the most sublime one.

MADHYASTHYA BHAVANA - FEELING OF EQUANIMITY

The life appears to be nothing but involvement. Sometimes the situation works out favorably and sometimes it does not. So instead of getting disappointed, angry, or more involved, we should contemplate on Madhyastha Bhavana which leads to the feeling that “I did my best to resolve the situation.” By observing Madhyastha Bhavana, we remain in equanimity, instead of provoking turmoil in our minds.



Anitya Bhavana

By Anop R. Vora, Rochester, NY

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Anitya meaning transient, ever changing. The opposite word is Nitya is permanent and changeless. This Bhāvanā



makes us realize that our physical body, youth, beauty, health, wealth, sensual pleasures, fame-everything is temporary and one day could go away in an instant like a lightning in the sky. To convince ourselves with this bitter truth, we need to look no further than at our own past, rewind it and observe how our body and its capabilities have slowly deteriorated; how we have lost some of our friends and loved ones already. Even if we live 100 hundred years, one day, we will have to leave everything, and our body will be nothing but a pile of ash. Jainism says very clearly that the attachment to these transient things is only going to cause more pain upon their loss if we don't wake up. This recognition is very important for us to live a serene life.

For the mind it is frightening to know the ever-moving nature of everything we see. The mind wants to cling to whatever it has created - things, objects, ideas, relationships, and positions. That is why it is not willing to give up when the time comes. It says: It is going to remain with me forever. It is mine now. This is what causes attachment, thereby creating sadness upon separation. That is the reason when the things or people depart from us, our mind is not ready to accept it. The mind refuses to recognize that nothing lasts forever. Either it changes or ends. Quoting Eckart Tolle from his book - Practicing the Power of Now: "When a condition or situation that the mind has attached itself to and identified with changes or disappears, the mind cannot accept it. It wants to cling to the disappearing condition and resist the change." This

is the main cause of human unhappiness. Contemplation of this temporary nature of things is Anitya Bhavana. This bhavana is meant to lift us up when we are down in the dumps; when things go wrong. The purpose of such contemplation is for us to get a better understanding of reality and help us change our focus to what is eternal - the soul.

There are many incidents in or daily life that exhibit the temporary nature of worldly objects. Let us look at some examples. One of the past presidents of Kodak was very humble and a small incidence from his life is worth noting: This happened when Kodak was booming and very rich. He was looking around for an expensive house one day when the realtor asked, "Sir, you are the President of one of the most successful companies of the world. You must be very proud of leading this wonderful company". He smiled and said: "This too shall pass". It is interesting to note that his words came true 25 years later when Kodak filed for bankruptcy. No one could believe that this could ever happen.

Bollywood star Mumtaz was interviewed by India Aboard a few years ago. She was one of the most beautiful actors of her time. When she was interviewed, she was 65, sick, lonely, and overweight. It was even difficult to recognize her. She narrated her life story and concluded it by saying "Nothing in life is permanent". She realized the painful truth without any knowledge about Jainism.

My wife's uncle was a great financial and social success in eighties. He was the founder of the JAIN Social group and was well respected throughout the Jain community. He had issues with blood pressure but was managing it quite well. But something went haywire and he got a stroke one day, got paralyzed and never fully recovered till he passed away 12 years later. His life changed overnight, and it was extremely painful for him to adjust to the handicapped life. He went down from glory to nothing overnight.

And this momentary nature of happiness applies to all; irrespective of who you are. On the day, Lord Ram was supposed to be coronated as a king, his life took a wild turn. He was asked by his father to go to a forest for 12 years! The excitement of coronation was replaced by gloom and doom in an instant.

Jainism tells very clearly that before we develop strong

craving to favorable situations, to our creations and before we go egoistic with our successes, we need to realize that everything has an expiry date over which we have no control. It is asking us keep thinking about this Bhāvanā regularly to develop a sense of discretion and a realistic vision. Once we imbibe its real meaning, small things which used to trigger strong reactions at one time will no longer bother us. There will be no need to use so much energy on temporary things. When we absorb and ruminate on its essence deeply, we would come to penetrate the depths of our own reality.



Buddhism calls Anitya Bhāvanā as Impermanence and has dwelt upon it very deeply in its literature just like Jainism has. To educate its followers and to reinforce its meaning, it is common practice for Buddhist Monks to painstakingly create a beautiful sand Mandal (like a Rangoli) by spending long hours and then destroying it instantly. They would not save the intricate design for the future. Their aim was to create a symbol of transitory nature of all things and destroy it as soon as it was complete and to vividly demonstrate the principle of Impermanence. They wanted to show that eventually everything falls apart and becomes something else. They wanted to create a true awakening among the people. They wanted to inject insight into the essential meaning of life.

Many of have heard about Anitya Bhavana from different sources but upon close examination, we will discover that the knowledge of this Bhavana has remained as a piece of information in our minds; it has not changed us much. So how do we develop it so that it becomes a part of our life? The best way to do it by introspecting our behavior through pratikraman, contemplation and meditation every day. This will keep us on the spiritual path and focused on lord Mahavir's teachings.



Both in favorable and unfavorable conditions, it is important to think that “This too shall pass”. The result of such contemplation will result in a search – “where can I find the happiness that is eternal?” And the focus then will change to “Nitya”; which is our pure soul - a permanent and changeless entity. These steps have the power to increase our awareness of what is permanent and what is not, and effect a real change in our thoughts, speech, and action. This transformation could pave the way for emotional stability, peace, tranquility, and eventual liberation.

ANITYA BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF TRANSIENCE

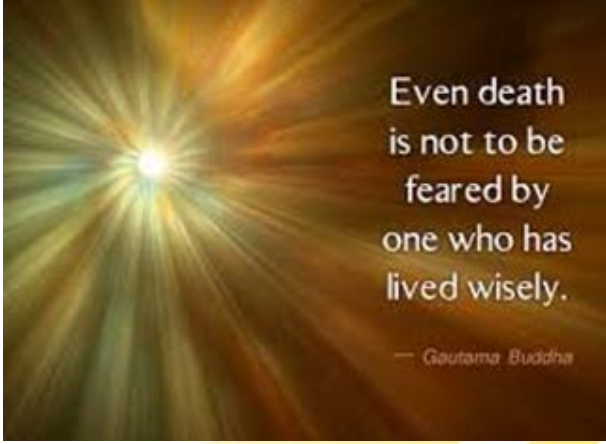
Contemplation that one's physical body and its associated pleasures, allurements, prosperity, riches, family relations, children, parents and others – all these are transitory and will perish. The basic nature of the soul is that it is eternal and to ponder over it is called Anitya Bhavana.

Asharan Bhavana

By Pravin L. Shah



Pravin L. Shah is a scientist in the field of Newtonian physics. He has studied Jain Agam texts and classic texts of Acharya Kundkund, Haribhadra, Upadhyay Yashovijayji and Anandghanji, and Shrimad Rajchandra in great depth for the last forty years. He is fluent in Sanskrit and Prakrit and has conducted spiritual discourses and Paryushan programs for over three decades. He has published a ground-breaking book entitled, *Atmasadhnana Amrut Anusthan*, which was released in July 2017 at the Jain convention in NJ. He lives in Reading PA and his email is: pshahusa@yahoo.com



The Asharan Bhavana deals with the feeling of helplessness. It focuses on having no place to hide for safety, protection, and well-being, being lost in the world. We have witnessed horrible mass killings on 9/11/01, and in last 18 years we know how horrifying it is to live in fear of death and misery in the 21st century! Every one is living on edge from fear of terrorist attacks and chemical and nuclear wars. In such chaotic situations it is natural to feel helpless. But one does not have to think of these extreme situations to realize that we are helpless in many ways. Even though we have been successful at prolonging the life through advances in medical treatments, death is unavoidable. We have all seen our loved ones dying in pain and could not do anything to save them. The money, fame, achievements, friends, relatives – none of these could come to rescue and change the inevitable. The story of King Shrenik and

Anathi Muni (see “Childrens Corner” in this issue) is a good example of this.

Bringing awareness of this reality, contemplation of this fact, is called Asharan Bhavana. The purpose is not to be afraid of death; but be ready for it! Upadhyay Shri Vinayvijayji guides us how to do this in His granth “Shant Sudharas”. He tells us how to seek help in order to make death a celebration, how to get out this cycle of life and death, how to surrender.

We need not be afraid of death, we need to be afraid of being born again! Being afraid of death is attachment whereas being afraid of another birth is a quality of an aspirant. The only way to really succeed in this life is to move our focus away from what is destructible – such as our body – and to find solace in what takes us towards what is eternal; and that is surrendering to Bhagwan’s teachings. Let us surrender our body to death which we cannot fight with, cannot run away from, cannot expect any mercy from. But let us surrender our mind to Bhagwan, Sadguru in order to win over death. Death is nothing but an event, a goodbye; it is not destruction! Death can only take away ego and attachment; not the eternal soul.

Acharya Haribhadra, a renowned 7th century Jain master has provided valuable insight on how to apply these Bhavanas and Jain Sutras in his epic works Lalit Vistara and Yogdrasati Samuchay texts. Starting with recitation of Navkar mantra and understanding and chanting Chattari Mangalam sutra can provide incredible healing of mind, body, and soul.

In Namuthunam Sutra, Jain masters have provided incredible “Sharan” or surrender to Tirthankars and Siddha with these powerful Sutras: Saran Dayanam (Arihantas provide true refuge or protection of our soul); Magga Dayanam (Arihanta shows a path of liberation of soul), Abhaya Dayanam (when we realize our true self is ever lasting and we are not the body or mind, one becomes immortal), Chakshu Dayanam (Arihanta provides us divine vision), Bodhi Dayanam (Agam texts provide us powerful teachings for liberation of soul), and Tinnaam-Taryanam (Lord Mahavir and all Tirthankars are liberated soul and have infinite compassion to liberate each soul in the universe)! If we just understand and appreciate how powerful these sutras are and if we can practice daily meditation on these sutras to reflect on, all our fear and false attachments will begin to dissolve gradually and we can experience peace, happiness, and blissful state. Then every moment of our life becomes a divine sanctuary of joyful journey to Nirvana!

Anandghanji's stavan, is very powerful composition to practice how to experience divinity within by surrendering to Lord Aadinath. Let us review the last verse of this stavan:

**Chitta Prasane re Pujan Fal Kahu re, Puja Akhandit Eha;
Kapat Rahit Thai Atam Arpana re, Anadghan Pad Rev
Rushabha Jineshavar Pritam Maharo re
Or na Chahu re Kant.**

True meaning of this Asharan Bhavana is beautifully described by Anadghanji in the above verse: When a seeker surrenders unconditionally to Lord Aadinath in devotion with no other desire except to receive God's grace and blessings, one experiences genuine peace and bliss. With continued practice of these Bhavanas or reflections, one can attain genuine peace, happiness, and spiritual enlightenment. The main condition is one has to be fully committed to study of the teachings and practice meditation daily on these Bhavans and integrate it with Bhaktiyog to illuminate the Self. Seekers of all faith have experienced such enlightenment including Chandanbala, Aanad Shravak, Acharya Mantungsuri who composed magnificent Bhakatamar stotra, Acharya Siddhsen Divakar who composed divine Kalyan Mandir Stotra, and Meerabai, Narsi Mehta, and Tulsidas who provided timeless devotional compositions to help millions of seekers attain spiritual enlightenment even at the present time!

When we surrender in full devotion to Lord Mahavir or Lord Aadinath, we become peaceful, calm, and fully secured and our "helpless" state of Asharan vanishes as we feel "empowered" - all the time in union with Lord Mahavir!. For simple exercise and practice of Asharan Bhavana, please recite these powerful sutras daily and several times when you are stuck in a traffic jam or stressed out at work! When you go to bed please recite these sutras religiously and miracles will happen to you! All you need is right faith and practice this meditation religiously.

**Chattari Shranam Pavajami,
Arihante Sharanam Pavajami,
Siddhe Sharanam Pavajami,
Sahu Saranam Pavajami,
Kevli Panato Dhamo Sharanam Pavajami**

Please repeat this: I surrender in devotion to Lord Arihanta, Lord Siddha, Sadhuji, and to the teachings of Kevalis. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.



ASHARAN BHAVANA - FEELING OF HELPLESSNESS

Contemplation that when death is near, nothing can save the living being, that he is helpless and no one can protect him from death. Therefore in such a helpless condition only adoption of right religion is true protection which can lead a soul to eternal peace, fearlessness and enlightenment. To adopt such line of thinking is called Asharan Bhavana.

Samsar Bhavana

By Jain Samani Dr. Suyashnidhi (JPP, Bangalore)



With the blessings of Pujya Gurudev Dr. Shri Padamchandra Ji Maharaj Saheb, Samani Dr. Suyashnidhi got initiated as Jain Samani on May 15th, 2010 at Mysore, Karnataka and is currently rendering her services to humanity through J.P.P. Ahimsa Research Foundation. She has MA and PhD degrees in Jainlogy, both with a Gold Medal. She is well versed with Jain Anuppeha Dhyana Yog Sadhana, past life regression, Reiki, Pranic healing and other alternative techniques. She presents her lectures, workshops with a message that Jainism is a way of life; it is simple, easily practicable. e-mail: suyashnidhi27@gmail.com .

Samsāra Anuprekshā/bhāvanā is one among the four attendant reflections of *Dharma Dhyāna*. Contemplation on *Samsāra bhāvanā* helps an aspirant to understand the relation of Self with the Universe completely aiding the development of detachment from all the attachments. Delusion (*Mithyātva*) and passions (*kasāyas*) in the form of anger, pride, deceit and conceit lead to further transmigration of soul in *Samsār*:

Samsāranti jivāyasminnasausamsārah||

Meaning: where and when the Jeeva transmigrates is called *samsār*.

Purpose of *samsār bhāvanā*:

- Realization of the world being full of all kinds of sorrows
- Understand the reasons of birth in different states/species/*Chaturgati* (four gatis)
- To discover effective ways of liberating the Soul from fetters of mundane life

The railway track, platform, airport, bus-stop, etc., are stationary, while the vehicles, goods and people are always on the move. A traveller travels till his destination is reached. *Samsār* remains eternal, steady and unmoved, while the non-liberated soul keeps transmigrating from one kind of birth to another. Na sa jai nasajoiatthajivanauvavajjai|| meaning there is not one single space-point left in this entire Loka, where a mundane being has not taken birth.

Mundane beings are classified into four major groups, based on their rebirth-category (*Gati*). Each soul migrates into one of the four states *Naraka Gati* (hell), *Tiryanch Gati* (animal or plant), *Manushya Gati* (humans) and *Deva Gati* (Celestials), by the cycle of birth-death-rebirth until ultimately liberated.



The four causative Kārmic-bondages of these *Gatis* have been explained in the *Sthānānga Sūtra*.

Understanding these reasons, doing introspection and then taking necessary steps to change our behavior will take us towards liberation. Let us explore these reasons.

1) Naraka Gati:

The four reasons for an Infernal-rebirth, as a hellish being, have been narrated as:

1. Indulgence in excessive violence in large scale
2. Immensely deep attachment to one's possessions
3. Consumption of non-vegetarian food and intoxicating substances
4. Killing a five-sensed living being/beings

Introspection and soul-searching thought-process about such activities would bring-in awareness and help to estimate whether there is any accumulation of such a hell-distaining karma. An aspirant has been advised to take up the twelve vows of a householder, that would refrain one from intended violence and reducing attachments to possessions.

2) Tiryanch Gati:

The four major reasons for a rebirth in animal or plant state are:

1. Deceitful behaviour
2. Intense indulgence in deceit
3. Utter falsehood
4. Faltering and defective weighing/measuring in trade

Deceit is considered as the foundation of all these. It destroys faith and trust. Falsehood arises from the roots of deceit, distorts one's perception, leading him to an illusory world. Short-weighting and deceptive measuring of things involves deceit. Intense deceit leads to bondage of severe deluding karma (*mahamohaniya karma*). Various forms of deceit could be like giving reasons of ill health, weakness, being busy and so on to escape from work in spite of having enough strength. Parody, simulation, adulteration, packing things with less quantity of product and air weight is matched to balance the total weight of the packet, verbal exaggeration of quality of goods and selling them at very high rates.

Why does any soul end up in animal-state at rebirth? Many instances have been given explaining this aspect. For instance, a dishonest employee draws full salary but doesn't perform accordingly. Intensive passions (*anantānubandhi-kasāya*) are responsible for bondage of *Tiryanch Gati*. Contemplation/reflections on *Samsār bhāvanā* – 'Am I entangled in the empire of deceit?', is believed to help avoid such rebirth.

3) Manushya Gati:

Four causes of a rebirth in human state are:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Simplicity or Straight-forwardness | 2. Compassion |
| 3. Humility | 4. Non-jealousy |

Deceit weakens the foundation of human life. Avoiding all sorts of credibility-gaps and maintaining equality in speech and deeds is one of the most recommended solutions to avoid a birth in the animal state and to be able to pave way to human rebirth. Passions break the pillars of simplicity and compassion.

4) Deva Gati:

Four causes for rebirth in celestial state are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Maintaining restraint with/without riddance of attachment | 2. Maintaining restraint but partially |
| 3. Unintended shedding of karmas (<i>akāma nirjarā</i>) | 4. Ignorant austerities |

As a severely ill patient gets transferred from one hospital to another, so too a Jeeva with karmas, keeps getting transferred from one state to another, transmigrating in the *samsāra*. Wealth, power, sensual pleasures and all other materialistic things have never ever given true happiness. The scanty experiences of brief joys in this mundane world may appear to be a sort of happiness; in fact, it remains miles away in reality. The dew drops settled overnight on the grass tips, get vaporized as soon as the sunlight falls on them; so does the happiness fades away unnoticed due to the presence of underlying pre-existing sorrows that remain unnoticed by most *Jeevas*. The happenings in life befuddles to be real for a person and makes him to attach himself to the world of ephemeral nature.

These four states, thus, together make up the complete pool of sorrows. Animals, birds, insects, organisms, etc., are always restless and turbulent. Their subjugated life due to inherent inability of expressing feelings added to their dependency, vulnerability, fear and bafflement of starvation fills their life with grief and despair. Every human being is bound by nature's rule. No person desires old age, illness, poverty or sadness, yet every person ends up with a feeling of "I am very sad! I am not good enough." etc. Rejections, the clouds which cover the inner peace is nothing but the fence of attachment created by the soul yielding such negative thoughts. These kinds of emotions hinder the spiritual progress while obstructing physical, mental and emotional balance. Man, alone is solely responsible for what he/she is, for the circumstances that he/she is facing in life. The celestial abode (*Deva gati*) might have much less sorrows compared to the other *gatis*. Still they have their own hardships encountering attachments towards their possessions like jewelry, female celestial beings are abducted from other *celestials*. The wars between them due to jealousy can be another reason for sorrow.

Mundane world or the *Samsār* is endless and is compared to a dense forest and a huge ocean. Whether we are in the *Samsār*? Or Is the *Samsār* within us? - is a dubious uncertainty. Water allows smooth sailing of a boat as long as it is on the outer side but will sink it as soon as the sides change, with the water being inside the boat. In the same way, mundane attachments make letting-go very difficult; remaining detached helps one to stay free from bondages. So, living in the mundane world with a sense of detachment helps an aspirant to float across the ocean of *Samsār* and arrive at the ultimate Destination –the *Moksha*. The real purpose of human life should be to attain detachment. Reinforcement of the inner strength prevents the shattering of the self until the ultimate departure from this mundane world.

SAMSAR BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION ON THE SUFFERINGS OF WORLDLY LIFE

Contemplation that the soul has repeatedly gone through cycles of birth and death and taken each and every form of existence as human, animal and in hell and heaven, the strong feeling that "when shall get free from this cycle of birth and death?" is called Samsar Bhavana.

Ekatva Bhavana

By Dilip Parekh

Ekatva Bhavana makes us aware that we, as a soul, are alone in this world. We arrive in this world all alone and we depart from it all alone. And among all our friends and relatives, we live alone! Even when we are with our loved ones, we alone have to suffer the consequences of our karma. When our body is in pain, no one can experience and share in our pain no matter how compassionate they are.

But thinking about this will only result in loneliness, depression; isn't it? But that is a one perspective of what Ekatva is. When describing Ekatva Bhavana in the granth "Shant Sudharas", Upadhyay Shri Vinayvijayji Maharaj Saheb, starts with a verse that tells us what we really are:

एक एव भगवानयमात्मा ज्ञानदर्शनतरंगसरंग
सर्वमन्यदुपकल्पितमेतद व्याकुलीकरणमेव ममत्वम्

"The soul is lonely in existence. It is Bhagwan. It is totally submerged in knowledge and perception. Everything else is just your attachment, imagination. This attachment is the root cause of all your unhappiness."

Each and every soul has the same characteristics – knowledge, purity, perception, blissful, eternal, etc. That is our true nature. The real happiness, bliss is within us. But due to ignorance, we depend on external factors such as people, material objects, money and power, for our happiness. Our expectations that these things will make me happy, causes us pain. When we fall sick and no one can either take away or be our partner is this pain, we feel lonely, depressed. But at such times we have to understand that this is reality. Ekatva Bhavana is contemplation of this fact. It also says that at times like this, look within and turn this loneliness into solitude.

Ekatva Bhavana teaches us that real peace, bliss, is when you are alone. Being with more people, more materialistic things makes your life complicated and prone to unwanted problems, and many struggles. This fact is illustrated in Uttaradhyayan Sutra in a story about Nami Rajarshi, the king of Mithila.

The attachment
is the root cause of
all your
unhappiness.

King Nami was very wealthy and was enjoying all the material comforts. He had many young wives and was living a happy life.

Once, the king developed burning sensation all over the body. The sensation steadily grew and became so intense that the king could no longer bear it. All the queens were worried. Many skillful physicians attempted to cure him with various medicines, but nothing helped. The king was tired and frustrated with this illness. After a lot of search, they found one expert physician who recommended application of Malaygiri sandalwood paste over all his body.

The queens themselves started making paste by grinding sandalwood on hard stone. Since they all were wearing bangles, it created loud jingling sound. The king, already in a lot of pain, could not bear the loud noise created by the bangles. He therefore asked them to either stop grinding the sandalwood or do it quietly. Thereupon the queens kept only one bangle on each hand and removed the rest. That stopped the sound altogether. The king liked that the noise was gone, but wondered whether the queens had discontinued preparing the paste. Feeling impatient, he asked the queens whether they had stopped making the paste. The queens replied that they were still doing the grinding. The noise had stopped because they had retained only one bangle on each hand and removed the rest. There was no banging of bangles on each other and hence no sound.

This made an unexpected impact on the mind of Nami Rajarshi. He realized the importance of solitude, the significance of Ekatva. Having

more things to deal with causes more problems. It creates unnecessary hustle and bustle, while peace lays in solitariness. He thought, "That one bangle, how nicely it is in peace! When there were more bangles, it created such a nuisance. I am like that bangle. Just like that bangle, as long as I live with other people, I will not be able find peace and bliss. Instead if I focus on my



eternal, blissful soul, I will be able to achieve peace and liberation.”

While in this contemplation, he recollected his previous lives. He decided that when he recovers from the pain, he will renounce the worldly life and become a sadhu. After making such resolve, he went to bed. When he woke up in the morning to the melodious sound of musical instruments, he found himself completely recovered from his illness. He kept his resolution and took diksha. He was completely detached from the worldly objects and steadfast in his determination to seek liberation. Lord Indra took a disguise and tried to persuade him as a test of his determination. Nami Rajarshi passed the test. He told Indra “Each and every object that you are telling me as mine, does not really belong to me. I am on my own. I am a lone traveler and desire to be within myself.”



There is lot we can learn from this story. Nami Rajarshi did not take diksha out of depression. He was able to perceive the beauty of being ‘alone’, immersed in the soul. There was an ecstasy in his following the solitary path.

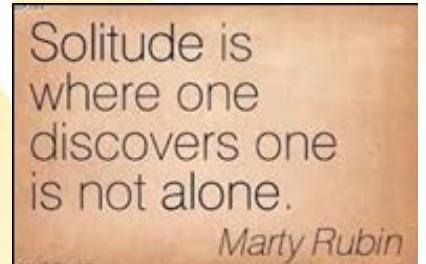
By focusing within, by taking solace in the contemplation of Ekatva Bhavana, we can achieve peace, knowledge of the self,

detachment, dissolution of passions. We can get rid of bad karma and progress on the spiritual path to liberation.

Instead of focusing on our eternal being, if we focus on what we have been associated with due to circumstances, we are bound to bring unhappiness in our lives. Just like we board a train and meet new people there, make new relations with the other passengers inside and say goodbye as soon as we reach our destination, our soul enters our body and forms many relations – son, daughter, sister, brother, etc. But these relations last only till this body lasts. At the time of death the soul has to leave this body and go all alone leaving behind all these relations; possibly never to meet them again.

Our association, love and affection for others should not result into attachment because it cannot save us from pangs of life. Our attachment stops us from realizing who we are. We need to contemplate on the true nature of things.

The soul is eternal and everything else is temporary. We need to increase our awareness. The more we become aware of the soul, we realize that all living beings are same as us – a pure, eternal, blissful soul. We then connect with others and with nature at a different level and actually realize that we are not alone after all!



But to get there, first we need to be in solitude and get it touch with our own self. That is Ekatva Bhavana.

EKATVA BHAVANA - FEELING OF HELPLESSNESS

What I can call mine in the correct sense of the term is only the soul – it has come alone and it will alone leave the body at death; it will be alone to enjoy or suffer from the fruits of hid good or bad actions. Contemplating on such true nature of the world is called Ekatva Bhavana.

Six Habits of Highly Compassionate People

Follow these steps to feel more compassionate toward others and toward yourself.

By Hooria Jazaieri



Hooria Jazaieri, LMFT, is a researcher, teacher, and psychotherapist. Her research at UC Berkeley centers on personal reputation and team chemistry. She is the recipient of graduate research fellowships from the National Science Foundation and the Greater Good Science Center. (This article originally appeared on Greater Good, the online magazine of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley.)

Would you describe yourself as a compassionate person?

Even if you don't necessarily see yourself that way, I bet you're compassionate at least some of the time (e.g., when you're well-rested and not in a hurry), or with certain people in your life (e.g., with your closest friends). Compassion can be thought of as a mental state or an orientation towards suffering (your own or others') that includes four components:

- Bringing attention or awareness to recognizing that there is suffering (cognitive)
- Feeling emotionally moved by that suffering (affective)
- Wishing there to be relief from that suffering (intentional)
- A readiness to take action to relieve that suffering (motivational)

Contrary to what many may believe, compassion is considered to be like a muscle that, as any other, can be strengthened with relevant exercises—or can deteriorate and atrophy. In other words, your capacity for compassion can expand, if you choose. You likely never learned in school that you can intentionally strengthen inner skills such as compassion. The good news is that there are specific habits that you can practice in order to begin honing your abilities to expand compassion for yourself and for others.

Habit 1: Try the research-tested compassion practices

Preliminary research from a variety of randomized controlled trials suggests that compassion can in fact be enhanced through systematic training programs. For example, the eight-week compassion cultivation training (CCT) course that was developed by Thupten Jinpa, Ph.D., and colleagues at Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education suggests that adults can indeed improve compassion for themselves, and reduce fear of compassion for themselves and for others.

Even if you don't or can't take a research-validated training program, there are numerous ways to build your compassion muscle—many of which are described on Greater Good in Action (GGIA), the GGSC's library of science-based practices. Some of these practices involve meditation, such as loving-kindness. Others are writing exercises, such as one that asks you to describe a time when you felt a strong bond with another person.



Feeling Connected

A writing exercise to foster connection and kindness

TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes. Try to do this practice at least once per week, selecting a different example each time

HOW TO DO IT

1. *Try to think of a time when you felt a strong bond with someone in your life. Choose a specific example of an experience you had with this person where you felt especially close and connected to him or her. This could be a time you had a meaningful conversation, gave or received support, experienced a great loss or success together, or witnessed an historic moment together.*
2. *Once you've thought of a specific example, spend a few minutes writing about what happened. In particular, consider the ways in which this experience made you feel close and connected to the other person*

Many of the practices in both GGIA and the structured training programs range from 10-30 minutes in length. As with most exercises, the more you do them, the more you will likely reap the benefits. However, something is better than nothing. For example, if your physical exercise goal is to take 10,000 steps a day and you only take 3,000, that's still better for your health than taking none.

Meditation is similar. While the intention may be 20-30 minutes of daily compassion meditation, some practice is better than no practice—and you are maintaining your intention and routine, which will only increase the likelihood of your continuing this intention and routine the next day. Notice if this “all-or-nothing” mentality with your compassion practice is hindering you and see if you can test the “something is better than nothing” theory.

Habit 2: And try informal compassion practices, too

While there's lots of research supporting those kinds of compassion-cultivating practices, there's also a place for informal, moment-to-moment practices throughout the day.

For example, you could notice when compassion comes easily or spontaneously for you throughout the day (e.g., watching the evening news). You could notice when you resist acknowledging or being with suffering (your own or others) throughout the day (e.g., when passing someone on the street who is asking for money or an extended family member who is challenging). Throughout the day, you could notice when you judge or minimize suffering (e.g., saying that it doesn't count or is insignificant compared to someone else or something else going on in the world). We often notice suffering (our own and that of others) but quickly dismiss it and thus do not allow ourselves to be emotionally touched or moved by the suffering (the second component of compassion). This kind of awareness of the presence, or absence, of compassion can provide some valuable information to you.



Letting Go of Anger through Compassion

To foster resilience, think about a hurtful event in a different way

TIME REQUIRED

5 minutes. You can repeat this exercise each time you find yourself ruminating on an experience when someone hurt you.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Find a quiet place to sit. Relax for two minutes, breathing in and out naturally. During each exhale, focus on the word “one.” Keep your arms, legs, and body still.
2. Identify a time in the past when another person hurt or offended you.
3. For the next two minutes, think of the offender as a human being who behaved badly. Even if the relationship cannot be restored, try to genuinely wish that this person experiences something positive or healing. Even though it may be hard, focus your thoughts and feelings on giving a gift of mercy or compassion. Be consciously aware of the thoughts, feelings, and physical responses you have as you cultivate compassion, kindness, and mercy for this person.

So, the next time you're standing in line at the grocery store, instead of looking down at your phone or watching how quickly the surrounding lines are moving (I'm guilty of both), take a moment to consider the common humanity of the people who made your grocery trip possible—the people who grew the food, transported the food, and stocked the shelves, or even the cashier who is about to help you. Perhaps you could take a moment of appreciation for each of them.

If you choose, this could be an opportunity to acknowledge the interdependence that surrounds us. Our lives, even simple trips to the grocery store, are supported by countless others.

Habit 3: Set an intention

Renowned meditation teacher Jack Kornfield once wrote that setting one's intention is like setting the compass for one's heart. Our intention helps guide our efforts to be compassionate and helps remind us why we are choosing to set time aside for compassion-cultivating practices. When I teach compassion, I pose questions for my students, such as these:

- What is bringing you to the practice today?
- What do you want for yourself?
- What do you want for your life?
- What do you have to offer the world?

While these are indeed “big” questions, asking them allows us to ponder our intentions of why we are trying to strengthen our inner skill of compassion.

For a week, try setting an intention before you start your compassion meditation practice and notice whether this intention helps clarify your purpose. At times, this intention can come up again throughout the day as a means of renewing your commitment to practice compassion, even when you are living life “off the cushion.”



Habit 4: Collect your own data

Research is probabilistic. Just because something works for most people (or people in research studies) does not mean that it will work for you. As I always tell my students, in order to get the most convincing data, “Be your own laboratory.”

Run a short experiment (e.g., a couple weeks or a couple months) and collect your own data. Do you feel more compassionate (towards yourself, loved ones, strangers, difficult people) when utilizing formal (e.g., sitting meditation) and informal (e.g., silently reciting loving-kindness phrases to yourself while waiting in line at Trader Joe’s) compassion practices?



Loving-Kindness Meditation

Strengthen feelings of kindness and connection toward others

Try it at: https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/loving_kindness_meditation

Students in my compassion training classes receive a workbook, which contains a daily practice log and space for comments. Since the practice is different every day, it’s important that we spend time, even if just a few minutes, reflecting on what the practice was like for us: what came up, where did our attention wander to during the practice, how did our intention guide our practice, and so on. Without reflection, these practices can become another thing on a lengthy daily “to-do” list. It is only with reflection that we can get a sense of whether these practices are actually benefitting us (immediately or in the longer-term).

Additionally, I invite students even when they do not practice to still log a “0” for practice time for the day and to also write down what they did instead of doing the practice (e.g., caught up on emails, slept in, went to the gym, watched TV, etc.). This allows us to continue the routine of logging and reflecting and also allows us to examine patterns to the days where we are not practicing—perhaps what we are choosing to do instead of meditating is a higher priority, or perhaps what we are doing instead is not actually adding value to our lives.

Running this experiment does not require a workbook, purchasing a fancy meditation cushion, or buying trendy new yoga clothes. These practices, which are thousands of years old, can be done right in the comfort of your own home, at the office, in your car, or really anywhere, just as you are. Afterward, reflection can take many forms—and you should adopt one that works for you.

Habit 5: Get support

In my experience as a meditation student and as a meditation teacher, the practices are initially helpful when done with the guidance of an instructor. The instructor can answer questions, help troubleshoot and problem-solve, and, most importantly, help you stick with and come back to your practice.

One of my favorite things about teaching compassion courses is the supportive environment that gets created within the group—it’s a unique opportunity to participate in community-based practice. I find it also helps renew one’s optimism as it reminds us that we are not alone in these practices. Many others are choosing to acknowledge suffering (their own and others’) and wish to see the relief of suffering. This notion can get lost at times when doing these practices in solitude



Feeling Supported

Recalling how others have comforted us can make us more compassionate

TIME REQUIRED

15 minutes. Try to do this practice once a month to sustain your feelings of trust and connection.

HOW TO DO IT

1. *Make a list of the people you’re close to who offer you comfort or security. If it’s helpful, consider:*

- *Who is the person you most like to spend time with?*
- *Who is the person it is hardest to be away from?*
- *Who is the person you want to talk to when you are worried about something?*
- *Who is the person you turn to when you are feeling down?*
- *Who is the person you know will always be there for you?*
- *Who is the person you want to share your successes with?*

2. Write down six positive qualities that are common to these people--qualities that they strongly embody.
3. Next, recall and visualize a specific situation when you were feeling distressed or worried and one of these people comforted and helped you.
4. Write a brief description of that situation and the way you felt during it.

If you don't have the time or money for a class, don't despair. You might find support at a religious community or center in your area, if you have one. If you don't, enlist a friend or relative to support your effort to make compassion more of a habit—someone who can encourage and remind you to stay on track and help you (non-judgmentally) troubleshoot the times when you just don't feel very compassionate in the midst of suffering.

Habit 6: Be open to possibilities—and compassionate toward yourself

There are lots of good reasons why sometimes we intend to do compassion meditation practices, and yet, for whatever reason, we drop the ball. Often, what people do when this happens is engage in “negative self-talk” by implicitly or explicitly saying things to themselves, such as “I never stick with anything”; “I’m a failure”; or “I can’t do this.” Interestingly, there’s no empirical evidence to suggest that beating ourselves up will actually help us change our behavior; in fact, some data suggests that this type of criticism can move us away from our goals rather than towards them.

Additionally, one of the interesting opportunities that arises when we do not do our compassion meditation practices is to see if, in that moment, we can practice compassion for ourselves. While a bit meta (compassion for missing the compassion practice), this is essentially one of the “tests” of our practice. When we’re tempted to be harsh, critical, and judgmental with ourselves, can we instead choose to have compassion: acknowledging our suffering, noting how this makes us human and that we are not alone, and trying to be gentle or kind with ourselves (or at least refrain from beating ourselves up - “if you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all”)?



Compassion Meditation

Strengthen feelings of concern for the suffering of others

Try it at: https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/compassion_meditation

Often the story that gets told about meditation is that it will be “relaxing,” “stress-relieving,” and “blissful.” While all of these experiences are possible, for many people the experience with meditation or compassion practices is the exact opposite of peaceful, relaxing, and positive. For some, depending on the practice, just focusing on one’s breath can bring about extreme anxiety or worry thoughts, bringing to mind a loved one can bring about grief and loss, imagining oneself as a young child can bring about sadness or pain, considering the suffering of all beings may bring about guilt or overwhelm.

It is important to notice whether we are bringing any expectations to the compassion practice. Often people will say that the compassion practices are not “working.” When we investigate what they mean by this, they are often referring to the experience of not feeling relaxed after the meditation. While relaxation and stress relief can be the goal of some meditations, in general this is not the case with compassion meditation. Compassion is ultimately about suffering, which can at times feel difficult to sit with.

Finally, people often bring the expectation that because a compassion practice generated a certain feeling or experience before (e.g., yesterday or last week), it “should” or will generate a similar feeling or experience today. As I often tell my students, reality is constantly changing (time is passing and the earth is rotating as you read this), and thus it is a bit of a fallacy to expect that we, and the practice, will be the same day in and day out. Because the practice is different every day, we have something “new” to reflect on after each practice.

It may simply be the case that the activities aren’t right for you. If loving-kindness doesn’t seem to be increasing your compassion, try something else, like writing about a time when you felt like someone showed compassion toward you, or a time when you felt spontaneous compassion for another. It is important to be open to another possibility: Perhaps compassion practices aren’t what you need right now. The good news is that there are many varieties of different contemplative practices available that can help you to become more present and non-judgmental.

Establishing new habits takes time. Be patient and keep trying. One day, you might find yourself more open to suffering—and more capable of addressing it—than you’ve ever been before.

Jain Activism - Reflections from the Parliament of World Religions

By Parth Savla, Priti Shah, Nikhil Bumb, Sonali Vakharia, and Neal Daftary

These are the questions that arose when a group of Jain professionals gathered one evening after a four day gathering that brought together roughly 10,000 people from over 70 countries and 30 religious and spiritual traditions.

The group entailed members that had volunteered in various capacities – locally and nationally – and had seen the trends of the Jain community from the examples of family members who had been leaders themselves.

There was an excitement in the air from the process of learning and exposure that had transpired. Along with it, an excitement for reflective activism which could be ignited built upon the already incredible accomplishments of the Jain community over the past century in North America.

The event was the Parliament of World Religions Conference held in Salt Lake City, UT a five-day interfaith conference including 7 plenaries and over 1,000 smaller workshops and panels. The Parliament, founded in 1893 in Chicago, is an attempt to create a global dialogue of faiths. It was also the first time that Jainism was brought to the west. Originally the most acclaimed Jain Priest, Muni Atmaramji, was invited to represent Jainism. When it became evident Rev. Muni Atmaramji could not attend, his disciple, lawyer Virchand Raghavji Gandhi, was deputed to represent Jainism.

This year, the 2018 Parliament of World Religions conference will be held in Toronto from Nov 1 – 7. In the spirit of creating awareness and encouraging you to consider attending, we would like to share with you the experience, insights, and reflections from Young Adult Jain Professionals that were part of the Emergent Young Leaders Program.

The theme for the 2015 conference was “Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity” and it featured a long lineup of renowned scholars including Dr. Jane Goodall, Dr. Karen Armstrong, and Nobel Peace Laureate *Mairead Maguire.

The participants included 60+ members of the Jain faith, including the five of us – Nikhil Bumb, Neal Daftary, Parth Savla, Priti Shah, and Sonali Vakharia.

As youth ambassadors of Jainism, we were incredibly humbled and enlightened by the experience. Coming into the Parliament, we did not know what to expect or what to take away, but we left feeling enriched and empowered.

The stated mission of the Council of the Parliament of the World’s Religions is “to cultivate harmony among the world’s religious and spiritual communities and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a peaceful, just and sustainable world.” With so much hate and violence around the world, particularly in light of the recent events in Paris, Mali, and Beirut (to name just a few), it was very refreshing to attend the largest gathering of for interfaith dialogue and collaborative efforts to protect the interests of mankind. Collectively, we have never seen so much compassion, love, and genuine openness for one another’s faith.

Having grown up as Jain Americans in the US, the five of us took some time to reflect and ask ourselves, “Individually, how do we as Jains apply Jain values in our day-to-day lives? Collectively, are we as a community actively expressing the relevance and application of Jain values as it relates to social and systemic issues?”

We also asked ourselves what the Jain form of “activism” would look like, if any? As practitioners of Jain philosophy, what would our participation or response be to social movements (such as the Arab Spring of 2010, the Occupy Movement of 2011-2013, or the recent hate crime in San Bernardino, CA)



Individually, many of us serve others in our own way on so many levels. However, there seems to be a void; why aren’t we all working together to serve others? Collectively, we could accomplish a lot.

Challenges we see:

- As Jains we may be “too comfortable,” “misery-free,” and “complacent” with our lives. What motivation is this creating for us to do more? Many of us may also interpret the Kaal Chakra, which is a time cycle showing that our world is heading towards more and more misery, that the miseries that are occurring are bound to occur so we cannot change this.
- As Jains, we have never experienced a major crisis. While Jains have existed for nearly 4,000 years, we have not recently experienced major crisis such as genocide, mass extinction, or political prejudice. The closest experience was the struggle for attaining of minority status in India.
- Karma, an excuse for inaction. There tends to be a view among some conventional lines of thinking that those who experience suffering do so due to their own karma and so to “take a stand” against injustice is thwarting this unfolding.
- Jainism is un-relatable to our lives. Some Jains may feel the limited scope of Jainism learned in homes or the technical, basic teachings learned in Jain centers/Jain conventions is inapplicable or unrelated to their everyday lives. While being a “practicing Jain” can foster becoming a “good person”, there is often lack of dialogue in how Jain principles can be implemented in business ethics, policy-making, animal farming, to name a few.
- Jains are not perceived as agents of change in recent times. Historically, Jain Tirthankars were not only spiritual visionaries, but social activists. They radically shifted social conventions such as promoting vegetarianism and stopping animal sacrifice in early Indian kingdoms, to standing up for land and environmental rights as. Virchand Ragavji Gandhi addressed the latter when he represented Jainism at the first Parliament of World Religions Conference in 1893.

What we see is possible

Bringing the Jain youth and young adult communities together in creating spaces for discussion, dialogue, and activism, which promote and embody non-violence, peace, compassion, and tolerance towards all living beings. Jains and the Jain community are recognized as thoughtful, caring, agents of change on organizational and system levels.

As youth ambassadors, we are calling for our generation to make that shift and “act locally, while thinking globally”.

*we are
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globally”*

Here are some of our main takeaways from our collective Parliament experience as Jain youth and the call to action we would like for us all to consider taking on in our own lives:

1. Participation is about more than awareness. It needs action through involvement. As members of a minority faith that most people have never heard of, Jains often feel our role at these forums should be focused on building awareness. The Parliament wasn't just about bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together and learning. The real power of such a platform is about getting into action with that collaboration. This was emphasized throughout the Parliament.
- Obstacle to overcome: Jain sessions can be very technical, communicating the detailed principles, history, and scriptures of Jainism, with references to applying those aspects in our basic, everyday lives.
 - Areas of concern: The Parliament highlighted five major themes – gender equality and women's empowerment; income inequality and the wealth gap; climate change; war, violence, and hate; and emerging young leaders. At its core, Jainism is deeply integrated with these issues and can contribute immense learnings and solutions on a broader scale.



- What can you do? Broadening awareness is a first and important step at these events. In order to make meaningful impact while reinforcing Jain ideals, we would like to see Jains actively engaging and participating in the discussion on these various social issues. As advocates of non-violence (ahimsa) and believers of equality among all sentient beings (anekantvad), it is our social responsibility to advance these issues and to be more engaged and connected in mainstream outlets. Let's not just be aware! Let's take action!

2. As future leaders, we need to set aside our emotions and address problems objectively. In his address at the "War, Violence, and Hate" plenary, Dr. Tariq Ramadan, European Union advisor and Professor of Contemporary Islamic Studies at Oxford University, emphasized that if we really want to make headway against issues such as hate crimes, religious discrimination, violence, and war, we must remove emotions from the equation. Emotions cloud our judgement and prevent us from getting to a real solution.

- Obstacle to overcome: Jainism can be strict in its practice and it can be uncertain on how it can be applied to modern day society.
- Area of concern: Dr. Ramadan's philosophy applies not just to issues like hate and violence, but across problems at the individual- and community-levels as well. It is more constructive to understand history of the systemic issues which breed violence rather than judging the individuals or "victims" of such systems.
- What can you do? Jainism is both a scientific and also practical religion that can adapt to changing societies without losing its core values. Anekantvad teaches us that everyone has a voice and something to contribute of value. We should remember and stress that objectivity in dealing with any and all issues.

3. Activism starts at the grassroots level, with you.

- Obstacle to overcome: As youth, how can we change the world for the better and contribute positively towards these movements?
- Area of concern: Parliament speakers addressed critical topics like climate change, income inequality, discrimination, wasteful consumption, war and terrorism. To hear these speakers was inspiring and electrifying, and at the same time intimidating and daunting.
- What can you do? Start with yourself. Mahatma Gandhi's motto was: "Be the change you wish to see in the world." In a panel on "What Would Gandhi Do? Moral Strategies for Sustainability, Peace, and Justice," Fresno State Assistant Professor of Religious Studies Veena Howard noted that "the champion of non-violence and self-discipline put his faith in the common human being rather than the power of an empire."

Change begins with us, not just by talking but by doing and actively making changes in our own life. We can then be the change locally, stepping up at the community level to help lead change in a slightly broader audience, and eventually working our way up to larger scales.

4. We need to show up set an example by our deeds, not just our creed. It's easy for us to sit back, comment, and complain about these platforms or similar events.

- Obstacle to overcome: There may be a generational and cultural gap between the ascetic teachers and newer Jain population. While the Saminiji, Maharaj, Sadhu, and Sadhvi help us connect spiritually and help us expose us to the deeper thoughts of Jainism, at times, it may be hard to understand how this can relate to our everyday lives. This concern seemed to be expressed at the Parliament as well as similar conventions.
- Area of concern: As fewer and fewer Jains understand the connection between the learning from the ascetics (and overall Jain expert teachings) to modern day society, Jainism may dissipate and disappear in future generations. Jainism has valuable scientific and practical teachings to give to society so it would be disheartening to lose this.

- What can you do? We must create a new paradigm, using the resources presently available that will engage and generate interest on the surface level. We need to find a way to bridge this gap by using the principles they have taught us and apply it not just internally, but externally as well.

The responsibility is also on us. If we don't vocalize our opinions and perspectives, we can't expect for them to be known. Often we assume someone else will raise the issue, that it isn't "our place," or that we won't be heard. Part of the problem may also be a misunderstanding on how to interpret Jainism and apply our principles to issues in our daily lives, or even broader social issues. Let's avoid this complacency! It's likely that if you are thinking about these topics, so is someone else. Use the resources presently available to you to express how Jainism impacts your daily life. Your actions will create a new paradigm that will engage and generate interest amongst others that can then stimulate wider action and change.

After five days immersed in a swirl of speakers, music, art and dance from religious traditions across the world, we emerged relaxed and rejuvenated. Ultimately, the Parliament taught us that religion can be an incredibly positive force in promoting change and bringing peace to the world. We live in a global village and we should strive to stay open-minded and to live with mutual respect, harmony, and optimism. At the same time, we have a responsibility to take an active stance in applying the principles of our own faith and embracing the value and practice of interfaith education and dialogue to create meaningful spaces for activism.

Let us practice peace AND action, starting at the individual level thereby influencing communities. Participating in the Parliament renewed our spirits and sparked a fire, deep within our souls, to take a stand against these very issues that promote injustice and inequality. Sharing our learnings from the Parliament was the first step. Stay tuned for opportunities to join conversations on meaningful topics.

We find that these sentiments hold true in today's world of 2018 as much as they did when we attended the conference. We encourage you to consider the points mentioned above as well as attending this year's Parliament of World Religions Conference Nov 1-7 2018. We look forward to having you join us!



CHILDREN'S CORNER

King Shrenik and Anathi Muni

(Adopted from JAINA Story Book)

King Shrenik of Magadha set out for a forest outing on a horse. As he entered the Madikuli garden, he saw a saintly person in meditation under a tree. He was surprised at the sight of such a pleasant face with a glowing

forehead and was impressed by the monk. The King wondered as to what heart-rendering and shocking experiences of worldly life might have led him to forsake the joys and pleasures of a youthful life and resort to a saintly way of life dedicated to penance.



The King bowed before the monk and asked politely, "I request you kindly set to rest the doubt agitating my mind. What has compelled you to take diksha in the prime of your life? As I look at the unusual beauty of your body and your youthful age, I am prompted to ask as to what compelled you to forsake your family, wealth and dear ones at such a young age."

In a loving tone the monk said, "O King, I was absolutely lonesome and a helpless being in this world. There was neither any protector, nor friend. I abjured the worldly life because of such helplessness."

King Shrenik laughed and said, “O monk, if you feel so insecure and unprotected (anath), I shall be your protector (nath). Moreover, a person like me as your protector will make all the difference and there shall be no problem in having sincere friends, near ones, and dear ones. In their company you shall be able to enjoy all the pleasures like wealth, power and peace. Please renounce this sainthood you accepted at a youthful age and come with me to my grand pleasure place.”

To this the monk said, “O King of Magadha, how shall you be my protector when you yourself are unprotected? I also, as you do, possessed invaluable wealth and riches, but once when I had severe pain in my eyes and burning sensation in my limbs, none could help me.

My preceptors who were expert in various therapies came to help and heal me.

These specialists treated with four types of therapy including vomiting, laxatives etc, but they could not heal me.

My father disbursed and offered lots of wealth but I could not be cured.

My mother was weeping for me but she also could not relieve me of the pain.

My younger and elder brothers also could not help me.

My sisters also could not heal or help me.

My beloved and faithful wife could only weep for me. She renounced all the ornaments did not use food, water and cosmetics in my presence. In spite of all this, she could not make me free from sufferings.

I was helpless. They were helpless too. With a view to avoiding such helplessness, I decided to take dikshā which, I thought, was an unfailing remedy to all my pains. I made up my mind to renounce the world if my pain subsided that night.

To my utter surprise the pain started subsiding immediately. By the time the day dawned, the pain had vanished completely. I was perfectly healthy. As per my decision earlier that night, I took dikshā and thus one who was totally unprotected (a-nath) found his protector (nath) in Bhagawan Mahavir.”

Deeply impressed by the preaching's of Anathi Muni, King Shrenik decided to seek refuge with Bhagawan Mahavir.

MORAL:

This story of Anathi Muni is an example of “Asharan Bhavana”. It shows that a person suffering from worldly pains and tortures, despite his numerous near and dear ones and immense riches, can feel unprotected and helpless too. A person having his soul awakened is indeed a “sa-nath”, a protected person forever. Scriptures say that having attained the ultimate state of spiritual bliss, Anathi Muni achieved siddhi pad, the ever-lasting state of being sa-nath.

Jain Center of Southern California goes Vegan

By Pravin K Shah



Pravin K. Shah is a chairperson of JAINA Education Committee and advisor to JAINA YJA and YJP youth organizations. He is also a member of the Harvard University Pluralism Project Advisory Council and director of Triangle Interfaith Association, Advisor to Uberoi Foundation of Dharmic tradition. He is an Electrical Engineer, retired from IBM and lives in Raleigh North Carolina, USA.

The Executive Committee of the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) at Los Angeles (Buena Park CA) announced on the Mahavir Janma Kalyanak day (April 8, 2018) that the Jain society will serve only Jain Vegan food (vegetarian food without dairy products and root vegetables) at all future programs of the Jain Center. The implementation phase in period is year from April to December 2018.



Also on Mahavir Jayanti Day, it served complete Vegan food to more than 1000 people who attended the Mahavir Jayanti program in the evening. All members were very appreciative of this action. This is the first Jain Center in America that has taken such a bold step on its own without support from Jain ascetics and popular Jain scholars of India. This is a history making decision for all Jains of North America as well.

After hearing the news, I called the president Dr. Jasvantbhai Modi and talked to him at length about this announcement. Dr. Modi is a newly elected first-time president of the Jain

Center. In such a short time period he was able to convince the majority of its 15 executive committee members to support the Vegan diet resolution presented to JCSC committee.

Dr. Modi's main point was that Jains should not consume dairy products due to animal cruelty (Jainism's main tenet is non-violence), and its detrimental effects on human health. We should serve only vegan food at our Center and this will provide a good example to other Jain Centers of North America. We need to educate members of our community about why we should consume only vegan food. This way our members, not only at the Jain Center, but at their homes also consume vegan food. The resolution was passed by over whelming majority of the executive committee. I was extremely happy to feel his enthusiasm in implementing Vegan food resolution.

History Making Jain Center – JCSC, Buena Park, CA

The Los Angeles Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) consists of more than 2000 community members. It is one of the largest and history making Jain Center of North America.

- It is a birth place of the Federation of JAINA that occurred in 1981. The creation of JAINA was inspired by Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji and Acharya Shri Sushilmuniji.
- The Los Angeles Jain Center is a home to a priceless, historical and more than 100-years old replica of a temple similar to the Palitana Temple. The replica is on display in the main lobby of the Cultural Complex. The assembled structure, weighing nearly 10,000 lbs measures 15 ft x 20 ft x 35 ft high, is carved out of teakwood. The structure has elaborately carved columns, wall panels, doors, a dome, two curved staircases and two ornate jarukhas (enclosed balconies).
- Serving only Jain Vegan food at the Center is another major history making event that occurred in 2018.

Our heartiest congratulation to the president Dr. Jasvantbhai Modi, his supporting executive committee members and the members of the history making Jain Center (JCSC) of Los Angeles.



Gurudev Chitrabhanuji's Mission

After confirming the news, I called Shri Gurudev Chitrabhanuji in Mumbai and talked to Smt Pramodaben. For about last 15 years Gurudev's full time mission was to promote Veganism among Jain communities across USA, India and other places of the world. Shri Chitrabhanuji was extremely happy and joyful to hear this great news from Smt Pramodaben (Gurudev is now 96 years old and cannot communicate over the phone). He has felt that his tireless effort to promote Veganism finally produced a great result in America.

Jain Center of Chicago, which will be celebrating its 25th temple anniversary in June 2018, will honour Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji by installing his bust at the Center. We earnestly request the executive committee of Chicago Jain Center to serve only Vegan Food during 25th year celebration function. This will be real honour to Gurudev Chitrabhanuji's mission and work.

Various JAINA Committees' Work on Veganism

For the past 10 to 20 years, several JAINA committees (YJA, YJP, Ahimsak Eco Vegan Committee and Jaina Education Committee) and several Jain Vegan WhatsApp groups promote Veganism across USA, Canada, India and around the world. During this time, these committees have educated few thousands Jains who practice Veganism in their daily lives.

- For the last 10 to 15 years, YJA convention has served 95%+ vegan food, and used environmental friendly paper products for their national conventions. Several young speakers were invited to speak on Veganism.
- Ahimsak Eco Vegan Committee is a resource center for Veganism and Ecology related literature,
- Jaina Education Committee is fully committed to the practice vegan way of life. It prepared all new Pathashala books about 13 years go and dedicated to the people who are committed to live vegan way of life. All Pathashala teachers' conferences and Jain Education workshops conducted at various places serve only Jain Vegan food.
- The education committee has published the Book of compassion which consists sever articles related to animal cruelty, Veganism, Environmental protection, and complete elimination of animal products from Jain rituals.

Vegan Movement at UK and India

Shri Digambar Jain Association (SDJA), a 400 member society of London, declared in September 2014 that they will serve only Jain Vegan meals to the members at any Jain society function.

Jain Vegan Group in UK is very active in promoting Vegan way of life across UK. Please visit its website www.jainvegans.org to review their activities.

Jain Vegan Transition and Veganize Jain Monks and Nuns WhatsApp groups of India are very active promoting Veganism. Few Jain Swetambar and Digambar monks are actively participating in the Jain Vegan Movement of India.

There are many online resources that elaborate on cruelty in the dairy industry. One such resource is an article titled "8 Cruel Standard Practices of The Dairy Industry" published at: <https://www.animalequality.net/node/742>

(If you would like to provide feedback about this article, write to jaindigestpublication@gmail.com or us the link below.
<https://jainaedu.blogspot.com/2018/04/hats-off-to-jain-center-of-southern.html>

2018 YJA Convention Reconnecting with Our Roots

By Chintav Shah & Jinen Shah
2018 YJA Convention Co-Chairs

With July coming soon, the 2018 YJA Convention Committee has put in countless hours creating the best Convention yet. So far, it has been an incredible experience to see 37 hard-working young Jains and an additional 50 subcommittee members from around the country come together to brainstorm how to incorporate Jain principles into events, activities, engaging talks, and more. While each committee has a different focus, our number one goal is to enable Jain youth from all over America (and the world) to learn, reflect, and connect.

On the first day of Convention, we welcome new attendees with various Ice Breakers to meet those who will end up becoming their lifelong friends. For returning attendees, this Convention is an opportunity to reconnect with the many friends they have made at previous Conventions. During the Daytime sessions, attendees will enter the minds of speakers with diverse backgrounds, engage in discussions on how Jainism is applied in the modern day, and work on projects where they can make an impact in the world. In addition, two exciting events will return to YJA with both the Jain Academic Bowl and Jains in Action: From the Ground Up. Here, youth will showcase their Jain knowledge and create projects that solve pressing issues in the Jain community. On top of delving into the principles and shared ideals of the 24 Tirthankars, we also keep the youth engaged with fantastic social events throughout the evenings. Every year, we reach into our culture with a fun Garba & Raas, showcase our stars with the YJA Talent Show, and close out with a celebratory Formal - each with its own theme.

Our goal is to make this Convention unique, educational, and memorable. With the Convention theme - Reconnecting with Our Roots - we want attendees to reach deep into the history of our past and discover how our individual and collective roots hold not only a map of how to live, but also the key to unlocking the purpose within our lives. We hope attendees take an honest look at their day to day lives and connect the stories and ideals as told by Mahavir Swami 2500 years ago to create better futures. And finally, we want this Convention to open the eyes of each attendee towards the power they hold in changing not only themselves, but the communities and the world around them.

Every aspect of Convention planning, from the decorations and keynote speakers to the local volunteering and fundraising activities, is essential to its success! Having attended YJA and JAINA Conventions for over a decade, we both recognize that each one comes with a unique memory that changed us forever. As a way to pass on what we've learned, we hope to ensure the 2018 YJA Convention is an unforgettable experience for every attendee, so that he or she will continue to attend Conventions in the future and stay engaged with the Jain Way of Life for years to come. All in all, we thank everyone who has been involved with Convention planning and we're looking forward to seeing you there!





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Jain Delegation Meets President of India

(A news article published in “Janmabhumi” in Gujarati.

Translation provided by Prakash Mody, Toronto, Canada)

Jain World – Manilal Gala, Janmabhumi, Mumbai, Friday, April 20, 2018 Page 5

Jains request President for Establishing Ahimsa University in India

Delegation from Institute of Jainology met Ramnath Kovind

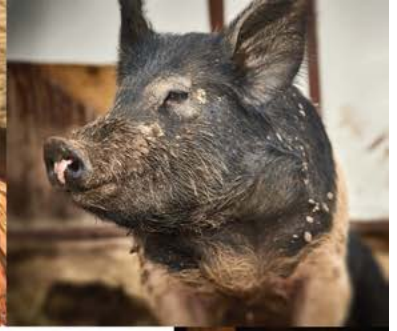
Institute of Jainology, India and London (UK) delegation discussed with President Ramnath Kovind about few important issues on Monday, April 16, 2018. Delegation consisted of Nemu Chandaria (London), Dr. Kumarpal Desai, Gunvantbhai Barvaliya, Maheshbhai Gandhi, H. C. Parekh (Retired I. T. Commissioner, India), Arvindbhai (Lalachand Hirachand Group), Rajkumar Jain (Delhi) and other invitees.



In the context of Jain diaspora, information about Jain religious activities going on abroad were provided. President was presented with the Catalogue of Collections of Manuscripts at the British Library, 3-volumes published by the Institute. while requesting the President, delegation mentioned that in 1893 Parliament of World Religions in Chicago, along with Swami Vivekananda, Virchand Raghavji Gandhi had gone as representing Jain religion. He had delivered more than 500 lectures and rejuvenated the Indian Culture. His life and literature should find a place in educational curriculum.

On behalf of the Institute, signed by Nemubhai Chandaria, Kumarpal Desai, Gunvantbhai Barvaliya and Maheshbhai Gandhi, the Memorandum was submitted, an appeal was made for an establishment of Ahimsa University in India. An appeal also included that copies of Jain manuscripts globally be made available to scholars for research in India.

President while concluding the discussion, mentioned that he has visited Jain Pilgrimages and met Jain Saints. He said that I have great respect for Jain principles and in your future projects if you require my advice, I will surely help.



Jivdaya in America

Founded on The Principles of Ahimsa
by a Young Jain Family in 2015



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20th Biennial convention



Kindly Save the Dates July 4th - July 7th, 2019



The JAINA Executive Committee, the Jain Center of Southern California, the Jain Temple of Los Angeles and the 2019 JAINA Convention Board are excited to invite you, your family and your friends from around the world to join us at JAINA Convention 2019. Please come and explore with us "Jain Religion in the 21st Century" next July 4th-7th, 2019 in Southern California at the **Ontario Convention Center in Ontario, California.**

- Low registration fees
- Registration opens early August!
- Religious and Spiritual Discourses
- Inspirational and Impactful Keynote Speakers
- International Jain Leaders - "Diaspora"
- Interfaith Round Table
- Performances by Professional Artist
- Jains Got Talent
- Jain Academic Bowl
- JAINA Awards
- Garba-Raas
- Delicious Jain and Vegan Food



Jain Center of Southern California



Universal Studios



Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum



Cultural Program



Garba Night



Disneyland

Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for further information, Also look out for our invitation in coming months to participate in the exhilarating cultural show to showcase the talents of your Jain center.