

# THE WAVE OF BLISS

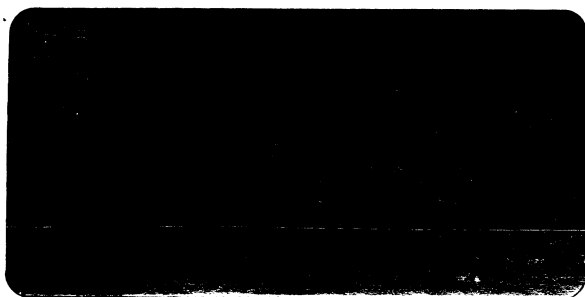
IMPACT OF CHITRABHANU  
ON THE WESTERN WORLD



# THE WAVE OF BLISS

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ON THE WESTERN WORLD

DR. N.P. JAIN



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## PROLOGUE

It has been a matter of intense delight for me to put together this book.

Some of the hundreds of letters written to Gurudev Chitrabhanu by followers of *Ahimsa* and *Anekantavad* of Non-Indian origin over the last two decades constitute the basic inspiration and substance of the book.

The purpose of the book is to appreciate and understand the refreshing as well as abiding impact of Jainism on the thought processes, behaviour patterns and meaningful changes brought about voluntarily and enthusiastically in their life style as well as values of life.

Principles of Jainism have been understood and assimilated by them in their most basic and broad humanitarian parameters, and sincere efforts initiated to practise them in day-to-day life.

Their 'experience' of this teaching underscores the universality of the deeply compassionate Jain philosophy. As a religion, its doors are open to anyone irrespective of place, region or country of birth, or colour, caste or creed. In a scientific and rational manner Jain philosophy seeks to enhance human knowledge (*gyan*), perception

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(*darshan*), and conduct (*charitra*), in the right (*samyak*) direction, and to wean the humanity away from the evil and the devil, violence and hatred, cruelty and intolerance. The practice of the principles of Jainism makes the mind and the body tension-free, tranquil and full of equanimity and spiritual vitality.

A few months back when I was with Gurudev Chitrabhanu at his residence in Bombay, we happened to discuss about his prolific correspondence with young and old American and European seekers. When I requested him to share some of the inspiring paragraphs from his students' letters, he read the paragraphs to me and I felt they contained pearl drops of wisdom and knowledge which deserved to be shared widely to promote love and compassion all over the world.

Gurudev instantly welcomed my proposal to digest them in a book form in order to bring out how well, how clearly and correctly, how enthusiastically, spiritually and emotionally had so many foreigners embraced Jainism not merely as a religion but as a way of life in terms of their vegetarian habits, meditation discipline, study of Jain scriptures and vital grasp of the need to attain self-control and self restraint which alone could be instrumental in victory over one's inner self and release of tremendous soul energy for the good of oneself as well as for the good and happiness of others.

That is how I came to write this book from those inspiring gist of the letters dating back to sixtees and continuing since to the present times. I read them once, read them again and again. It was like reading Jain scriptures. Everytime I 'experienced' a delightful directness, an awareness full of soul-power, a feeling of gratefulness at having been able to come so close to the deeply

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humanitarian and compassionate philosophy of Jainism, and a desire to become a better Jain.

American and European students have also taken an integrated view of the value of tenets of Jainism in terms of spreading peace, love, truth and feeling of brotherhood in this world which is otherwise so full of agony, hatred, mistrust, suspicion, separatism, conflicts, terrorism and violence.

The letters are so genuine, so sincere and so naturally written that they not only catch your imagination but hold you enthralled with delight, admiration and elation. I have not met all of the writers, but I feel as though I know them so well.

All these and many more have opened their hearts to the philosophy of respect for life, have accepted the logic, reasoning and rationality of *anekantavad*, have gained insight into the implications and justifications for *aparigraha* (non-attachment and non-possessiveness) and have committed to non-violence, truth and the reality of equality of souls.

One needs to see and admire their enthusiasm; one needs to observe and emulate their sincerity; one needs to be as inquisitive about unravelling the truth about life and universe. The candle of their faith is burning bright, their commitment is exemplary, their involvement is infectious.

I have been a born Jain; but after reading these letters and grasping the spirit and the inspiration behind them, I feel like 'a Jain reborn'. I do hope Indian Jains residing in India and abroad would feel the same way, and draw the inspiration from our new friends for renewed commitment

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to the principles of Jainism in thought, expression and action.

I have taken Gurudev's blessings to write this book. I do not lay any claim to originality in it. The originality stems from the minds and hearts of Americans and Europeans who have made a very deep impression on my heart and soul.

A million thanks to them to allow me to wander about in their heart-land and to unfathom their spiritual urge and upsurge. May they all move steadily towards greater and greater enlightenment, expanding vistas of awareness and comprehension, non-possessiveness in thought and deed, and relativity in thinking. May they ever-deepen their spiritual awareness, feeling of oneness with life in all forms and understanding the 'inner-self'.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. P. Jain'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping underline that extends to the right and ends in a small hook. There are some small, illegible marks below the signature.





## CHAPTER I

### THE WAVE OF BLISS

Jainism has made its impact on Americans and others in the Western World as a deeply compassionate and gentle philosophy which inspires reverence for life encompassing all living beings, and a convincing feeling of 'live and help let live'.

It comes out vividly in letters addressed to Gurudev Chitrabhanu from the young and the old mostly from USA and also from Canada, Germany, UK, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere. The letters make fascinating reading because they bear the imprint of transparent sincerity and expression of heart-felt experience of joy, confidence, serenity and reduced tensions.

Jain Meditation has impressed as a very dynamic and non-dogmatic form of spiritual discipline and development which is at once rational and non-mystic. It is a philosophy projecting a balanced and a broader view of life. Indeed it offers a way of life which is simple and direct and helps the lost and the confused 'to get connected again' to stable peace of mind and more contented soul-satisfying living.

In his discourses at Jain Meditation Centres, Universities and International Conferences, Gurudev Chitrabhanu emphasised that Jain philosophy is based essentially on

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the unfolding of spiritual consciousness, which is the birth right of every soul. Through knowledge and endeavour, the individual develops and unfolds the potential within one.

People have been drawn towards this teaching on account of its detached and objective attitude to life, the simple life style it promotes, and its understanding and interpretation of reality in relation to the issue of minimising harm and promoting non-violent and loving behaviour in thought, feelings and expression. It helps individual personality to acquire greater self confidence through introspection and spiritual self-sufficiency. No more of depending on any external element's mercy or generosity for one's welfare, progress, contentment and happiness.

In a world of highly advanced materialism with its endless temptations, illusions, and mirages, it is interesting that the Jain thought — though much remote in its cultural, social and historical orientation has 'related itself beautifully' by the strikingly opposite emphasis on simple and direct living and thinking, rising above the complex web of desires, rejecting the outwardly shining gloss of material attractions and promoting 'discovery of truth about life and truth about self'.

In a thoughtful observation, Shri Balabhadra Costain says, "Our life and this time is very fragile and precious. We do not know what the future will bring. We have to face the reality of this life like a *Kshatriya* (warrior); to face the events that come into our life with courage, detachment and also to face the reality of our existence in this cosmos. Jainism gives us great insight into reality and it often requires the heart of a warrior to face and engage in the reality of our own existence and to understand the purpose of human existence on this planet".

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Western civilisation has given so much hedonistic comfort. Life in its daily routine is comparatively smoother without hassles. These are not the kind of acute problems one faces in a developing country related to bread-and-butter issues, related to sheer survival in the face of poverty, hunger, disease, shortages and so on. And yet with all the freedom from want as well as opportunities knocking at the doorstep for material progress, people do not have peace of mind. Tensions fill the life of an average Westerner and he/she finds it difficult to cope with 'suffocating voids' in relationship with others, with 'disappointments, disillusionments and distress' arising out of failures in communicating with fellow human beings. Deceit and betrayals, falsehood and pretensions shock human conscience.

What does one do? You go to a counsellor or a psychologist and human psyche becomes a disease to be treated like any other. It is precisely at this point that those who have come in touch with the teachings of Jain religion have found remarkable solace in them, a key to the peace of mind and above all a feeling that you are your own cure.

Bruce pours out his heart when he writes: "So much involvement with people, yet the inner balance is stronger now and somehow there is faith that with inner balance and love, the *KARMA* is not accumulating. It is now possible to help more and be more clear in asserting what is true and not feel exhausted. There is a great inner peace with this new faith".

Danesh Cockayne describes, the feeling of self-reliance 'generated by taking to the path of spiritual realisation of self and getting into one's higher self'. And all this in a simple and direct manner without having to resort to

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any mumbo-jumbo of meaningless rituals or ceremonies or any other pretensions or cliches." Derek asks and answers, "Sometimes I feel like a lion locked in an invisible cage, having the key in my hand but not quite knowing which direction to look for the door to freedom".

I remember well a saying of yours: "Here I am. Let anything come. I have the heart to transform all things and bring balance. Let me use my extra sense, inner sense, my wisdom and intelligence to turn every event into joy, into understanding, into creativity".

Vikas calls him and his student Ananta's taking to the Jain way of living as a 'WAVE OF BLISS'. They were deeply inspired when they visited Jain holy temples and centres of pilgrimage. The annual pilgrimage to India has been prompted by Gurudev Chitrabhanu, and has very aptly been described as 'a' journey into awareness.

Vikas Southern describes the 'experience of delight and deep satisfaction' he and Ananta had when they climbed up the mountain top leading to the Jain temple at Palitana in Gujarat.

Second time when he could not join the pilgrimage, in a deeply moving letter, he says: "OM SHREE SATRUNJAYA ĀDINATHAYA ARHUM NAMAH. The journey has begun with Pilgrims making their way up the mountain side to the summit and the glorious light which reflects from the domes of the Temple roof. We are there both in spirit and body. On the second and third of November, Ananta and I received the Blessing of joy simultaneously and separately as the 1989 Journey of Awareness commenced. Our hearts and minds were uplifted quite suddenly while we went about our daily routine. Later when we were at home we related our separate and individual experiences

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individual experiences and realised how very much blessed we are to share in the Jain way of living with all those who are in harmony with their hearts."

"Each day as the journey continues we shall review our photos and memorabilia of our past journey to awareness and approach each day with a new reverence, a reverence shared in each step up the mountain. Just the other day we received the photographs which Bill Wrenn took almost two years ago and one of these was especially meaningful because in it were pictured Gurudev, the Teacher and Vikas, the student taken at the office at the entrance to the main temple atop Palitana. This photo renewed the Quest!"

"To begin again the Pilgrimage, the return to the roots of consciousness and to the essence of enlightened thought *AHIMSA*, Jai Jinendra; may all share this experience'.

Continuing, Vikas further says, "On our return from India shortly after this wave of bliss resided, we were brought back to the real world and were informed that due to our philosophical outlook and abstinence from the usage of animal products, we would no longer be able to remain employed at the local health food store. This came as a complete surprise as we had discussed this issue previously and had stated our position that as Jain practising in America we would maintain the purity of *AHIMSA* in thought, word and deed and did not approve of the usage of animal products, would not serve and shall not injure other beings to maintain our bodies. We have since left this position and are presently seeking to make other arrangements."

"The trials of *Sadhana* are many and the lessons of life sometimes harsh but with *Samyak Darshan* and the support



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of the continuing expansion of *AHIMSA* consciousness throughout our world, we are able to rise each day with the joy of life in our hearts *OM HARI OM!*"

Cheryl Bhagwati writes: "Life is enjoyable for me now that I am expanding my awareness and attaining with the divine in me to a greater degree".

Brahmidevi writes with deep delight, and joyous revelation: "After two weeks of real soul-searching and watching my squirrel-like mind dart to and fro between reasonableness and causeless joy, between holding on to my balance, and letting go of control, between memory-conditioning-future projection and life here and now, I decided to take a day of rest and fasting and a little Patanjali — reading and listening to the power of silence talk — and behold, last night it happened.

The doubtless 100% clarity of purpose revealed itself as green lights for India! The ecstasy I felt in the temples of Abu welled up from *Manipura Chakra* not like a high about to crash to a low. No, a real joy-in-life, lightness-of-heart, knowledge of the capacity to drop past and future coloration and sureness that I am here to still and steady and refine this consciousness, to detach it from all moorings, and put forth all I have got into the vertical and horizontal, with the awareness of how this helps to 'run' to enlightenment and to fly like a child into the arms of the beloved vibrations of the purest of the pure at Abu and Satrunjaya and elsewhere.

'The soul is coming more and more to wholeness and unencumbered being. New steps, new beginnings, new freshness and finding enriching friendships'.

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Jain philosophy has served to satisfy the hunger for spiritual growth 'through inner light and seeking out the inner world'. Contact with Jain teaching has made some Americans and Europeans, in their own words 'calm, meditative, truthful, sincere, refreshingly cheerful, full of positive vibrations and yet kept dynamic balance between contemplation and action.

Meditation has given to them a feeling of 'Spiritual prosperity'. It is a discovery of inner strength and power to face the challenges and temptations of the material bondages. Jain concept has sunk in deep in their reasoning, emotions, daily existence and yearnings. It has brought them peace of mind and durable solace.

The noted Czechoslovak painter and scholar Jaromir Skrivanek visited Jain pilgrimage centres in India many times since 1970 and organised in many countries exhibitions of photographs taken of major Jain temples. He found from his own experience that Jain way of living is not only philosophical, but that it is a true religion in its purest form that could not be found anywhere else. He found in Jain philosophy 'an all-embracing light of love'.

The famous T.V. actress Ms Betty Buckley stated during her visit to Nairobi (Kenya) in September 1981, when she was interviewed, that since she became a meditator in 1976, she experienced a deeper sense of peace and has become a completely new person enriched by the philosophy of reverence for all life.

## CHAPTER II

### SO HUM

Jain teaching focusses attention on the core issue 'Who am I? (*Ko Ahum?*). The answer is *So Ahum* 'I am That — That I am'. One who constantly struggles for a place under the sun and faces crisis in life in the process of seeking contentment, happiness and a sense of achievement must look unto oneself to grasp the depth of the concept of *So Ahum*.\*

Abhai Banow has brought this out in a highly inspiring and rhythmic poem:

#### Song of *So Hum*

*So* means life, *Ahum* means I  
Realized by this inner eye  
Which opens with light, as the heart does with love  
Which joins my below to my All above  
*So* means That, *Ahum* means I  
This here my ground, That there my sky.

*So-hum* that can set me free  
Sings of that higher life in me  
*So-hum*, Sanskrit of old, telling a tale that must be retold

\* This Mantra '*So Ahum*' is in Sanskrit but when we meditate it becomes compound and united word that is *So Hum*.

## SO HUM

That I am I, which I see without  
That beauty, that life I can't live without.

One not two, this message implies  
It's there to be found by the seeker who tries  
*So-hum* breath in (and) breath out  
It's one not two, some day you will shout.  
With words of love to all who can hear  
With songs of silence ever so clear

*So Ahum*, I am I.  
If others have known this, surely can I  
I am, I can, I will it sings  
*So hum* this message of unity brings  
Of head, hand and heart of love and of will  
This ancient message is with us still

Stilling the heart, calming the mind  
Bringing that peace that's so hard to find  
That peace beyond emotion and thought  
That priceless pearl that can't be bought,  
But found within the waves of our breath  
Chanting *So-hum* ends our fear of death

Glory be to That which I am  
*So-hum* I am that I am  
*So-hum* I am that I am....

The process of awakening towards *So Hum* is beautifully described by the learned Balabhadra in a very rich literary style:

"The sun is about to rise and its brilliant presence is displayed on the clouds above. The train is gliding along

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its journey in a masterful way with periodic bumps, indicating effort and will. There is a fine, firm layer of frost uniting the yet to be activated animate and inanimate forms. In many ways the scene from the train window resembles an early morning train ride in rural India. In many ways this temporary, transient early morning scene resembles life. The fragile rigidity of human conscience lies somewhat cold and barren, lifeless and awaiting the height and activating warmth of the great soul energy; transforming all that it touches. But the human situation does not rely totally on cosmic, mechanical function. The Soul, Will, *Atma* can influence and change the mechanical and repetitious habits which inhibit the joyful experience of existence. The sun has now risen, beckoning all consciousness to Awake.'

Realisation of *So Hum* requires shedding of one's ego. Prabha Morkan writes about 'the death of my ego' in the process of the discovery of the self. "Is it due to good *Karma* or whatever it is?" she asks.

Jenene shares a deep inspiring thought thus: "Into this world we come, insecure and scared not wanting to face the inevitable reality of who we are, and wondering why we could no longer nestle forever safely in the soft, hidden, protective womb. From that moment of birth on, self-discovery has been to inch forward slowly and ever-so-painfully to the point where many of us choose to avoid the awakening altogether. This is life's greatest tragedy! What a loss we suffer when we go through each new day with our blunders, clinging to our degrading and anchoring limitations... and choosing to see only that which the living ego paints as what we cannot do and cannot be. I weep with begging desire for us all to open our eyes to who we are and rise, in reverence and humble dignity to the Truth of who we are".



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In another letter Jenene analyses the thought process further: "I am trying to remember that I am not the roles I am playing right now i.e., (1) the role of a mother, (2) the role of a wife, (3) the role of an artist, and (4) the role of a teacher. These are all roles I play, and they are all very important roles. But they are not me. They are only roles and roles change with time and circumstance. It's the 'me' that I need to get more in tune with, through meditation and self-love. I will not be free to love unconditionally and freely all others until I have completely come into Oneness with myself. Isn't that what enlightenment is all about?"

Cheryl Bhagwati expresses the inner revelation due to impact of His teaching in a lucid saying 'I want my inner light gain intensity or a little more breathing room, a little more distance from this EGO'.

Clare Rosenfield puts the thought-experience in the following words:

"Every moment of the day is meaningful. Every moment is lit with the light of Reverence for all life. Its clarity simplifies and illumines, makes humble and teaches me that I can learn from everyone and everything". She concludes describing herself as 'One drop of faith in life and light'. That is *So Hum*'.

Trupti Otto from Berlin also explains the search for realisation of self and joining inner confidence in the following words:

"I am really missing someone with the same spiritual direction here in Berlin, with whom I could speak over my thoughts and feelings. But may be this is an illusion that this is possible. I have to go my way; others can be close or far away, but in the end my way is only for me and I have

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to go alone. Every doubt holds the demand to grow; every question is the possibility to get more sure of oneself”.

Gurudev's teachings have thus, tended to enhance confidence in self in not merely meeting challenges of mundane existence, but in searching for strengthening soul power with a positive and practical way of thinking.

Again and again in the letters the theme emerges that the teaching is helping towards the realisation that '*So Ahum*' is a positive philosophy which can eliminate negativity and pessimism that permeates our thoughts, emotions, expressions and deeds. It is the Western way of interpreting the meaning of *SAMYAK DARSHAN*, *SAMYAK GYAN AND SAMYAK CHARITRA* as the key towards grasping the purpose of life and the inspiration that should guide the thoughts and actions in whatever situation a person might be in.

Sreven from Canada has much to convey in the following words:

“Wake up, wake up! Let the light melt the hardness of your heart. Cut through your proud ego-self to that gentle spirit in you that knows no arrogance, condemnation, revenge or punishment. This gentle spirit carries the mighty power of all inclusive, unconditional love and kindness, wake up, wake up, don't let the torments of ego-pain, pride and self righteousness feed in your life force and suck you dry. Oh, wake up my dear brothers and sisters and do not waste your lives once more in anger, frustration, and in the sorrow and tears of self-pity”.

The deep desire to find an answer to *Ko Ahum* in *So Hum* has gathered momentum in the minds and hearts of

American as a result of the loving guidance and teachings of Gurudev Chitrabhanu. He has succeeded in lifting their reasoning as well as emotions from a 'narrow-I' concept to a 'global-I' concept. The message given by him to them during his sojourn to USA in the year 1980 is so beautifully inspiring and instilling confidence in one's own soul energy to realise '*So Hum* — I am that — the divine is I'.

Here goes the message: from Gurudev Chitrabhanu:

"Each day of the year waits for us — fresh and new. The pages of a daily calendar diary are plain and blank. We can fill them — if we so desire — to become a record of a life of fulfilment and joy. Whether we make them days of brightness, peace, creativity, beauty, love, light, and service to others or days of dismal gloom, conflict, inertia, ugliness, exploitation and greed, is up to us. The choice is ours. We can make or mar our life.

When we remember that each day dawns with the light of the Sun and blessings of the beauty of the Earth, we awaken to the light and are alive to the beauty with all our loving energy. Let us keep in our heart and mind the illumining flame of Reverence for Life so that each day is a day of radiance and of blessings.

What is God? God is not a person. God is a PROCESS OF EVOLUTION!

G Stands for GENERATOR: to convert mechanical energy into electrical energy in order to electrify our spirit with sound of *SO HUM*. I AM THAT. THE DIVINE IS I.

O Stands for ORGANISER: OF BODY — MIND — AND HEART for harmonious living and integrated action to experience the ecstasy of YOGA: UNITY.

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D Stands for DELETER: OF NEGATIVE THOUGHT, EMOTIONS WORD AND ACTION to enjoy the music of meditation that frees our self from destructive forces to enjoy freedom.

Thus, knowing our real nature of God-self, we realise that our pain and pleasure, bondage and freedom are the result of our ignorance and disobedience to the law of cause and effect. All that we are is the effect of what we have thought and our attribute! What we did yesterday is today. What we do today is tomorrow.

In this new light, let us have a deep conviction that by changing ourself, we change the conditions around us and within us."

## CHAPTER III

### *AHIMSA*

Correspondence reveals grasp of the fact that Non-violence in thought, emotion, expression, deed and action constitutes a fundamental pillar of Jain philosophy. What has moved the Western World is the consideration of the principle of *Ahimsa* towards not only fellow human beings, but to all living beings. Chitrabhanuji says "The universe is not for man alone. It is a field for evolution of all of life's forms. Different living forms may not be the same in mental capacity and sensing apparatus, the life force is equally worthy in all".

Chitrabhanu's message to the Western World has been that people must refrain from greed and violence to survive and to create the atmosphere of peace, non-violence and understanding. Non-violence is integrally related to truth. Indeed to separate oneself from the truth is violence.

At the International Press Conference for Religious Peace sponsored by the Embrace Foundation at the U.N. Chapel in New York on October 4, 1985, Gurudev Chitrabhanuji declared: "To save the world from annihilation we must practise the Jain principles of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) and understanding. Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer and Martin Luther King had demonstrated the spiritual power of non-violent action to bring about significant social



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changes. Indeed there is nothing in the world so powerful as non-violence”.

The message of Lord Mahavir has gone home with the devout International followers: “All of our acts of goodness, all of our moral practices to give up greed and be more humane are meaningless and useless unless we have non-violence and reverence for all living beings in our thoughts, in our hearts and actions”. “I cannot take what I cannot give back. No one can give back life. So no one should take it”.

The famous American Scientist Carl Sagan observed in an interview published in the Time Magazine on October 20, 1980:

“There is no right to life in any society on earth today, nor has there been at any former time with a few rare exceptions such as among the JAINS of India. We raise farm animals for slaughter, destroy forests, pollute rivers and lakes until no fish can live there, hunt deer and elk for sport . . .”

The message of non-violence has been taken in the comprehensive backdrop of world-wide violence, which threatens to blow up humanity and to destroy all fruits of civilisation in terms of values of life, and the concepts of compassion, pity, love and sympathy.

There is intense regret and unhappiness at the acceleration of violence in India — the land of peace and non-violence. Kamla writes: “I worry about you everytime. I hear news of violence in India. Such a beautiful land with so much to teach us”.

Talking about guns and violence in USA, Quaker Elizabeth from New York found it disgusting that Ronald

Reagan during his visit to Mexico presented a rifle to the President of Mexico. Pro-gun organisations tell people: "Guns don't need people; people do." But even to own a gun, says Elizabeth, is a violation of *Ahimsa* for it implies, 'I can kill you'. America was built on God, guns and guts mentality. It is a tragic fact that the average high school graduate has been exposed to 18000 TV murders, the rich can buy gold-plated pistols per \$10000/-, and guns have come to be regarded as American as baseball and apple juice. In 1980 there were eight handgun murders in England but in USA the number was 10012 — Enough bad news".

Clare Rosenfield has written with great lucidity, eloquence and depth of feeling on the state of world today with indifference and cruelty to life being perpetuated all around us, with *ahimsa* being relegated to the background, and fear, terror and agony increasing the area of suffering for the humanity and indeed for all living beings. The letter is a beautiful form of poetic prose because the expressions have flown from Clare's heart:

"In these 'civilized' days of minutely planned weapon systems, precise mechanisms of premeditated mass murder in the name of 'self-defence', we have become inured to violence. Torture is justified as patriotism; missiles are calculated to target only people, not buildings, in some cases; people who hold minority views or who are not in a position of power are discriminated against and economically exploited. Why? Because of the fundamental flaw in thinking, because of the gap between intellect and feeling.

When feeling and thinking are in harmony, one would not hesitate to say that all living beings, not just men, not just women, not just wild life, not just certain species of

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birds or whales, but all creatures are created equal. One would regard killing as killing, whether it was inflicted on humans, seals, lobsters, fish, sheep, cows or anyone. All living beings breathe. When they die, the life force ebbs away. When death is caused at the hand of another, there is suffering. There is pain. There is fear, terror, and agony. There are no exceptions.

It is nearly spring time. Along with the budding blossoms of leaves and flowers and grass, along with the planting of gardens, and the sweet scent in the air, along with the melting of the snows, there is another not so joyous event going on in our universe. The birth of baby seals would be a joyous occurrence if it were not a delivery into the hands of murder, excruciating pain, and death. Can we not stop it? If human babies were subjected to this, the law would step in immediately, regardless of the murderer's excuses. Does a seal mother feel any less maternal loving than a human mother? Especially right after birth? Can you imagine watching your own new born baby smashed over the head with a baseball bat a few hours after you gave birth? It is unthinkable. And yet it is not only thought of; it is executed, year after year, after year, despite protests and determined efforts on the part of animal lovers and humanitarians who feel that life is sacred, regardless of the form in which it is found.

When womankind will stop turning a deaf ear to brutality wherever it is, when womankind will stop condoning tyranny by supporting the machines of tyranny (agri-business which streamline the business of animal confinement and slaughter, fur farms which breed, confine, strangle, or asphyxiate foxes, minks, rabbits, and other innocent creatures for profit, cosmetics industries which squeeze or scrape openings near the reproductive organs for future perfumes, which harpoon whales for lipsticks,

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rouge, and other products, which kill musk deer for scent).

When womankind will stop turning a deaf ear to brutality meted out to the most helpless of living beings — the innocent, defenseless animals — only then will there be a move to end brutality and violence toward human beings. It is those who care to save the lives of all life forms who will awaken humans to their own destiny. No matter how many outcries of rage are sent out into the universe against the tyranny of dictatorships, against the irrationality of leaders in perpetuating the arms race, against the violence done in the name of any ism or in the interest of profit, they will not be effective until the enraged uses his/her voice to stop injustice toward all living beings and until that person stops feeding his/her body on murdered flesh.

Animal lovers, activists, vegetarians have taken their place in history as great literary figures, as highly respected philosophers, artists, mathematicians, statesmen. Among them are Diogeness, Porphyry, Pythagoras, Seneca, Ovid, Plutarch, Plato, Socrates, Alexander Pope, Schopenhauer, Leonardo da Vinci, Michael de Montaigne, Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, Maurice Maeterlinck, Annie Besant, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, John Harvey Kellogg, Albert Schweitzer.

Jesus said, "For I tell you truly, he who kills, kills himself, and who so eats the flesh of slain beasts eats the body of death".

When blood soaks the earth, Mother Earth groans with pain. Sometimes the pain bursts the earth open and the

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wound remains gaping. We humans call it earth quake and many beings are swallowed up. We don't know why? Sometimes the tears flood out and overwhelm rivers, villages, cities of inhabitants, floating them out to sea. Sometimes her wailing is reflected in the torrential rains and blizzards of different climates worldwide. Mother Earth mourns. The sun grows dim, covered over by heavy clouds of man's immorality. The air chokes with pollution and negative vibrations are contagious. Mother Earth suffers and renews, swallows and gives forth again. We come and go, but she remains. While we are here, let us live as her disciples and see that she wants no bloody offerings. What makes her smile is what makes us smile, since we are formed of her rocks and earth and clean watery streams, and that is harmonious living, harmless living, a life lived in reverence for life. In this way we will treat all of life with respect, with reverence, with care, regarding all that lives as our own selves."

Clare, otherwise a clam, meditative and quiet person expresses great courage of her convictions and profundity of feeling when she deals with reverence for life, and longs for a world in which suffering is reduced to a minimum and peace is all-pervading. She advocates deepest level of compassion on a universal scale for suffering inflicted on or endured by all living beings, regardless of race, nationality, religion and form. Here is what she once narrated to Gurudev in a wave of profound thought:

"Once, while waiting at a train station in southern Thailand, I heard cries and wails which pierced my heart. I traced their source to scores of pigs and piglets being roped together, shoved, and kicked into the back of a large lorry, eventually to be transported to slaughter. The squeals and cries sounded to me just like those of my own

two babies, then four and one, whom I had left in Bangkok in order to take this trip. It was then that I thought, "If it were my own babies, would their suffering be anymore or less than that of the pigs?" I sat in that station and sobbed. That scene did something to me.

Today, the minds of many men are focused on how to streamline the process of turning animals into food with the same attitude as turning steel into cars. Efficiency. Profit motive. More and more. Faster and faster. Babies separated from their mothers, some even suffocated in bags (roosters, for example, deemed useless). This summer I witnessed a newborn calf crying tears and rolling its eyes restrained in a pen after having lost its mother to the dairy farmer after two days. I saw a movie called *The Slaughterhouse Reform Bill* in which the 'Kosher Kill' was exposed without commentary. Cows, calves, lambs were corrailed down a narrow corridor. One by one, they dropped through a trap door and were caught by a rope by one leg, after which they dangled next to one another fully conscious, in agony, until a man with a long knife came and slit their throats. The blood that gushed was in torrents. Everyone who watched that film in the room with me was crying out in anger, anguish, or uncontrollable tears. The last part of the film showed the 'humane' method where the animal is stunned first, with the blow of a sledge hammer, drops to the floor with others who are also in line, and where, unconscious though not yet dead, it faces the knife. The film ended on an absurd note — 'If you were an animal, which method of slaughter would you prefer?'

That mentality which can kill thousands of non-human lives in a day, what is to prevent it from taking the next step, from killing thousands of human lives? If we can kill the most helpless, the most voiceless, the most

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defenseless for profit and for our bodies, what is it that will stop us from sending beautiful sons and daughters to war, rendering ourselves helpless before the stockpilers of weapons and misguided planners of our defense? If we can think for ourselves, take our lives into our own hands, get up in arms about the arms race, then can we not also stop contributing to the perpetuation of agony, pain, and suffering in our diets? Can we not see the subtle desensitization that consumerism, taste buds, and not wanting to know is covering us with?

I don't know the answer. I only know that for me and our children, the vegetarian way of life is not only a way of removing ourselves from supporting the machines of violence and the mentality of callousness toward helpless creatures, but it has also been able to give us a new and fresh outlook on life. I feel one with the creation. I feel a deep kinship with the beings with whom I share the planet. I see them as energies, conscious, living, growing evolving energies in a myriad of different forms. They are my brothers and sisters just as much as the downtrodden, persecuted, suffering humans.

As Edgar Guest wrote:

"Who for God's creatures small will plan  
Will seldom wrong his fellow man."

I want to go to the root of the mentality which can plan large-scale destruction, whether it is of animals or of humans. The relationship between meat-eating and war has been pointed out by Jain philosophers of India, by George Bernard Shaw, by Albert Schweitzer, by Henry David Thoreau, and others. You may not agree, pointing to Hitler who was a vegetarian. But he was only because his digestive system was so spastic that he could not digest anything else but vegetables; his vegetarianism,

obviously, was not born out of an iota of compassion for suffering animals."

Sreven from Canada writes: "You have helped to bring the torch of light into the dark night of ignorance, where humans are indulging in all kinds of perverted sense of taste, the craving that comes from their mouths and eyes only for their unsatiable taste buds, their swallowed food accompanied by the unheard and unseen cries, agony, pain and suffering of slaughtered animals, fishes and fowl."

The spirit of non-violence is being imbibed by Americans and Europeans in the broad back-drop of humanitarianism, compassion, love and solidarity with all living beings and interdependence with Nature.

In a recent letter, scholar — painter Jaromir Skrivanek of Czechoslovakia applauded the end of communism and beginnings of a freer democratic society in his country by stressing that it all came to pass in a non-violent manner. "By this peaceful revolution — now called all over the world as a velvet revolution, the whole totalitarian power was demolished and paralysed."

Sreven writes with feeling when he quotes a poem of Gurudev Chitrabhanu, which 'touched him ever so gently':

### Fulfilment

The trees were dancing gaily in the breeze  
'Why do you dance so gaily today, O Trees?'  
I asked, Nodding their foliage merrily,  
the trees replied,



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'We bore the searing heat on the sun  
giving shade to the weary traveller  
and the drooping bird.  
We readily offered our fruit to the hungry  
Should we not dance now, happy in the fulfilment of  
fortitude and compassion?'

Mette Norgaard (Madhu Mukta) has this to observe:

"This winter has been a time for what I might call 'practical introspection'. I have maintained my meditation and yoga practices, but I cannot say I have deepened my understanding or experience. What has happened, though, is that my commitment to *Ahimsa* is increasingly solid. Early on, this commitment was on a very emotional level. Now, I increasingly experience it on a conscious level as well. Furthermore, it is becoming clear to me that part of my purpose in life is to facilitate other people's understanding of Reverence for Life. This has given me a very strong sense of direction. Now I know the path, though I do not know quite where it ends or how I shall travel it. It has helped me become certain that *Ahimsa* is one of the core principles of my life, and it has helped me find a way to bring my professional life in alignment with my personal beliefs. As a result, I feel more whole, more energetic, more focused.

This past year, a great deal of my energy has been spent on my work. You might say, on external things. Though this will continue to require quite a lot of energy, I think it is time to turn my focus inside again and to deepen my understanding of Jainism. Maybe this summer, I can work on the transcribed talks you gave me, and start to compile the materials for the book on *Ahimsa*. That would be helpful to do while you are near.

## AHIMSA

Myriam Herz (Meera) from Switzerland says what Jainism means to her: "Awareness is most necessary to live with myself, relatives and friends, in a professional setting with clients and finally with society. I first have to be aware of my own mind and see how it hurts myself and how this is projected to others. Since I don't want to live with hurts and have always been striving for harmony, two important precepts of Jainism were internalized as guiding poles in my life, namely non-violence, not only in action, but down to the most subtlest thoughts, and relativity in thinking.

To constantly watch my thoughts according to these high ideals, at the same time not criticizing myself for my shortcomings, is a real challenge, often painful, but if confronted with courage and honesty, very rewarding in terms of growth. Finally, I am a great lover of nature and I feel nature is very good to me. It restores my energies and I always feel protected by it, even hiking all by myself for hours in the mountains or the woods. I believe this results from my respect towards the animals, trees, flowers and all life. It is all mutual, all one. It is a wonderful joy to experience the depth of non-violence and the more I practise it, the more I realize the wonders behind this truth.

Bob Feinson (Bahubali) expresses his feelings thus:

Gurudev's teachings woke me up at the age of forty. Until then, I had been given no information on the art of life and living. (My schooling was electrical engineering.) This awareness culminated when my wife passed away two years ago after a long illness. The Jain philosophy helped both of us in this moment of transition. Judy died at home without fear — ever welcoming death. She knew that death was merely a part of our journey through life, part

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of cycle of birth and death. And the teaching enabled me to separate love from attachment and to go on with my life without the typical period of mourning and desolation. I had learned, "Everything changes, nothing remains the same!"

## CHAPTER IV

### LOOKING UP TO THE TEACHER

The introduction of Jain religion — both in terms of the spiritual as well as its practical aspects has come as a delightful experience to American and European Jains, thanks to the highly stimulating, inspirational and guiding path shown by Gurudev Chitrabhanu to them. Intellectual interaction with him has helped numerous troubled souls to find peace with inner-self, freedom from destructive actions and augmented reserve of inner strength and confidence to face ups and downs in life. He has inspired a large number of people in the Western World to experience the miracle of their life and to lift their vision to a global purpose by appreciating the sanctity of all life and the vital strength of non-violence.

Elizabeth of New York (USA) has this to say about Chitrabhanu: "It is always such a joy to be in your presence, for you radiate good vibrations always, and exemplify love, compassion and reverence for life and the actions necessary to improve society".

Meola Sudarshana has grasped the message of Gurudev 'to be, see and free yourself'. She feels there will never be detachment from the *Guru*, because the connection on a pure soul level is unconditional, 'It has increased self-confidence and soul energy deep within her to be able to withstand any external shocks'.

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Bill Wrenn finds Gurudev's teachings very useful for overcoming negative conditioning and focusing on life on what is really important. The teachings have left an indelible imprint on his conscious and unconscious mind and have given him a great deal to think about and strive for. Indeed letters from innumerable friends and devotees reflect the grateful feeling of having come in contact with Chitrabhanu who has been to them a friend, philosopher and guide. In person and from distance he has continued to provide loving vibrations of peace and harmony. He has guided them well to distinguish between knowledge and understanding. It is understanding which brings awareness, blissful joy and true essence of life. As expressed by them, they have at last found a soul in the person of Chitrabhanu, they could open up to and by being open, begin to find oneself. He has changed the mood of many from depression or desperation to awareness, understanding and joy in living.

In Jain philosophy, the teacher has a special place of honour since he is the one who first practises and then preaches. He is the one who sets the example and motivates the inspiration. No wonder the *Namokar Mantra* includes veneration of 'Upadhyay' along with *Arihants*, *Siddhas* and others.

Gurudev Chitrabhanu's experience in USA, UK and West Europe has been that a *Guru* is welcome to the people if the *Guru* helps the disciple to become a *Guru* himself. David Light observed in an article in New Sun after interviewing Chitrabhanu in December 1978 that 'Chitrabhanuji does not inflict any rituals on me and seems to be saying,' you are okay as you are. Be who you are. That's all. He is a *Guru* who ends up making you the *Guru*.

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He is like an ice in a cooling drink. He cools your consciousness and then disappears."

Gurudev Chitrabhanu has himself repeatedly said,

"I am not concerned with proving myself or making miracles for anybody. My teaching is to concentrate on the virtues of the people. The mission of a teacher is to lead a person to his or her own inner teaching and relieve the person from all dependency. In the word *Guru*, *Gu* means 'only darkness' and *ru* means 'remover'. What often happens is the disciple clings to the teacher and not to the teaching. Thereby he misses the goal.

You do not need groups to find God. Groups are busy looking for messiahs to solve all their problems. It is an illusion, weakness, an avoidance of responsibility."

One has to turn the spirit of soul and get released from the bonds of materialism. A spiritual person will be more creative, more positive, prosperous and more appreciated because he or she knows the power of spirit and can use it everywhere.

Sreven has this to say of his experience at the Jain Meditation International Centre.

'My strength has increased by watching the people who come into the centre and into Gurudev's teaching, and the miracles that start taking place in their lives. When I see the tormented faces of the people who first came here, see their eyes reflecting their inner pain, and then I watch the change which comes into their being from Gurudev's teaching, his gentle spirit, and from Jainism. My own heart at times almost bursts with the deepest of love and gratitude towards him. And I become very

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humble in front of that spirit which emanates from Gurudev Chitrabhanu even from the distance invisibly. He is like a lone shining star in the vast darkness that covers this earth'.

'For I am seeing with my own eyes and hearing with my own ears the fruits of Gurudev's spirit and teaching. And he is not even here. So I walk with the light and try to share his light and the light of the unending line of Jain teachers through the ages'.

'I thank you again for your generosity and giving heart to your being an instrument in helping to spread the gentle teaching of harmlessness towards all living beings'.

Bruce's comments on the role of the teacher are intellectually profound and in couched intensely philosophical expression: He also emerges as a highly advanced committed and serious pupil.

'Conventional time (*Vyavahar Kala*) is vanishing by so fast that many of the distinctions such as day and night no longer have significance. There is more of the experience of a greater time which is beyond daily experience. There have been many significant events which continuously occur and which further verify the validity of the Jain view of Reality. It is a great joy to experience in one's life the wisdom of the Master Scientists of human (all living beings) happiness. The practice of *Upayoga* as you taught is of profound benefit. (Benefit is an incomplete descriptive term as assumably *Upayoga* can be understood as the manifestation of the consciousness and attribute of the *Jiva*?) Also what can be seen is the great wisdom you have, because of the way you refined the teaching to the practical essentials and then presented it in such a way

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that it is accessible to all people. Namaste, Gurudev Chandraprabha Sagarji'.

'Meditation, school and all things are proceeding very well. There are ups and downs but with *upayoga* practices, the progress is towards smoothness an equanimity. Deep, deep insights (consciousness evolution) occur with the practice of *Ratnatraya*'. Three jewels: right knowledge, right vision, right practice.

Gurudev, deep within this heart is '*Sraddha*' (faith) which, when the inner activity has become calm, leaves monkhood still as the personal humble objective. It is not even an objective; it is as if it has to be. It is as if it is a necessity in one's life; a completion. This attitude may be erroneous and please state if it is. Maturity is a task for me to achieve, but with the mature steadfastness of an elephant, monkhood and Jain Dharma are my love'.

'However, it appears that Sadhuhood is not a simple matter to achieve under the present circumstances. For one who pursues the teaching of Mahavira and wishes to transcend sectarian differences, this perhaps is not possible. Or put another way, for one who sees great merit in both main sects and the benefits from the opportunity to participate in both sects, this participation also may not be possible. Some people here have said that it would be of benefit to the Jains in North America if one studies and becomes an *Upadhyaya* first. This would satisfy a community need in North America and also provide the opportunity for 'trans-sectarian' study and participation. This would further allow a greater overview of the present situation and permit a specific direction to be more easily taken when at a later date, the time for *diksha* (renunciation) is seen to be more appropriate for all concerned. What are your thoughts on this matter? It can



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be discussed when you are in North America. This matter appears complex but there is faith combined with knowing (*Samyak darshan* and *Samyak gyana*) that there is an existing process which will resolve in time this momentary complexity. Perhaps it is the lack of *Samyak-darshan* that gives rise to this complexity.

So that was a brief update. Presently Shri Kunda Kunda's *Samayasara* is providing inspiration and broad insightful knowledge'.

Vikas Southern, another devoted and devout scholar has this to say:

"These past three years have been so filled with the wonders of light and love and I must say that as the student of Jainism I and those in America have indeed had the good *Karma* to learn from a lineage of saintly beings as those in your family circle."

"My dear *Guruji*, however, may I thank you and tell you that your presence in my life gives a bountiful return as each day passes. I am in the lives of others and impart to them the wisdom and love which you have shown to me. Each new person I come in contact is shown the compassion and consciousness which your blessings have allowed to manifest in the form known as Vikas Prakash Ananda. And although these people do not know of Jainism or for that matter know about Indian philosophy, they know that there is something within and the joy is shared when we meet and speak and for the time we are together they are at peace, *Jai Jinendra*".

In another letter written four years earlier Vikas Prakash reviews and reflects upon his growing interest in Jain philosophy. He says:

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"I have just finished reading the books *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* and the 12 Facets of Reality. The Sutra has given me a new view of my previous 37 years of existence on this planet and I am ashamed of the way that I have used these precious fleeting moments of my present past.

Dear Father, there are so many paths to the light. How is it that I have floundered in delusion for so long without seeing the error of my ways? Was it general, environmental or *karmic*? Perhaps all three of these may share the burden of my afore-mentioned delusion and ignorance! I can only look upon my experience of having led me to you and therein justify the importance of my past.

Within the 12 facet of Reality, the keys to my present reality and future existence have begun to manifest in my life and this has brought great solace to my spiritual constitution. Your suggestion, to lead the private life of a *muni* for two years will give me the opportunity to live up to my spiritual potential without the separation and austere outlook which are necessary when formally taking the personal vows of a monk. For this period of grace and the wisdom you have shown in giving my life direction, I shall be eternally grateful.

Gurudev, at this time of year, in America, we, as a nation gather with those who are dear to us and offer a prayer of thanks to the forces which have given us light, love, health and happiness in this past year. May I extend this prayer to you. Dear Father, to your spiritual companion, Pramodabhen and to your sons and all who are dear to you. Thank you for your kindness and guidance".

Bruce Costain from Canada writes with deep conviction, vast profundity and sincerity about his embracing Jain

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religion, and the abiding desire in his heart to go into further and deeper involvement with the religion:

"It appears Gurudev that the time comes when the decision must be made to move more closely to a chosen spiritual discipline. I have meditated deeply on the need to become a monk; whether it is necessary to take the vows to achieve what I understand to be our 'mission', *Moksha*. The relationship between 'achieving' and 'being' needed to be understood. After much thought and meditation on questions such as: Is a *guru* necessary if one is committed to spiritual development? Will the universal consciousness and one's higher consciousness not be the *guru*? Can the highest spiritual development not occur in North America also? Does the serious aspirant need to travel to India for initiation? Is the learning that is happening to the aspirant not the same learning that would be occurring as a monk or nun? And if so, what is the need to become a monk or nun? If one is content with just 'being with balance', despite the surrounding events, what is the need to go on up the mountain? Is reaching the summit of the mountain the realization that peace in the heart despite the circumstances of life, is the ultimate achievement? To face life and death with peace in one's heart and the *Namokar Mantra* in one's consciousness, is my understanding from you as to how we face our existence and mission.

The search for answers to the above questions has resulted in two insights for me. One continuous awareness with balanced joy during life's activities needs to be achieved. And two, I need to quietly and with reverence move more closely to the Jain Dharma. This is a quiet, personal decision, Gurudev, that I now need to take.

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Life is very full for me with the meditation centre, school courses, animal rights and vegetarianism projects. There is much non-violent influence that can be exerted as groups organize and make decisions to create a less violent world”.

The foregoing comments by three highly advanced imbibers of the principles of Jain religion manifest deep conviction, strong natural desire and personal preparedness to proceed further at a higher, more sublime and more spiritual level with the religion of their choice. It is heartening to see the belief in the faith reinforced by comprehensive on-going study of Jain scriptures, and acquiring a clear understanding how in Jain religion the principles and the practice go together hand-in-hand and that the practice is not merely a ritual to be observed with blind belief.

Faith and scholarship of Balbhadra, Vikas Prakash and Ananta are highly inspiring and exhilarating. They have taken to Jainism almost on par with *Gurus* and *Upadhyayas* in India, and many ordinary followers of Jain religion in India could look upto them for spiritual guidance and religious discipline.

S. Michele writes, “I want to grow and I want to be intuitive enough to be my own counsel. Gurudev, your words are very powerful and help me a lot. I do sincerely appreciate all that you have done for me and given to me. I listened to one of your tapes and it helped me a lot. I am now going to listen to the other ‘Miracles of Letting go’... Something I very much need to hear from time to time. I love my life now.”

The catalytic role of the Teacher in introducing the basic tenets of Jainism and slowly and steadily, smoothly and

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harmoniously getting the pupils fully initiated into it is also brought out in a large number of letters.

Catherine Florida says: "I feel so many special blessings have come into my life since meeting you again in this life time. I have been inspired to give up smoking which was a 27 year habit, and I have been a non-smoker for almost eight months now. I am working on changing my eating habits. So far I have been able to accomplish no beef no meet for over a year, and am working on the rest of the change. Thank you Gurudev for all of your help and guidance known and unknown to me".

Netalie's letter reflects the satisfaction of the hunger for spiritual growth. She writes, "Your love and blessings and my evergrowing conviction in and readiness for *Ahimsa* have lifted me greatly and I am experiencing that expanded energy that you saw in me some months ago."

Priyakanta Erena is full of gratitude and appreciation as she writes, "I do hope you are well and healthy, Gurudev, as the world needs you so much, especially the western part. Please hold me in your meditation sometimes so that I may touch upon your strength and not get discouraged in my daily tasks and keep my equilibrium".

Writing in the same vein, Rick Rakesh says, "Please know that you will always be giving to me, your presence and our time together are like the Sun in my life, shining out across the miles that now separate us, and illumining my path throughout the years to come. May the light within you embrace all living beings and lighten their daily steps".

The comments from Nirmal of Pittsburg are very touching. "I have been blessed to have encountered you

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in my life and remembering the love I felt from you emanating to all, helps me stay in touch. How can I incorporate the love for everything in my daily living”.

“I have been helping a friend dying from a brain tumor and it certainly helped me become really clear on this whole process of life. We are all handicapped in some way — some physically, some emotionally, some spiritually. Even if I never see you again in this life, I know I shall never give up my love for the life of reverence for life”.

Jenene expresses her deep regards saying: “I bow to you with respect and adoration for the self-realised Divinity within you. I am so very grateful to know and love you; and as I grow in my own awareness of my Divinity and implement within me your message of non-violence and peace, I desire to in turn also share this with others”.

The observation of Balbhadrā are very penetrating indeed: The teacher is there to initiate and guide and help his pupil to become self-reliant in the search for the path towards spiritual fulfilment, oneness with life in all its forms and understanding the inner-self.

He writes: “You suggested that if there were questions to present, the experience is that although there are questions or issues, they quickly get answered and resolved either in the formal sitting meditation or in the meditation during one’s daily existence. Any queries or urgency is dissolved in the faith in the evolving selflike as *Guru* process”.

Mimi Manorama writes “the last time I spoke to you was when you helped me immeasurably at a very difficult time in my life. And for that I will always be very grateful.

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Your wisdom, insight and compassionate heart placed everything in its right perspective."

Jaromir Skrivanek from Czechoslovakia visited India and took beautiful pictures of famous Jain temples particularly at Palitana. Reproduction of the paintings in colour was printed in the Indian art magazine 'Roop Lekha' with an article by Dr. M S Randhawa, the then President of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society. When he came in contact with Gurudev Chitrabhanu, he wrote: "Many times I was preparing to write to you about my vivid memories I have of our first meeting in Bombay and how much it influenced my whole life and how often many unusual things happened in connection with you". Reflecting on the life in the 'closed' atmosphere of communism, he wrote:

"But if you would ask if I am happy or unhappy, I could answer you that same way a river flowing would answer you. I know only flowing, living and it is sufficient. How sweet would it be to breathe when we could live free and in peace".

Jenene expresses sublime thoughts in beautiful prose with intensity of feelings about self-realisation:

"What I am eager to tell you is, I walk in a steady state of meditation as I go through out my day. When I cannot sit to meditate, as I work I listen carefully to the inspiring tapes I recorded of your instruction. At first it did not have a strong effect. But it's been several weeks now of listening and meditating over and over, and pondering and gaining understanding and wisdom on the seven energy centres in relationship to my life; as well as other precious thoughts. It is becoming ingrained into my thinking continuously now. I have such a long way to go,

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but I have at least begun my parallel journey to merge and become one with my Divine Self.

I know that I must not be in a hurry, but instead enjoy the ride. Yet I feel eager to master my first energy centre of Security so that I can progress on, and on. I want to first establish a firm security in the knowledge and realization of my Divine Self and my oneness with the Universe. I want to establish my roots within this earth element of the first centre so I can become steady and consistent in my state of consciousness.

There is so much to share with you! I could write on and on. I am so excited and grateful for what I have learned, and I hunger to learn more.

Through your guidance of meditation — especially on the seven centres of energy — I am beginning to truly understand myself for the first time, and I feel I have a path to follow to help me gain better insight on myself and life.

I do not know when this can possibly happen, but some day I would love to visit you in India. Money and my large family of small children interfere at the present time.

There are little notes taped all around my house, in my bedroom, in the kitchen, reminding me to strive for the Oneness with the Divine Self within, and affirmations that I am doing this. I truly feel as a being of light and I desire to radiate that light for others to feel and grow by. Soon I will be teaching a group of eager teenage girls on inner and outer self improvement. Within this course I will be sharing with these girls some of what you have shared in your books, as well as some yoga. I love to teach that which is important and precious to me.



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I am grateful to know you dear Chitrabhanu, and I feel a reverence towards you for your increased light and understanding."

*Mitra* (Rev. Rob Garen) writes: "My meditations are real 'hummers'. I almost feel invisible sometime. Most importantly I want to be stress free so that I can pursue a simple spiritual life. The changes taking place in me, the insights, it goes beyond a letter of words. I love me and thank you for the part you have had in that".

Sujata observes, "Gurudev, you have really taught your students well! The base and foundation that you have given us all — has served us all in such good stead — to be able to develop creatively and make the teachings our own, each in our own way. And it has also enabled us to be very discriminating in discerning truth."

Here is a tribute to the Teacher from a disciple whose life has been changed for the better:

"Your life is the definition of love. Some events which I experienced due to your friendship, your teaching, and your very kind consideration of all are: a chance to observe a model first hand. Your spiritual education living in you, I saw you leave a half cup of water for mice to drink from in the open wall of a Jain hotel. At the Airport you held Rita's hand when she was falling apart (inside). She will always remember it. You prevented Pramoda and Ajit from stepping on a large insect in the dim hall way at the Sadhana building.

I saw you return to us exhausted from your work in 'flood relief' holding the hand of a small boy and carrying a suitcase in the other. You were vulnerable, and you told me the truth even when it must have been very bitter on your tongue.

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Your question in 'the old monastery' before bathing, "are there any insects in the shower, Ajit?" You gave me the chance to live and work on a new level, and friendship with your family.

Your inspiration during four trips through India, and your careful unobtrusive guidance and protection of all was unmistakable".

Your attracting the company of like minded 'aspirants' for the benefit of all. Your gifts may not be repayable. Yet we have to share what we have learned and gained trusting our own experience.

Remembering our 'divinity' we find reason to live. You have changed my life. Your life is the definition of love.

And here is what the Czech philosopher-painter Jaromir Skrivanek wrote in December 1992 about the impact of Gurudev Chitrabhanu's visit to Prague (Chechoslovakia) in:

"Many thanks for your visiting my house, your lectures and your blessing presence in Prague, not only from me and Marie, but from all my friends who met you. Your arrival in Prague was like a real miracle from fairy tales bringing them new impulses for their spiritual endeavours and new hopes and inspiration for their next living. Of course it was a miracle also for me".

He continues: "I must reveal Marie's thanks and gratefulness for your meditative advice to imagine her soul over her head when she will climb in high altitudes to avoid eventual health problems. She really made it and the results were perfect. She has seen her soul dancing over the peaks of the mountains. This

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happened when she was climbing the most dangerous and highest place of a pass at the height of 5,416 metres when all other members got high-mountain sickness but she was going as if having the wings”.

Chetana Catherine M. Florida echoing birthday greetings to Gurudev from 100 students from Michigan wrote an inspiring letter:

“With birthdays we always think what we can give the person. However, all I can think about is that you have given to me. So using your name CHITRABHANU as my focus, I would like to share with you what you have given me.

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| C is for Creativity     | — getting me to see and understand my personal power to be creative.                         |
| H is for Help           | — giving me the help I needed to get through those ‘dark times’.                             |
| I is for Integrity      | — Being my example of what integrity is in working with everyone.                            |
| T is for Truth          | — through the light of your awareness, I become more and more aware of the truth.            |
| R is for Reconciliation | — to reconcile all of my differences with people so the ‘molehills’ do not become mountains. |

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- A is for *Ahimsa* — to be non-violent and more reverent for all life.
- B is for Better to Best — learning how to live better to become the best that I can be
- H is for Healing — how all things can be healed with, and through, the light of inner awareness.
- A is for Adoration — for life and for you, Gurudev.
- N is for Not — as you have shared what to strive for in life, I have also seen what not to strive for!
- U is for Unlimitedness — what we experience when we truly experience who we really are.

I thank you for all of these gifts. What I would like to give to you on your birthday is my love and commitment to you as my teacher in helping you to spread the message of *ahimsa* (non-violence) to all those I meet and work with everyday”.

Yashoda Jordon of New York has this to say:

“A single negative thought kills all positiveness. Who else would remind us but the eminent teacher of Jainism. All words coming from Gurudev are like pearls and have helped me immensely in sorting out the why, where, who, what. Cutting through a densely barrage of ideas and problems with a laser-like beam in meditation explains the way how I have become the woman as a

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professional. How else can I comment on Jainism that to me is a million dollar way of life. Above, all, understanding the way life works and situations. But it has not made me a very patient person.....yet!"

Here is what several young and old Americans of different National origins have to say on what Jain Philosophy meant to them in daily life. Elizabeth Cattel (over 80) writes:

"Few of us hear words of wisdom spoken in our homes, or where we work, or by our peers; and even our colleges and universities teach mainly the knowledge of cold intellect that William Blake deplored as 'Single vision and Newton's sleep.' And our culture conditions us to self-interest and material acquisition. Therefore, how meaningful it is to hear Gurudev Chitrabhanu speak significant wisdom, tell us how in meditation to find the Permanent Self, and for us to be in his presence which radiates a spiritual vitality."

"I have been able to fulfill my 'most' dearest wish: to become a total vegetarian! I've become immensely sensitive to the idea of non-violence and, even more important of not judging others who are not. I've understood that others do not have to have the same philosophy as I do and still be of value. Also, the satsang of our Jain Centre has meant a lot to me. Watching the lives of students who had studied before me, inspired me, during difficult moments to carry on until the time when I felt successful myself, most of the time!"

Edith observes:

"Empathic Psychotherapist: Solves problems of relationships, career, self-esteem, depression, anxiety, anger,

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guilt....."Such advertisements appear daily. I was possessed with the whole bunch of these emotions. I ran to a therapist. It helped, like aspirin, a few hours or days. I looked for many 'magicians' who would really solve my problems. I discovered there was no solution. However, determined in my desperate search for a little peace of mind, I finally found, after a long and painful journey, what I was seeking: The Jain Philosophy taught by the Great Master Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu. After just a few lectures, not therapeutic sessions, I discovered the secret: Nobody can solve problems from the outside. It is an inside job! With Gurudev's teachings, I am on the complex road of breaking with my conformity, traditions and habits, as I am being transformed into a happy, healthy, and peaceful human being."

Myriam writes:

"Seven years ago with a life not having any purpose and meaning — always looking for outside satisfaction and running from one attachment to another attraction — I found something to fill up that inner emptiness and remove the pain of loneliness. Studying with Gurudev brought structure and the gradual cleansing of my mind — letting go of selfishness, greed, anger, bitterness, in order to experience compassion, love and understanding. I got closer to some sort of inner peace. It also helped me to gather the energy to complete a Masters Degree. Today I am in a profession in the helping field, which gives me satisfaction. My relationships have improved, especially with my parents whom I can now appreciate and respect."

Lucille gives her impressions in the following words:

"The main thing I learned is that what I was looking for outside for years and years was to be found within and

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that the source of my pain was not the situation or the other person but my expectations. I had to hear this, over and over again for three years before I could fully accept it. The peace and freedom I enjoy now are the great gift of Gurudev's teachings."

Yashoda Jordon puts it succinctly:

"It has meant a complete metamorphosis!!"

Subodh Swen says:

"In the business world, the teaching has enabled me to deal with people without getting caught up in their anger or their greed. It is like watching a game being played, yet the players do not realize they are playing. All these desires are without meaning, since we leave it all behind eventually. In one sentence, 'It is to be light.' The insight I gained is that we do it all to ourselves, both good and bad! There is no one else responsible but ourselves for what happens to us. Whether or not we enjoy our life is up to us".

Bob Robert writes:

"In 1983, I was guided to begin my in-depth study of Gurudev's book. The Psychology of Enlightenment: The Seven Energy Centre. Using only this book on the chakras, which is so clear, simple, concise and self-directed, I received wonderful insights and understanding! It really did open up a whole new world for me."

Jaya Saranam's feeling of gratefulness for the path shown by the teacher is evident in the following warm-hearted poetic expression:

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"In my sorrows, you touch my cheek  
with fingers that have known pain,  
and I bathe in the soothing, healing  
water of your soul

In my seekings, you clasp my hand  
with your hands  
and guide me with your eyes  
into the light of your seeing

And in all this  
you are with me,  
in my waking, in my sleeping  
and in your constant vigil  
is the signature of your love

Oh teacher, let me take refuge  
in your heart of freedom,  
and in the years we share  
work by your side

In the infinity of our linking  
I surrender,  
and rest graced with peace"



## CHAPTER V

### THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION

Americans & Europeans have tended to show enthusiasm for absorbing Jain philosophy in day-to-day life quite apart from subscribing to its basic principles and philosophy. They find that the two are inseparable. Jain ritual is something so new and yet so simple and uncomplicated for them to practise within the confinements of their physical capacity and will power. It is also facilitated because Jain religious practices are basically turned to mental and physical discipline, and there is also flexibility in the matter of degree of austerity or renunciation a person is willing or prepared to commit himself/herself to. There is also no blind-belief oriented mumbo jumbo about observance of Jain religion.

What is interesting is that a lot of interest has been aroused for observing Jain religion through recital of *Namokar Mantra* and other prayers and bhajans, observance of fasts, meditation, practising and preaching vegetarianism, organising vegetarian projects, listening to videotapes of discourses, (given by Gurudev at the Jain congregations at various Jain International Meditation Centres in New York and elsewhere in USA and Canada), yoga practice, celebrating *Paryushan Parva* together, observing the festival of Forgiveness and grasping its essence, nursing not only ailing human beings but also sick and wounded animals and birds, undertaking

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philanthropic and humanitarian acts, fighting for the rights of animals and preventing cruelty on them or killing them.

Among the ardent followers, the feeling is growing through experience that such religious practices help in increasing their soul-strength and revitalising their soul-energy. It makes them feel more self-reliant both physically as well as mentally, and diminishes diffidence, timidity or lack of courage. In one word, such practices are helping them keep their equilibrium. One devout scholar has coined a beautiful term 'balanced joy' for the deep satisfaction that one gets by observing Jain religion and subscribing to its principles — even on a lower scale. The 'balanced joy' increases as one moves up on the performance scale.

The practice of Jainism has come to the American and European followers not only as soul-purifying and soul-uplifting, but also as making them better, kinder and more compassionate human beings in the wider word of all living beings. Many regard it as a miracle happened to them, and the miracle is the discovery of the power of the inner-self, the joy of true understanding and the deep experience of interdependence.

What has deeply touched the core of the hearts of Americans and Europeans is the experience of annual pilgrimage to the holy Jain shrines in India. These trips have been very appropriately named as 'Journey to Awareness'. Balabhadra poured his heart out when he wrote: "Honestly I don't want to die without visiting *Sammata Shikhar*". Vikas Prakash and Ananta felt that as they made their way up the mountain side to the summit of *Shatrunjaya* and saw the glorious light which reflected from the domes of the temple roof, 'Their hearts and

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minds were uplifted quite suddenly'. The pilgrimage was for them 'a wave of bliss'.

When they learnt of postponement of the pilgrimage in 1990, Vikas wrote: "Both Ananta and I were very much surprised to learn of the postponement of this year's Journey to Awareness. In my heart of hearts there were visions of Shatrunjaya, Mt. Abu, Shravanabelgola, Pavapuri and Sammeta Shikhar which were so vivid and warming that for those brief moments in which these scenes of your homeland were present in my mind's eye, Ananta and I were once again sharing the vibrations of the timeless blessings which these Mountains of Divinity bestow upon the fortunate pilgrims who visit them. As real as any reality which I have known in this life! The smell of incense, the glow of candles, the coolness of the stone floors on the feet! The sound of mantra vibrating throughout the Temples and surrounding area; pilgrims coming and going to pay homage to each of the deities, all this and the calm serenity of the wide-eyed fully conscious larger than life representations of Adinatha, Parsvanath, Shitalnath and all Tirthankaras!"

Durga and Narayan (Mr. & Mrs. Simonin) from Paris led a group on a pilgrimage to India in 1970, found the experience highly uplifting and deeply soul-satisfying. Since then they have been in constant touch with Gurudev and his teachings and have brought into their own teaching of Yoga at the Centre de Yoga traditionnel in Paris — valuable input of meditation and concentration as per Jain tradition. They have taken *Namokara Mantra* to heart as its daily recitation has given them considerable peace of mind and tranquility of spirit.

I recall meeting and greeting a group which had come to India from USA in 1985 on pilgrimage under the inspiring

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guidance of Gurudev Chitrabhanu. When I met them in New Delhi towards the end of their tour, I could see the feeling of ecstasy and discovery of joy within bubbling forth in their talk. It was a unique experience for them and they wanted to do it again in future. Their tensions had disappeared. They looked relaxed and at peace with the world — all those leading bankers, industrialists, professors, traders and other men and women of the mundane world. The pilgrimage had raised their soul power so high as to take the mundane in its stride and not get trapped into it.

And consider the deep pleasure they got chanting *Namokar Mantra* at the mountain tops in temples and their environs. Rock singer Rosita Rashmi writes:

"There is a lot of love and a lot of joy that has been put into this and a lot of gratefulness at being able to sing and record a song that is so ancient, so powerful and I believed the whole world should hear it. I have never felt so complete in singing before."

In another letter she writes, "In Mt. Palitana, when we were in the temple, when we finally climbed the mountain and went into the temple you asked me to sing *Om Namo Arihantanam*, and you wanted us to sing it for everybody. My first reaction was strange because I did not want to dishonour or sing it incorrectly. But I did hear it differently in my own mind, heard the mantras played differently. When I did sing it, and everybody joined in and we all sang it together, I actually heard the sounds that you will hear when you listen to the tape '....'. I played the mantras on my guitar to a musician. He was overwhelmed by it, and told me he heard definite sounds in his mind. They were the same sounds I had heard in my mind in India. So when we came together to prepare

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the album called 'Ray of Light', it was synchronotic, as if it was meant to be .... It seems that this mantra has its own power, and I am just a vehicle to express it in a way it has never been expressed before. I have never felt so complete in singing before."

Trupti Otto narrated to Gurudev and me at Gurudev's residence in Bombay her 'beautiful' experience when she was asked to sing and chant *Chattari Mangalam* and everyone joined her at Palitana. She felt 'connected' to inner peace and deep delight like one she had never experienced before. She misses this back home in Berlin: "here the growing is different, more coming with the demands of the real world which is so different in dynamics from the atmosphere of meditation and cool-collected thoughts leading to the attainment of spiritual energy."

Reinhold Braun from Germany writes: "I have been five times to India and travelled to all holy mounts of the Jains. I went to the top of Girnar, Shatrunjaya, Abu and to the three hills of Taranga in Gujarat and Rajasthan. I climbed to the top of mount Parshvanath in Bihar, and I have orders to my feet to bring me to Gommata in Shravanabelgola. That I saw a lot of other important holy temples of the Jains you may imagine! I also have friends. I know Acharya Paramasagar and I visited Acharya Kalyan Sogarji in the new Simandhara-temple of Mehsana. And I know a lot of monks, now I can hope to see you one day and this would be a big enjoyment for me. The world needs *Ahimsa*, that is my conviction and my belief."

I was invited to preside over a public function held on December 4, 1991 at Patkar Hall in Bombay to welcome the 1991 India pilgrimage group by 25 American, German,

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Swiss and English men and women. It was a heart-warming experience to meet these 'inspired' foreigners who have been attracted to the tenets of Jainism, and have sought to transform their lives through meditation, vegetarianism, animal care, linking spirituality with science and commitment to non-violence. The group included Professor of humanities and law, attorney, deep sea diver, nurse, financial consultants, computer expert, marketing executive, Psychiatrist, yoga and spiritual teacher, bird healer, musician and artist. Their faces shone with a radiance — at once pure and wholesome. They came not to discover India, but to discover themselves in the overwhelmingly pure and rarefied atmosphere on hill tops of Jain pilgrimage centres.

Levin spoke of earning love and respect and being vegetarian and transmitting it to others as the aim of his life. Jerry Fischer dealt with the profound meaning of reverence for all forms of life. Joe Warren, Professor-cum-attorney spoke about linking reasoning and logic with faith, belief and commitment. Shanta Nancy Grasso expressed repugnance to meat eating and how she succeeded in converting her family to vegetarianism. Premal Takacs reflected on concern for animals and virtues of being vegetarian. Cathy Florida narrated her experience of many years of meditation, vegetarianism, running of Jain International Meditation Centres in U.S.A., editing a magazine 'Light house' and her deep attachment to Jain philosophy.

The Journey of Awareness lasting a fortnight took them to Palitana, Shatrunjaya, Mt. Abu, Hastagiri, Ahmedabad (Hathibhai Temple), Shankeshwar, Bamanwada, Dilwara, Achalgarh, Ranakpur, Udaipur, New Delhi.

They returned home determined to come again to repeat the soul-satisfying experience.

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Dick Davis, a hang glider, pilot and explorer, a super achiever in business-finance-investments from Florida, a man with winsome personality and heady success in business got so deeply impressed with Chitrabhanu's teachings that he took him as his *Guru*. He gave up smoking and drinking and chose meditation as his path to self and new life. He became Chairman of New York based World Meditation Centre. He has visited India thrice travelling; sleeping in Ashrams and worshipping in temple. He says, "In India at the Ranakpur Jain temple, the pillars were carved over a period of a hundred years. They are incredibly lace-like. It is built high, over underground waters. They believe that it gives the temple worshipper good vibrations from the deep waters'. He stood by the ancient pillars of faith and felt those vibrations.

Bob Feinson (Bahubali) goes on to confirm his vegetarianism: "I often think of you when I eat Chinese food in Taiwan or Hongkong. I know you will remember my comment about whether I can still eat Chinese food if I reach Nirvana? But in these countries they have vegetarian restaurants (Buddhist) that features a complete line of foods without any meat, fish, eggs and cheese."

He continues: "This last trip in Osaka, we were in a seafood restaurant where one of the courses was Lobster — raw and alive. They had taken out the tailmeat, chopped it up, but the front of the lobster was untouched, and it was still moving as people were eating the raw flesh. This is common in Japan and Korea (as you most likely know), but I will never get used to seeing this barbarism":

In his deep philosophical strain, Balbhadra talks about meditation: "Gurudev, the meditation on self which you

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indicate has effected greater clarity, regaining of balance, strength, vitality and joy. There is not the attachment now to *Diksha*. Whether *Diksha* happens or not, all will be fine. And using your words, it appears that a person must find his security in risk and advance with conviction towards his greater self-realisation. The challenge will be to ensure solitude time for self-realisation, to maintain the *Dharma* principles, and to do whatever is necessary in one's present community. The greatest difficulty and challenge is to achieve true *aparigraha* (non attachment) while fulfilling one's *karmic* responsibilities."

Sujata Chandan writes from Paris: "Everyday I pray and practise the beautiful *mantra* you gave me. Humanity in the western world is eager for living without time, and fed up of running after money they already spent before they received! Anyway I know the world is a stage, only I do not forget to close the curtain of this stage everyday; thanks to meditation and vibrations exchanged with you and the universal Divinities".

It is interesting to read the comments on 'fasting'. Clare Rosenfield (Brahmi Devi) writes, "Through fasting one day a week, I, too, in my own way, am gaining confidence in my health, in being able to be free from the need for food atleast one or two days at a time. Freedom from food = freedom from attachment."

And here is Dhena Priya Kanta writing from the Jain Meditation International Centre, Toronto (Canada), regarding seven days fasting:

"There have been many people wanting to fast for seven days; and it takes many hours of my time to guide them through a seven-day fast. Before they begin fasting, I talk to them for two hours at least, explaining about fasting



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and possible symptoms which may occur while their bodies throw out toxins and mucus accumulated there for years. Also I try to remove the deep seated fear of abstaining from food and remove all negativity from their minds about fasting. Then when the person starts the seven days, I keep in touch everyday all through the fast and also three or four days after they break their fast and begin to eat”.

Brahmi Devi writes about *Paryushan Parva*: “Thank you, Divine soul, for the Gift of *Paryushan* to all of us. I realised that you have given us everything we need to know in our lifetime — how to go inside, into the inner world, how to go to the height, up to the Siddhanum, and how to go out, to connect with living beings in the outside world. And when we have done one of these three, we are really experiencing them all. Until hopefully, we feel the trinity in one continuously.”

Vikas Anand expresses deep satisfaction at the observance of religious practices by him and his friend Ananta. He writes: “We have been fortunate to be able to maintain the *Vratas* of *Ahimsa* by stoically and steadily continuing to place matters of spirit before matters of the body and the world. We are moving ahead with our plans to bring Jain culture to this area at a slow but steady pace, introducing your books and your philosophy of loving kindness and compassion to all whom we come in contact with. The people of this region have a tradition of being hunters and fishers; hard working middle class people who drink and smoke liberally but go to church regularly. Jain culture is somewhat exotic and foreign to them, but the principles are very appealing to those who are educated and seeking another way of living than the one they presently have. It seems but a matter of time before their hearts open to the timeless teachings of *Ahimsa*.”

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Jane Hein (Jagruti) has been fascinated by *shlokas* and loves to memorize: "It is amazing how the recitation itself gives the gist, and when I recite so many sutras in a row from *Shri Samayika Sutra* as well as *Chattari Mangalam*, *Om Punyaham Punyaham*, *Mangalam Bhagawana Viro* and some others, I feel very fortified and substaigned from within and all around by Siddha-substratum consciousness."

Catherine Florida organised a seminar for the festival of Forgiveness (*Samvatsari* or *Khamavani*). The statement below which thirty six persons signed reads as follows:

"I ask to have my consciousness raised above any unforgiveness that may be housed in my consciousness known or unknown to me — either from this life time or another life time.

I ask that I may be forgiven by those people, places or times that I have known or unknowingly caused pain in the lifetime and from all other life times.

I ask that I raise my consciousness to the level where I can forgive myself".

Trude Fontana writing from Germany declares faith in Jain philosophy while at the same time raises interesting questions which came up in the mind in a natural and logical way:

"The Jain religion is a wonderful one; I love it very much, it is according to my feelings, I love it with all my spiritual force but I know it makes human life very complicated in view of all the difficulties connected with the idea of non-violence. There are in India too many insects, dangerous animals, and many dogs everywhere to be

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treated in the right loving way. Jains try not to give any trouble to animals, but without taking further interest in them or assisting them. The number of poor and help-needing creatures in India is perhaps too gigantic for human forces. In Europe it is much easier. The climate is not so favourable to immense procreation. Prosperity allows good nourishment of animals, their sterilisation, provision of hospitals and ambulances etc. There are many well-functioning societies for the protection of animals. But the cultural development based on the Jewish Christian crazy idea of human supremacy permits slaughter houses and vivisection!"

In another letter, equally powerful feeling is conveyed:

"Since my childhood, I was interested in religions. My father, a historian told me often about oriental religions and in some way I began to take interest in India. Then I became a vegetarian and I was looking for a philosophy corresponding to my feelings of compassion for animals, not only ill-treated by mankind, but also from the nature itself. So I began to study Buddhism and later I discovered the Jains and their rigorous rejection of any violence".

Trude Fontana expressed a deep desire to visit Jain pilgrimage centres, having seen only Mt. Abu during the previous visit to India.

Beryl has grasped the essence of Jainism and is keen to translate into practice *aparigraha* (non-attachment). She writes: "I am selling my land, my paintings, my jewellery. I want to clear every debt of every shape or form that I ever had. I do not want so much as a piece of saw dust to keep me from perfect awareness of myself. I do not want things. I want freedom from *Karma*. I want all souls to be free and I do not want in any way, in the smallest, tiniest

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way to be responsible for stealing anyone's time or space or emotions or capability to evolve. I want to be so clean that every speak is part of my awareness. No clinging, no heaviness."

'Everything seems different. I do not want to read books. I do not want to go to groups. I do not want to see the movies. I do not want to discuss philosophy. I want to be silent. Not out of frustration, but out of a deep longing to 'experience'. I only want to breathe, to meditate, to practise my yoga, and to go over and over the tapes — all 36 of the *gyanasara* series . . . I am so completely full of reverence for life and appreciation for the teaching that there is no room for anything else — no desire, no demands, no frustrations. You *Guru* are 'my dawn'. *Guru Pavajjami*, *Swatva Pavajjami*!!

Nidhi Durand observes: "On January 22, I celebrated my first anniversary as a Jain and it was a very happy day, I spent that day in silence, yoga, spiritual reading, meditation and repeating the vows I took one year ago. My dedication to these vows is stronger than ever."

Banow from Miami embraced respect to life out of conviction and practises it with enthusiasm and devotion. He writes, "I continue to pursue *Samayika* and the theme of SIDDHA and the meditation bears fruits. I see how you have gently guided me to accept the path of being alone. At Harvard you told us, 'Be a sheep and the wolf will be at your throat; be alone like a lion'. Then you offered me the name of Abhay (the fearless)".

Abhay succeeded in overcoming his fear of being alone by discovery of his own soul power and getting over obsessions about material possessions, lust and attachment. He grasped the link between religious

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principles and their day to day practice and the significance of the synthesis thus brought about.

Chetna faxed a message in November 1992 from Egypt on the miracle of *Namokar Mantra*:

"I have now taught the Namokar Mantra to a group of Coptic Christians and we chanted daily after we went into the great pyramid at Giza and chanted the mantra in the King's & Queen's chamber. The energy became so magnified and powerful that the Group Leader John Davis said that in all of his 12 visits to Egypt he has 'NEVER' had such an experience, in all the times he was there before. He wants me to teach about chanting at a Coptic Conference this summer. While we were in the Pyramid you came in with a big smile and said — 'very good'. Chetana you have brought the mantra and teachings into Egypt and are putting the energy into the Pyramids."

Celebration of *Paryushan Parva* and more particularly *Samvatsari* or *Kshamavani* or 'Festival of Forgiveness' has been taken up with great enthusiasm by American Jains. In a wide ranging discourse, Chitrabhanu explained the purposeful orientation of the concept of forgiveness at a big gathering of devotees at Doral Hotel in New York city on August 19, 1992. Here are excerpts later widely circulated by the Light house Center Inc. in their paper. 'The Lighthouse Beacon':

"Today we are going to meditate on the celebration of forgiveness. Generally people think to forgive is difficult. One has to make a lot of effort to forgive somebody because it becomes part of your thinking and goes deep into the emotions. So forgiveness is considered very much religious. The philosophy I teach and share is that

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— *forgiveness is not a big religious act, it is a dance of life.* If you forgive you enjoy your life. If you don't forgive you carry the load, you carry the burden, you carry heaviness of bitterness so you don't know what life is. Life is passing by and people are sad because of their heaviness. One man came and he said that he was not enjoying the vibrations of the people who are meditating. He was looking around and he said these people are relaxed, their jaws are not tight, their eyes are not staring, they are relaxing, and they are just sitting as they are, not trying to become anything else. And this man saw that I don't do that thing, I don't enjoy that thing, but the teacher had insight. The teacher knew the vibrations, he experienced the vibrations of the person. So just when he mentioned why are you carrying the sack of the stones on your back? You are sitting in the chair, leave it there. So he started thinking. What is the sack of stones? Where are the stones? And then he thought, yes I do. I have the big stone of ego. I have the big stone of resentment to people. I have a kind of deception, pretension to prove to the world I have inside bitterness, and I also see the world everybody is enjoying and I feel heavy. One by one, he started seeing the stones he was carrying on his shoulder. And that is why he was not relaxing . . .

This philosophy tells you one thing — it is very clear. How can anybody love you if you always become something else to be with them. How can anybody love you for who you are, or for what you are, if you are continuously becoming something else to be with them. And we are always trying to become something else to be with somebody. To be with somebody we try to become something else and at the same time what we are demanding from the people is, why don't you love me for what I am? Why don't you love me as I am? But we don't think how can they love you when continuously you are

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becoming something else to be with others. And you are not you, you are continuously becoming something else . . . There must be something steady in you in order to receive or you become something else according to another's wishes or demands. It is very deep, continuously working in us and that is why we are not comfortable with us or others. And in this discomfort we are not able to see exactly what the problem is and that we are projecting the problem outside. And when you project the problem outside of yourself, what you need is an analyst because he explains your outside problem. Because he does not go in, you don't want to go in, both are playing outside again. It is a big business in America — lawyers, doctors, and analysts. In Asian countries, you will not find so many analysts; millions of people who don't have so much comfort as you have, but still they are not crazy. You don't find so many mental hospitals, nor so many asylums. In every country I see big hospitals and I ask who are the big executives, big educators, big doctors. I ask how could they become executives who have everything and still they have mental problems? What is mental problem? Mental problem is creating the emotions and trying to find out the answer and magnifying the small thing with the magnifying glass and not seeing the size of the problem, and the size of the thing, and the size of the relation and they go on magnifying . . .

Mahavir was the last prophet of Jainism in 599 BC. His teaching came from the realization of what was going on in nature. So this philosophy in a way, is not coming from the books, not coming from the head, not coming from an individual. It is the philosophy of nature, it is the law of nature. Somebody experiences the law and that person articulates the law so we call him inventor. Newton invented — what did he invent? Gravity. But before he

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invented, gravitation was there or not? So he is not a manufacturer — he discovered. But still we give credit to Newton. Einstein invented a theory and in that theory he proved that energy can be turned into matter and that matter can be turned into energy, it is convertible. And that theory of relativity is not a product of Einstein. He presented what was there already. Television was not manufactured. It was the law — how the vibrations are working, how you can capture them. In the same way Mahavir did not manufacture anything. He experienced what was the law of life — why people are unhappy, why people are not enjoying the journey. They are well equipped, they have the language, they can express, they have the brain, they can reason, they have the emotions, they can communicate, they have five senses and each sense can enhance something good in the universe. So what one needs to know is that the person is not using them. He is misusing them. She is misusing them. If you don't use properly, anything which is dormant it misuses more. If you use it, at least it will sparkle, it will be polished, but if you don't use it, it rusts. The human talent is rusting, the inside is corroding. So we have to see that this our human life. We have to make it . . .

Every person has the wellspring in her and in him. And that we realize through meditation, through concentration, through teaching, through breathing, through listening, and gradually we have to erase the old words which have made us so helpless dependent, weak and frightened. So here, these are the days, these eight days, are specially meant for the people's awareness, for their realization, for their own good. These eight days are for people to be people. These eight days are for individuals to be individuals. And these eight days are for you to give a gift to yourself because you have been so generous, you have given to everybody.



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There was one girl who was coming to me and she was very unhappy. I say, why are you unhappy? She says I have so much love but my boyfriend he is ungrateful, he does not know how to receive it. I want to give my love. I say you have so much love, you want to give to him, a little portion of it, why don't you give to yourself, so at least you will not be unhappy, you will not cry, you will not be depressed. What you want to give, a little portion at least you give to yourself. Because you want to make him happy, "Yes, if I give him love, he will be happy." I say so much love and such a good quality you have, give that portion to yourself, so at least you will be happy and you won't be here to come and ask the question. We are very generous, we want to give to everyone. We want to give free advice. We want to do everything, but we deprive ourselves. We hardly take time to be with us. If we are alone we feel uncomfortable. So we call somebody, we invite somebody, we talk to somebody, because we have not learned to be with us. One is not enjoying the solitude, but solitude is the beginning and solitude is the end whether we believe it or not . . .

There are people who want to give to you, the universe is there to give to you, but if we are limited, we are in fear to take it, how can we take it? So the person is not good in a relationship because of his/her own fear. Fear is reflecting in the relationship. And that fear you remove through awareness and understanding . . .

Sometimes guilt pursues us. And small mistakes we have made become large. And if you start believing in your own mistake and say what a bad person I am, what a horrible person I am. I did such a horrible thing. But the thing was *not* so horrible as you think. It was small, but because of telling yourself again and again it becomes horrible in your mind. Because the neurons go on

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building this energy. So what we believe becomes that which we are...

Our thinking must be simple. Deceit complicates the simplicity of thinking just simple thoughts. When you were watching Mahatma Gandhi, the best quality in him was the simplicity of life. Mahatma Gandhi would not miss prayer or meditation anytime. One day they came back from a trip at 2 o'clock and they were so tired, he went to sleep. Three o'clock he got up, and started meditating. His secretary was one of the most dedicated men you could find; he was so much one with Gandhi that when Gandhi got up, he got up as though his sleep was aligned with him. He got up, and he said, you are tired. Gandhi said, I can live without food, but *not* without meditation or prayer. Because without food, I can live, body will be pure, but not without this purification of thought through meditation... My friends, that's the way he became Gandhi. At the physical level he was a bunch of bones. He was not a tall man, a handsome man. He was nothing. He was not even 100 pounds. Churchill (a very big man) mentioned he did not want to meet him because Gandhi had some magic in his eyes. What was the magic? Magic of love, magic of truth. Churchill said again, I don't want to see him. He hypnotizes you. Love hypnotizes, truth hypnotizes. Friendship is hypnotism, and I tell you, you will hypnotize anybody when you speak from your heart...

So now let us close our eyes and just visualize that you are in a form of a crystal body. Your body is a crystal. But we don't see the transparencies of the crystal because there is some dark liquid filling it. And we are trying in these eight days to take it out. So visualize that around your fingers and toes there are valves which you can open and close so the liquid can go out. Visualize the top of

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your head, and the liquid colour which does not allow your crystal like personality to be transparent. You open the valves of your fingers, so this liquid is going out. It is a sticky liquid of passion, of anger, of hate, of bad feeling, of guilt. It is a mixture. So now in your forehead you see that water has gone, so you see it is transparent. Now again you allow a little bit to go, drop by drop, so the liquid is going down, your eyes are clear. You have a clear vision. It is not coloured with the dark liquid. It has gone down. Now it is going down to your mouth, your words are perfect your words are true, your words are very very positive because it is the transparent crystal quality that is shining. Now the liquid has gone down from your voicebox so you can see transparent voice box. The voice comes and touches everyone's heart and head. The words are loving, the words are positive, the words are pleasant, the words are friendly. Now this liquid is going down and you see your chest. It is clean, so in your heart there is love, there is friendship. You love everyone, you love yourself. Because of this dark liquid, you were not able to express and see the reservoir of love in you, but now it is clear, you can see. It is a reservoir, within you...

Now you are allowing these valves to be open. The liquid is going to your arms and stomach and intestine, your thighs, and calves and toes and all this body is now transparent like a crystal. So what has gone is liquid of anger, liquid of vindictiveness, liquid of all the impurities. With the help of forgiveness we have cleaned our body, our mind, our senses, and when we are pure we feel pure. We are pure. We are kingdoms of heaven. We experience the heaven within us. We experience now in this transparent, crystal-like presence of our existence that all the good qualities which we were projecting outside are in us; but we could not see because of this

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dark mixture of liquid. It is gone. We see ourselves as a crystal self.

Scandinavian Madhu Mukta has beautifully absorbed the message of self-restraint and non-possessiveness as is clear from her letter:

Well, last week I started yoga classes again to try to get inspired. The class was wonderful, and the next morning I just *had* to get up to get my practice in. Once I do that it becomes a lot easier to 'still' the mind. I can move right into my meditation with a deep sense of peace.

Another positive step I have taken this year is that I have eliminated my major time waster — the TV. Before, if I sat down at night to watch McNeil Lehrer Report at 7 p.m. I was practically hypnotized. I would remain in front of the box flipping channels till 10 or 11 p.m. I never liked myself for spending evenings that way, but I still did it. I was like a TV addict. So a couple of weeks ago I asked Alfredo if he could programme the TV so I could only watch PBS and videos. He could. This is great! I have gained so much time to spend on my favorite past time — reading. It also helps me catch up on my correspondence.

During the fall I did learn a few things, though I took the course on the seven energy centres by Subodh. He did a nice job. I am now beginning to understand how the seven levels of consciousness work. I have a lot of work to do on the 3rd centre; I so much enjoy being in control.

I also listened to the three tapes on the chakras by one of your students who is now dead (Mitra?). What a great voice he had and the delivery was wonderful. I said to Mamata that this was like listening to a professional speaker, and she told me he used to be a minister. He

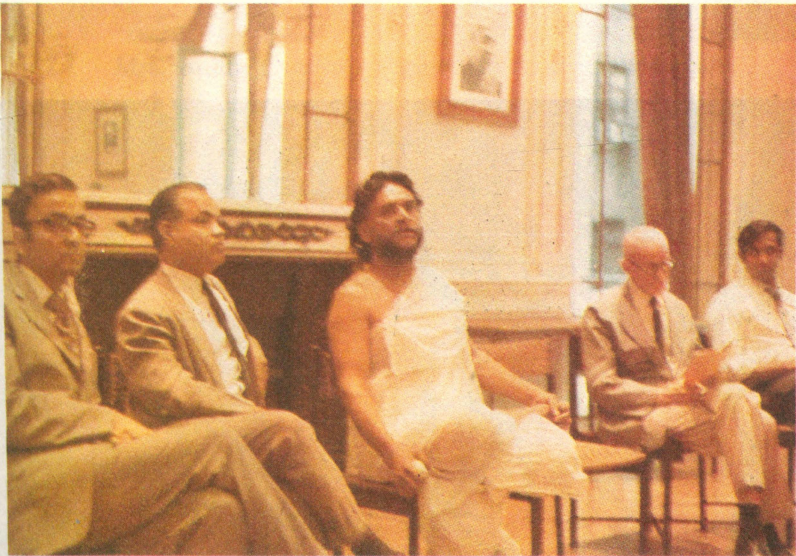
## THE WAVE OF BLISS

communicated well and, among other things, helped me understand why the sounds of *mantras* are beneficial.

Shortly before I listened to Mitra's tapes, I had had a wonderful experience. I had used a tape Pramoda gave me (where she chants the mantras from 'To Light One Candle') to practise *Aum namo arihantanam*. I would play it over and over again as I practised the sounds and rhythms. While listening to Pramoda and chanting the *mantra* with her, I felt such a profound sense of peace. My body and mind became relaxed and quiet. This was the first time I *experienced* chanting. Thank you Pramoda for this gift."

## CHAPTER VI

### THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



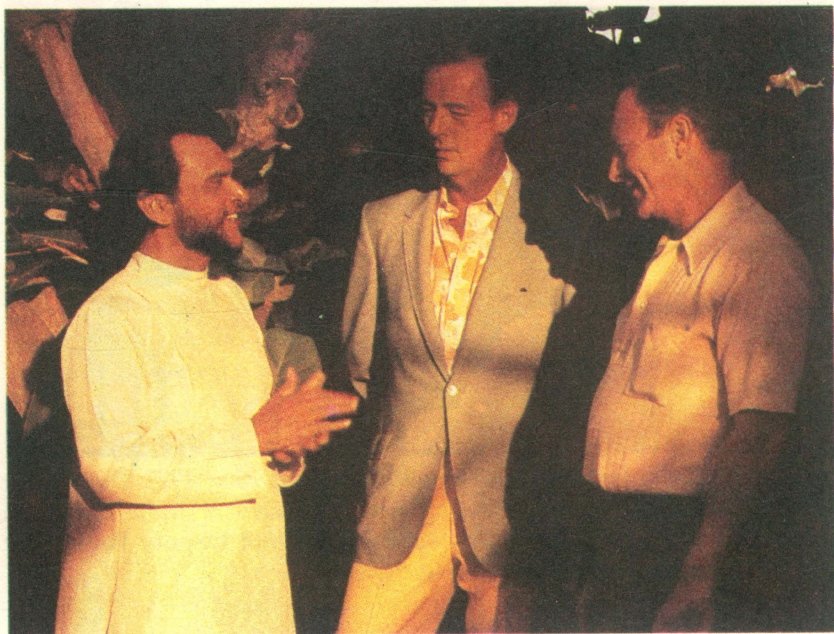
Indian Ambassador with Ambassador of Humanity: 1971 The author Dr. N.P. Jain in his first meeting with Gurudev at India House in New York during his tenure as Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of India to United Nations.



## THE WAVE OF BLISS



Harmonious vibrations at a sea-shore meditation in USA.



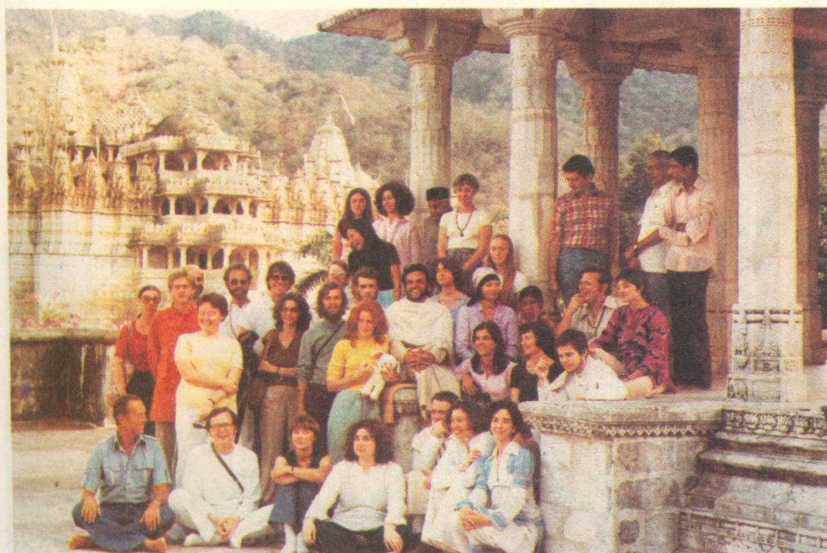
In Gurudev's company USA Astronaut Edgar Mitchell finds himself within himself — 1974.



## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



Mrs. Indira Gandhi delighted to receive blessings.



Pilgrims from the West at Ranakpur Jain Temple.





On top of Jain Shrine near Palitana.



Gurudev at the Nairobi Hindu Centre — 1987.





Addressing World Jain Congress at Leicester (UK) 1988.



American Pilgrims at Shatrunjaya Palitana with Gurudev — 1989.



## THE WAVE OF BLISS



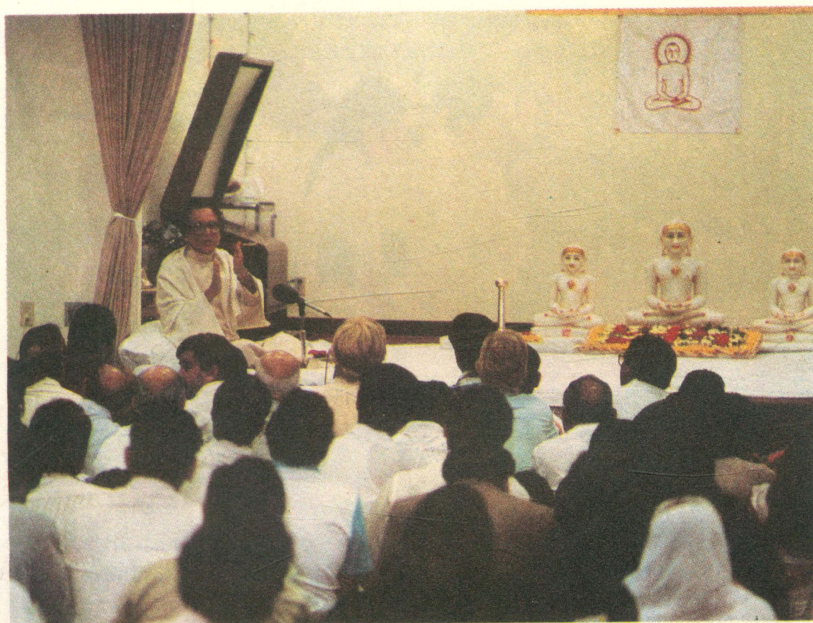
Gurudev with students of 'Light House Centre' in Michigan — 1991.



Pramoda Chitrabhanu receiving award for the book, 'Foods of Earth, Taste of Heaven' by the hands of Mr. Thomas S. Gulotta — Nassau Country Executive of Long Island, New York — 1992.



## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



Inaugurating First Jain Temple in USA at Los Angeles.



Message of Reverence for Life to the torch bearers of tomorrow.





Loving compassion for the handicapped, Chitrabhanu and Pramodabhen in Nairobi (Kenya) in February 1992.



The Joy of reunion with Gurudev, Long Island, New York, USA.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



The sun of non-violence and peace rises in the West. Chairman Dick Dans welcomes the pioneer of Love and *Ahimsa* at the Church of Unity in East Palm Beach, USA.



## THE WAVE OF BLISS

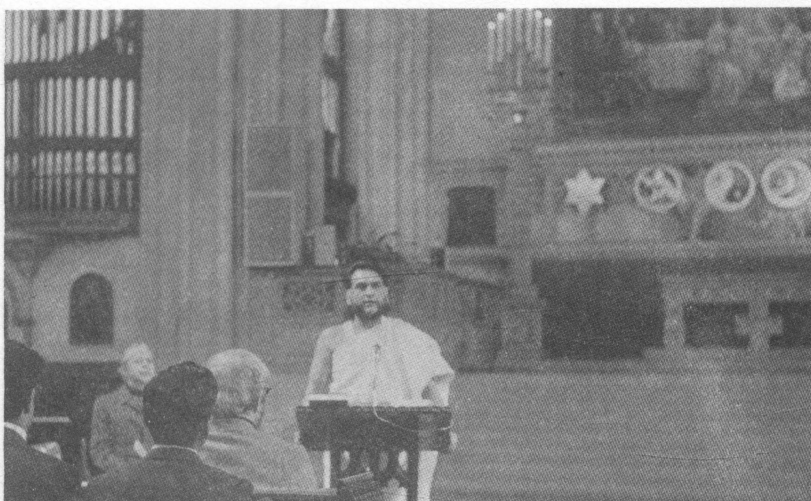


Indira Gandhi, Gurudev, and his father Muni Chandrakant Sagarji.



'East and West begin to interact'. Gurudev received by Pope Paul in Vatican Rome (Italy) in May 1970.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



Jainism — the voice of Peace and Non-violence.  
Gurudev: New York (USA) 1971. A pioneering mission begins.



Third Spiritual Summit Conference at Harvard Divinity School, USA: 1971. Governor Francis W. Sargent of Massachusetts receiving Gurudev and other spiritual leaders of different world faiths at Harvard, Boston, USA. Swami Ranganathananda, Swami Chinmayananda and Representative of Pope Paul of Vatican are also in the picture.



## THE WAVE OF BLISS

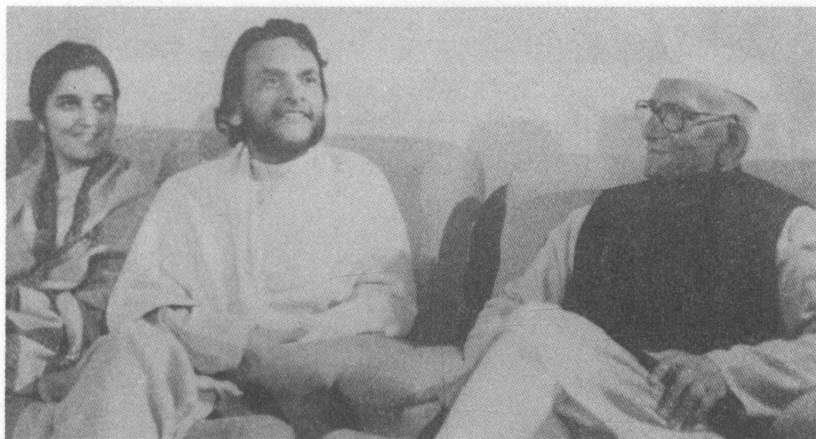


At the World Peace Day at the United Nations: 1976. Gurudev with Secretary General Kurt Waldheim.

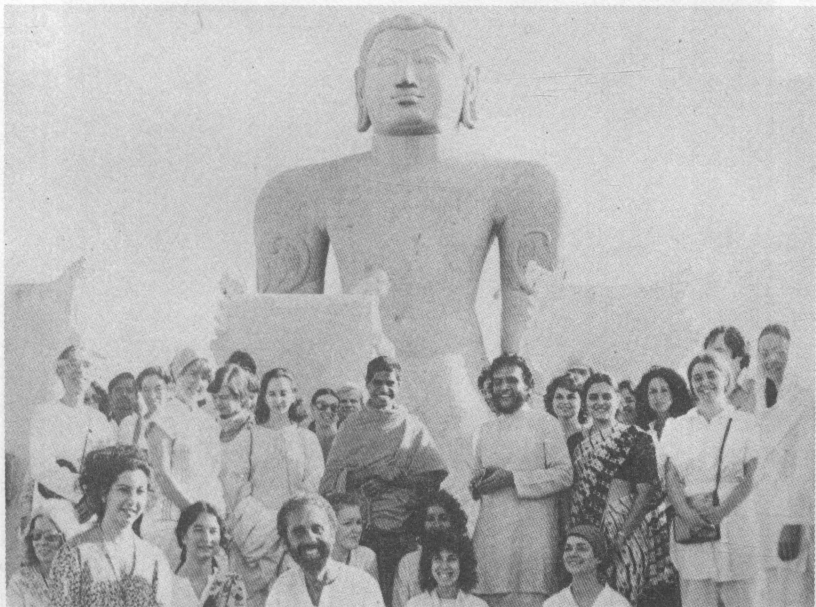


Gurudev addressing Prayer meeting in a church in Long Island, New York, USA in 1976.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA

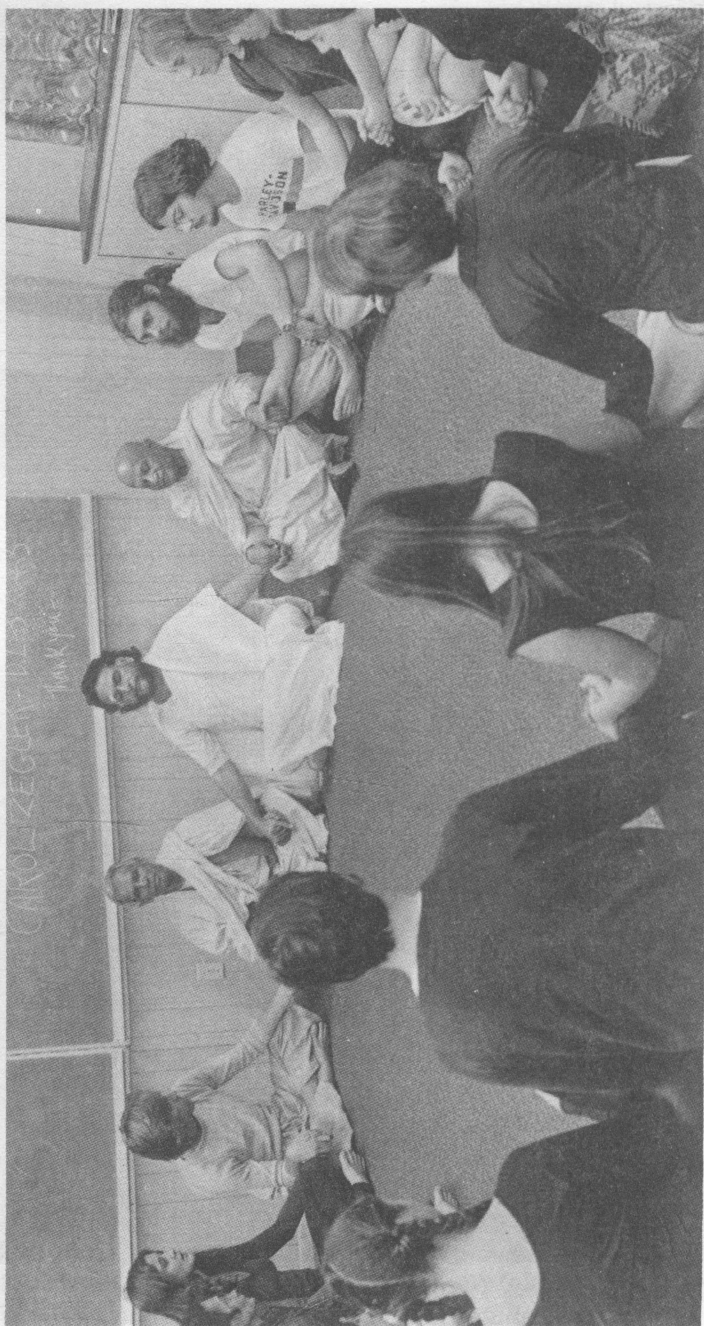


Gurudev and Pramodabhen with Prime Minister of India Mr. Morarji Desai at his official residence in New Delhi (India): 1977.



Gurudev and Pramodabhen with Shri Charukeerty Bhattrak Swamiji and joyous American pilgrims at Shravanabelgola in front of the colossal statue of Bahubali at Gomteshwara in 1979.

## THE WAVE OF BLISS

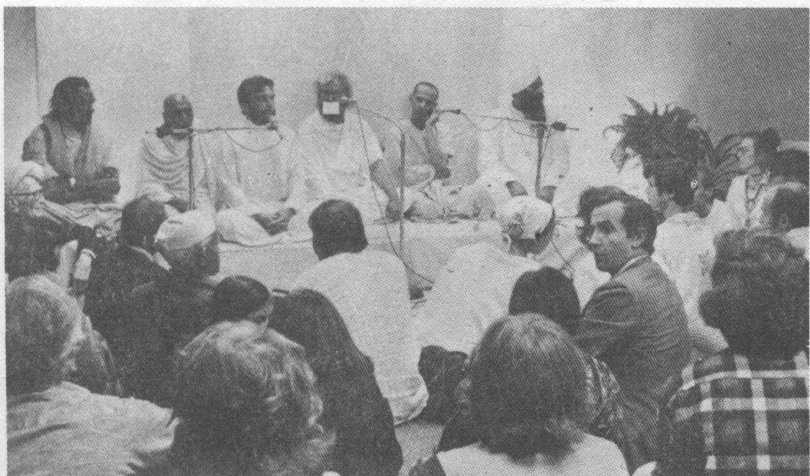


Experiencing the Vibrations of Navakar Mantra: 1972. Gurudev in New York with Swami Ranganathananda, Head of Ramakrishna Mission, Head of Therawada Buddhist Mission and group of American University Students.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



Opening of the Jain Meditation International Centre in New York City: 1973.



Gurudev introducing Muni Sushil Kumarji in Jain Meditation International Centre, New York City (USA) 1975 when Gurudev sponsored him for his first trip outside India. In the picture also are Swami Chidananda, Head of Shivananda Ashram in Rishikesh, Swami Dr. Mishra and Yogi Bhajan.





Gurudev with Mother Teresa at the United Nations in New York: 1981.



Gurudev and Pramodabhen being greeted by President Moi in Nairobi (Kenya) — 1981.

## THROUGH THE EYES OF THE CAMERA



International Press Conference for religious peace with world religious leaders at UN Chapel, New York City, October 1985.

## CHAPTER VII

### A PIONEER SHOWS THE WAY

In the pre-Indian independence era, knowledge and information about Indian philosophy and religions were not projected in any dynamic, vibrant or sustained manner to the world outside. Swami Vivekananda, Virchand Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi shine out as star performers who travelled abroad widely and spoke with eloquence, knowledge and conviction about Indian philosophy of non-violence and the Indian way of life.

The successful non-violent struggle for independence led by Mahatma Gandhi made a deep impact on the minds and hearts of people in different continents. In a world grown weary of wars and conflicts, use of non-violence by Mahatma Gandhi came as a beaconlight.

That Mahatma Gandhi was since his childhood influenced by teachings of Jain religion attracted interest in it abroad. Large number of Jains also began to travel and settle down abroad in Africa, U.K. and later in U.S.A. and Canada and some of them took with them their adherence to the principles and practices of Jain religion, but there was no teacher to guide with practice and inspire them to a sustained exploration of its riches.

In the past, information and knowledge about Jainism in foreign countries was sporadic through speeches on

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special occasions or conferences by distinguished Jain scholars like the speech of Virchand Raghavji Gandhi at the World Religious Conference in Chicago (USA) in 1983 and subsequently in Europe.

Dr. Hermann Jacobi had published translation in English of some Jain scriptures as early as in 1884. Herbert Werner, Dr. Zimmerman, Saletore, Glassluapp, Winternitz, Walther Shubring, R. Williams, Mrs. N.R. Guseva, Paul Maret, Kenoldfield are prominent among those who wrote books on Jain religion in the first half of the twentieth century. Vincent Smith, Fergusson, Percy Brown, Klans Fischer, Dr. C.R. Jain and James Burgess wrote books and articles on Jain art and architecture.

It is in this background that Gurudev Chitrabhanu undertook his pioneering mission to awaken the West to non-violence compassion and relativity of truth and to make Jainism known, appreciated, accepted and followed abroad.

Gurudev Chitrabhanu was born on July 26, 1922 in Rajasthan and received his education in Bangalore. He renounced the material world at the age of twenty — and matured his consciousness as a *Muni* (Monk) through silence, meditation, fasting and deep study of scriptures for twenty-eight years. During this period as a monk, he inspired a large number of people with his scholarship, devotion and spirituality. His discourses were thought-provoking and brought out the relevance of Jain philosophy to the problems faced by individuals and society in the increasingly materialistic world.

With ease and grace, Gurudev Chitrabhanu left a deep impact on the minds and hearts of many national and international personalities of outstanding stature. The late



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Smt. Indira Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, interacted with him periodically for over two decades through personal meetings as well as exchange of letters. She respected him for his sublime vision and regarded his blessings as 'always a source of strength, support and comfort.'

Morarji Desai, former Prime Minister of India and a person committed to non-violence and vegetarianism holds Gurudev in great regard and has exchanged views with him from time to time. He inaugurated the Vegetarian Society (Reverence for Life) of Bombay in November 1983 and observed that 'There is a false assumption prevailing that non-vegetarians are physically superior to those who do not eat flesh. He cited the horse, elephant, bull, hippo and cow as examples of tremendous physical power and stamina.'

The late Jay Prakash Narayan, the great Sarvodaya Leader was deeply impressed by Gurudev Chitrabhanu's most persuasive eloquence in favour of non-violence in thought, action and deed.

Already as a *Muni*, Gurudev Chitrabhanu's popularity had soared high among his followers and the Indian public by virtue of his profound knowledge, powerful oratory and convincing appeal. Scores of political and social leaders among them Ravi Shankar Maharaj, Rukmini Arundale, K.M. Munshi, S.K. Patil and others participated prominently in the congregations held to hear him preach.

Both as a *Muni* and after renunciation of monkhood as a *Guru*, Chitrabhanu has continued to serve the cause of mankind and humanitarian philosophy and way of life with fervour, dedication, faith, sincerity and strong

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will-power. Now his constituency of followers is world-wide and includes India-born Jains and others from different stratas of life. He has inspired them to bring miraculous change in their lives. Prominent religious leaders of different factions the world over recognise him as a front-ranking broad-minded and open-hearted teacher of a deeply compassionate philosophy of reverence of life in all its forms. He carries conviction since he practises what he preaches.

Over the years Gurudev Chitrabhanu has had opportunities of meetings and discussions with world leaders and statesmen like President Moi of Kenya, Kurt Waldheim, former UN Secretary General, Governor Francis W. of Massachusetts (USA) and several others.

In 1970 Chitrabhanu became the first Jain monk to change ancient rules against wearing shoes and travelling by vehicle in order to participate in the Second World Spiritual Summit Conference at Geneva. He assumed a unique role of a Spiritual Ambassador of the East to the West. He observed: "As if spiritual wings are lifting me to participate with the world."

Gurudev opened the Summit Conference with the *Navkara Mantra* and at the concluding ceremony chanted some verses of *Bhaktamar* on immortal love and devotion, and offered prayers for the peace and well-being of all living beings in the universe. His message made a profound impact that, "I believe in the practice of non-violence more than in the preaching" "and with friendliness to life, one cannot harbour hatred. And without hatred, how can there be room for war, conflict and killing" and "The happiness of the individual is only part of the happiness of all. The universe is one ecological whole."

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The renowned Indian industrialist G.D. Birla called on Chitrabhanu in Geneva and the meeting turned out to be a beautiful illustration of passing on positive vibrations. When Mr. Birla arrived at the place of Gurudev's residence, Gurudev was observing his hours of silence from 12 noon to 3 p.m. Mr. Birla waited for twenty minutes for the period of silence to be over. He experienced a great sense of refreshing realisation and awareness that while in the material world people waited for him, this was the first time he waited for a holy person. He gained enriching insight into life. He observed that "I may have donated immense material wealth to many, but the wealth I have secured from Guruji's silence today is incomparable." He gained a glimpse into the wealth of inner peace and contentment which Chitrabhanu was radiating.

Thus began a pioneering mission with a newly emerging global role for Chitrabhanu for spreading the message of universal peace, fraternity, compassion, non-violence and reverence for life in all its forms.

In 1971 Chitrabhanu renounced the hierarchy of monastic life he had led for 28 years to be free to carry what he regarded as his new vision of a universal mission. He travelled through Europe lecturing to European audiences in England, France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany and Italy. He had a historic meeting and dialogue with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican in Rome on the fundamental purpose of life and the essence of religion.

The new phase in Chitrabhanu life began in right earnest in U.S.A. at the spiritually and intellectually invigorating atmosphere at the Third Spiritual Summit Conference at the Harvard Divinity School in 1971.

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The Conference was sponsored by the Temple of Understanding and the Princeton Theological Seminary.

In Elizabeth Cattell's words, "from Chitrabhanu's gracious personality emanated such a serenity and joy in living that many individuals including herself were drawn to sojourn the infinite with him. He radiated a dimension of life full of inner divinity and soul prosperity."

At the Summit Conference, Chitrabhanu boldly held forth his views against dogmatic thinking and sectarianism. He called for dynamic action for promoting world-wide harmony, friendship and service above self. He said, "When we act out of love and goodness, we project positive vibrations. That creates a sphere of love and compassion around us which affects the human and the natural environment. A lot of vibrant energy is transmitted which uplifts the soul and helps the quest for higher level of consciousness."

Chitrabhanu married Pramoda Bhen and became father of two children. But the monk inside him lives, the candle of religious faith burns brightly, and his wife has emerged as a spiritual companion as well — the life mission of both — jointly and individually has become the propagation of the idea of 'Live and help let live.' It has been a miraculous transformation for both.

Chitrabhanu continues his mission of his life with zeal and devotion. His friends and admirers call him lovingly Gurudev. His wife Pramoda Bhen has been deeply religious and spiritually awake and shares wholeheartedly with him the mission to propagate world-wide the humanitarian principles of Jainism. She has been an active crusader for promoting vegetarianism and has

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written books which have helped people in USA and Europe to take the vegetarianism with ease, conviction and delight.

Chitrabhanu decided to cross the oceans in order to experience the vastness of humanity and universal fraternity and share the insight of non-violence, reverence for life and relativity of thinking. These are the three things that inspired him since these alone give life its true depth, direction, strength and purpose. New York Times in its despatch on December 13, 1973 described him as Pope John of Jainism because like the late John XXII, Chitrabhanu had opened the windows of his faith 'to let the fresh air in'. While preaching or practising Jainism, he has never been dogmatic or sectarian. He has concentrated on the need to unfold and arouse spiritual consciousness which is the birth right of every soul, and the key to the understanding of the purpose of our life in this universe.

His books, discourses, tapes of discourses and running of Jain Meditation International Centres in USA and Canada over a period of two decades have made a deep impact on the numerous American men and women from different walks of life who come in contact with him. He has students in East and West Europe including in particular United Kingdom, Germany, France, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, as well as in Africa in particular in Kenya.

He did not simply lecture to them on one time basis or in an adhoc manner. He effectively communicated to their minds as well as hearts the essence of Jain religion, its relevance in present day age, even in a totally different socio-cultural setting of western civilisation. More than that he taught them how to practise the religion in order to draw visible benefit from it for solution of their

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personal problems or problems in relation to others in the family or society. In a significant manner he became their friend, a real *Guru* whom they could look upto, confide their deficiencies, failings, problems, diffidence and gain new social energy and spirit of self-confidence, ability, courage and determination.

There has been a remarkably reciprocal continuity of contacts and interactions and ever strengthening feeling of mutual confidence and faith. The students are from different walks of life — businessmen, industrialists, professors, psychologists, yoga experts, philosophers, scholars, artists, media persons, social workers, doctors, writers and poets.

The contact and interaction with foreigners is not in any isolated manners. It has coincided with the work among Jain community of Indian origin — be it in Nairobi, London, New York, Japan, Geneva, Germany, Singapore, Hongkong, Los Angeles or anywhere. A significant local and continuing contact has thus developed between Jains of Indian origin settled abroad and the foreigners now introduced to Jain philosophy. Contacts have taken shape not confined to the level of individuals only or groups of individuals in different places, but also at institutional levels with well established centres of philosophy, major Universities, Yoga and Meditation Institutions and Church Leaders.

With his annual visits to Europe and Africa, Gurudev Chitrabhanu has renewed the message of Jain philosophy and religion to an increasing number of people. He has infused his teachings with his experience of almost 28 years as a Jain Monk and since late sixties and early seventies for two decades as an itinerant traveller, world citizen and a Jain Master. His discourses focus on the core

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of contemporary challenges and frustrations in order to help the people to discover and develop their own inner self and increase their soul power and energy for their own moral and spiritual rejuvenation. He expressed his objective very aptly: "I do not want to teach people their duties or any doctrines of religion, I want to arouse them from their complacencies, to stir their hearts, to vivify their imagination, to bring them from their little selves to the higher of which they are capable". His audiences abroad have felt inspired by his message to cleanse their hearts with the flow of amity, appreciation, compassion and equanimity and to radiate these qualities into every aspect of life.

What is noteworthy is the free and frank communication between him and his disciples. What is admirable is the respect, love and the admiration he commands from them. What is inspiring is how much interest and involvement he has developed in the hearts and minds of American and European Jains towards religion not for its sake, but as a way of life, as an answer to crisis and difficulties that one comes face to face in life.

I have known Gurudev from early 70s when we first met in New York at the UN Chapel (The Temple of Understanding) where both of us were scheduled to speak on Non-violence and message of Jainism on the occasion of Lord Mahavira's birthday. I took an instant liking to him. He was at once so simple and accessible, profound and deeply philosophical, religious and scholarly. He was a happy combination of being detached and at the same time attached. But he came out to my mind in the first place as an utterly honest person, intellectually, spiritually and emotionally.

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Writes Mamata Yagalla, an English teacher: "His life is an open book for all to see. He has shown the capacity to sacrifice; he has shown the patience to withstand, uninformed and biased criticism; he has shown the willingness and open heartedness to the tolerant and loving to all including his critics. His charisma is not born of glamour, but of the power of pure love and insight into the human heart. He has come on the world stage as a selfless world server inspiring others to live better and more fulfilling lives."

What is somewhat unique about Chitrabhanu's method of transmitting message with conviction is a kind of spiritual radiation effect on his followers. And it is achieved alongwith the arousing of a scientific approach through yoga, meditation, concentration and control over inner self. He does not seek to plant any ideology or promise any miracles in his teachings but lets the belief grow inside your inner self as a product of your own 'divine experience.'

The 'divine experience' is not merely a product of acquired knowledge (*gyan*), but also practising any of these with deep convictions of religion through meditation, yoga, vegetarianism, actively working for prevention of cruelty to animals and other living beings, observing fasts particularly during *Paryushan Parva*, practising abstinence from drinking or smoking, and restraint in the matter of eating, chanting *Namokar Mantra* with a soul-stirring orientation, visiting Jain pilgrimage centres and ancient temples of Jain worship in India and so on.

Gurudev does it with seemingly utter simplicity and ease — and yet the message 'TO STAY AWAKE' penetrates deeper into the psyche of the recipient. It makes one both



## THE WAVE OF BLISS

radiant and confident as if one has found a golden key to the Gates of Heaven. Such is the extent of the 'wave of bliss' experienced by individuals who were until then lacking in direction or inspiration, nervous about past, present and future and perplexed about the very purpose of existence. They have gained a new dimension of thinking and a new directive for living following the foot-steps of their inspirer — Gurudev Chitrabhanu.

The essence of Gurudev's teaching has been that our conduct in life should be gained by four principles —

1. *Maitri* (amity)
2. *Pramod* (appreciation)
3. *Karunya* (compassion) and
4. *Madhyastha* (equanimity)

NOTE ON THE AUTHOR  
OF THE BOOK "THE WAVE OF BLISS"

Dr. Narendra P. Jain, the author of this book is a multifaceted personality. As a career diplomat he has been India's Ambassador to United Nations, European Economic Community (EEC), Mexico, Nepal and Belgium, and Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. He is a noted economist, a well-known poet, a prolific writer and a distinguished Jain scholar. He was awarded Doctorate and status of Permanent Academician by the renowned Mexican Institute of International Affairs. He has delivered keynote addresses on Jain religion at the World Jain Conference (1988) at Leicester (UK), Asian Jain Conference at Singapore (1989), Biennial JAINA Convention at Stanford University (1991), Global Forum of Parliamentarian and Spiritual Leaders at the UN Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992. He met Gurudev Chitrabhanu for the first time in New York (USA) in 1971 and has been in constant touch with him for over two decades.