

Journey to Enlightenment

On the Wings of Light and Love

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

Volume Two

**Journey to Enlightenment
On the Wings of Light and Love
Volume Two**

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

**Edited by:
Nirmala Hanke**

Published by:
CreateSpace
Charleston, South Carolina
www.CreateSpace.com

ISBN 10: 1-4849-0546-6
ISBN 13: 978-14849-0546-3
May, 2013



Lighthouse Center, Inc.
740 East Shore Drive
PO Box 645
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189
www. LighthouseCenterInc.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All of us at the Lighthouse Center, Inc. are forever grateful to Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji for his warmth and wisdom, for showing us the way by his lifelong example of Ahinsa and Reverence for all Life. Every year we look forward to his visits to the Lighthouse Center, and many of us have traveled on pilgrimage with him to India, or have visited him in New York City. We treasure his down to earth stories and we are inspired by him and by Pramodaji, his wife, to do our best each day to “be who we really are”. In this book are all his spiritual messages, talks given at the Lighthouse and elsewhere, that have been in *The Lighthouse Beacon* newsletter since 2003. Thank you, Guruji.

Many thanks to Richard Rohit Smoot for preparing the book for the publisher, with all the technical expertise involved, and for all the *Beacon* newsletters over the years.

Thanks to Becky Nirali Kleinschmidt for providing the cover design.

Thanks to the Lighthouse Board of Directors and the entire Lighthouse family for their support and enthusiasm for this project.

Nirmala Hanke
Editor

A special thank you goes to Rameshbhai
and Mayaben Dedhia for financially
supporting the publishing of this book.

We are blessed with their generosity.



Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

CONTENTS

Preface	6
Biography of Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji	7
1988 Letter from Catherine Florida	9
1996 Tribute from Chetana Catherine Florida	10
Messages	
1. Grow Flowers	12
2. Story of Nandeshen	17
3. The Changeless Beneath the Changes	19
4. The Story of Charity from the Heart	22
5. The Great Soul of Ahinsa	24
6. The Way of Ahinsa	26
7. Giving Priority to the Breath	30
8. Are We “Antique” Collectors?	32
9. The Presence of God	35
10. Celebrate Your Day	38
11. Make a Commitment to Yourself	41
12. Live by the Day	45
13. The Freedom of Choice	48
14. Four Steps to Reach the State	52
15. Jivadaya	56
16. Karma	58
17. Six Steps to Evolution	62
18. Life is Liberation	66
19. Managing Life with Meditation	70
20. Paryushana: A Week of Forgiveness	75
21. The Nature of Mind and Truth	77
22. Ahinsa is Life	80
23. Feel the Meaning of the Word	84
24. Five Steps to Healthy Living	90
25. Talks at the Lighthouse	95
26. Happy New Year	97
27. Your Attitude is the Only Outcome	98
28. MILK	101

PREFACE

It has been ten years since volume one of *Journey to Enlightenment on the Wings of Light and Love* was compiled and published under the guidance of Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji. That volume combined the spiritual messages of Chitrabhanuji and his first apostle, Chetana Catherine Florida, founder of the Lighthouse Center, before her transcendence in 2003. This second volume provides all the messages Chitrabhanuji has shared in the Lighthouse Center's *Beacon* newsletter since 2003.

In addition to the messages, we have included a brief bio of Chitrabhanuji, to give you a bird's eye view of his remarkable life of self-realization and service. This is followed by a letter written by Catherine Florida to Chitrabhanuji in 1988, inviting him to come to the Lighthouse Center, and asking him if she might be given a spiritual name. Then as Chetana she wrote a tribute in honor of his 74th birthday and 25 year anniversary of coming to America.

Chitrabhanuji is now almost 91 years old, and is as vibrant and clear a visionary as ever. Those fortunate enough to know him in person, experience his gentle and profound presence, and treasure his every word, his every expression of compassion and vision of how our lives can be, as we continue to grow in peace and awareness on our spiritual paths. We at the Lighthouse have always looked forward to Chitrabhanuji's talks and messages for guidance and reflection, to be read and pondered again and again, as our understanding and life experience deepens. May his messages gathered here be a help, a comfort, an inspiration to all.

Biography - Gurudev Chitrabhanuji

In 1970 Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu became the first Jain Master in 2,500 years to leave India and come to the West. In those days, such an act was very risky because of the ancient Jain injunction against monks crossing water or traveling by vehicle, or by any other means except barefoot.

At the time, Gurudev was spiritual leader to hundreds of thousands, in fact, millions of Jains around India. To understand why such a man might leave such a position of authority and security, one must understand his life and his message.

The Jain philosophy is one of India's most ancient schools of thought, scholars often tracing its history to prehistory times. For the many Jains in both East and West who have benefited from the teaching, it is an eternal philosophy of Reverence for all Life and Relativity in Thinking.

Gurudev's life has been an eventful one, yet always guided by a quest for the spiritual truth. He studied psychology in Bangalore and was involved in Gandhiji's Satyagraha.

At the age of twenty, he became a Jain monk. During his twenty-eight years of monkhood, he spent five years in silence and meditation, speaking only to his guru. During this time, he went far down the path of purifying his consciousness. He studied Sanskrit and the various philosophies of India, as well as the rest of the world. He also founded the Divine Knowledge Society of Bombay, which produces humanitarian and educational assistance to the poor and needy.

His discourses were very popular, often drawing crowds in the tens of thousands to hear his words of wisdom. As a result, he was invited to attend the Second and Third Spiritual Conferences, held respectively in Geneva in 1970 and Harvard Divinity School in 1971. It was at this time Gurudev realized that it was time to take this opportunity of sharing the ancient message of Reverence for All Life and Relativity in Thinking, and so accepted the invitations. This would certainly put his authority and security at risk. (Remember, after the Original World Parliament of Religions a century ago, Swami Vivekananda and Shree Virchand Raghavchand Gandhi were greeted in India with garlands of shoes.) Nonetheless, it was time to share a secret too well kept from a world desperately in need of a more compassionate direction for mankind.

In the west, Gurudev has spoken at many colleges and universities, including Yale, Princeton and Cornell, and worked with many church groups drug addiction centers and international-minded groups. He was the first to address the United Nations on Ahimsa and has served as founder-president of World Fellowship of Religions in America. He has many books in print in India and in the West which have also helped to spread his message. They include *The Dynamics of Jain Meditation*; *Realize What You Are*; *The Psychology of Enlightenment: Meditations on the Seven Energy Centers*; *Twelve Facets of Reality*, and about ten more in English and twenty in Gujarati and Hindi.

In 1981, by the ocean at San Diego, Gurudev attained the enlightened state of self-awareness, which enabled him to purify further his own consciousness and life and enhance his present global mission of Reverence for All Life. Being a world traveler, centers all over the world regard Gurudev as their spiritual advisor: in America, Canada, Europe, Africa, Asia and India. He is the founder of the Jain Meditation International Center in New York City, in Manhattan, where he has weekly talks and meditation, and he is spiritual advisor to the Lighthouse Center, Inc. in Whitmore Lake, Michigan.

“Jain,” Gurudev explains, “is not a religion or an identity, but has its roots in the Sanskrit verb ‘ji,’ meaning ‘to conquer’.” This conquest is very much the result of a personal spiritual struggle against our enemies of anger, jealousy, ego and greed. A “Jina” is one of those enlightened beings who has conquered these inner enemies and thus has seen through the negative clouds which obstruct our natural state of enlightenment.

Gurudev has through the years helped many come closer to their own true, divine nature, by helping them let go of their own inner enemies, through meditation. Thus, by his many talks, guidance, communications and consultations, he is helping to bring about a world full of individuals who realize that compassion for the universe begins with compassion for self. The New York Times in 1973 wrote, “Chitrabhanu... is no evangelist seeking to convert followers to Jainism.” He encourages them, “to become strong enough in body, mind and soul to take charge of their own spiritual journey,” and use their energies for self-realization and for the benefit of all through Ahimsa and Reverence for All Life.

1988 Letter to Chitrabhanu

By Catherine Florida, Whitmore Lake, MI

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu
New York, New York

Dear Gurudev:

Even though you personally would not remember meeting me, since I have only been physically in your presence twice, I do remember joyfully being around you. Your teachings have made a profound meaning in my life and the lives of others. I first heard about you many years ago from Mitra, who was lecturing for a retreat on the chakra meditations. I was already doing a mantra meditation without full realization of what I was doing. After the weekend retreat, I studied the tapes on the meditations. After your books came out, I studied your books. Before this, I was doing lectures in Michigan for a program called Do Something Different, a program which accentuated life from a metaphysical approach. A high school where I lectured for one night then asked me to do a series of classes on ESP Development. I accepted and that is when I started teaching from the direct experience of meditation to the full information from your books. Many students come back and forth in my life to say how much they have gained from your teachings.

I have taught small groups of students for the past nine years from your books. We also hold a regularly-scheduled once-a-month meeting for intensive meditation where we spend 20 minutes on each chakra.

The reason I write to you at this time is because I have heard that you will be in Michigan on July 8, 9, and 10, 1988. One of the students who ordered the books for this last class mentioned this to me. There are about 50 to 70 students who would be so honored if you could take time from your very busy schedule to meet with them for a couple of hours one of those days when you will be in Michigan. They wait so anxiously to hear from you as so do I.

When I went to India two years ago, I realized that I really wanted an Indian name or spiritual name. I would be so honored if you would feel comfortable in giving me a spiritual name. I don't want this to sound forward or bold on my part, but I do not know how else to ask.

I am thanking you in advance for all that you have brought into the universe at this time.

Catherine

A Tribute to Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

Summer 2006

By Chetana (Catherine Florida) 26 July 1996

Dearest Gurudevji, Pramodaben and All Special Guests,

I feel so honored and blessed to be part of this celebration and tribute to Gurudevji for his 74th birthday as well as his 25th year in the United States. We are all here tonight not only to celebrate Gurudev's birthday and 25 years in America, but also we are here for another reason, regardless of who we are, where we have been or where we are going. The reason we are here is that we love Gurudev.

Each one of us has, in many different ways, experienced Gurudev's love and guidance and through his love and guidance we have become more than we ever thought we could be. For me personally, Gurudev has been my Spiritual Father, mentor and friend. He has loved me when I felt I couldn't love myself, when I was angry with myself, when I felt I didn't do the spiritually best I could do. He was and is always there, giving love and light to help me through some of the "dark" time of my life's journey.

Each of us here tonight, I believe, has felt his love and understanding, for he has the kind of love that does not start and stop with the "seasons" or "reasons" of mankind; his love goes on and on to touch all those open to receive it. He has a way of making everyone feel loved and special for who they are, just as they are. Sometimes we get lost in the darkness of our minds and temporarily we forget, we have spiritual amnesia about who we are and how special we are. When that happens, Gurudev astrally, mentally and physically sends us his unconditional love, which then gives us the light to see clearly again who we really are.

Gurudev's messages of Jainism: "Reverence for All Life" and "Ahimsa: Non-Violence" would probably not have been heard here if Gurudev had not come to America in 1971. For me those two messages alone have changed my whole thinking process about living life. When I first met Gurudev, Reverence for All Life and Ahimsa were new and fascinating concepts for me inasmuch as I had come from a meat-eating, prejudiced, drinking background. The more he talked, the more I listened and the more I realized that this was indeed what I needed to have in my life. This was what was missing from my life, this was the Spiritual Path I had been seeking.

Since then I have learned so much about what is “truth.” And what I have learned from Gurudev I have shared with many, many Westerners. The Lighthouse Center’s mailing list is over 700, and over 1,500 people have attended the introductory meditation lectures. And that means that many, many Westerners have been touched by Gurudev’s teachings, either directly through him or indirectly through the Lighthouse Center and me.

In closing, I would like to propose a spiritual toast to Gurudevji, and that is: As he has blessed us one and all with love and light, so let us in turn give him blessings of love and light so tht he stays with us here on earth until he is 100++.

Happy Birthday, Gurudevji, and Happy 25 Years in America.

Love and Light, Always,
Chetana

Grow Flowers, Not Thorns

Fall 2003

A sick woman in a hospital was having lots of complaints, and the doctors tried to diagnose her illness. They took x-rays, MR!, and numerous other tests; still they could not find anything wrong with her. She spent so much money, so much time, and had so much agony, but there was no answer. A friend one day came to see her and brought sunflowers for her, which she placed in the window facing her. At night she slept and the next morning when she got up, she found that the flowers had changed their direction toward the sun. She could not understand why the flowers facing her in the evening were now facing the sun outside. She was wondering who might have come into her room during the night and changed the direction of the flowers. Meanwhile, when a nurse came, she asked her, "Have you changed the direction of my flowers when I was asleep?" She replied, "No." Yet, she continued to wonder who could have changed the direction. The nurse was wise and mature and she explained to her that sunflowers always change their face toward the light of the sun to grow and blossom. She now understood the secret of the sunflowers' beauty and freshness. This understanding changed her perception and thinking.

For the first time she saw that her eyes and her mind were focusing toward the negatives. She thought,

"All my life I go out and try to find what is wrong with the world, with my friends, and in my life. I am finding fault with everything that I have. Once I change the direction, it will make a great difference in my life. It is a simple question of direction." She also realized that to be happy or unhappy is not in God's hands; instead it is in her hands. We may assign the responsibility to God; we may find somebody on whom to throw the responsibility/our problems. So the woman changed her direction and perception. At the time she did not know that healing takes place in a positive approach to life.

In the book Crime and Punishment a characteristic of the mind is revealed.

"With a little shift of the mind ^{there is no} crime a man cannot commit." In the history of mankind the people who killed others were killed by others. ^{which}

Buddha and Mahavira gave blessings; they gave love, they gave life; and they received love, they received blessings, and they received life.

We have so many books for positive thinking, how to grow, and how to live; but what is lacking and missing is practice. The moment we decide to practice, it changes the color because the hidden dormant energy comes to the surface. As long as you do not bring the energy to the surface, you remain wishy-washy or you procrastinate, saying you will do it tomorrow. But tomorrow never comes. We are fortunate that we meditate and have inspiring thoughts that help us to change our direction and to act rather than procrastinate or blame others for our ills or depend on others for guidance. Most people do not make an effort to change the direction, but if they decide to change, they can take care of the ills and have healings.

A student asked the president of the University of Michigan what was the secret of his success. He answered in one sentence: “Grow antennas and not the horns“. To grow horns means to be animal-like; while to grow antennas means to have intelligence to pick up something wholesome and healthy. What a small thing, yet what a powerful statement! It is easy to be animal-like and go out and kill and create suffering for innumerable people. However, it is also easy to be a blessing to yourself and the world. But what is difficult may sound easy and what is easy may sound difficult with perverted thinking. To love and be kind to you and to others is a very easy thing but it is difficult to practice. To kill others, to be violent, to spread hate is very difficult but some people think it is easy. There are all kinds of people in this world. The country that had Albert Schweitzer also had Adolph Hitler. In the same country we see good people and we see killers. This is a world in which we are here to learn to do good things and not to be hateful and harmful.

We meditate on how to collect blessings and how to heal our wounds. We have so many wounds. Sometimes we have wounded ourselves in ignorance, and sometimes we have allowed ourselves to be wounded by others. These wounds do not allow us to have peace and health. In this new millennium, we have to find the ancient as well as the modern way to heal ourselves. In order to heal, it is essential to find a way to change our direction from negative thinking to positive thinking; and be selective in choosing our company and friends. We certainly need company; however, if we are with the wrong company, it can take us to such a wilderness that it would be very difficult to return. In Sanskrit, the word company is called satsangha, which means the company of good, permanence, love, peace, joy and positive behavior and thinking. This company influences us without our effort, an unspoken influence. Once you are in the right company and you are moving in a right direction, it influences you, it shapes you, it smoothes your sharp edges. It

gives a beautiful shape in your consciousness. It is like going to a beach where you see beautiful stones and pebbles. How smooth, round, shining stones they are. Who gave them these smooth, round shapes? With the company of water constantly rolling, the rough stones become pleasant pebbles. Satsangha is not only a human contact or a guru contact but also anything that takes you into yourself, that tunes you to the nature and to the beautiful thing inside, the serene state of consciousness and freedom from hate and being in a state of love. Only a person who has appreciation and compassion is able to experience the nectar of love. That is why we don't hold onto hate, revenge and mad negative feelings, and we avoid fighting and finding faults.

In April of 1970, I was in Geneva to attend The Second Spiritual Summit Conference. It was a unique, unforgettable, pleasant experience. Then I received an invitation from The University in France. My stay was in a hotel on the Riviera. I had a lecture in a family's home with several of their friends.

That was very pleasant. The family sent a limousine to drop me off at the hotel. It was about 11 O' clock at night and outside it was beautiful and the weather was good so I decided to go out walking on the Riviera; it was such a peaceful state of mind and health and environment: no noise, no people, no vehicles, only the rhythm of the water and a pleasant moon with a vast star-studded sky. It was a calm and clean atmosphere. Sitting on shore, and without any effort, naturally I glided into deep meditation. I experienced something I cannot describe in words. There are no words to describe it because to describe it you need language and sentences but when you glide into that state, there is no mind, just peace. It was a unique experience and when I consulted my watch, it was 1:30. For two and a half hours there was no eating, no party, no music, nothing. Yet I felt such an ecstasy and a soothing sensation in myself. I did not have such an experience even in a holy place. Such things happen maybe two or three times in one's life but if you try to repeat it, it cannot be repeated. It is a state of love, peace and freedom from any conditional boundaries, nation, cast, creed, man, woman, mine, yours. You go above these walls. One of my friends named Swami Ranganathan, who is 95 years old now, the head of Ram Krishna Mission, was also one of the speakers at the Conference. We met again in Munich. I could relate my feelings with him because he was a man of experience. He asked me if there was anything new. I told him that I experienced this joy and peace that I cannot describe. He said that if you can explain what you experienced it becomes the realm of the mind, while your experience was not in that category. The ecstasy you cannot

describe. In Hindi there is a saying: "I cannot be explained to somebody." A person who is deaf and mute had a beautiful dream and felt ecstasy and in the morning he was smiling so the other people were asking, "What was the dream which makes you so happy?" As he was remembering, he was becoming more and more happy. The dream he ruminates, and the dream gives him more joy and peace. It cannot be described, just as a deaf and mute person who feels happy cannot describe his dream. Swami said, "Still you can describe." I said, "Let us write something on a paper," and I wrote: "I want peace." My friend also wrote, "I want peace." I said take out 'want' and what remains is 'I peace.' I now take out I - then only peace remains. It is 'I' and 'want' that are creating trouble. However, if you take both out, you are in peace. My friend held my hand and said, "You are right." I said, "I want love, and again take out 'I' and 'want.' What remains is love. The problem is 'want' and 'I.'

I tell you, my friends, if you send an invitation for joy, you will end up having frustration. When you want something from somebody, you end up in frustration, as everybody is not capable to give something that you want. Frustration comes because we are carried away by want. Frustration is two words: 'I' and 'want.' The subject and the verb are 'I' and 'want.' There are two eyes: the 'I' of wisdom - which we call the third eye - and the 'I' of possessiveness. When we try to see with our possessive 'I,' then the eye of wisdom closes because the 'I' goes out and grasps outside things. The whole problem is being possessive. We are trying to possess something, even the person, a watch or a friend or anything. It makes you happy if I say, "I belong to you." You become happy.

The question is who belongs to whom? My friends, we are all individuals and we have come to make the best of the time, and to possess something is a mental sickness. Let go and everything is yours. The earth, the flowers, the sky and everything else is there but you want to possess it and that is where the problem arises. In this world not even Alexander the Great could hold on to anything. When he died, he kept two hands outside to show that he was going with empty hands. From Macedonia he went out to conquer the world and killed so many people, yet he did not take anything with him.

Due to Aristotle's company, at the last moment he could realize his error but it was too late. What belongs to you is your peace and love; for that you do not have to go anywhere. If a person decides that he wants to make this life better and see the beautiful sun and keep his direction to the light and go on directing his face toward wherever the sun arises - wherever the good things happen - then he will feel change and he will start seeing goodness and Godhood everywhere.

The Story of Nandeshen

Fall 2013

Transcribed by Nirmala Hanke

Every evening during Paryushana, the Forgiveness Festival, many of us went to the Jain Temple in Farmington Hills, to hear Gurudev Chitrabhanuji speak. As always, he told many stories from his own life and from the Jain tradition. One story in particular, the Story of Nandeshen (Nan-dee-shun) seemed to speak especially to us at the Lighthouse Center, and Gurudevji thought it would be good to share it with everyone. This is the story he told:

Nandeshen was very ugly; his eyes were small, his lips big and his body awkward. His parents did not like him, so he was living with some distant relatives. We have a saying “as ugly as Nandeshen”. All the people were ignoring him and he felt that if he had a chance, he would burn everyone because people were making fun of him, kids were putting their dogs on him. He wanted revenge. He was not able to think of anything else.

When you think badly about others, you will not be able to do any good. When you drink poison, you are the one who suffers, no one else suffers. But Nandeshen became so angry that one day he decided that there was no meaning to life. People who are angry do not enjoy life because the furnace is burning continuously. So he decided to commit suicide. He went to the well and wanted to jump in. He wanted to die but did not have the courage to die. He thought what to do. He was hesitant, to die or not to die.

And at that time a saint came and saw that he might commit suicide. So the saint came to him and asked, “Young man what are you doing?” This was the first time in his life that anyone had said any kind words to him. Everyone was treating him like an animal. For the first time he felt the friendship in the saint’s words. Friendship is full of miracles. The saint said, “Son, what are you doing, dropping a beautiful life into water?” These words touched him: this was the first time someone was communicating with him with compassion and good feelings. Then he said, “What can I do, I am ugly Nandeshen. Everybody calls me ugly.” The saint said, “You are beautiful. Come with me, I will show you how to become more beautiful”.

He asked him to do service. But what? “Help the old woman”. Nandeshen went and helped the old woman. The woman thanked him and asked him who he was. He said, “Ugly Nandeshen”. She said, “No you are very beautiful”. From that day, he started helping others. Soon, his name was on everyone’s lips and he became the talk of the town and everyone wanted to be with him. Why? Because of the service.

There is a story that somebody came to test him when he was sick. The angel came as an old and sick man. When Nandeshen picked him up, he pissed on him. Nandeshen thought “the poor fellow” and decided to help him more. The angel then realized the purity of the service that Nandeshen was providing and changed his form and bowed down to him for his service.

For 84 cycles Nandeshen will be remembered. Tirthankars are only remembered for 24 eons. His name will be remembered for 84 cycles.

The Changeless Beneath the Changes

Spring 2004

*Excerpts from “Twelve Facets of Reality: The Jain Path to Freedom”
by Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu*

When our mind does not see life as it is, it acts and reacts according to its preconceived concepts of what should be. It then uses all its energy to make these concepts concrete. When concepts become concrete, then life becomes rigid, like a crystal.

Whenever life becomes crystallized, there is no flow. Because of rigidity, we take stands. We go to the extent of fighting in order to maintain our bias. As a result, we become either temporarily happy or temporarily unhappy. If we watch ourselves at such times, we can see that we have lost pliability. In this way, we lose touch with the flow of life.

To help overcome ... rigidity and crystallized living, the first and greatest stumbling block to overcome and examine is *trushna*, or craving. Craving arises in your unawareness when you do not see an object as a thought crystal but, rather, as a means to gratify your desire. Then you put all your energy into getting it. Sometimes you never get it, and sometimes you do. But in any case, the time comes when you have to leave it. If you are aware when you have it in your palm, you look at it and smile at yourself, saying, “Is this the thing for which I have used so much energy to get? For this I have spent my energy?”

In order to understand the nature of reality, we have to see what is real without distorting or hiding it. We have to remove all the outside wrappings which are created by our mind. The mind creates many beautiful phrases and mirages. It likes to hide reality with glossy coverings. Like the deer who runs toward a mirage of water when it is thirsty, we too are in a frenzy to get that which is merely an illusion. If you want to enjoy the freshness of life, you must shed your coverings. Words, concepts, beliefs, crystallized thoughts act as coverings. Puncture them and you will see how hollow and insubstantial they are. Remove them and you will see yourself.

To learn that you are deluded by outside things, in meditation the master might tell the student to become attuned to the colors and the shapes of the clouds at dusk. Then he closes his eyes and brings the picture of this to his mental eye. Over and over, he opens his eyes, watches the changing scene of

nature, closes his eyes and meditates. After two hours, everything becomes dark.

Then the teacher asks, “What do you see?” The student answers, “I see nothing. Everything has gone.”

“Where have they gone - the beauty, the shapes, the clouds, the colors?” They have gone and yet they have not gone. They are there in a way. This is the point: everything is still there in the universe.

Nothing has gone. Everything is there. But, because of the rotation of the earth, you see changes. Your physical eye sees that something is gone.

Now using your inner perception, see that the whole galaxy is moving in an unbroken rhythm. The same sun we think of as vanishing here is being seen across the globe as rising. And yet it is the same sun. Lift yourself above the level of earth to the height of the sun. You will always see the sun. Behind the continuous changes is the continuity of the changeless. Be conscious of that sun in you. There is changeless life in you.

When we become convinced that change is for growth and growth is for becoming aware of our inner divinity, we will be inspired to be free, free from the tendency to cling to familiar things. We will become eager to unshackle ourselves from the fear of change. When the truth sinks into our consciousness, it opens a new door. We stop seeing in a rigid way. The words gone, disappear, vanish, death are seen for what they are - as empty or misleading words, based purely on our visual perception, not on our inner insight. So what appears to be “death” to one is “birth” *to another; both are two waves of the same ocean: life.*

Changes are causing us to be aware of the changeless, and the changeless is causing all the changes to take place. Until we reach the “best,” we pass through “good” and “better.” All the terms change in order to bring *out* a better and better form. Ultimately, we become so refined that we are able to experience the radiance of *our* inner reality - the permanent bliss of our being. So, as you grow, cultivate this awareness: That in the sunset, dawn is hidden; in the dawn, sunset is hidden. Appearing and disappearing are the play of life. Both are manifestations of the changeless.

This first point of meditation is called anitya - meaning transient, ever-changing. And nitya - meaning permanent, changeless. For the mind to know the ever-moving nature of anitya is frightening. Why? Because the mind tends to take that which is temporary and believes that it is going to last forever.

The mind clings to whatever it has created things, objects, ideas, relationships, positions. That is why it is not ready to give them up when the time comes. Such a mind says, “It is going to remain with me. It is mine now.”

But the nature of nature replies, “Nothing is thine and nothing is mine.” We have to re-educate our mind. Otherwise it tends toward attachment, thereby creating sadness.

Meditate on *nitya* and *anitya*. Find *out* what is permanent and what is impermanent. Separate the grain from the chaff. Now they are mixed together. Learn how to fan out the husk from the genuine kernel. Then you are able to know what is everlasting and what is temporary. For that you have to come to the center of yourself. First, realize and accept the transitory nature of forms. Then you will experience the nature of nature, the changeless behind the everchanging. The changeless indicates that which cannot die, for it was never born; it is the very life of life.

Meditating in this way, we develop a sense of discrimination and a vast vision. Small things which used to trigger *our* addictions no longer bother us. There will be no need to use as much energy on temporary things. We become generous toward the shortcomings of others. We start to experience a deep feeling of oneness with all life, and we will not cry over the spilt milk of transitoriness. With our inner vision, we see that which is continuously pulsating in all, and rejoice.

The Story of Charity from the Heart

Spring 2004

Excerpt from "Twelve Facets of Reality: The Jain Path to Freedom"

The story has its roots in the past, but is not remote for today. Palitana, a city in the state of Gujarat in India - known as Shatrunjay - is a city of temples on the hills. You won't find such a large number of beautiful temples anywhere else in the world. But do you know who built these temples? Certainly not a single person! They are a result of the love and devotion of countless unknown hearts.

The Chief Minister named Bahad wished to grab the rare opportunity of renovating and, if needed, reconstructing these ancient temples. It was his ardent desire to do this arduous work, but even the village people wished to extend their helping hand in this task. Everybody craved to donate something for this great renovation. Everybody felt it was a rare opportunity to be part of the contribution. The news of the contribution to restructure the temples reached the ears of Bheema Kundliya, a poor trader who barely earned his livelihood by selling ghee (butter). He too felt, "Why shouldn't I part with everything I have?" Just an ordinary trader! He sat down to count his savings or you may call it his only capital! In all he had one and a half rupees. A man with tattered dhoti, with dusty spots of ghee on it, became restless. The longing to give his meager capital became his goal.

Bheema started his journey to donate his capital to charity. He walked about 12 kilometers, reached the gorgeous residence of Bahad, but he was stunned. He saw that thousands of rich people were giving to charity thousands of gold coins. He thought to himself, "Who will care for me here where so many are eager to contribute precious jewels? Who will allow me to even stand here?" He was disappointed. He sighed, "How unfortunate am I!"

He turned back and, sitting under a tree, he thought for a while, "It's true that I did go there but did I tell the minister, 'Please accept my gift.' If he had refused, then I would have believed that he is not willing to accept my contribution. So, Let me go once again."

He came back with hope. The Mantri, the Minister, saw him and leaving aside everybody, came to the gate. He thought, "This poor man might be in need of money and if I don't give, then it's a shame for humanity." The minister asked Bheema, "Tell me, my dear brother, what do you want?" He placed his hand on the shoulder of Bheema. Overjoyed with the affectionate touch, he said, "Revered Sir, I don't need anything. I have come to give something." He untied the knot of the cloth and took out one and a half rupees.

Mantriji, holding him by the hand, led him onto the precious muslin carpet. Bheema said, "Lord, my feet are dirty." Mantriji overtaken by feelings, said, "This dirt of your feet is like auspicious marks. You have shown exemplary generosity as you have come here to give away everything. We have contributed thousands from our millions, but you have come here to give away everything! Salutation to you! "Bheema's name was the first name listed in the long list of donors. His charity turned out to be the greatest of all!

Friends, you yourself should decide what is more important: How much you contribute or how you contribute.

The Great Soul of Ahinsa

Fall 2004

from *Times in India*: “*The Speaking Tree, Anekantavada and The Cycle of Opposites*”

by Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu

Both violence and non-violence start by degrees. The beginnings are subtle and evolve quietly into grand acts of conflict or compassion. When Nelson Mandela was released, he was told by some to get even for the monumental wrong that was done to him. However, he refused to be swayed by hatred. He said he had already been a physical prisoner of his opponents for so long and wished not to live the rest of his life as their emotional captive. Mandela understood that to project anger outwards, one must burn internally and that to commit violence upon others, one must first turn violent upon the self. Burning the holder before its enemy the spark of anger can consume the source before its adversary. Today, if we want to learn to conquer our baser emotions, we need to learn from the examples of those who have forged their choices within the heart of life's most tempestuous battles—people such as Mandela, Gandhiji and Martin Luther King.

The idea of Ahinsa is an emancipatory one, yet not a concept alone. It begins as a feeling and can grow into an encompassing life approach. The idea morphs into a feeling. It is this feeling that transforms others around us. Vardhaman Mahavir was an example of such self-realization. He inspired others in an exemplary fashion, imparting wisdom without preaching. The speaking tree speaks without speech!

It makes true understanding possible. It has been said that an angry person opens the mouth and closes the eyes. It is our mind that needs control. Wars they say begin in the minds of men. It is there that peace must be won. Our sages understood this simple truth ages back. Mahavira, one of the Tirthankaras, practiced the truth of Ahinsa, peace and non-violence without setting out to preach to the world.

Mahavira understood the roots of violence in the human psyche. His warning, therefore, was against absolutism and dogmatism. His stress on Anekantavada, relativity of thinking, was a plea for the recognition of the multi-faceted nature of reality. The perception of reality depends on the time, place, nature and

state of the viewer. Absolute truth cannot result from any particular viewpoint alone. Absolutism for him was an act of mental violence. Relativize the absolute, he pleaded. He wanted respect for different belief systems.

Anekantavada is a vision within which the paradox of all opposites are integrated. If we look at things with balance we will know that opposites are complementary to each other. Without opposites there is no growth and awareness. When we are aware of the cycle of opposites, we don't see them as opposites. We see them as compatible for growth, allowing us to approach the world openly.

Mahavira spoke against the mindless acquisitive impulse, remarking how this sets up the system of violence within our lives. He was not impractical or unrealistic. He wanted us to grow beyond the self-limiting principle of greed and help us transcend our poverty consciousness. It is only the transcendence of the ego that makes for a larger sympathy; an identification with a larger principle. Mahavira's compassion extended beyond humanity, to all forms of life. His standpoint makes him a kindred spirit to contemporary environmentalists and animal conservationists. Mahavira speaks to us in the present. It is not by balance of terror or air-dropped bombs that we can make the world a safer place. We can make it a safer place with a transformed consciousness. For that transformation we need to heed the gentle and healing message of Mahavir.

The Way of Ahinsa

Fall 2005

Dear Friends,

Today our meditation is on Ahinsa. Meditation is to experience peace. Peace is possible only in the presence of Ahinsa. So, Ahinsa is the need of our journey. What is Ahinsa? Ahinsa is feeling reverence for all life.

A for Awareness

“A” stands for awareness. We need to see our own Self in the mirror of consciousness. And seeing ourselves, we draw our own portrait of what we want to become and of what we really are. If we go lovingly closer to our Self and experience our Self, we will be able to experience peace with others as with our Self. We will experience our true Self. “I am sentient energy; I am the one who is animating everything. So, why do I not animate my Self and those who come in touch with me?” Then we peacefully portray our own picture in harmony with the universe. We experience that “I am animating the body, I am animating the senses, and I am animating whatsoever I touch.”

This is the journey to self-realization. Though we often resist this, this journey has to start with ourselves. But the light of self-realization can be dazzling as even daylight to a person who has been sleeping for a long time in the dark. One has to train one’s eyes to be ready to take the light of such realization, and we do that with meditation and increased awareness.

As we become aware of our loving sentient energy, we go deeper and deeper to experience that “I am here to know my ‘I’-ness.” When it dawns, we realize our oneness with all life. This is Ahinsa.

H for Harmony

Then “H” comes for harmony. “I will be a harmonious presence on this earth and will cause no harm.” This is respect for all life. That can happen with Reverence for Life.

Vibrations of violence beget violence. If we focus on violence, then violence will be our habit. But if every day we think, “I am going to experience the presence of peace,” we start feeling peace. Gradually we engulf ourselves with

peaceful vibrations. If we live in this way, this will become our shield. This will become our support. This will also become our protector from outside violence.

Vibrations of violence or vibrations of peace do not come from outside; they come from inside. In the beginning, there will be some kind of conflict, but respect your life. Say, "I am not going to create any violence to myself." And if any negative thought of hate, anger, resentment comes, say: "No, I don't want it. I am peace." Tell those violent thoughts, "Get out." Take them out just as we tell children, "Please, don't make noise; I want to sleep." In the same way, we tell our mind what to do. Sometimes it is easy to tell others, but it is much more difficult to tell our own self.

Violence percolates from negativities. Each individual has to take charge of oneself and create harmony in oneself. Unless we create peace inside, we won't be able to create peace outside. To tell others we use words but to tell ourselves, we have to have the experience of peace. It is easy to say words, but it is a challenge to tune into the feeling. To connect within, we meditate and experience the peaceful presence of Reverence for Life. This way, the practice of harmony gradually permeates every cell of our being.

I for Integration

Then the 'I' in Ahinsa is for integration. Integrate everything: body, mind and soul. Let us bring equanimity, equality and consideration to all races, all religions, all ethnic groups, and all life. Take out the division from your mind. Take out: "She is a Christian. He is a Jew. She is Chinese. He is Indian." These are all walls of conditions. These walls are not outside; they are built inside our mind. These walls are separating us from others and the presence of our own life.

Integrate! Be integration! We need a heart which integrates all, a heart which understands that all want to live, all want to have peace, all want to eat; there is no difference among all of us. Love does not have time to waste on hate. Love knows how to forgive. Love knows how to forget. Love knows how to move on. This way we are working on integrations and slowly we feel integrated.

First, start with the mind, then with the words, then with the deeds. We integrate the way we think, speak and act. When we say, "Thank you," the

thanks is first in our thinking, then it comes in our words, and then in our action. If a person is receptive, he does not wear “gloves,” then the feelings touch him or her. But for vibrations to be sincere, they must be harmonious, integrated and whole: integration of thoughts, expressions and deeds.

N for Nobility

Nobility reminds us of our magnanimous quality of the soul. It generates the feeling of generosity and compassion of all living beings. Nobility is a generous virtue of thought, word and action. It knows how to forgive. Forgiveness is liberation – liberation from hate, revenge and animosity – *which comes from conditioning. By forgiving we liberate our soul from the negativity.* Nobility also knows that not to forgive is a commitment to sorrow and suffering.

Nobility is the nature of the spirit. It is never mean, it does not discriminate, it does not come from birth or wealth, post or position. It emanates from a compassionate heart of amity. Its feeling of love flows towards all – small or big. It has no walls of prejudice of group, race or religion.

S for Service

The “S” in Ahinsa stands for service. Serve somebody. Let your life be a service. Through service we become alive. Have you thought how many people and things serve us? We breathe air; we drink water; we eat vegetables; we wear clothes; always we are receiving the services of other living beings. And in exchange, what are we giving? We exploit people, animals and the earth. Day by day, the earth is losing its beauty, its energy. If we don’t respect the earth, we will not respect life anywhere.

We need to serve and make service a part of our living. We need to live and help to let live. Some people ask, “Where can I go to serve?” I say, “Serve wherever you are. There is no need to go anywhere.” You can do service in many ways. Ask, “Today, how can I serve other living beings?” In this way, we contribute. One more person serving is a blessing to the earth.

A for Abstinence

The last “A” of Ahinsa stands for abstinence. Abstinence from those things which pollute our vibrations. Abstinence from products which cause pain and

suffering. Abstinence from liquor which confuses our thinking. Abstinence from foods which do not give health. Unhealthy foods may taste good but they hurt our body, thinking and life. Our cells are created from the foods we eat, and according to the foods we eat, our vibrations are created. It influences our thinking, our reasoning, our sensing. To promote vibrations of peace and harmony, therefore, we need to abstain from harmful products and the foods which come from violence and suffering. The senses are a gateway to all kinds of vibrations.

So, my friends, as we meditate, we realize that “I am a living presence in this body. I am sentient, conscious energy. I am love. I am Peace. I am compassion. I am animating body. I am these senses, these brain cells, and all my existence, as I feel myself. I am Ahinsa.” This is the way we can live with Reverence for Life and Be A Blessing To This World.

Love and Blessings,
Chitrabhanu

Giving Priority to the Breath

Spring 2006

*Excerpted by Patrice Levy Lee
Jain Meditation International Center
10 August 2005*

One of the best ways to reach a state of meditation is through the breath. This is also a way of enhancing the power to manage your life. But we are burning this power without awareness. Once you understand the power of your breath, you will prioritize it.

The Breath

The secret of life is to give priority to the breath. What is important in your life? When you pay attention to the breath, you will not waste time on what is unimportant. Then you will know how to manage your time – and you will always have some. Think about how much time you waste on useless things. Set limits. Condense your points. We spoil the present by dragging in the past or flying into the future. But, first, give priority to the breath and learn the art of silence: When to speak. Where to speak. How much to speak. Focus on the breath and you will gradually bring focus to the mind. If we know when to talk, where to talk and how much to talk, we will save a lot of energy.

Quantity or Quality

In meditation, two things happen: Physically you are relaxed but mentally you are alert. Cultivate the mind and you can control the body. When the mind is engaged, you can sit comfortably for hours. Learn this and you can do your work with clarity and ease. Do one thing at a time but do it with excellence. It is not about quantity; it is about quality. Live a qualitative life – in your career - in your marriage –in your relationships.

Death or New Birth

When you pay attention to each word you say, it becomes a prayer – an expression of your consciousness. Step by step you reach the stage of the seventh chakra and from there you see more of life because you have a better

view. From there it is a panoramic view. To see more in life is the height of meditation. A person at the second or third stage sees the death of a caterpillar; a person at the seventh sees the birth of a butterfly. When you see an entrance, you don't worry about the exit.

Spiritual Wealth

If you want to worry, there is always something to worry about. But there is something lofty in you. Invest in your spiritual wealth. Live not for money or position or possession – this leads to worthlessness. Live for life. Focus your attention on aliveness of life, on celebrating the day. Count how many times you have been touched or how many times you have touched others. When you are in awareness, you filter what comes into your mind before you speak. Gradually you will see more. Gradually you will achieve the power and potential to experience the eternity of life and it is all possible with the power of the breath.

Are We “Antique” Collectors?

Summer 2006

*Given at the Lighthouse Center,
13 May 2006*

It's a new day. If you have courage to forget, it's a new day. People have attachments to old things. They collect antiques. People go and buy antiques. We love yesterday, what happened in life. We pick up bad things sometimes. The most confused beings are human beings. Animals don't have this problem. There are so many psychiatrists in this country. A millionaire friend of mine told me, “Every day I go to the psychiatrist.” If this man could have the teaching of Reverence for Life, have respect for his body, he would not need to go to the psychiatrist. One day, the psychiatrist asked him, “Who gave you your spiritual name?” The man said he had gotten it in 1946, when he was meditating on a mountain in India. He said he was very happy then, but then he got very busy and lots and lots of money started coming.

So the psychiatrist called Gurudev and went to see him. The psychiatrist had problems, with alcoholic children, and his sister taking his inheritance; so the man's guide was full of problems.

You can be happy. It's a good day. From today decide to let go of the past. On the day you were born, you had no clothes, no shelter, no food; you didn't know your mother or father. But you made it. So why worry now? We were all born Digambara (like the Skyclad monks, with no clothes, no possessions). This meditation is nothing but coming to you, that's all. This is not a religion. Be with peace and quiet and be open with yourself. Nobody can make you as happy as you will be when get in touch with your pure Self. Most religions make you superior, and anyone who doesn't believe is inferior. This puts others down—this is the biggest violence. I will go to heaven because I embrace a certain belief system, but then I put down others who don't embrace this. Parents may do this with their own children. To put children down is the biggest harm you can do to yourself. Children come to you for love, kindness, and understanding. These children come to you because of your punya, your good karma, for you to nourish them with pure water. In this world with a plant you can give good water, earth and love, or you can put the plant in sand and give it alcohol. Then the plant will not grow. If a child doesn't grow in a

place of love, it becomes a “bad child”. Give love from the beginning. If the parents are alcoholics, how can the children be nurtured? Parents need to be responsible—you can decide not to attend a party and give to the child instead.

One man here sends money each month to his parents in India. His American wife says, “Why?” She wants to save money for their future. So the man tells her a story. As a child he had a fever. His father got an invitation to dinner with the governor in Bombay. Even rich people would enjoy this, having dinner with the governor, but the man decided to stay home with his sick son. He thought, my time with my son is more important than to be at a party with all the elite. So when the child grew up, he thought, “My parents gave up for me, so then do I neglect them when they get old? I got so much love from my parents, they made it possible for me to go to school, have a career, come to America. So now I give back to them.”

What can you give?

You enjoy your life. Get in touch with your Self. No one can do anything to you as long as you are awakened to your Self. Upa Yoga—be aware of your Self: clean, pure, indestructible, sentient energy. Energy is indestructible, everlasting. Body is a bulb, you are the energy. You realize, I am not the bulb, I am not the body. Don’t identify with the body like a car, “I am a Mercedes”. It is your body, but you are not your body, you are SO HUM. When you experience your Self, you will know: I am already what I am seeking outside. It will not be overnight, because we are programmed for so many years. The stiffness becomes so strong, like a broken hand in plaster for two months. We have become stiff with conditions. We get bored, we want to forget. So we take alcohol, drugs, marijuana, LSD (like Ram Dass and Timothy Leary). All kinds of addictions hold you back, take you away. Come to yourself, believe in yourself. The moment you feel pure, you are sure. This is your biggest wealth, biggest peace. Meditation is taking you—not to God, not to heaven, not to a Guru—meditation is taking you to your Self. When you are with your Self, you are at peace.

Namo Arihantanum. Namō means I bow, honor, respect; Ari means weakness; and hantanum means overcome. I bow to all those who have conquered all negativity, all that separates me from my Self. For example, when you are angry, you do not like being called that. MAD—mutual assured destruction—anger destroys you and the other. You become strong by overcoming what was separating, hurting, destroying you. When you conquer, you bow to yourself,

you honor yourself. Have you told yourself, “I love you”? We take time to analyze what happened yesterday. Discard the thought which makes yesterday alive. When your past becomes alive, it destroys your day. Practice “Namo Arihantanum”.

Who gives life? Not God, you give life. Choose not to make the past more and more alive. Think positively, about what you have now. Yesterday is gone, a cancelled check. Even the bank can’t accept a check from six months ago. But we bring back the past from 20-30 years ago. You are courageous people here today, because you are here to take charge of your life. Each person has the capacity to be a teacher. When you become awake and aware, you are giving from your life. I was the same as my cousin, who was even more creative than me. But I took a direction when I was 20 to find myself. My cousin took another direction—money and hedonism, and eventually destroyed himself. When he was 61, he was full of disease, and his wife left.

Mahavir says, “It’s never too late”. You can make your life from today. This is the best moment in your life. Start with the breath—inhale peace, exhale all the negative. Inhale love and peace.

The Presence of God

Winter 2007

*Given at the Lighthouse Center
12 August 2006*

Namaste, I bow to all of you. If you reflect on yourself, you ask, “Who am I? I am Divine. I will not put myself down in any circumstances.” Your commitment is not to put yourself down in any circumstances. The world can put you down, but they don’t know you.

How many people remember the breath? How many breaths are destroyed with anger, jealousy, competitiveness, ego, suspicion? Let the breath be the breath of Peace, of Love, of Divine Light. Every breath should be charged with Love and Peace and Divine Light.

One person asked me years ago, “Do you believe in God?” When you don’t have, you believe. Do you believe in the sun? No, you have the sun, the sun is there. Belief is not realization, not experience; belief is tomorrow. One man said, “Guruji, I don’t believe in God. I feel, I see God in vegetables, animals, in the eye of a child, the eye of a fish.” Where there is life pulsating, the desire to love, there is the presence of God. How can we live without the presence of God? When you breathe, inhale the Divine, the presence of God, and exhale the anger, the hate, the stress, the negative energy.

Don’t think of what others are thinking; think of what you are thinking. We are so eager to know what others are thinking, saying, believing about us. But Mahavir’s teaching says, “Don’t trust even my word if it does not make sense to you. Believe in yourself.” Those who get divorced started with love, and celebration. But over time they don’t agree, and thoughts, beliefs and anger separates them. Love is destroyed by *anger, jealousy, and hatred*. *Who has the power to destroy you?* No one, unless you give your consent. Our own thoughts can destroy us. If you don’t hurt anybody, no one will hurt you. When you have no fear, you do not attract violence. If someone doesn’t agree with us, that’s fine. But we want to correct them, make them see it our way.

Belief is a very dangerous thing. One student used to have a time concept, a belief that he always had to hurry, hurry, hurry. When he saw the red light, he'd think, "Oh my god, I'm going to be late!" But now he meditates on the breath, taking each breath with awareness, staying with each breath. When you hurry, worry is inevitable. More hurry, more worry. Now when he sees the red light, he says, "Thank you, I will have time to breathe." The red light that was a sign of tension is now a sign of peace and rest. When you have God with every breath, it will be good time all the time.

We all have the Light. The Light is the same, the bulbs are different. God is everyone. God is Love. Love is God. If you love, that is the presence of God. The more you love, the more you don't want to hurt or hate anyone. As you breathe in peace, those around you will feel your calm. Peace begets peace. Whatsoever happens in life, accept it. Meditation is to be aware of every moment, and to accept what comes. Not to be upset, not to blame. But it will take time. Every moment is taking you to the last dance. If you live 100 years, all the breaths are accumulating to the last dance, death. The last minute, the moment of death, departure. If we live in peace, we are with eternity. I am, I was, I will be. So belief in the creator, throw it out. Anything created will be destroyed. But the soul is not destroyed; energy cannot be destroyed. Energy is indestructible. I am energy, sentient energy, I cannot be destroyed. Energy takes different forms, according to your desires: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.

Start feeling love. Be kind to yourself, don't beat yourself up. People can say or do anything, but if you don't give your consent, no one can hurt you. If they say something hurtful, laugh with them. When I first came to this country, students at the university would make fun of my clothing. I would smile, it wouldn't bother me. Then we started meditating together, and they didn't make fun anymore. What people say is their problem. We have to know ourself. Meditation is every minute, every breath. Take a deep breath—it's free, no charge. Breathe in oxygen, life, the Divine. So Hum, I am Divine.

Paramatma is like 24 carat gold. Paramatma is the purest, most supreme soul. When you have purified yourself completely, you are God, you are pure consciousness, you are Paramatma. This takes a long time, because we are all so conditioned, as Christians, Jews, Muslims. But no one has a right to tell anyone, "If you don't believe, you will go to hell". We all want to experience Truth, Beauty, Goodness. But when the negative thoughts come, we struggle with ourselves. With these thoughts there is no peace. I know you are all

blessed. Break the conditions and experience pure breaths. It is not easy, but begin. It is a challenge, continuously. When the mind goes to the negative, you have to say, “Come back”. Our habits are like a dog straying. Even I have to remind myself. I think of Mahivir who said, “If I can do it, you can do it.”

We have to have clarity that we are indestructible, sentient energy. *Meditation will gradually take out the fear of death. The body becomes old and tired, the spare parts run out.* What you sow, that you grow. First, remember that you are indestructible, not created, not a toy. You are immortal, ever present. To maintain the body, the purer the breath you have, the longer the life. Have no regrets in life—if only I had done that...Many years ago I was in Florida, about to go to Boston. A man told me that I would miss the beautiful weather. I told him that it was beautiful in Boston too. He said it was so hot, so cold, so rainy in Boston, not like Florida, so warm and sunny. See how the world changes with your perception. Enjoy the weather wherever you are.

Second, realize, feel, touch, see the presence of God. When Native Americans take fruit from a tree they say, “Today we take fruit from the tree, one day we give nourishment to the tree”. From you I receive, to you I give. We have no right to waste a single grain. Nourish your body with respect and reverence, and don’t waste anything. Respect everything, and minimize violence.

Third, bring a prayer of peace to the whole universe. We can send good vibrations, even to those who don’t know what they are doing. Hitler went to church to pray, and then said he was just doing what God told him to do. We do not want to be like Hitler. Ask yourself, “What is my contribution to the suffering in the world?” Our anger will contribute to outer violence and inner violence. Anyone who wants peace in the world must be at peace within first. Thomas Merton said, “If you want the world to become peaceful, you become peaceful”.

Celebrate Your Day

Spring 2007

Given at the Lighthouse Center

13 August 2006

It makes me happy to see that you are all happy people here who do not have clouds of sin and guilt. Free from all guilt. Consciousness is clean. I want to share that with you how to start the day. When I wake up, before I put my feet on the ground, I address myself. It is a day of celebration, because I am alive, alive to experience the intimacy with the Divine which is in me. People do not have even a glimpse that they are holding in their being Divinity. We first must recognize that Divinity is within each of us; it is not in the sky, not in the heaven. Beware of those whose Divinity is in the heaven. Dr. George Bernard Shaw was a fine writer, and was given the Nobel Prize. He said to beware of those whose God is in the heaven, because they can do whatever they want on the earth, and then go to church and say they were guided by God. Like Truman did with Hiroshima, like all the war mongers. They fight for their religion, or they fight and use their religion to justify the fighting. Mankind is confused. So much guilt and unhappiness is inside and is projected outside. Freud and Jung saw this. Suppressed violence takes form outside, in the world.

I congratulate you that you realize why you are here on the earth. And you celebrate your birth. Every day is your birthday. We don't know how long we will live. Sleep is a small form of death. Sleep takes you from one day to the next. Each morning is our birthday. Celebrate each day. Because we don't know tomorrow where we we'll be—all kinds of calamity may occur. Tomorrow is not in our hand, but today is.

You made a choice to come here. When you awaken your individuation, which is slumbering, you can make your day as you plan to do it. Sensuality is fine, but don't lose your day in sensuality. After ten years, you don't feel the same, after twenty years, you don't remember it. Sensuality is temporary, it is like a bubble. Spirituality is not a bubble. Whatever comes, you are not afraid. So even when you leave this body, you are not afraid. If you take a picture each day of your life, you will see the changes from baby to wrinkles. Death is what you have lost along the way. Inherent in Nature we will lose this body also.

So the first thing I do in the morning is to celebrate my day, celebrate being *alive, feeling alive. I can see, I can hear, I can speak, I can move.* Bless all your gifts. Helen Keller at least could touch and smell. When she touched Nehru, who was the President of India, she said, "I feel you, I see you." He asked, "How do you see me?" To see we don't need only eyes, we also see with feeling. In touch you have the inner eye. We are in such a hurry; we don't know what we are eating, what we are seeing. There was a man in a Mercedes with an apple in one hand and a phone in the other, because he didn't have time to eat. People may be rich, but they have no time to see what they are doing to their body. Instead of competing with them, have mercy on them. We feel poor in comparison. But as a spiritual person you are rich. You are the richest person because you know who you are.

Each day go slow. Each moment is moving towards the finishing touch. Accumulation of all the moments in your life takes you to the finishing touch, the final moment. Our sum total of how we will be is in the sum total of all our moments. Inside, what we are thinking is in our neurons. Clever people think no one sees the bad things. Mahavir says, "You are watching, how can you say no one is watching? How can you eliminate yourself watching you?" Even when you are doing something hurriedly or sneakily, you are looking to see that nobody sees. That in you is watching you. That is why a realized person knows he cannot cheat. The imprint on your consciousness will remain with you. You do not need to confess and ask forgiveness, it is not in the priest's hand. The things you have acquired and accumulated remain here, on the earth. But the imprint of what you do is in your neurons. A real spiritual person is genuine with him or herself. A religious person says, "God will forgive me;" that is his business. A spiritual person says, "No", because the spiritual person is feeling intimacy with the Divine within. The spiritual person is not afraid of society, people's opinions, praise or put downs.

When you celebrate your day, you are not afraid of anything. Gandhi was told of the danger in the Muslim community, but he was not afraid. He said, "I will go there, I will die for my cause, remembering the name of Divine Ram." The body is not permanent, it's a beautiful house. Take care of it, but do not punish it with wrong food, smoking, drinking. This heart is so kind to us, working, pumping every minute. We hurt our heart, our limbs, our eyes. Helen Keller would give thanks to her smell; she could smell the aura of each person. She thanked her touch. Are we giving thanks? We don't have time to give thanks for what we have. Have appreciation for what you have, an attitude of gratitude. Start each day with an attitude of gratitude. You will feel good, and everyone around you will feel good.

In New York City I have a habit—I say “Good morning, it’s a good day.” One man said to me, “What’s good? It’s a lousy, rainy day.” I said, “Thank you” for putting me to the test. I will not be unhappy with that man. Gold and brass look alike, both are yellow. But put to the test, you will know what is brass and what is gold. Inner beauty is your under-standing, love, compassion, aliveness. When we feel this, we are alive. I am awake, I am alive. I celebrate my day. Being alive to experience the intimacy of the Divine within me. Live one day this way. There will be no regret. Life is very juicy. Even from a lemon, make it lemonade. Life is not a bowl of cherries. We have to make lemonade from the lemon. We can because we have the connection with the Divine within. Let go of guilt and sin. Some people don’t like smiling; they want to make you unhappy like they are. When I see a rainy day, I see the bath for all. It is your choice: see the good in bad things. See the sun behind the cloud. Those who died completing their mission, did not attract the violence. Gandhi said he would die for his cause. Ultimately, a movie was made about him. If he didn’t die in this way, there may not have been the movie. Joan of Arc was burned at the stake, and then she was made a saint.

What is Divinity? In the West we use God. In India we use Paramatma, Paramatma means supreme soul, purest soul. The most purified atma (soul) is Paramatma. Gold is mixed with dross, but when it is purified, it is 24 karat gold. As you go on purifying yourself, you become Paramatma. Our atma, our soul, has the inherent nature to become Paramatma. When you meditate, you can say it is inherent in me to be Paramatma. When you see the statue of Mahavir, you can say to yourself that you can become like him. We do not come to worship the statue of Mahavir, we come to be inspired. Become the Divine, which is Realization. Don’t say you believe in God; experience God within you and within everyone.

Be happy wherever you are. I celebrate the day. I am here to experience the Divine within me. What I sow that will grow. Whatever seeds you plant will grow—thoughts, words, and actions. This is not religion; it is the Law of Nature. I am not here to impose my ideas, I am here to share. And if someone has a problem, I will not lose my equilibrium. I am very happy sharing the Truth. It is not a creed, not a religion; it is just a way of life. Jain Dharma is a way of celebrating life.

Namaste

Make a Commitment to Yourself

Fall 2007

Given at the Lighthouse Center, Inc.

19 August 2007

It is the best day. The present day is the best day, not yesterday or tomorrow. Yesterday is a dead past, a cancelled check. If you want to keep it, keep it. Tomorrow is a fantasy, it may happen or not. But today is the best day, because we are alive. Alive to make what we want to make. Alive to have a choice: to make the day or mar the day. It's your choice. How to make the day is in your hand. This is the teaching of Mahavir. He does not teach you to depend on anyone—no props. You stand on yourself, your Atma. A building that stands on props has no security, it is supported by props.

This human life is the best gift we have, not money, power, position, name or fame. Realize what you are. Say, "I am alive, I am life, I can do what I want to." It is a beautiful Saturday; instead of going here and there, you are here at the Lighthouse by 10:00 am. Who made you come here? No God, no guru, you. You decided to come here. So you could find out who you are. Others have told you what you are not, they've told you that you are a sinner. So you go on carrying this load on your head your whole life. Or they may have told you that you are handsome or beautiful, or ugly, an ugly duckling or cute as a rabbit. All different names for who you are, but no one has addressed you, the living life, the Atma that you really are.

In the olden days there was a narrow road with two people coming in two chariots from opposite directions. One had the belief that the person that gives way is weak, and the other person is strong, and he thought, "I don't give way to fools." But the other person, who was initiated on the spiritual path, thought, "I always give way to fools." The person who calls you a fool is a fool within. When someone is not aware of himself, he blames others. The word "fool" came in his mind, not yours. There's no need to argue with fools. Holding hate, revenge, and bad feelings only harms us. It is sad to carry negative vibrations of a relationship when it is over. One may be divorced but still married to the bad feelings, the negative vibrations. Instead recite "Namo arihantanum", I bow down to myself, I can overcome my inner enemies.

One can be brave and tough in front of others, but inside be very weak. We succumb to our negative feelings. You can see a newborn baby, so beautiful in the crib. What happened? We lost our smile along the way. We need jokes to make us smile. When you are one with your Atma, you are happy, content, peaceful. When you are not, you are sad, angry, jealous. If you hold onto the negative energy, it will consume you, you become more unhappy, tense, uncomfortable. The negative energy burns you more. Enemy and friend are the same person. A man once bought a diamond ring for his wife, now they don't get along. Misunderstanding, anger, jealousy got in the way.

This teaching is very fresh. It is today, not yesterday, not tomorrow. It is now or never. You have to make your commitment very strong: I will meditate. Making this commitment is like chewing gum day and night, eventually it will settle in your neurons. The bad things we try to forget and cannot, the good things we cannot remember—this is the longevity of negativity. I remember when I was a monk I knew a mother who was very old and about to go. She had four sons. They invited me to come see her. I told her, “Mother, you have to forgive everyone, first yourself, then everyone.” But she did not like her youngest son, who had married a woman from another belief. She had told him years ago, “I don't want to see your face, because you don't respect my opinion.” Still on her dying bed she would not forgive her son, she kept holding onto her negative feelings.

Everyone is here according to karma. No one belongs to anyone else. No possessiveness. You belong to the universe. Your body is not yours. Your memory is not yours. There was a very important man, a president of a large company, whose neurons were no longer working, and he didn't know where the bathroom was anymore. Once you know that “I am Atma” you allow people to be, with no hate, no dislike, no judgment. If you don't try to hold onto people, they will stay with you. Control is controlling, it cannot control, it does not work. The first forgiveness is with yourself. If you do not realize yourself, your Atma, you will not believe in yourself.

One of my friends is a Roman Catholic priest. We meet to talk, and one day we were discussing, what is sin? Sin is the denial of Divinity in yourself. We are living because of that Divinity. When Divinity leaves the body, we die. Mahavir was a simple person. But he had realized, “I am Atma” twenty seven births before. Man can become superman, when Atma becomes Paramatma. Seeing a statue of Mahavir is an inspiration: he overcame his attachments, his ego, and his Atma became Paramatma. When you realize yourself completely, your Atma

becomes Paramatma. That is why I say, “Namaste” to you, I am saluting the Divine within you. When you realize that the Divine is within you, you will never put yourself down. The biggest sin is to put yourself down. When you go to see the President, don’t put yourself down. Without you he would be a beggar, for you have the vote. You can honor someone else, but don’t put yourself down. And make no comparisons, Seeing a very rich man, you might say, “I am nothing in front of you.” But why make yourself small? Continuously we are comparing. We bend over backward for the poor, we bend forward to the rich. Denial of divinity is sin. We have denial for so many years. Our conditions do not easily leave us. We go home and start comparing again.

Today is the best day, the day to make a commitment, not to me, but to yourself. Take advantage of the classes here at the Lighthouse. The teaching is so clear, so clean. There is no dogma, no putting others down, no comparing with others, but believing in yourself. I am so happy that so many of you are initiated and have made so much progress. I see it in your eyes, where you have been and where you are. When you close your eyes, see who is inside, that invisible Light that you are. Light bulbs and other gadgets are useful because of the electricity carried inside. In the same way we are all useful because of our Atma. If we don’t pay attention to Atma, what have we gained from the beautiful day? You have made this center an oasis. Whatsoever you do, you have deposited for your future. With one seed come a thousand blossoms. Your consciousness becomes your prosperity.

Every day in the morning I put my foot on the ground and say to myself, “Today is the best day, this is the day that I am alive.” Every day make a commitment to yourself. Even when there is a little cloud, say to yourself, “It’s half sunny”. The glass is not half empty, it’s half full. The emptiness or fullness is within you. *How we look at life makes the difference. Try to see in your family what good qualities they have. There was a lady who had married and divorced seven or eight times. She changed people, but her choice was the same. A lion, a donkey and a fox went together for hunting. When the hunt was done, the lion told the fox. “Make equal shares for the three of us.” So the fox made three equal shares. The lion choked the fox and he died. Then the lion told the donkey, “Now you make equal shares”. So the donkey took a little for himself and left the rest for the lion. The lion was surprised and said, “Donkey, you are smart. Where did you learn this?” The donkey said, “I learned from the fox”. The donkey learned from experience, but many times we don’t. We go through bad experiences, but don’t learn. We think we have*

sinned. But there is no sin, there is consequence. If you put a finger in a socket, you get a shock. This is not a sin, it is a consequence. You learn from it. Let each mistake be a stepping stone to go upward. Acknowledge the mistake and learn from it.

So my friends. It is a beautiful day. And it is up to you. Your day is up to you, it is your choice. Say to yourself, "I am pure, I am sure." Listen to the inner voice, your Atma. Do not compare yourself to others or put yourself down. Make a commitment to yourself. Accept your Divinity.

Namaste.

Live Day by Day

Winter 2008

Given at the Lighthouse Center, Inc.

18 August 2007.

First of all we are happy that we have a good day. Anyone who wants to live long, learns the art of living by the day. Don't make promises of what you'll do on your birthday, or New Year's resolutions—they fade away. The teaching is: live by the day. Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is fantasy. Today is in our hand. If we don't pay attention to what we have, we are losing what we have. If we are in the past, we are living with dead things.

Each day get up and say, "I am awake, I am alive, and I am going to make the best of the day." It is easy to handle that day. At the end of the day review how the day has gone. Review the positive things and the positive people of the day, and also the negative things, the old habits and negative interactions. The end of each day becomes an accounting of the day. In that way the journey of 1,000 miles starts with a single step. To experience eternity, we experience one day at a time, whether old or young, wise or otherwise.

Start out the day with a smile, a feeling of being alive. Look out, look up and say, "I am blessed, I have good eyes, good ears, good nose, good mouth, good hands, everything". See the gifts you have. When you know your gifts, you will feel rich. Many people with lots of money are full of disease, or have lots of problems, and are unhappy. You have everything now. Yet sometimes we are not happy because we don't know what wealth we have. People who do know, live day by day, and are rich.

In Pittsburgh a man, Andrew Carnegie, made a point on Saturday mornings to spend one hour with young people. There was a young man, exhausted and depressed who planned to commit suicide. But first he went to see Andrew Carnegie on a Saturday morning. He told him, "There is nothing you can do for me. I've tried to find a job and can't find one. I am going to commit suicide." Andrew Carnegie gave him a check for \$25,000.00. The man said, "\$25,000.00? What for?" Andrew Carnegie said, "Yes, for the eyes you will donate to someone when you die." Then he gave him another check for another \$25,000.00, for his two kidneys. The young man then realized what he

had—five senses, and said he didn't need the checks. He went back to the place where he was rejected for being overqualified for a job, and said he would do any job, cleaning, anything. This time he got the job. Whatsoever job you do, do with a touch of perfection, excellence. Excellence is your true nature. We do so many things, but sometimes only half-hearted. Always do your best, whatsoever you do.

This young man cleaned the room and put it all in order. When the boss came, he was surprised. So he had him look after the books. After 25 years, the now older young man had a party and invited Andrew Carnegie. He gave to him a check for \$50,000.00. and said to him, "Thank you for giving me a lesson for life. You made me aware of what gifts I have."

Like the young man, all young people are a blessing for the earth, because they can do what they want to do. We must respect young people. Young people have the fresh spirit. Don't compare the child with anybody. This destroys the child's creativity. Make no comparison with anybody. Each snowflake is *unique. Each human being is unique, equal. Our habits keep us from seeing* this; habits don't allow us to be aware. The success of meditation is in how many habits we have broken. But people don't believe these things. The past overcomes the present. When someone makes a mistake, we bring up all the past mistakes. We become negative and angry.

Realize that the day is in your hand. You can make it or mar it. You have a choice, freedom. Karma is freedom of action. There is no sin. There is consequence. If you put a finger in the socket, you get a shock. This is not a sin, it is a consequence. You can learn from it. But if it is a sin, you go to confession. You don't learn from it. Each mistake should be a stepping stone to go upward. There is no need to be shy or ashamed, no need to hide. Acknowledge the mistake and learn from it. Hiding leads to lying, and this damages our neurons. The damage we do to our neurons is not temporary, like the money, success, position in the world are temporary. The damage to our neurons is permanent: the neurons become confused, and with age these neurons become weaker and don't remember. Confused neurons don't recognize what is, like the spider that gets caught in its own web. Neurons are very powerful, but people use alcohol, drugs, bad company, bad religion and this destroys the neurons. Meditation keeps the neurons fresh, alive. Meditation teaches us the art of living, making each day excellent.

Mahavir said, “Don’t worship me. Meditate and realize your life.” It is not a religion, not a dogma. Each individual has to wake up. This teaching is to live day by day. With meditation, your consciousness will be very clean. You will have inspiration, insight, intuition, planning, no cobwebs. Intuition comes from cleanliness of consciousness. It was easy for me to leave thousands of people following me in India, because I had the inspiration to leave. I was not attached to all those people. Each person who becomes a Vegan is an inspiration. If you control your tongue, you will have good communication, a good relationship with the world. Anyone who has conquered their tongue has conquered the world. Mahavir says, “Be aware of your language, use it properly, do not speak negative words.”

I am a starter, like jump starting a car when the battery goes down. So the blessing of the Third Eye is a starter for the energy within you. Denial of Divinity is sin. To eat something wrong is not a sin, it brings a wrong consequence. If you eat wrong, you get wrong. If you go on smoking, you get cancer or a heart attack. Instead, breathe in SO-HUM. There is no sin, only consequence. If you deny yourself, and put yourself down, that could be called sin. With awareness you can see and speak what is beautiful about you. Once you are aware of your divinity, you will see the wholeness, truth and beauty of your life.

Whatever you are, you are beautiful. Don’t compare. The moment you compare, you have lost your beauty. Respect yourself. Accept yourself. You can change your wrong thinking. Then you will be happy and you will not make demands on others. A teacher said, “Each time you fall, don’t blame, but pick up something.” Each day make a little change for the better. That way, day by day you are empowering yourself.

The sun does not know what darkness is. When asked, it said, “I don’t see any darkness, show it to me.” Darkness cannot exist for the sun. When there is no light, there is darkness. In the same way, we are like the sun. When our light shines, we do not see the darkness.

The Freedom of Choice

Spring 2008

From Jinamanjari Journal

Meditation is to free oneself from bitterness and sadness of past conditions and judgments. Our programmed beliefs, even religion, which means to unite is used to separate one from another. Many people have narrowed their life and placed themselves in a fold by thinking, "I am Muslim." "I am Hindu." "I am Jain." "I am a Jew." "I am a Christian." "They are not like me; they are all outsiders." By belief, one has blocked and alienated oneself from mankind and living beings who are helping our existence in many ways, visibly and invisibly. Meditation helps to break the self imposed limitations on oneself and to live liberated in a "uniting" universe...

The Jaina philosophy does not build our life on the past but on the living present. To me, a good life is a healthy loving life. A good life is a creative life. It is that life where we want to have the awareness that we can choose what we want to choose and make the choice to accept and let go of the dead past and live in the living present.

If we don't let go of the past, we cannot move forward. I am reminded of two friends in India who decided to cross the Ganges River by boat in Benares. They were drinking bhang, a stimulant, and were feeling energetic because of intoxication and the beautiful full moon. They decided to cross the river to another town to get good food. The whole night they rowed and rowed. But when it was dawn, they saw people on the shore who looked like the people from the night before. One of them said, "This place looks exactly like Benares." So, they stepped ashore and asked, "Where are we?" They were told that they were in Benares. "Benares? But how can that be? We have been rowing and rowing the whole night." Only then did they find out that in their intoxication they had forgotten to untie the rope from the jetty. The rope was over 200 feet long, so that had moved from here to there, but what about us? We want to move forward, but we don't untie ourselves from the anchoring past habits and beliefs. Whenever we talk, we talk about the past and go on playing the old worn-out record. Even in therapy for years, our mind roams in the empty rooms of past phantoms. Clinging to the past dogmas, we turn from a plum into a prune.

Mahaveer said, “Don’t just go to your power within.” Ask yourself: “Who am I and what is my power? How do I see myself? Why did I not choose the right things? Do I allow others to tell me what I can and cannot do?” *Remind* yourself that others are only projecting themselves onto you. What they say does not reflect you; it reflects on them. If they deny certain things, they are not denying you; they are denying themselves. Their statements do not apply to you.

A couple of years ago several students from the United States came to India with us, and visited Shatrunjaya in Palitana. In this group there were two people who were trying to come to terms with their guilt. They were not happy with the past and had been going to various types of therapy for many, many years. I had known both of them for a long time and now they traveled all the way to India to have some special time to study for self-awareness, for self-realization. They visited the mountains and caves where many people became enlightened. We climbed Mount Shatrunjaya, where a cluster of temples adorns the top of a holy mountain. On top of the highest of the temples, we had a special ceremonial meditation to let go of the past, to let go of the mind.

Anyone who wants to free oneself from wrong belief, guilt and sin is free to choose the Jain method of saying this mantra: Savva Pava Panasano, which vibrates to liberate. Here savva means all; pava means guilt and negativity; and panasano means destroyed. All guilt and sins of the past are destroyed. The next part of the mantra is: mangalanam cha savvesim. From that moment, mangalanam benedictions and blessings start pouring on us from all directions. This is the greatest among all benedictions, all blessings. In this way one goes deep into oneself. Deep into the source, one creates a fine insight and incinerates all the negativities. One accepts oneself as gold, purified of all dross.

Of the two people, I mentioned before, one came up from the mantra meditation and said with joy. “I am free! Free from the burden of the load of past negativities.” What she had not been able to do in twenty years happened spontaneously in that moment. Collecting all the junk of the past, collecting all guilt of the past, she incinerated them, cleansed herself of them, and forgave herself. She did not need to go anywhere to be forgiven, to be saved. She said, “I burned the negativity and threw the ashes away, and I came back to my clean self.” It was true for her because she believed it to be possible. Her belief became her reality, a fact for her.

But the other person said,” How can you burn all your past and your mistakes, your guilt? You can’t. It is impossible.” Often when we want to cling to our past, we can find arguments to support our condition. We are logical people - human beings are reasoning animals - and to make life miserable, we find so many logical reasons. We pick up a book which was written by one person who heard a second person quoting a third person, and then edited by a fourth person. We now take this as the real message and we say, “It is written! It is our original sin and it cannot be undone. We believe it!” It is written that a savior is needed or else we risk damnation and will go to hell; we believe it. But none of this is what the master interpreter said. A master is he or she who does not insult human dignity. Do you think the master will say, “If you don’t embrace me, you will go to hell.” Such an idea cannot come from any master; it comes from the egotistical interpreter. The masters help you see beauty. They give you their shoulders to climb up on to see more, to be taller not smaller. They don’t want to see you shrink; they want to see you grow.

Real parents are those who expect their son or daughter to be better than they are. Parents aspire to see their children go one step farther than they went. The son or daughter draws inspiration from the parents. If a child makes mistakes, the parents do not put the child down, but see it as a growing process and lack of experience; experiencing the pain of mistakes, the mind gains wisdom. To see the light of goodness behind the clouds of mistakes, we first have an eye to perceive goodness in oneself; only then can we see beauty everywhere.

Earlier I mentioned two people who were part of our meditation in letting go of guilt and negativity. One of them found many reasons to hold on to the past; the other willed it to be free and her seed blossomed into a smiling flower. You may think, “That does not happen.” But with her it did. She let go of old thinking and discovered she was free. Such an experience brings inner peace.

Not only she but anyone can recover from guilt by getting in touch with all pervading loving energy to discover one’s pure nature. Believe in your freedom to let go of the past! Be free and open to let the blessings pour in. Go deep into yourself, experience yourself, and believe in yourself. This is an understanding that comes only from your introspection, from your self-realization. Visit all the corners of your consciousness. See your strengths and erase your weaknesses. Accept yourself. Gradually build your self-image. Feel

your thoughts of “I am free and I choose to be happy. I choose to be peaceful; it is my nature.” So, let us release the past and have peace. Let us experience the presence of the divine energy which is within each of us.

Let us share a final universal blessing: Let the whole universe be blessed. Let everyone be engaged in one another’s well-being. Let all faults and mistakes of the past be effaced and vanished. Let everyone, everywhere, be healthy, happy peaceful and blissful. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti. Peace, Peace, Peace.

Four Steps to Reach the State

Fall 2008

Adapted by Sharat K. Jain, Ph.D and Rohan K. Jain

In order to reach the peaceful state of mind you need meditation, and to meditate you need relaxation. The meditation is like a brook that flows, grows, and ultimately merges in the ocean of love. In a flowing brook, there are many obstacles, hurdles, and rocks, and they try to hinder progress, yet the energy of the brook is flexible. It flows, grows, and overcomes all hurdles. The tensions that you create in you become hurdles. The memory of all the hurdles turns into pressure, and a person under pressure is not able to flow and grow. To flow and grow, one needs to be relaxed by learning the art of relaxation.

All mental, physical, psychological and social diseases arise from tension, constriction and suppression. Under pressure, people make wrong decisions. In order to make right decisions, you need to learn how to relax, and meditation helps you to do just that. In the Western world, even the famous institutions of learning offer classes on how to meditate. In the world over, meditation has become an important part of treatment of various mental, physical and social problems. In Jainism, meditation is essential to personal and spiritual growth. You can even achieve Kavalgnan → Nirvana or total knowledge - by practicing meditation. This is the highest miracle of knowledge you experience with the energy of meditation: Dhyana.

In order to attain Dhyana, you need to free your mind from hate and attachment - clinging and aversion - as they work against each other, thus causing pressure and tension. When you are attached to some 'thing,' your mind becomes sticky and loses the rhythm of flow. When you have hate, it is burning inside and your mind becomes like popcorn. When you put grain on fire, it becomes popcorn and starts jumping around. Similarly, when we have hate, energy is burning inside and we continue our obsession with attachment and hate. Those who are very dear we want them very close; and the ones we do not like, we push them away. Pull and push goes on during our whole life.

A religious place is supposed to give you peace and harmony; however, even when you are in peace and harmony, you form a group with people you like and you stay away from people you do not like. Those who join a new group may not want to go to their old temple and so create a new temple and press

others to attend. Why are you building tension in your heart by pressing people to go to a new temple? Why do you have this kind of attachment? You do not want to go to the old temple because you do not believe what they are doing. In order to be efficient, you need to think, feel and know how your mind is functioning. Are you free from pull and push? For instance, in the name of Lord Mahavir so many groups exist. In my opinion we need only to follow Mahavir who experienced Kavalgnan and shared the insight with us. You do not need original scriptures, I find that the teachings of Mahavir have nothing to do with groups, such as, swetamber, digamber, sthanakvasi, terapanthi, et al. Jain religion is completely open and it has no room for sectarianism. In original Jain scriptures I found that Agnan – ignorance – which is aversion and clinging, is the root cause of this sectarianism. With a touch of knowledge, and when Agnan is destroyed, the eyes open and miracles happen. A person is able to experience and realize in this life that the God resides within. In order to destroy Agnan and see God within, four steps to meditation are helpful.

First step in meditation is Padasth Dhyana. Padasth means the word you recite; you concentrate on its qualities. Prior to starting this meditation, you sit in a comfortable place and posture and you relax and make your mind a friend. If you know how to do it, your mind can be very helpful. There are times when, unknowingly, we are making our mind a friend; nevertheless, if we make it knowingly, it will be a miracle. How are we making our mind a friend unknowingly? Let us consider: when you go to a bank and want to collect money in cash, they will do that for you. As you are in the bank, there might be lot of distractions around you; however, when they are giving you money, you will not pay attention to anything else but the money. Your whole attention will be on every bill. You will not be distracted by anything else around you. Your mind becomes so concentrated that it is like meditation. Similarly, when you are driving your car, numerous distractions are around you, but your whole attention remains on the road. Driving is meditation but you do not know you are meditating. Your mind knows that if you make a mistake, you risk your life. The same way if you make your mind a friend, it will help you. In order to have help from your mind, you need to convince the mind to help you. The mind will not obey if you suppress or force. Request your mind: ‘For one hour please do not bring any distractions. I want to sit and meditate and experience the presence of Bhagwan’s purest energy in me.’ It is the mind which is doing a very good job of prioritizing important activities in your life. The inner conviction makes it happen. If you decide with full conviction that

“I do not want to have clinging and aversion, I want equilibrium” Veetraag: no clinging; Veetdwash: no aversion -it will happen. It needs to be your inner conviction, not lip service. It is your inner drive, inner force, and persistence that will make things happen.

Once you have made your mind a friend, you recite Namō Arihantanam. As you do that, you imagine the Arihantas who have removed all their inner enemies, and have eradicated aversion, clinging, anger, greed, jealousy, lust, false pride. When you say Namō Arihantanam, the personality of Arihantas with their inherent nature comes in front of you. For example, if you are fond of mangos, and somebody says, “Today we are going to have mango juice,” the word creates a picture and brings saliva in your mouth even though a mango is not in front of you. Words have an impact. If somebody uses abusive words to you, it will make you angry. If somebody says a negative word, the picture of this word comes in front of you. In the same way, when you say Namō Arihantanam, the picture of Arihantas who have conquered clinging and aversion come to your mind and slowly you develop the qualities inherent to Arihantas. Eventually these qualities become part of your nature. For instance, when the twenty-third Jain Tirthankara Lord Parshwanath is meditating, the celestial being Dharnandra is doing praise and devotion because this is his nature. While Kamath, who harbors negativity, he is harassing which is his nature. And with Lord Parshwanath, he is maintaining his equilibrium which is his nature. Kamath and Dharnandra both are doing their own thing; however, Lord Parshwanath remains peaceful with balanced consciousness. The nature of thorn is prickling and the nature of flower is perfuming. Thorns cannot become flowers and flowers cannot become thorns, as each has its own nature. Similarly, Arihanta Lord Parshwanath’s nature is to stay balanced. As you say Namō Arihantanam, the pictures of Arihantas come in front of you and how they conquered raga: clinging; dwasha: aversions; maan: pride; moha: greed; krodh: anger; and how they have become peaceful. The moment you recite the sloka, such a picture appears in front of you and you start the process of developing qualities of Arihantas and that is Padasth Dhyān. Once you have mastered the step, you go to the second step of meditation.

Second Dhyān is Rupastha: an image, an idol – a meditation in which a form, a shape, comes in front of you when you meditate. Your mind is watching the shape of the idol that is peaceful, quiet and pleasant. Bhaktamar Sloka, a well known Jain prayer, indicates that the best of the best of the qualities of atom, the peaceful vibrations, are taken from the universe and the

image of God is created. When a Tirthankar was born, the best of the atoms and all the best of the elements of the universe were there to compose his life. You imagine that the best of all those atoms have created the image of Paramatma: soul, and in your mind you feel the peaceful vibrations that are coming out of the image and are spreading inside you. Therefore, the idol becomes the living presence of the best of the atoms. Upon mastering this step, you practice the third step.

The third is Pindastha Dhyan where you imagine that the image, idol or words are within you. You think that you are holding within whatever was outside in the temple. You simply see Bhagwan within you - no aversions or clinging, no other thoughts, and just peaceful thoughts. It is like a garden where beautiful thoughts are blossoming. Your body is relaxed, you are sitting like God, and the image you see in a temple you see it in your body. How well you are doing depends on your effort, commitment, intensity, concentration and longing.

Upon mastering the Pindastha Dhyan, you go to the **fourth step: Rupateet Dhyan**, which simply means you feel the quality of God within you without word, images or imagination. You maintain equanimity and continue to develop freedom from aversions, clinging, false pride, jealousy, greed, anger, lust. You become content and confident, positive and peaceful.

JIVADAYA: Compassion to Living Beings

Fall 2008

By Pramoda Chitrabhanu

The Sanskrit word Jivadaya has a unique connotation in the literature of Jain Dharma. Jiva means life and daya means compassion—compassion to all living-beings. The idea behind Jivadaya is to have a sensitive heart that makes a deep empathic relationship with every form of living life starting from the micro-beings to macro-beings.

Its foundation is laid on the strong bedrock of our own practice of non-injury to life called Ahinsa and on one's genuine reverence for all life. Bearing this in mind, it becomes our prime concern to know and feel how we are affecting others, so as not to hurt anyone through neglect, apathy or intention, subtly or openly, subconsciously or consciously. It is the secret thoughts and tendencies entertained by us that make up the subconscious which is mainly responsible for the actual actions that one ultimately takes.

We know that human beings and indeed all lives are dominated by suffering. Our cravings, attachment and desires for the material things lead us to violence and destruction. These kind of hidden atrocities go unnoticed in our daily living that is the root cause of pain and agony.

In today's time of increased global warming and hostility the people all over the world are feeling more and more insecure, threatened and unsafe to live in a world plagued with the epidemic of power and position, violence and hate. The antidote for this is Reverence for Life and Ahinsa.

As Bhagwan Mahavir rightly said, "Knowing that all the evils and sorrows arise from injury to living beings, and that it leads to unending enmity and hatred which is the cause for great fear, a wise man who has become awakened should refrain from all sinful (harmful) activities."

In the olden days, the idea of Jivadaya was limited to animal shelters. It inspired people to spend their resources for animal sanctuaries where animals are protected and taken care of till they die. But today the story is different. Violence on dumb and mute animals has increased to such great heights that it

has caused moral and mental degradation to human-kind. It is because of this that the idea of Jivadaya has acquired a broader meaning of bringing awareness and spreading the message of compassion and non-violence in the fields of clothing, food, cosmetics, entertainment, experiments, and medicine.

All glory comes from daring to begin. The journey has begun. It is our desire to see a world free of pain and cruelty, for it is the fury of violence and barbarity that has perpetuated suffering, dominating our lives and those of all animals on this earth.

The more we reflect within ourselves the more our belief and conviction of universal kinship deepens, and we awake to the truth that we are all interconnected and interdependent. All life is therefore viewed as a gift of togetherness, accomodation and assistance. Without the one the other cannot exist. Bringing imbalance on one end brings imbalance on the other end.

Keeping this in mind, may we never get too busy in our own affairs that we fail to respond to the need of others with kindness and reverence. May we all be part of this circle of compassion and extend our feeling of love and care to all those who cross our paths on the journey of evolution.

Karma

January 2009

*Given at the Lighthouse Center,
4 May 2008*

Good morning. Every day I say “good morning” when I go for morning walk. One day a man was having problems with his wife, and so he said to me, “What is good about the morning?” He was honest about how he was feeling. What matters is what you feel. Feel what you feel and become aware of what you feel. That makes your day.

Today we are feeling good, so we say, “Namo Arihantanum.” This is a way of saying “good morning” in a language for people who want to have Self-Realization. Namo Arihantanum is a way of greeting the inside world from the outside world. “Ari” means all the inner weaknesses, “hantanum” means who has overcome. The world is full of weakness and strength; in a way the world is neutral. It is up to us. Make it or mar it. We are blessed. We understand and we can decide what to do and what not to do. Whatsoever happens is our own creation, knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously there is our consent.

We often say, “He made me unhappy” or “She makes me angry”, we blame others because we are not aware of our own feelings. We make others scapegoat. In the olden days the goat was sacrificed in the temple. Instead of sacrificing our ego, we sacrifice a scapegoat. We are using other people as a scapegoat. But how can another person make you unhappy? When you can be with yourself, you will see yourself, see your own feelings as they come and go. This will help you to watch your own feelings and master them. This self-confidence will guide you to achieve your goal. Many philosophers have misunderstood the word karma. Freedom of action is karma. Some people say, “Oh, it’s my karma, because of my karma I got this husband,” or someone says “I got this wife”.

What is philosophy of consciousness? It is the language of spirit within us, and karma is the action. Action is the capability of consciousness. What you feel inside, you speak. That gives shape to your words. Thoughts can be negative or positive or neutral. We color our thoughts according to our understanding and our emotions. When angry or upset, don’t speak. It is better to keep silent. When someone is emotionally charged, don’t fuel the fire, keep peace. It is better to be silent.

Dr. Mayo became a partner with a rich man, and with his help he was able to open the Mayo Clinic. One day his partner was sulky and wanted to talk to Dr. Mayo. Dr. Mayo could see anger in his eyes and in his expression, his words. The partner said, "I want to talk to you." Dr. Mayo said, "Not now, we will talk later on". The partner said, "I am mad." Mayo gently answered "One is enough in this room," and left the room. Anger is not our nature. It comes from outside. Don't open the door when anger knocks. Once you open the door anger enters, it possesses you and you don't have control. Anger is an outsider. Your consciousness is divine. You are all divine, all pure. But you have forgotten yourself, who you really are.

As soon as you believe that you are a sinner, who will liberate you? This belief is your problem. Your belief becomes your reality.

In meditation, get in touch with yourself, so you will experience the richness of your life. Instead of believing in beliefs, which is the influence of the outside imposed on you by calling you a sinner, not good, not rich, you have to believe in yourself.

Don't depend on others for your beliefs. Money, name, fame, running around in the rat race, becoming president of the rat race, there is no peace in this. In the government, in politics, it is a rat race, there is no time for peace. Rich people are spending time with their chauffeur, taking an apple and a cell phone. They don't have time to eat breakfast with their children. They don't enjoy life. Don't be jealous of them. Enjoy your life, make it simple. Gandhiji said, "The less I have, the more I am".

When I travel, I have a small bag. People ask me, "Where is your luggage?" I say to them, "I travel light."

Outside things occupy time, so you have no time for yourself. There are so many things, we pick the wrong dress, and then still window shop for another one! We have to laugh at our follies. Don't make yourself feel guilty when you make a mistake. Don't say, "I am naughty". Be aware. Learn from the mistake. You have to teach your own mind not to be guilty. When we make a mistake, we can recognize it, accept it, learn from it. We say, "Michami dukka dam": I am sorry and I am not going to do it again.

Free yourself. Don't let the past mar the beautiful present. If you don't mind your mind, your mind will mind your business. Watch your words. Seventy-five percent of people don't know what they're talking about. We do everything in a hurry, at the last minute.

There was a man going somewhere. He woke up late, and in his hurry, sat on his glasses in his car. He thought he could make it in time, but all of a sudden it started raining. His wife said, "Use the wipers". He said, "No, it will come in the way, I'll drive intuitively". Then a cop saw him driving 80-90 miles an hour. The cop had to chase him down and then asked him, "What were you doing?" The man said, "I wanted to get home before I got in an accident". A lot of people talk and don't know what they are saying. Each word we speak registers in our neurons. Whatsoever you put in your neurons will not be erased.

"Karma is action". If you are aware of your thoughts, words and actions, you will be creative. If you are not aware, then your words will hurt you.

There was a young man from America who went to India to find a wife, a woman of his same culture and language. He was highly educated and had a degree from Harvard. He put an ad in the paper. Ten to fifteen girls answered the ad. He selected one of the girls, a very intelligent, beautiful girl, and planned to meet her at 10:30 at the Churchgate Station. He was certain that she would be on time, and he believed that "time was money". The girl was coming to the station as quickly as she could, but she missed her train because it was too crowded. So she didn't arrive until 10:45. The young man was upset, pacing the floor, judging and blaming. When she arrived, he said, "You are late. I'm standing here like a fool for 15 minutes." The girl said, "Thank you, I don't want to see any fool, even a fool from Harvard." So who makes you a fool? We make a fool of ourselves when we do not watch our words. This is karma.

Karma is the philosophy of consciousness. What you want to make you can. Namo Arihantanum, the inside consciousness, can overcome the negative thoughts and feelings. It takes time, like a broken bone. First there is the cast, and then the physical therapy after the cast is off, and gradually the movement comes back. In the same way we have psychic damage, our consciousness becomes smeared by bad company, bad conditions, drugs, bad habits.

I was born in Rajasthan, but I was brought up in the South in a little town of Tumkur. When I was 16, I was invited to a wedding in Rajasthan. They had bhang, an intoxicated drink. I was unaware, so I took a drink. Very tasty, so I took one more. All these things, alcohol, marijuana, LSD, make you forget who you are. Children don't like alcohol, it burns. But people drink to forget, they are miserable, unhappy, and not enjoying peace. So the next day I found out they had taken a picture of me, standing on a roof, naked. They would not give me back the photo unless I gave 100 rupees. I gave them the money and got the photo and the negative back. I didn't want to do that again and learned without feeling guilty; otherwise, one has to pay a hundred times.

Namo Arihantanum—you have freedom of choice—to become whoever you want to be. For this you need meditation. When I came to Harvard and spoke, I told them: “Man is free to do what he wants to do. We don't need outside angels; recognize the angel in you. You can become what you want to. This is the inherent quality of consciousness.”

Meditate on SO-HUM. You are Consciousness. Anyone who realizes one's self and conquers oneself is Jain, not as a creed, but as one who has conquered all inner weaknesses. All consciousness is the same. There is a process of purification—purify what is negative, take it out, let it go. Don't waste time.

We have a very precious life. Many people don't understand what we are talking about, they have limiting beliefs. Your own weakness is your enemy because it is limiting you. For anything that is limiting you, conditioning you, use NA-HUM, I am not that. We are all born free.

The philosophy of Karma is liberation. Understanding of karma is freedom of action. You realize what you are, it does not limit you. You are not in any box. Watch your consciousness, be aware and be free. Watch your words. When you are emotionally charged, be silent, don't act. Be very watchful, every step you take has a consequence. Each step in awareness leads to liberation.

Six Steps to Evolution

Summer 2009

Meditation is to experience peace, reverence for life, and the quality of consciousness. Peace is possible only in the presence of Ahinsa.

What is Ahinsa? Ahinsa is feeling reverence for all life. Let us commence with self-awareness to practice what gives birth to peace.

A.H.I.N.S.A.

“**A**” represents **Awareness**. We need to see our own Self in the light of awareness. And seeing ourselves, we draw our own portrait and go lovingly closer to our Self and experience peace with others and with our Self. I am a living presence, animating the senses, and animating who so ever I touch.

This is the journey to unfold our essence. Though we often resist this, this journey has to start with ourselves. But the light of self-realization can be dazzling as even daylight can be dazzling to a person who has been sleeping for a long time in the dark. One has to train one's eyes to be ready to take the light of such realization, and we do that with meditation and increased awareness.

As we become aware of our loving sentient energy, we go deeper and deeper to experience that “I am here to know “I”-ness.” When it dawns, we realize our oneness with all life. This is Ahinsa.

The “**H**” of Ahinsa illumines our **Harmonizing** quality of consciousness. We experience harmonious presence on this earth with Reverence for Life which leads to harmony. “I will be a harmonious presence on this earth and will cause no harm.” This is respect for all life. Vibrations of violence beget violence. If we focus on violence, then violence will be our habit. If every day we think, “I am going to experience the presence of peace,” we start feeling peace. Gradually we engulf ourselves with peaceful vibrations. If we live in this way, this will become our shield. This will become our support. This will also become our protector from outside violence.

Vibrations of peace emanate from our loving heart. In the beginning, there will be some kind of conflict, but our practice and feeling of harmony will not allow any negative thought of hate, anger or resentment.

Each individual has to take charge of one's self and create harmony in one's self. Unless we create peace inside, we won't be able to create peace outside. To tell others we use words but to tell ourselves, we have to practice peace to have the experience of peace. It is easy to say words, but it is difficult to tune into the feeling. To connect, we meditate on harmonious breathing. This way the practice of harmony gradually permeates in every cell.

The “**I**” of Ahinsa represents **Integration**. Integrate everything. Integrate equanimity, equality and consideration to all races, all religions, all ethnic groups, and all life. Take out the divisions from your mind. These are all walls of conditions. These walls are not outside; they are built inside our mind. These walls are separating us from others and the presence of life.

Integration of behavior with belief is Ahinsa. Be this integration! We need a heart which integrates all, a heart which understands that all want to live, all want to have peace. There is no difference among living beings, even a fly or a flower wants to live.

Love does not have time to waste on hate. Love knows how to forgive. Love knows how to forget. Love knows how to move on. This way we are working on integration and slowly we feel integrated.

First, start with the mind, then with the words, then with the deeds. We integrate the way we think, speak and act. When we say, “Thank you,” the thanks is first in our thinking, then it comes in our words, and then our hand extends. The vibrations of thanks, which started from thinking, have gone to words and then part from our fingers. For vibrations to be receptive, they must be harmonious.

Integration is a harmonious, peaceful state of our consciousness.

Integration of body, mind and spirit is an orchestra where soul experiences a symphony of peace, prosperity and progress

The “**N**” of Ahinsa is **Nobility** of consciousness. Nobility is excellence. It is elegant and humble. My teacher once told me, “I am not your master.” I asked, “Why?” He answered, “I don't want to be your master.” But I said to him, “We call you master. You are our master.” He said, “Yes, I am a master, but not yours. I know how to master my emotions; I know how to master my thoughts; I know how to master my deeds. But sometimes I relapse and so whenever you call me “master,” you remind me of being a master.”

Somebody once asked me, “What is the secret of success?” I answered, “To err...but less...and less.” This is the secret. Nobody grows without erring. You may make mistakes but don’t beat your head. Don’t say, “I am a sinner; I am guilty; I am bad.” Don’t punish yourself day and night. If you drop ink on your clothes, there will be a stain, but then you wash it and you wash it again. Each time you wash it, there is less and less of the stain, and one day you see the stain is no more. Be kind with yourself. Be gentle. Love will erase all stains and then you will be your own master.

A Noble heart is generous. It overlooks even injuries. Meditating on this quality, we are magnanimous toward our former enemies.

The “S” in Ahinsa stands for **Service**. Serve somebody. Let your life be a service. Through service we become alive. Have you thought how many people and things serve us? We breathe air; we drink water; we eat vegetables; we wear clothes; always we are receiving the services of other living beings. And in exchange, what is given? Exploitation! We exploit people, animals and the Earth. Day by day, the earth is losing its beauty, its energy. If we don’t respect the earth, we will not respect life anywhere.

We need to serve and make service a part of our living. We need to live and help to let live. Some people ask, “Where can I go to serve?” I say, “Serve wherever you are. There is no need to go anywhere.” You can do service in many ways. Ask, “Today, how can I serve other living beings?” In this way we contribute. One more person serving is a blessing to the earth.

The last “A” of Ahinsa stands for **Abstinence**. Abstinence from those things which pollute our vibrations. Abstinence from products which cause pain and suffering. Abstinence from liquor which confuses our thinking. Abstinence from foods which do not give health. Unhealthy foods may taste good but they hurt our body, thinking and life. Our cells are created from the foods we eat, and according to the foods we eat, our vibrations are created. It influences our thinking, our reasoning, our sensing. To promote vibrations of peace and harmony, therefore, we need to abstain from harmful products, foods and thoughts. The senses are a gateway to all kinds of vibrations.

It will help us to know why the abstinence of dairy products is also Ahinsa. This excerpt below is from an article by Pramoda Chitrabhanu: “Milk: At What Cost?”

“The cows’ milk is only for their calves and it is only for babies, but now the cow is exploited for human beings.

*Their calves go hungry without a drop of milk and we become the cause (Nimitta) for their hunger and slaughter, violating the first vow of Ahinsa.

*This also affects our longevity (Ayushya) Karma. Reducing the longevity of others we reduce our longevity.

*The law of life is to take anything without the permission of their owner is a theft (Adattadan).

*They also know that it is acquiring the Karma of Obstruction (Antaraya) causing the separation of mother and its baby.

*Mahavir has emphasized foregoing passion creating foods in daily life (Vigaya).

*All dairy products are passion creating food.

*Giving up dairy and becoming Vegan, we become practitioner of Ahinsa.

*Knowing the facts and yet if we are not able to change our food habits and give up dairy products, we have to question our beliefs and commitment to dharma.

*The law of nature - Dharma is nothing but cause and effect. What we sow that we grow. Whatever suffering is caused to animals comes back to us like a boomerang.

*Becoming VEGAN is one of the most important and effective actions we can take to ease the strain on our Earth’s limited resources, protect the planet from pollution, prevent global warming, and save countless species from extinction.”

So, my friends, as we meditate, we realize that “I am a living presence in this body. I am sentient, conscious energy. I am love. I am peace. I am compassion. I am animating body: these senses, these brain cells and all my existence, as I feel my Self. I am Ahinsa.” This is the way we can live with Reverence for Life and Be a Blessing to this World.

Life is Liberation

Fall 2009

JMIC Newsletter

April-September 1992

Dear Friends. When we meditate and ask: What is the purpose of being human? What do we accomplish by being human? What is the ultimate aim of being human?—we can get an answer from examples as well as from our own experiences.

All the great masters have given examples from their own lives. They distanced themselves from their environment, from their conditioning, from the place where they were born. Their names were different, but for all the differences, they had one thing in common: they were all seekers. They were trying to find their real selves, their home and their essence. The masters may be in this time or past times, because time is eternal. We are only putting limitations on time, with the clock and with our own minds. Such limitations are all mentally-made blocks that keep us from finding the answers from our experiences in life.

In the same way we have made physical blocks of our flame, our spirit. We say, “She is woman; he is man; he is old; she is young.” But the energy, the consciousness, the soul, the spirit is not old or young, he or she, that or this—it is a flame. The flame can be in the body of “he” or the flame can be in the body of “she”. He and she are made by forms. But the flame is not made by anybody. Flame was. Flame is. Flame will be. That is called life. How you look at life makes the difference to you. So, what we have to learn from meditation is how to look at life! How do we see life?

For some, life can be a tragedy, life can be a comedy, life can be a journey, life can be liberation. Somewhere I read that life is tragedy for those who feel. Because the emotions are always mixed up, we go up and down like a yo-yo. Emotions swing up and down according to the mood, according to the environment, according to our interrelationship with others. We see life through the lenses of emotions. And the emotions sometimes become thick, sometimes thin, sometimes transparent and sometimes opaque. And the person loses the vision because of the lenses. So life is a tragedy for those who feel.

Life is a comedy for those who think, for minds have all kinds of crazy desires. We don't know what we want to be. Sometimes we want to be this, and sometimes we want to be that. We can't fulfill all our desires. So, it is good to take a break sometimes, to step back, to think, and to see the humor in our situation. So if you think, life is a comedy.

I know one man in New York, a thinker, who was walking one evening near Central Park. It was late. A mugger came and held a gun to his head, and said, "Give me your money or I'll blow out your brain." The thinker answered, "I'm a philosopher and I live in New York. You know that living in New York is very difficult. You can live without brains but not without money. So, you want to blow out my brain? It is all right. But I'm not going to give up all my money." In a split second, he saw that the situation was funny. He said, "You want money? Let's be fair. I don't have a lot of money but I'll give you \$20. Then I'll feel safe and you'll feel gain. But if you try to kill me, who knows, the cops may catch you and put you in prison. So, instead of having a good dinner, you'll be in prison. So be fair. Take this \$20 and go." He saw that life is a comedy and you have to play with it. You have to learn to make it lighter.

Don't make life heavy with your emotions and don't make rules. Rules that the husband should do this, the wife should do this, the mother-in-law should do this, the father-in-law should do this, and the daughter should do this. That way we slowly, slowly make our minds into fossils. We become rigid. And things don't work out the way we expect. We become jittery. We become angry. We become nasty. We become unhappy. And when we are alone with ourselves, we ask, "Why did I become like that? It was not nice." Take it as it is. It's funny. See the funny part in everything. Change your perception and don't make it so serious. Don't make everything into rules. And don't become so righteous. Too much righteousness will make you stiffer and stiffer. People are people, accept that and liberate yourself. And instead of worrying about the potholes, celebrate your journey.

The teachers who have got enlightenment, who have experienced their home, their essence, often went away for many years. What they were seeking was their origin. What they were. And going deeper, and deeper, and deeper, they realized themselves and found their origin, their root, their connection.

So when I read life is a comedy for those who think, I thought, "There must be something extra." And I thought, "Life is a journey for those who travel." It's a journey. We are all travelers. It's a trip. We don't die. We change the places.

We change the town. We change the clothes. And we are always travelers. Travelers cannot afford to waste time quarreling with each other; they enjoy. Make this human trip as light as possible. Allow people to come along or to leave. If somebody wants to live with you, "It's fine." If they want to go, say, "Goodbye." Don't cry. Let go of the attachment. Let go. You know now it is not meant for you.

We always shift our attachment from one to another. When we were young we were with the parents. Later we become attached to the teachers. We grow and we become attached to the wife or husband; and then to the children and grandchildren. We are souls, and we offer lovingly whatsoever we can for the people who have been with us. But if they don't want to remain, there is no need to impose anything on them. Sometimes you are doing a service by not doing, because they don't desire.

The masters have meditated. And in the silence they heard atma is paramatma: "My soul and the higher soul are one." When the water is calm and there are no ripples, you drop a pebble and it creates circles. In the same way, when you are in silence, when you are in peace, one word of wisdom comes and it ~~creates a circle within. And each word will become a trip to enlightenment. So~~ the first thing the masters found was that, "My soul is not different than the higher soul." The small sapling is no different than the big tree. Only the small tree has grown big. But the seed that was in the small tree is the same as in the big tree. So one is seeing the presence of God within oneself. This is not ego or becoming something superior to others. It is realizing your own nature.

When a person feels, "I am one with that: the highest; the noblest, the permanent light; and the divine presence," from that day our inferiority complex will break. Go on meditating. You will feel inseparable. And always you will walk with the feeling of being God incognito. Each person is incognito God. Invisible God.

But there are many distractions which will come and take us away from this essence. They are old feelings, old habits, or things we do under pressure. It may be physical pressure. Sometimes it is psychological pressure. Sometimes we do things because of cultural pressure. Sometimes it is because of family pressure. There are so many kinds of pressures around us. So we do not do things because we want to, but because we are under pressure. So to stay with the feeling of divine presence, we need good company. Good reading. Good environment. Good thinking. Slowly, slowly we get rid of the habits and the pressures. That will be a challenge. Take this challenge in life. Not the

challenge from outside. You do not have to win and be better than others. You have to be better than yourself. "I will be better today." So you start working. We don't go ahead of others. We go ahead of our own conditions and our own personality.

When you feel heaven within, then you will find that "I am holding the energy which can heal. Because I created my wounds, I have to heal them. I am both the creator of illness and the creator of healing." Illness does not come unless you do something, either in eating or in emotions: in anger, in hate, in resentment, in bad feelings, in holding something inside and not letting go. In that way we are inviting disease. So if we hurt we also know how to heal. And the healing can be done by each individual. Each person has the healing power. And when you believe that, "I am going to heal," then you take the steps which help you heal your problem.

The spiritual thing is that which breaks our old habits and builds self confidence and conviction that "I can do anything I want to do." You don't use the negative word, "I can't." Instead say, "I can. I can do." Gradually take out the negative word that shows incapability. ~~We are capable. Life is liberation~~ when you understand. It is not a tragedy. It is not comedy. It is liberation. If we understand, then life is liberation. We liberate ourselves from the cycle of birth and death. And we become universal consciousness. And all the masters, wherever they are, are living in that light, that love, that eternity. Why can't we be the same? We can be!

This life, in what I saw in my enlightened experience, is very beautiful and blessing-full. So, my friends, I want to share with you. Take out the feeling of dependence and become independent, like each master. We don't come to follow the teacher. The teacher is a catalyst, who helps you develop clear vision and shows you which path to walk. We don't follow the teacher's path but our own path. We come to follow the path which leads to our home. We all have our own home. That happens when we are moving in the direction of liberation.

Life is a tragedy for those who emotionalize. And life is a comedy for those who think. Life is a journey for those who travel. Say, "I am a traveler. This is my journey. I have to make my journey. I have to celebrate my journey with everyone, with all castes, all creeds, all sizes, all colors, all kinds of people, all life." And, life is liberation. As we make our journeys and free ourselves from old habits, old pressures, old conditions, old stigmas, old words, and old programming, we liberate ourselves. So, my friend, life is liberation. Freedom.

Managing Life with Meditation

Summer 2010

JMIC Newsletter 1991

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu, as a Jain Master, encourages devotees "...to become strong enough in body, mind and soul to take charge of one's own spiritual journey. A teacher must never foster dependence in his disciples." His teachings help us to attain that state of consciousness in which we can experience harmony with ourselves and with the Universe. He comes to us as an exemplar and enabler of that harmony - a man whose presence itself is an affirmation of joy, oneness with all life, brotherhood, creativity, love, wisdom, action, and light.

*Catherine Florida, The
Lighthouse Center
Whitmore Lake, Michigan*

Nowadays man is lost. Man does not know what he is doing. He is walking in sleep; he is a sleep walker. I've seen it. You see it with educated people. You see it in people with prosperity. But hardly do you see how poor they are inside; how frightened they are; how angered they are; how confused they are; and we see the results in the callousness in the world. It is not only in India; it is all over the whole world. And when man is lost, he becomes chaotic or paranoid or psychotic and he does not know what he is doing. He can do any violence; he can do sabotage; he can cheat; he can do anything. And nowadays you will see that such a person can even become a minister of a cabinet. This is the world in which we are living, and it is such people who are guiding us. Some are in the name of gurus; some are in the name of religious heads; some are in politics. The people who are in a position to be a beacon to us, a guidance to us, an inspiration to us, are themselves lost. They themselves are groping in darkness; darkness of greed, darkness of popularity, darkness of power, darkness of caste, creed, and religious fanatic ideas. When these leaders speak from their platform, we are guided and led by them and so this is a very trying time through which man is going.

Being Programmed

Our only hope nowadays is meditation, introspection. This is the only thing which awakens a man who is slumbering, is walking in sleep and is programmed. We are programmed people. Whatsoever we are doing, we are doing under a trance of a program by the media: the newspapers, the magazines, television, radio, the writers. They are day by day programming us and they also are programmed by others. Still we think that we are the one who is thinking. No! If the person were thinking, there would be clarity. The definition of happiness is clarity. Clarity of thinking is happiness. So, today, when I was asked what I am going to speak about, I thought: "Let's take time to think and let's take time for meditation." I am going to share some insights with all of you on meditation.

What is Meditation?

Meditation has now also become like a product in a supermarket where you go and buy various kinds of meditation and so I want to define what meditation is, because it can be used in negative ways also.

Meditation is a journey of discovery to your self, and from self to Higher Self, the purest Self, and in this state you see the world journey; it is a discovery that we are sentient energy. You find it within you, and this meditation takes you to that state which we call God Consciousness, Divine Consciousness, Self Consciousness, or Self Awareness. It's an inward journey, but various approaches in life are trying to take us out. Meditation is the only thing which takes you in and into your own self. And when you go inside, God talks to you. In prayer you talk to God but in meditation God talks to you; that is the difference. In meditation you don't say, "You are holy. You are big." You are this or that. He knows who He is. Why are you using unnecessary words? They are merely praise and flatteries. But in meditation, you allow Him to talk to you. Listen! Just be calm! Find out why you are here. What you are really is the light, the love. When we go closer to ourselves, we find inside what we are seeking outside. You are seeking God outside, but He is inside and He is a reflection.

"Meditation is the only thing which takes you in and into your own Self. And when you go inside, God talks to you."

What is God?

I define God as taking time to meditate and what you find is God in you. Each letter in God, G-O-D, represents a specific trait. First you experience that certain Generating energy, the “G” of God. That energy is not outside; it is within. G is the generator, the creator of electricity. Say, “This is in me. I am life. I am consciousness. I am sentient energy.” I am awareness but my awareness is clouded because of desires, greed, all kinds of fanatic ideas. What I have to do is uncover; I have to bring out the quality from inside. It is a diamond with its radiance within. As we go on polishing the diamond, the radiance comes out. But it is a rough diamond. What is required is the art of polishing. And when we break our ego and we go on polishing, we find the radiance: insight, intuition, premonition. You get many, many insights and you will be surprised by your reservoir of knowledge. A reservoir of knowledge within!

Discovery of Self

We hardly take time to *sit* and *listen* and say, “Who are you, my dear?” The whisper comes so gently, so still that you have to become completely calm. If there is the noise of demands, we do not hear because of demands: some want money, some want power, some want position, and when there is a demand, our clarity is colored and covered. We become sure when we become pure. And purity comes to us when we come closer to ourselves, when we just sit and listen and say, “I have talked to you but now you talk to me.” And there is an art of listening. Just listen! And when we become aware, we see how our demands are overwhelming. We think we need so many things but we really don’t know what we need. We are collecting; we are accumulating; but we don’t know when we will have the time to enjoy them. And in this rat race, we are lost. We cannot find our Self. Find somewhere to just sit and watch what is going on inside. This is a beautiful way to live. All are on a sojourn. So, in meditation we are experiencing a sojourn and we ask whether “my trip in life is a trip of orderliness, light, love, peace and joy.”

Time for Self

My friends, who is preventing us from making our life rich? No one except ourself. We are in our own way; we are in our own hurdles, obstacles. Why? We have to break walls. Meditation means that we take time to inquire and experience these three words: *Who Is This?* I am the generator. I am energy. Whatsoever happens in the world happens because of this dynamic energy. You can do anything. This the energy Mahavira realized and he brought us to

nonviolence. He realized and he generated compassion. He realized and he said, “Watch your words. Watch your body. Watch your thoughts.” There is no need to watch outside; it is inside. Once people are able to take time and see, they are able to generate the “G” for Generating energy. Each human being has this capacity. Every day if it is at all possible take ten minutes just for yourself. You have given time to your business, to your children, to your wife, to your husband. to all! But why not to your own self?

Affirmations

Ask yourself each morning before starting the day, “What do I want from my life? How am I going to spend my time this day?” Each day is a precious day and even with millions of dollars, no one can give us one extra day when our time is over. There are no exemptions. We have to have deposits in our consciousness. So, before you rest your head on your pillow, you say, “Today I did something. I deposited my day in the bank of my spirit: A little joy! A little sharing! A little bit of good feeling!” Then the night is no longer full of nightmares but full of beautiful feelings. You are at rest.

Individuation

What we are doing is following the herd mentality: our dress, our speech, our style, our walking, our eating; we must be like others and do like others. We are not individuals. But know that man starts his journey in life when he becomes an individual, when he has individuation. In the psychology of Jung, individuation must develop. One must come to one’s individuation of “Who Am I? What Am I?” And when one finds out, he does not go with petty conformity. He says, “I Am I.” I am I whether you accept it or reject it; it has nothing to do with me. But courage one must have to avoid being a chameleon. And this capacity, each one of us has. When man lives in this way, there are no regrets that one has not accomplished certain things when one’s time comes. This is possible with the “G” of God: the Generator of energy.

Responsibilities

The “G” is generator; “O” is organizer and the third essential is very important: the “D” stands for Delete. We delete those things which are not useful, which are not helpful which are burdens. When we go for a haircut, we have the useless haircut and we pay money for that. The barber takes your hair but still you pay, because it needs to be deleted. In the same way, every day what is not necessary, delete it before you rest your head on your pillow. “This is not useful! This is not needed!” We are like children collecting cards,

stamps, books; even if we are not using them, we keep them. We have to outgrow our childhood. So the third necessity is to delete. Delete those things which are useless and destroy those things which are burdening you, *physical or mental*.

Around us there are accidents, there are diseases, there are so many happenings. But calamities are not coming from nature; they are coming from our own uncontrolled greed and desire. That is what creates things! The basic principle I am talking about is not from the scriptures, but from my own experience of how life is *effected*. Learn the art of deleting. Have a throw-away basket so that what we don't want, let it go. Let it go, like a hair cut.

Practice

Any person who knows, uses, and applies these three-lettered essentials of life knows what to do and what not to do, from an inner voice. But because of greed, because of desire, because of ego, because of fanaticism, the inner voice is suppressed. When we take time, our meditation will lead us to become the best human being. Now, make them your own, these three words from GOD: Generate, Organize, Delete.

Paryushana: A Week of Forgiveness

Fall 2010

Jain Meditation International Center
Autumn 1980

Pary means “from all directions, from all around.” Ushana means “to stay”. Paryushana then means to come from all directions and to stay, to be still. It means to stop moving all around and to stay close to oneself. This meaning is a symbol for growth and transformation: the purpose of life according to Jain teaching is to realize oneself, to experience wholeness, peace and reverence for life.

These eight days each year are set aside for the practice of special observation of one's thoughts, words and actions and for reflection on the past year's relations and personal experiences. Each aspirant cleans his or her heart of all old resentments and anger, of any jealousy and competitiveness, and seeks forgiveness from others for any pain he or she may have caused.

This is a special time for calm and quiet introspection, for thinking less of oneself and more of others, for renewing one's touch with oneself and with all life. How can we learn to be more aware and sensitive, to harm life less and bring more joy and friendly feeling into the world? These are the questions of Paryushana.

On the final day is the ceremony of Pratikramana, which means to step back. This marks the climax of the week of forgiving. It is a time when we look at our lives and remove any traces of negativity, resentment, or injury we find within. In this meditation we free ourselves of heaviness and return to the world refreshed. And we say to one another: Mi Cha Mi Dukka Dum, which means, “If I have hurt you in any way, I ask your forgiveness.”

Forgiveness Mantra

May I forgive all souls, let them forgive me.
Let my heart of hatred and resentment be free.
Let my love go forth to all that may be.
Let the perfect souls witness my pledge to be free.

Khamiya khamaviya mai khamaha
Savva jiva nikaya
Siddha sakha aloyena
Mujja vaira na bhava

The Nature of Mind and Truth

Spring 2011

From The Miracle Is You

The mind can turn against anything; it has a habit to revolt against what it does not understand. It attacks and in that way, it thinks it can save itself. If it does not strike, it feels it will not save itself. To save face, it uses a device to strike out at what it does not grasp or cannot conquer. Sometimes when the mind does not understand the teacher or Master, it strikes out against him or her also. It happens to all teachers and Masters in one way or another from time to time. The wise man wants to conquer his mind and his senses and that is all. He says, "Those who are ready, let them understand. Those who are not ready, let them learn through suffering." Suffering becomes their master. They gain from pain.

There are some people who are not happy unless they become unhappy. They find some reason to have a discussion and create a fight, and they spoil their evening instead of sitting in silence, having peace and seeing beauty. That is why if you are going away for the weekend with friends and you want to have a very pleasant time, better take some time for silence. Then you will enjoy nature within and without. Otherwise, you might come home with fighting, quarreling and disputing with yourself.

It is very difficult to understand the nature of the mind and how it works against us. For example, it may say, "I will die for the religion." The religion which helps to know the immortality of self, and peaceful self of consciousness, is its essence. Religion is neither for death nor for war. The cause for all our suffering is self-ignorance. Realization of who am I brings an end to all conflict and otherness. Self-knowledge means no belief: when you see the sun, you do not say I believe in the sun. In the light of self-knowledge, the darkness of all the beliefs disappears.

What is reality? Our belief is reality; reality changes the moment we change our belief. There were many crusades because of beliefs which they called religion. In this confusion of belief and reality, people created religion and then in the name of religion and God, people were butchered and massacred.

Religion is for peace, for love, for joy, for liberation. ‘You may do what you want to do; let me do what I want to do.’ The motto of religions is to respect others’ freedom and others to respect ours. Religion is not imposing something on somebody. A cult may do this but not religion. Religion means to join back, not to sever. In the garden of the universe, religions are beautiful plants of colorful roses. Diversity enhances the serenity of the garden: Unity in diversity.

Once a priest from the Western world went to the East and met a Master of meditation. The priest was eloquent in English as well as in Oriental languages. When he went to see the

Master, he told him that he would like to read some passages from the Sermon On The Mount in order to make the Master aware of the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Master was very happy to listen ... so the priest started translating. Then on the Master’s face there came a glow; in his eyes there were tears. His whole being was thrilled with joy. The priest was very happy because he thought he was able to impress the Master and convert him. But when the priest said, “I hope you enjoyed the words of Jesus,” the Master said, “Jesus? These must be the words of Buddha! Mitta-Friendship, Karuna-Compassion, Ahimsa-Non-Violence do not kill any life because you kill your love and peace before you kill anyone else. *Surva jiv sadbhav: equanimity for all life. Save vi jiviyun ichhaie: all life love to live.*” In diverse words, this is the wisdom that illumines the sacredness of life. Wisdom is translated in various countries in different times, in different places, in different languages, and in different modes of life. What is important is the sacredness of life, and we may say: Revelation for different folks, different strokes!

This is a precious time for us to experience the inner quest of life: live, live lovingly, live peacefully, live healthily, live without hurting the core of our essence, and live in realization of divinity within. So we live normally but with the realization that our essence is incognito God. The main purpose is the wisdom, the aliveness of life, the sweetness of life. Without clinging to the words, just meditate on inner core of sacredness of life. Miracle is our essence. Essence is incognito God.

Truth has always existed, before Mahavira, before Buddha, before Christ or Rama. Do you think truth was born with these Masters? If somebody opens the curtain at noon, you see the sun for the first time. But before the curtain was removed, the sun was there. Instead of basking under the sun, do you cling to the person who removed the curtain? We have good feelings for this person and we say, "Thank you," but we care for and carry the light and the warmth of the truth.

Love and Blessings

Ahinsa Is Life

Summer 2011

*“As we meditate we come to know ourselves.
We discover the sacred beauty of life.”*

Ahinsa is not a philosophy. Ahinsa is not a religion. Ahinsa is a feeling of life. Many people say, “Ahinsa means don’t hurt anybody. Don’t kill.” That is one meaning, but it is secondary. The first meaning is: “Don’t hurt yourself.” When you hurt somebody, you are already violent inside; you lose the feeling of amity. Ahinsa is the road from enmity to amity. From hostility to love!

Ahinsa is a subtle thing. It cannot be grasped unless we go deep into ourselves. As we meditate we come to know ourselves. We discover the sacred beauty of life. Unless we have that experience, we may use the word Ahinsa, but it will only be lip service. It will just come from language; it will not emanate from experience. To practice Ahinsa, one has to remove the veil of ignorance about oneself. One has to experience life.

Once we have the experience, we make an inner commitment to practice Ahinsa in three areas: with our actions; with our words; and with our thoughts. Every night we review our day and ask, “Did I harm myself? Did I have any negative thoughts and feelings toward anybody? Did I criticize anybody? Did I judge anybody?”

As we develop the tenderness in ourselves, we see the tenderness in others and become more compassionate toward others. Once we see the sacred beauty of life in ourselves, we see that sacred beauty in others. We do not see that person as a man or a woman or a person from a certain sect or religion. All these obstacles evaporate.

Unless we see beyond the barriers, there won’t be peace in the world. We may talk about peace; but inside we go on creating separation. Some say, “My religion is best; it is the only true religion. And, if you don’t start to practice my religion, you will go to hell.” Such dogmatism and bigotry is also a form of violence. When we practice Ahinsa, we try to understand what others are saying, what they are conveying, what they are feeling. We listen beyond the words.

Once you start practicing, your life becomes an inspiration. Wherever you go your eyes will speak; your feelings will speak; your words will speak; your actions will speak. And people will be changed. Not by your words, but by what they see. When we experience the sacred beauty of life, we experience peace. We inspire peace. Then, there will be peace. There will be peace.

Ahinsa and a meditative mind go hand in hand. Meditation is seeing things as they are. And when you see, you feel and you experience. A child is not thinking; it is experiencing. That is why it does not think that you are old or young, beautiful or ugly. It does not discriminate. It sees life. It connects with life.

In meditation we get in touch with life; its depth, its joy, its beauty, its ecstasy. This is our source. But when we think, the mind either worries about the future or has regrets about the past. So, the present slips through our fingers. In meditation, we just feel and live. We are in tune with the experience of life. Life is the experience. Life is not permanent. Life is change. Whatever action comes, it comes from our source. That source we experience and expand in meditation. We tune in. We connect to ourselves, our body, our cells, our vibrations. And we progressively evolve in this change.

If we look at a ray of the sun, one ray, it is white and bright. But if it enters a prism, it becomes like a rainbow. The ray shows only one color, but now in the prism it appears in seven colors. What happened? It is a connection. The drop of water is hanging on the leaf. The sun ray touches it and you see the rainbow in the small drop of water. You don't see color in the rain, but there in that small drop it sparkles like a rainbow. The connection makes the change. When we meditate and have pure awareness, we see our own light. We see our own rainbow.

As meditators, we let the addiction to control melt away. We do not live in the future or in the regretful past, but in the pleasant present. Every moment life is pulsating and moving. We connect each day with our source and feel the dawn of life.

If Ahinsa and a meditative state go hand in hand, then Ahinsa also opens us to the humanity within us and in others. One evening Tagore was writing at a table near the window in the light of his table lamp. He wrote for an hour and a half and it was getting late; he became tired and turned off the lamp to go to

sleep. To his surprise, Tagore saw that the room was flooded with moonlight. The moonlight had been in his room for hours, but he had not noticed. Only when he switched off the table lamp, did he see. And he writes, "My table lamp ego did not allow the God-like moon to flood into my life." As long as we have the small ego lamp, we don't see the flood of cool, natural light; our ego looks only for that which confirms our beliefs and ideas. "Oh, he speaks of something different from my religion, my belief, my ideas, and my dreams...I don't want to hear that." But if you turn off the ego, you realize the very presence of God within you. Once this door opens, you become open. You can listen to others and learn. Everywhere you can see many viewpoints.

In the partnership of love and marriage, you don't treat your partner as an object of pleasure. Your partner is a partner sharing love; is a partner sharing feeling; is a partner sharing your divinity. And when you look into his or her eyes, you realize that you don't want to hurt your partner with criticism, finding fault, or blaming the family. You want to understand.

When people are not aware of who they are, they go on criticizing, pinching, nagging each other. They do it in the name of perfection, in the name of improvement, in the name of caring, in the name of helping. But violence is present because there is no understanding. No reverence. No love. When we have negativity and hate, do we feel joy? Do we feel love? Do we feel pleasantness? Do our eyes smile? Do our limbs dance? No! Negativity stifles, constricts and confines.

In one Indian town, a woman came to see me. She told me that her mother was sick and wanted me to come and bless her. But I saw that this woman was very old, so I asked, "You have a mother?" Yes," she said. I was curious and asked, "How old are you?" She answered, "I am ninety." Ninety? I was surprised. A ninety-year old daughter comes to take me to her mother? I asked, "How old is your mother?" "She's one hundred and ten," the woman told me. So, I went there. I saw. The mother's skin was so soft and tender. I touched her and it was like touching the holiest, highest, purest soul. So peaceful! I asked, "What is the secret of your longevity?" And she said, "I love everyone. I don't hate anybody. When anything happens I tell myself it is my karma. Nobody is responsible for my pain. I am responsible for my pain."

When we feel the divinity, we can feel the cool, refreshing light of love and joy. We understand our humanity; we understand neighbors, family, people, and the world in which we are living.

Love and Blessings,
Chitrabhanu

Feel the Meaning of the Word and We are Breath

Fall 2011

Given at the Lighthouse Center

April 29 & 30, 2011

Transcribed by Nirali Becky Kleinschmidt

If we utter a word and the meaning does not touch our heart, the word becomes lip service. Most of the words we use, we use as lip service. When light extinguishes, the word stops. Words are lip service if the meaning does not touch our heart. Most people don't feel the feeling of the words that they are uttering. The way the word is uttered, if you *feel* the meaning of the word, you are on the path to enlightenment.

In Genesis there is a word; there was light, and what it was, it was a word. Word is a light. When you speak, there is light in you. Light speaks the word. Without light, word becomes an empty bulb. It has shape and size, but it has no light. If we go on using word, there are empty bulbs. In darkness, a big bulb will not help, but a tiny bulb will shed light. There was word and word was light, and light is the word.

When we say "Namaste", there is a very deep meaning. All oriental people use it, but at the same time they fight. So if they are fighting, I know they are using word, but without the light. The moment you feel light, you don't have the fight. You see the same in you and the other person. Another person is a reflection of you. If you have a clean mirror, you can see your figure. If you are alive, you see the figure. If not alive, and you show a mirror to a dead person, the person is there, but the seer is gone.

My friend you are not the figure, caste, creed, woman or man. You are the *light*. When you feel the light in you, you feel it in others. When you *feel* the light, you will not hurt others. You will help. Light will not hurt light. Light will help light. If there are two or three lights, and you bring in another outside light, light will merge with the other light. Light is not separate; inside and outside is in our mind. I wish and pray that the Lighthouse Center should become center of the light; not outsider. Don't judge anyone who is Christian, Jew or Muslim. See the light, not caste, creed or appearance. Healing starts from this.

Day and night we hurt ourselves because we are separating ourselves. We make someone “mine” or “my buddy” or “my enemy”; mental division is continuous. The world is just to be where you are. Why do we make their problem our problem? You are light and the breath. So when you inhale the breath, you are inhaling the same breath breathed by Jesus, Moses, Mahavir, Buddha, Rama, and Krishna. They didn’t breathe different breath. It is the same breath. Millions of years have gone by, but breath is the same in the Universe. If you realize, *I am breath*, you will not die. Everything changes. You will breathe somewhere else. So when body dies, breath is still there. You will take another form. You will breathe somewhere else.

Many people say “God bless you”. At that time, I hesitate. Why use a third person? Why not say “I bless you”? But take out the ego. When you say “Bless you” you have to have a loving feeling. Heart blesses. Say it as if the person is your son, daughter, loved one. They are someone’s loved one.

Go a little deeper into self. Everyday life is a process of healing. Heal. Not later on, but every day. We don’t know when breath goes out, it may not come back, and we will be gone. Can you ask a palmist, and when seeing your palm says “Your time is very long”. But this does not decide it, your life depends upon your breath. When the breath exhaled does not come back, it is over. *We are breath*. When you know breath, you don’t want to pollute breath.

Why do you fight with people? It is because of your concept. This person does not agree with me, so they are not my friend. You like “yes mister, yes miss”; everyone who says yes and agrees with you. That is conditioning. But if you have breath, then you are OK if someone disagrees with you. If you have lunch together, you don’t see shape, size, etc. There is harmony inside. So live in this world and realize the divinity of consciousness. Don’t cause any illness to your mind, body or senses. I am going to become my friend today. Everyone will heal and make a commitment from today on that I will be my own friend. So what advice I give to others I will give to myself first. So when you don’t hurt yourself, you are not hurting others. You must be hurting yourself first. I will not have anything that will hurt my consciousness. We know the law, and we see, but we don’t meditate on it.

Take a matchstick. It can ignite anything, but before it ignites it, it must ignite its own face first. If you take a picture when you are angry, you don’t want to

see your face. How cloudy your consciousness is. You don't want to see your face when it is clouded by anger; and this anger makes someone unhappy. How much we destroy ourself, and our happiness from anger, because anger lingers after the event is over. This is when we bring in forgiveness. Mahavir says "Michhami Dukkadam."

Prayer is not for bread and butter. Prayer is to experience, and our prayer is Shivamatsu Sarva Jagata. All the words, may the whole universe be peaceful. Shiva means blessing. I have to be a blessing to myself. I will not hurt myself. Start the day by giving a blessing to yourself. Shivamatsu. Whatever you do, you do with blessings. That is your commitment.

Pay attention to tension. Why are you holding tension? Tension creates disease. You have lost ease...*relax*. Why lose ease? Disease is illness. Healing is nothing but to come back to ease. Healing is when you are at ease. When you are not at ease, there is disease. Bubbling with possessiveness, control, etc. will not be at ease. When you have tension, take a breath and relax. Breath is nectar, and it is available all the time. It is available on the plane, train, and when you are walking or sleeping. It is no charge.

Breathing is a life giving energy. Light needs oxygen breath. Lamp needs breath, oxygen to burn. But we don't pay attention to breath. People pollute breath with smoking. This brings cancer. Man does not know how to live. It is basic what we need. Here we understand the value of breath. Make time. Whenever you have time, take a deep breath. The more oxygen you have the more you are going to live. Breathing with yourself, not away from yourself. Moment breath becomes less, power of thinking becomes less. Breath touches the neurons. Breathe in peace, love, I am, So Hum. With more breathing, your mind is blossoming into a flower.

Chetana said she wanted to be initiated at Palitana. I told her it was not possible, because she was smoking and polluting herself. I would not allow it. She said she couldn't give it up, and I said "fine, I won't take you to Palitana". She gave up smoking, because she wanted to purify. Congratulations to this soul! She was initiated at Shatrunjaya. Before she was living on props and smoking, etc. and thought she couldn't live without it. But all you need is breath.

I can live with anything as long as I am breathing. With breath, I can be my own best friend. Shivamatsu. The whole universe, the whole world is my friend. No Christian, Jain, Jew, Muslim, etc. These are all adjectives. Essence is pure consciousness. Everyone is pure consciousness. We are incognito God. You feel “I am incognito God” Atma is paramatma. Paramatma is purified soul. Mahatma is better human being, like Gandhi. Because he was practicing Ahinsa in politics and everything. When a person completely purifies he becomes paramatma. Same consciousness as we go on upgrading, we feel paramatma. Healing is inherent in us. Deep breathing. Focus on this healing. We want to heal this ourselves, before we go on to the next body. We go on changing. Experience “I Am”. If you feel “I Am” you will not be controlling. Then you can live with people without controlling others. Who are you to control others? You are insecure if you are controlling. People are empty because they are insecure. The weakest people on earth are controlling. Hitler and Mussolini. They made their nations poor. Controlling people are empty inside like a vacuum. It is like a stuffing, like what you see inside some toys. We are stuffed with ego, caste, creed, position and post. Once you realize “I Am”, I am not big because of an adjective or degree. Otherwise, always we live on other people’s approval and dependence.

You have to be sincere. I am not going to depend on others’ approval, but on my own inner conviction. What I feel, I tell. How can people know you as you are, if you become someone else to be with them? We always try to become someone else. How can they know? We are always complaining “People don’t know me”, but how can they if you do not allow them to? Why are you a chameleon? How can they know you? Go on feeling I am love, I am peace, I am pure breath. I am breath of Mahavir, Buddha, Krishna; whomever you identify with, and that is OK. The mind needs that.

In the beginning this is very difficult. It’s like having your hand in plaster. When you take it out, your hand can’t move. We have become stiff for so many years. People are in plaster of beliefs. To get movement, meditate. Meditation is therapy. We have become stiff with ideas and identification of Christian, Jain, Muslim, etc. Those who structure you are your teachers. But they themselves are structured. Close your eyes. Don’t go anywhere. Go to self. Take a deep breath and be peaceful. Inside voice will come. Awaken the inside.

Only one life. It is very valuable. If you miss it, it is gone. You can't buy this life again for a million dollars. How we are wasting it. How we live exchanging each day of our own life. One has to know the value of the day. My day is valuable. You cannot buy it.

Recently, one of my friends at the age of 65 was sick and he was home. He was meditating. He knew his time had come. Two or three doctors came and said "Now we will take you to the hospital". He responded "No doctor is going to give me life. You can make a person breathe with a machine, but you can't make the life. Not even my wealth can give me one extra minute. Let me breathe and experience life at home. Let me go at home". The gift we have my friend, cannot be bought with a million dollars.

The President of the Blind Association in India, Dr. Rajendra Vyas was blind himself. When he got a son, everyone said "You have a very handsome son!" At that time he said, and the word he uttered I still remember and can't forget "I can give a million dollars to a doctor who can give me eyes to just glimpse my son and wife's face". We take our eyes for granted. We are blessed with our ears, eyes and hands. We have freedom of movement. We are not counting our blessings. We are counting money, positions and degrees.

The Lighthouse Center becomes a center of the light to connect with light. See the light in everyone. Practicing meditation I have not got anything. Then why meditate? By meditating I have lost so many things. Meditation is to lose. I have lost, not gained anything. I lost my anger which was a long time with me, I lost my ego, I am Jain, I am guru. I lost all these things. One, by one, they fell away. Now, I found my Atma, soul.

Tension brings disease. Look to see why I am tense? Use your inside doctor. Continuously meditate on commitment to self. I will not hurt myself. I will be my own best friend; your own buddy wherever you go. The whole world will then be your friend.

There are five steps I want to share with you to live by:

- 1. *Meditate.*** Be with your breath. Realize I am the light. Inhale, regularly, deeply, and properly.
- 2. *Eat plant based food.*** Eat what nature gives you. Fresh with variety of grains and veggies. Fresh life, growing life.
- 3. *Exercise regularly.*** Don't become a couch potato. Good to do something everyday.
- 4. *Breathe*** deeply.
- 5. *Think peacefully***

I promise you if you eat plant based food you will collect blessings from the universe. Have prayer and thank your food for giving nourishment to you. You will be evolving. Fresh life and growing life will grow in you, and they will come back with a better life.

Because of affection and love, mother cows make milk. Moment she becomes mother, blood turns into milk. Mother cow's milk is for the baby cow, not grown up people. The mother cow is so happy. At birth she licks her baby. The dairy industry is so cruel. They take away the baby and send to the veal industry. There is such sorrow and crying. Imagine someone taking your baby away by such a monster. Such pain and suffering. The mother and baby cow suffer. Baby food is milk, ice cream, butter and cheese. How many babies must die. Killing the innocent mother and calf. Milk is like poison. Many people say I can't give it up, but it is not giving up, it is *feeling*. Many people who are vegetarian and don't take potato, will take milk. They don't have the consciousness and feeling. How much suffering I am causing because of this body which is going to be buried. Take the blessings not the animal's curse and pain.

Live spiritually. I am Divine. Don't criticize. Have compassion. Whatever, whomever they are, let them be happy. Today my friends the feeling we have is of healing. Let everyone be happy. Let all the faults and weaknesses disappear. Shivamatsu. Let light be in everyone. Let everyone be engaged in one another's well being. Let everyone be a friend to oneself and to each other, and not to hurt others.

Five Steps to Healthy Living

Spring 2012

One should know the purpose of living and also how to live a healthy life, peacefully, purposefully and happily. In that sublime atmosphere, we also need to introspect on who we are. The two primary questions, therefore, one must try to find answers to, are (1) who/what we are, and (2) why we are here. Once we get the answers, howsoever partially, the steps to healthy living become clear to us. Otherwise, one needs to have some background before reaching the steps.

If one leads a chaotic life, i.e. undisciplined, devoid of 'svadhyaya' (self-study and study of scriptures) and 'tapah' (self-discipline with ascetic devotion) and spends the invaluable time here in collecting just material things (wealth, titles, name and fame), then at the end of this life's journey, one really goes empty handed, as a loser.

In order to inculcate reverence for all forms of life, one must have good thoughts, good food, good company and good environment. We need to make this journey a pleasant trip to our own selves, so that when we leave this body, there is a smile on our face, reflecting that we have lived a rich and healthy life, knowing the purpose of life.

Who is to climb up the five steps to healthy living, when one reaches these? Each one of us has to climb up the steps if we want to lead a healthy and happy life. Each one has to proclaim, "I am the person who is going to climb the steps to make my life not an 'outside appearance', but 'inside awareness'." Whilst taking the steps up, we are helped by what is not, to use what is! The invisible energy which is within us, which makes the body alive, helps the body to climb up the steps, just as to enter a room, the door has to be open and there should be no obstacle at the entry point. Only open space would make the entry possible. When this invisible energy goes out, all visible things become useless. We are helped by what is not, to use what is and this requires meditation and deep concentration. The body is helped by the invisible 'Atma'. The body works only because of the 'Atma'.

When one looks into a mirror to see how he looks, the thought does not occur to any one that what is visible in the mirror is not I. The one who is invisible and observing is I! This reflection is not of my Soul, but of my physical self.

The eyes cannot see without the Seer within. In meditation, we may see the Seer, the Invisible, the sentient energy within us, our true self. We need to come to our true self and recognize and respect it. In a mirror, we see the 'outside appearance', whereas in meditation, we experience 'inner awareness'.

A multi-billionaire built a huge, palatial house for himself and his wife in Uganda. He decided to go for a pilgrimage to the Himalayas, before moving in to the palace. He flew to Delhi with his wife and stayed at a hotel before the onward journey to the Himalayas. At night, the invisible spark, the 'Atma' left his body and the wife was left bereft. I was asked to stay at their palatial home, when I *visited Uganda. I wondered, staying in that huge mansion, and realized that unless* one knows his own real self and readies himself (constantly) for leaving the visible body, the amassing of wealth and material things does not make sense. We need to make time and spend it in looking at and knowing our own self.

There is a couplet in Hindi that says in this world, one can be said to have achieved something really great, if one meets his own self.

Do we really know ourselves? Do we spend time to sit beside our own selves and see who we are? No, there is no connection, no knowledge and no information. It is time, we make time to know our own selves.

A poet sang in Hindi that you have walked miles, away from the core, marching away from the self. Now for heaven's sake, change the path, O traveller, to come back to your self. Light a lovely candle, to manifest your own self, and realize the God within, by the radiant light.

Name, body, wealth, fame are all outward attachments. God is within us.

A rich man, on his death-bed, surrounded by his five sons, worried only about his business, asked them why they were all gathered around him and not at the business premises. Til the end of the journey, most people do not realize the purpose of life and who/what they really are, busy accumulating only material wealth!

Hence, we need to understand and then climb up the five steps to bring us closer to our true self.

1. Breathe

The first step is to breathe, with awareness, depth, peace and precision. Longevity depends on the number of breaths we take. Hence the longer the breaths, the longer is our life. We need to breathe in oxygen through fresh air, in good measure, to give a good amount of energy to our body and mind. We can swing on our breath. Take some time in the morning, or before food or in the evening to concentrate well on your breath, so that you form a habit of breathing with awareness and peace through the day and also at night. Pranayama (control over breath and its exercise) is a beautiful journey, which makes you feel rejuvenated, relaxed and free from tension and negative emotions.

Concentrate on each breath you inhale and exhale, Do not waste your breath by breathing with anger, greed, ego and hatred, as we do not know whether we shall breathe the next breath.

Chant the mantra 'SOHUM', i.e. 'I am That', whilst breathing. I am Atma (the soul) and Paramatma (God). What I am searching outside, is within me. Give at least 15 minutes every day to yourself to breathe, to think, to reflect.

2. Eat Plant-Based food

The body is nourished by food – healthy, pure and innocent food – not food made by harming other lives. Diseases and health – related problems arise mainly as a result of our ignorance about what to eat and how to eat. Body is made from the food you eat. Vegetables and fruit and juices make the cells alive. Birds eat fruit and they remain healthy and keep flying freely. There are no hospitals for birds. 'Yogis' in forests used to live only on fruit.

Animal milk is meant only for their offspring, when they are born and are young, just as a woman's milk is for her child. Mother feels love and affection for the child and the particular hormone changes blood into milk. It is produced only for 18-24 months after child-birth. Besides humans, no species drink milk once they grow up. It is just the greed and the wrong propaganda of the dairy industry which attracts consumption of milk by humans even after 2 years of birth. The cruelty perpetrated to the animals for milk production is horrendous and the animal suffering does not leave us unscathed. It is well-known that the great George Bernard Shaw, at a party in his honour, after receiving the Nobel Prize had mentioned to the hosts, 'my stomach is not a graveyard to bury the dead'.

Be compassionate and you will remain healthy. You give ‘abhaydan’ – a gift of fearlessness – to the innocent animals and collect blessings. The good deeds always remain with you, whereas money and fame are transitory.

When I was 37, I had high blood pressure and other health problems. Today at 89, I am healthy and fit, as I have turned vegan and am in charge of my food and lifestyle.

3. Exercise Regularly

Regular exercise of various kinds, be it Yoga Asanas, be it ‘Pranayama’, be it a walk, be it service, makes our bodies strong, resulting in stronger and calmer minds. A calm mind enables you to be at peace with yourself and the world. Keep the body moving.

When I was 19, I stayed with Gandhiji for some time. I offered to wash his clothes, to save him the trouble. He refused, asking me who would wash when I was gone. Learning the lesson, til now I wash my own clothes. I walk regularly every day and remain active also by climbing (up/down) stairs.

4. Think Peacefully

Though the first three steps would help you climb up this fourth one, you need to put in some effort too. Train your mind not to have any negative thoughts of the past or about the future. Remember only good thoughts and experiences, not bad (so-called) things which happened in the past or which may happen as per your imagination. Have faith in yourself that you can achieve anything good. People tend to forget good things and remember only the negative happenings, however small in number. Negativity has longevity. Avoid it. Increase positivity. Relax, inhale peace, experience the vibration of peace, make it a part of life. Try to know the purpose of your living. Is it to collect grievances, bad memory, negative emotions, material wealth? No, none of these. We are here to surround ourselves with all life-giving, life-seeking and life-enriching purposes, instead of with anger, grievances, ego, greed and jealousy. Let others hold bad thoughts about you in them. You should remain unaffected by negative influences. You shield yourself with positive and purposeful vibrations, to keep the negative ones at bay. Do not think in a hurry or with anger and ego, as these will distort your thinking and you will not get the right answers.

In sum, there are two aspects one should bear in mind and practice:

(a) Not to hurt our ourselves (thinking about what people say), and (b) Alleviate the pain and suffering of other living beings. Keep doing good deeds every day and increase the deposits in your account. Keep collecting blessings.

5. Live Spiritually

If you spend the day with the world, at least in the evening, sit with yourself, with your 'Atma' (your real self) and try to know if you are at peace with yourself, if you are at peace with the world, or if there is any anger, ego or greed within. We carry something beautiful and divine within us. Let it blossom beautifully.

Every situation is a moving memory. Nothing lasts forever. One egoistic king was told by his 'Guru' (Master / teacher, one who dispels the darkness of ignorance) to learn and live by one thing. He told the king one day that he may feel good that he is a king but he should always remember and repeat one sentence, i.e. 'This day too shall pass'. After every situation or incident, the king started saying, 'This day too shall pass.' This made him quite humble. Once he was invaded and defeated by another king. He was depressed, as he was imprisoned by the other king. Soon he remembered his Guru's words. He thought he was still the same and that day would also pass. He became calm. The victorious king was surprised. His ego too was shattered. Hence both benefited and became masters of their own selves. The moral of the story is not to get attached to anything – just enjoy, have peace, bless others, and have bliss yourself.

Do meditate on all five steps for healthy – physical, mental and spiritual – living. Practice, practice and practice, as reading or hearing is much simpler than implementing. What is important is how much you digest and not how much you eat! That's the real test. I am sure you will climb up the five steps successfully, attaining a healthy and happy life, as you all are seekers. Develop the qualities of amity, appreciation, compassion and equanimity, to facilitate the ascent.

Talks at the Lighthouse Center

Fall 2012

Excerpted by Nirmala Hanke

23-24 June 2012

On the weekend of June 23-24, 2012 Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji visited the Lighthouse Center and gave two inspirational talks. On Saturday his talk was: "Experience the Presence Within." He began, "On the way here I was meditating and it came into my mind that this body's been working for 90 years. In 90 years we breathe 2 1/2 billion times, according to the Department of Health. In order to breathe there must be energy, electricity, light. Because the heart is beating, we are breathing. This is called the presence of God. God is not a noun, God is energy. As long as life is in us, the body works. As long as we are connected to this energy, the body works; once the connection is gone the body is dead."

He spoke about holding the presence of God within: G—O—D. "The "G" is for Generator, the generator that transforms negative energy. When you realize that you are holding the presence of God, you can transform anger to love, hate to appreciation, greed to generosity. It becomes a light in your eyes. Work for a year, every day say, 'I am going to transform the negative energy to positive energy. I am generating, I am holding the presence of God.'"

The "O" is for Order, organize your life; and the "D" is for Delete, delete those things you don't need in your life. We are collecting so many things we don't need: stuff, stuff, stuff. Instead Chitrabhanuji says, "Keep a few things you can manage; otherwise, you spend your life managing things. Simplicity is the light of the truth. Some people say that simplicity is impractical. But is it wise to spend all your time collecting, managing, arranging? All the real saints I have seen are very simple.

Know the presence of G-O-D. Just go inside. A pilgrimage is not for going to see God outside, you need to see God inside you. If you don't see that, you will be an empty fellow. Realizing the presence of God is feeling that presence when you are alive, not after death. To experience the presence of God, you have to meditate. It is not a lecture to hear, you must live it. Meditation requires practice. With practice you will increase the quality of your consciousness from atma to mahatma to paramatma."

On Sunday Chitrabhanuji spoke on “Individuation: You Are Unique.” He talked about the uniqueness of each person: “Take time for your individuation. Take time to know who you are, you are not more or less than anyone else. It can be a difficult challenge for we are all living with comparison. Be an individual. In this world you are unique, there are no carbon copies. Even the trees are individual. Maintain your uniqueness; do not compare yourself to anyone. Say, ‘I am Light, I do not have to compare myself to anyone.’ Comparison is a killer, it destroys, distorts. Let there be no inferiority complex, no superiority complex.

Self-realization is to “know thyself”. In this life we have to know what we are. Self-realization—the power is in me, I can do what I want to do. Chart your life, plan your life. It is in your hand. There was a philosopher who came into town. He did not teach from books, he talked to the people about who they are. But there were two young people, very smart, and they wanted to test him. To prove he was wrong, they went with a bird in one hand and held it behind their back. They said, ‘Master, tell us, is this bird alive or dead?’ They knew that he wouldn’t be able to answer—if he said ‘alive’, they would press the bird’s throat and kill him; if he said ‘dead’, they would show the bird was alive.

Either way he would be wrong. But the Master said, ‘Do you want to know? It is in your hand.’ The boys realized the Master was right—it is in your hand. Your life is like a bird in your hand, you can make it alive or dead. Because of anger, because of negativity, many people spoil their life. The only enemy is yourself—your anger, your negativity. When you are angry, think about how you are hurting yourself. Hurting yourself, what are you going to gain? Once you leave a dark mark on your consciousness, it is hard to erase it. I am asking you to be your friend.”

Meditation is the key: “Meditation is your awareness. It is in your own hand to make your own life. You can make it or mar it. Become aware. The moment you are aware is the moment of enlightenment. Awareness allows us to see what happens, and when something negative occurs, we can erase it and start anew. Every moment is for decision with awareness. The more we meditate, the greater our awareness, and the better choices we can make. You will have the power, the creativity to do what you want to do, change what you want to change, in the light of awareness.”

Happy New Year

Winter 2013

Never Forget To Live
Time is like a river.
You cannot touch the same water twice,
Because the flow that has passed will never pass again.
Enjoy every moment of Life.....
May you be blessed with all things good,
May your joys, like the stars at night,
Be too numerous to count.

With Love and Blessings
Chitrabhanu & Pramoda

Your Attitude is Only the Outcome of Your Belief You Nurture

Winter 2013

“Jai Jinendra” means to be victorious, not to conquer others but one’s own weakness. Those who conquer outside are very weak people. Because they are not able to conquer their weakness, so they project their weakness outside. The “war monger” rulers were not brave but weak people. The weak leader would lead the weak people and the strong people would not submit to their authority. This weakens people; the problem will not go away – any problem when avoided – the problem gradually multiplies. Ultimately it leads to ruin.

What is meditation? Meditation is a discovery. It is temporarily soothing by closing the eyes and feeling good and relaxing, that is fine in the beginning. What is the discovery? It is changing your inner attitude which gradually changes the outer aspects of your life. It is like a watch – if you want to change the hand on the dial – go inside and correct the machine so the outside will start working and give you the right time. But if you continue to change the outside hands when the machine is broken – it will not give you true time.

Meditation is a self-discovery to change the inner attitudes of your mind, and then the outer aspects of your life will change. A person can look outwardly changed but not be changed inside. Anybody who tries to temporarily escape from a problem but does not change their attitude will find that the problem remains. In spiritual matters it is not advised to escape the problems with drugs or short cuts. Meditation builds your “muscles.”

What is a bigger fear than death? Death is inevitable, the moment we are born the “meter” is on. The meter does not relax and when its time is over it stops – one has to be ready to face death. Whether we hear it or not, it is always there. The ready people see death as a door to be liberated. Death becomes an exit to go “out”, they are not trapped inside a door. Pain is in a birth not death – Mahavir becomes a model for– inspiration – I have accepted life peacefully. All unfulfilled desires are the seed for rebirth. The seed will not grow again if the germinating element is roasted out. Rebirth is in our hands – whatever comes – don’t plant a seed for desire – be happy with what you have. Do not want more and more.

Do not compare yourself with anyone. In comparing we are putting ourselves in difficulty. We become violent to ourselves. Because when we compare to others, it always creates inequality. When you see poor people, you want to give them something. When you see rich people you feel humbled. This continues in a yo-yo fashion where there is no balance. Arrogant people become humble in front of someone who they think is superior- they have no inner balance. The poor and the president are both human beings. The soul is not different in both people. The meditator respects the soul of every human and the meditator also respects the soul in the animal.

Animals are like us, they have a desire to live – if they hurt they cry. All life we see as we have seen this life in us. Life is very tender. You don't want to be harsh or egotistical to anybody. To be harsh on others you are harsh on yourself. If you are harsh, you will have no connection to soul as the nature of soul is tender. God is in all of us – we do not deny God – the atheist is the person who does not see God within, God outside. When you go within yourself you become strong enough to change and withstand anything that comes – even death – I will not tremble. Say, “I have lived my life -I have not harmed or cheated anybody”. If I do something to somebody I don't like – I am my own measurement – my inner attitude is very important. That is called self-discovery.

Anyone who asks what is meditation – the temporary answer – is relaxing and deep breathing. With meditation over time you will become the same person outside and inside. You are not one person in work and another when you meditate. The world will give you everything- it is up to you to decide what to take. Meditation will make you aware of what to take. The philosophy we are practicing is: act the way you want to become and you will become the way you act.

Act the way you want to become because the act and the thought is giving you shape. Meditation tells you to breathe and relax and why react to world – do what is right for you. Do something for your joy – don't compare yourself to someone – don't lose your joy. People take away their joy by comparing to others. We do not impose our will on others. We can control our understanding and our approach to life. Meditate to have your own peace and time. This is very precious. You have the complete right to be what you want to be – this is the core teaching of meditation – discovery. I have the power, time, wisdom and energy to change my inner attitude. Outer life will be changed because I changed my inner dial. Do not be angry at self, at the way you are now. To tell yourself

you are a sinner is a sin. Sin is missing the target – the idea of sin is going to make you unhappy, depressed and unaware of the divine presence in you.

Sometimes because of unawareness we make mistakes. When we are gentle and forgive ourselves, we will be able to forgive others. Those who do not forgive themselves cannot forgive others. Not to forgive is a decision to suffer. The best healing is forgiveness. When you forgive you take away a thorn which was not allowing you to move smoothly. The thorn was always hurting. Forgiveness is the most powerful healing so first forgive yourself to be happy and give up judgment, which does not allow you to be happy. The mind is always judging.

This is the principle of life as taught by Mahavir. This throws light on enlightenment. It takes the light of awareness and allows you to see what you want to keep and what you want to discard. Then go on deleting, which is part of the definition of God.

G = *generate* = transforms mechanical energy into electrical energy.
Mechanical energy is transformed in us into light energy.

O = *organize* = organize what you want to do – this will give smooth, orderly movement.

D = *delete* = have courage to drop what is not helpful but harmful. Let go of bad influences, negative energy.

MILK

Summer 2013

Nature's bounties, beauty and wonders are limitless. She has blessed mankind in abundance; but with certain inherent control mechanisms. She has her own rules and regulations, which man needs to follow, for his well-being and spiritual growth. She has also been kind enough to give intelligence and discretionary powers to man. But, man in his greed, many a time, does not understand nature's checks and balances. Nature then is forced to checkmate him, for his own good. For example, if man succumbs to his palate and becomes its slave, he loses control over his thoughts, speech and actions, and also suffers ill-health.

Many of us are vegetarian. We eat plant-based food. We believe in 'Ahinsa' which is non-violence or having reverence for all forms of life. We have minimized our needs by becoming or remaining vegetarian.

Though being vegetarian is excellent for man's physical as well as spiritual health, it is not enough. We have realized, over the years, that being 'vegan' is far superior and a much more complete practice of 'Ahinsa'. Veganism does not allow the intake of milk or dairy products for human consumption or use.

Milk does not grow on plants. Milk is one of nature's most beautiful wonders. We can say MILK stands for Mother's Infinite Love and Kindness. Milk is produced in a human or an animal Mother. Only when a female, either of a human being or an animal, becomes pregnant and is to give life and birth to another being, her blood gets transformed into milk. This is simply because she takes upon her the work of the Creator. She nurtures, protects, takes care, loves the new being in her own self, forgetting her own discomfort and pain and gives shape to and creates and gives life to the new creation. Her love, compassion and kindness flow into the new creation and that naturally transforms the required quantity of red blood into white milk when her creation comes into the world. Milk is only for the new creation of the mother and that too for a limited period of time, for the nourishment and early growth of the new-born. Milk is a gift of nature for the helpless baby. The red blood turning into white milk for the baby is a miracle of nature. As long as the child does not get teeth, the mother gets milk, and the child grows in strength by consuming mother's milk. When the child grows to the stage when he gets

teeth, the milk takes its original form and color, i.e. it gets transformed back into red blood. At that time, even if the child wants mother's milk, it cannot get it as it no longer needs it.

It is made so clear by this law of nature that milk belongs only to the baby. None of the species, other than human beings, consumes milk when it grows beyond a stage, when it is too young. Human beings, unfortunately in their ignorance, start having milk of other species once they grow beyond this stage, little realizing that it is a calf or an off-spring of some other species who is deprived of its due. It is in fact inhuman and against the principles of non-violence and non-stealing when humans have milk of cows or other species, belonging to their offspring. Where will the helpless calf go for its nourishment? The animal baby starves and remains under-nourished. As though this sin is not enough, a bigger crime follows. If the offspring is a male, it is sent away to the veal industry in Western countries and to the slaughter house (surreptitiously in the early hours of the day) in India.

Now-a-days, everywhere, since the bull is not required by humans, either for farming or carting, they indulge in these inhuman activities to suit their selfish ends. Thousands of bulls go to butchers for slaughter. This unfortunate slaughter and the use in the veal industry take place on account of the consumption of cow milk by humans.

In addition to these atrocities caused, as the babies are taken away from their mothers, the mother has to undergo the pain of separation which she suffers in silence, without any revolt, as she practices non-violence. The cow cries silently, as the new-born is taken away, since for nine months she had nourished the child and when it is born, it is separated from her. The silent agony of the cow creates certain vibrations.

These selfish acts perpetrated by human beings, due to their greed, result in the following three consequences :

- When we take the milk which belongs to the off-spring of the cow, the suffering vibrations of the cow and the calf would boomerang on us and might create some separation in our lives. As we plant the pain in others, the vibrations received would result, as a 'karmic' consequence, into separation from our dear ones.

- The cow's normal life span is twenty-five years. Humans reduce this longevity by slaughter or use in the veal industry. The 'karma' of taking away the longevity of a living being influences our life span and results in reduction of our own life span or of our dear ones. Also the end of the life may not be natural and it may be by accident or some unknown disease or some permanent disability may take place.

- We snatch away or steal the off-spring from the cow, as well as its milk for the calf. The milk and the child are taken away ruthlessly by us without the permission of the cow. This is 'adatt dn'. This is a charity not done by the donor. It is acquisition of someone's belongings without consent. One should therefore be ready to face consequences of losing one's own property, wealth or dear ones.

The simple principle of 'As we sow, so we reap' also applies here. Our wrong actions would boomerang on us and we have to go through the consequences thereof.

The cow has milk, but it does not give it. It stops eating, being separated from her offspring. Machines are used to milk and for artificial insemination. A lot of suffering is inflicted on these peace-loving creatures by the humans for their greed. In about seven years, due to their exploitation, the cows become useless for humans and they are sent for slaughter. Our glass of milk results in the cow being eventually slaughtered. The cow undergoes physical torture and the agonizing feeling of separation, for human well-being.

It would be clear to any intelligent, caring and compassionate person that it is not logically, medically, morally and spiritually right to drink milk of other species, once the natural period of having our own mother's milk is over. To satisfy ourselves and for our nourishment and well-being, we may have milk from several alternative sources like plants or nuts such as soya, rice, almond, coconut, etc.

As Bhagwan Mahavir had said, "Non-violence and kindness to living beings is kindness to oneself. For thereby one's own self is saved from various kinds of sins and resultant sufferings and is able to secure his own welfare."

CHITRABHANU

“On the Wings of Light and Love Volume Two” is another compilation of spiritual messages from Jain Master Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanuji to his students at the Lighthouse Center, Inc. in Whitmore Lake, Michigan. Included are practical approaches to growing up spiritually, compelling stories from Chitrabhanuji's lifelong spiritual journey, and theoretical discussions of karma, Ahinsa, and Reverence for all Life. These messages are treasured by the Lighthouse students, who read and re-read them, finding new understanding and inspiration each time. We hope they will be an inspiration and guide to all seekers on a spiritual path.

ISBN 9781484905463



9 781484 905463

90000 >

