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JAIN DIGEST

A Publication of the

Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA)

email: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

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

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On the Cover:

"Lokpurusha - The Cosmic Being"

(Source: *Art of Enlightenment - Exhibition of Jain Miniature Art*)

The purpose of this painting is to help people easily understand the result of their karmas. The torso represents the upper realm (Urdhva-loka) comprising of seven main regions where higher and lower category gods dwell. The middle realm (Madhya-loka) though small, is the most important of the three realms. Tirthankaras are born in this loka to guide human beings and to help them liberate themselves. The inhabitants of the lower realm (Adho-loka) suffer excessive miseries.

The article on "Lokswaroop Bhavana" on page 20 provides more information about Lokakash."

Disclosure

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



20th Biennial JAINA Convention

July 4-7, 2019

Los Angeles, California



Ontario Convention Center



Jain Center of Southern California



Come join us in Los Angeles

1,500 families of

Jain Center of Southern California,

Jain Temple of Los Angeles

and JAINA

... wholeheartedly invite you.



To Register:
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HIGHLIGHTS

- Low Registration Fees
- Mentalists, Singers, and Talented Performers
- Play, Garba-Raas, Cultural Show
- Jain Academic Bowl and Jains Have Talent
- Family, Group, and Community Reunions
- Exhibits, Poster Sessions, and Vendor Booths

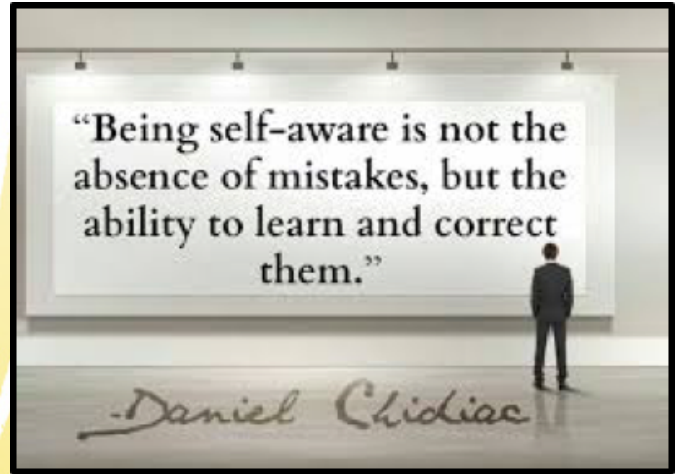
SESSIONS

- Discourses by World Renowned Scholars and Spiritual Masters
- Six parallel session tracks on "Seva-Satsang-Samarpan-Sadhana-Self Realization"
- Workshops on Jain Way of Life and Healthy Living
- Meditation and Yoga – types and Practices
- Ecology and Sustainability
- Interfaith and Jain Unity Panel Forums



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Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give.
 -- Eleanor Roosevelt



Editor's Note



Om Shri Veetragay Namah

Jai Jinendra,

It is always wonderful to know that you, our readers, enjoy reading the Jain Digest issues. However, once in a while we get feedback that brings tears to my eyes. That is what happened when I read the

e-mail from Swati Shah from Rhode Island. She wrote: "Reading and educating myself with Jain Digest articles has enlightened my views about Jainism especially since going through some health/work related issues. I use it as my source of guidance, inspiration and take the articles (with me) especially when traveling."

Several people have told us that they consider each issue of Jain Digest as a keepsake and read the articles over and over again. We are grateful for your love and appreciation and on behalf of our editorial staff and all the writers, I thank for the opportunity to serve.

The June issue with the theme of "Bhavana" was well received by various people such as parents of young children, young professionals and Jain scholars as well. In this issue we bring you articles on the remaining eight bhavanas - Anyatva, Ashuchi, Ashrav, Samvar, Nirjara, Lokswarup, Bodhi Durlabh and Dharma. We hope that you find them interesting, educational and spiritually elevating.

In the February 2018 issue we had published an article about importance of "Daan" (Charity) in Jainism. Does such giving make you happy? Read more about how to make giving feel good in an article from UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center.

The Jain Digest team congratulates YJA for an amazing convention held in Chicago this year. Read about YJA and the convention report in this issue. Summer of 2019 brings another convention – the 20th Biennial JAINA Convention – to Los Angeles. Registration is open and excitement is in the air!

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

In Seva,

Dilip Parekh

Jain Digest-Chairman's Message

Jai Jinendra,



Jain Digest committee is very much thankful to the do-nors without whose support it would just not be possible to continue publishing such a wonderful and a meaningful magazine with contents that elevates and connects Jains in North America. We are also very much thank-ful for the overwhelming compliments that we received towards the June issue.

Regarding the upcoming 20th Biennial JAINA Convention to be held in Los Angeles next year, it gives me immense pleasure to announce that we received around 1100 registrations within 48 hours of opening of the Convention registrations. As of September 30th, the count has reached 1600. We appreciate the support and enthusiasm of our community.

All the committees are working very hard to see that this convention is memorable for a very long time. The cultural committee had shown a small part of their performance during paryushan at Jain Center of Southern California. It was so impressive and entertaining that the entire community wanted them to repeat that short dance. They said that this was only a trailer and to see the entire show you need to attend the convention. We have more than 40 speakers already confirmed to attend the convention. We are working on getting a very high profiled inspirational Keynote Speaker.

The highlight of the convention is going to be a 6000 sq. ft. Temple we are going to have inside the convention center. It is sure to spiritually elevate all attendees.

The registration fees are affordable; however, the price will slightly go up from Nov 1st, 2018. To get the best deal, register as soon as possible. Here is the link - <https://www.jainaconvention.org/>

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

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

You may email us at Jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

Peace, Love & Happiness,

Mahesh Wadher
Chairman, Jain Digest Committee
Chairman, JAINA Calendar Committee
JAINA First Vice President
Convener JAINA 2019 Convention

JAINA President's Message



Jai Jinendra!

Hope you and your family are in sukh-sata and had wonderful Paryushan/Das Lakshana celebrations at your Jain Centers. With your love and support, JAINA continues to reach new heights and make progress in achieving its vision. Today, JAINA is a very well-known and highly respected organization not only in North America but also around the globe.

It is my honor and privilege to share with you a number of accomplishments JAINA and our Community have achieved over last 4-5 months. Here are some of the highlights:

Youth Exchange Program - JAINA, JITO and BJS sponsored and coordinated the Jain Youth Exchange Program [JYEP] 2018. The program brought 12 Jain Exchange students from all over India to the USA. They were hosted by Jain families. In this 3 weeks program students visited 5 cities: Boston, New York, Washington D.C., San Francisco and Chicago at the Young Jains of America Convention. Under this program, they visited monuments, temples, met entrepreneurs and industry leaders.

Tapovan NRI Shibir - "Tapovan Sanskar Pith" held Tapovan NRI Shibir 2018 for children from July 15th to July 21st. Over 50 children from 11 different countries participated in the shibir and performed the activities like Asthaprakari Pooja & Bhavna with Orchestra, Angi & Aarti, Samayik & Vanchan, Cultural activity, Yoga & Meditation, Sports & Games on daily basis. They also learned about Jain Geography, Science and History. The shibir was extremely satisfactory for students, parents and the Tapovan team

Workshop at Maryland - After three successful recent workshops, JAINA Education Committee, Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW) and Jain Society of Northern Virginia (JSNV) jointly organized 4th Jain Workshop from April 27th to April 29th, 2018 at the Jain Temple of JSMW in Maryland. The workshop, attended by 48 people, was very well received and was an enlightening experience.

JAINA Convention 2019 team has launched a website and opened registration on September 3rd and received over 1000 registrations within the first 24 hours. Please take the advantage of the discounted price and book your registration at jainaconvention.org. JAINA First VP and Convener, Mahesh Wadher, invited President Obama to be a keynote speaker and along with JAINA Past President, Ashok Domadia invited Pujya Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar to the JAINA Convention 2019.

JAINA EC/BOD was held at Jain Society of Central Florida (JSCF) in Orlando from 3rd August to 5th August, 2018. The meeting included covering status of EC board meetings, its updates and action plans. It also held two days sessions of over 15 committees with interactive participation of 50+ members. JAINA President, Guntant Shah, thanked members of JSCF for their hospitality and preparations for the meeting in such a short time. JAINA should consider hosting future meetings at both, medium and small Jain centers.

India Day Parade - Federation of Indian Associations (FIA) organized an India Day Parade in New York City on August 19, 2018. It was the largest Independence Parade outside of India. JAINA, YJP and YJA marched along with International Ahimsa Foundation Float.

Professorships in Jain Studies – Recently two Professorships in Jain studies at Universities in California were established. (1) On June 19, the Los Angeles Jain Community, the donors and officers of the University of California, Santa Barbra signed the documents to establish the Bhagwan Vimalnath Lectureship in Jain Studies at the prestigious University of California Santa Barbra (UCSB). (2) On the auspicious day of Guru Purnima, Drs. Jasvant and Meera Modi of Los Angeles with a gift of \$800,000 signed the legal documents to establish the

Bhagwan Ajitnath Endowed Professorship in Jain Studies at California State University, Northridge.

JSMC 25th Anniversary - The Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago (JSMC) celebrated the 25th Anniversary of its temple from June 22 to July 1, at Bartlett, IL. About 4000 people from the US and outside witnessed this 10 days of historical celebration. I am glad to be a part of the special events like float procession and the bust statue inauguration of Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji.

YJA Convention 2018 - Over 750 Jain youths from across the world reconnected at YJA's 13th biennial Convention held in Chicago, IL. I addressed the youths and congratulated the YJA team for organizing amazing YJA Convention 2018 with tremendous efforts and great teamwork! JAINA, as always, will continue to support and motivate youths in sharing Jain heritage and religion among the youths and eventually passing on to the next generation.

2018 Parliament of the World Religions - The Parliament of the World's Religions is the world's largest and premier interfaith gathering and will be hosted this year from November 1-7, 2018 in Toronto. The Parliament will feature more than 500 artistic, cultural, scholarly, and interactive sessions, presented by a diverse and international group of selected session leaders. Each day will be anchored by plenaries and major assemblies focused on the Parliament's core issues and constituencies. You are encouraged to register for best access to the 2018 Parliament programs at www.parliamentofreligions.org.

YJP Conference - The second annual YJP Conference will be held on October 5 to 7 in Long Island, NY – a weekend envisioned to help Jains realize their leadership potential, create long-lasting friendships, and facilitate meaningful conversations. More details can be found at www.yjp.jaina.org.

Sincerely,

Gunvant Shah
Delhi.



Cleanse Wrong Beliefs

By Himanshu K. Gandhi

Himanshu is based in Boston, MA and is an avid follower of Jainism. He can be reached at h.gandhi@samved.com

PRANAM.

It is fine that...
... under the influence of wisdom...
... abstaining from sacrilegious consumption was considered right...
... and an attempt was made to control dietary intake.

Then why not take a step further in the direction of His wisdom, and make an attempt to cleanse wrong beliefs?

What sense does it make to get entangled...
... where passions (anger, ego, greed, deceit) get agitated?

Moment we see dramatic “news” we get incited with attachment-aversion...
... and then at some gathering with friends debate-argue on the same to consume more of attachment-aversion?

What’s good and what’s bad...
... where-all and whose-all’s “wrong beliefs” will you mend?

What’s the point of increasing Karma and Samsara (cycle of birth-misery-death)
just like that by holding wrong beliefs?

Hold some thought-discussion on eternal truth that...

... Every living being is perfect...
... When one becomes aware of own pious self, this bit effortlessly comes into full acceptance.

... Every activity is preset and exactly as meant to be...
... Make an effort to witness all change only from the perspective of knower and seer.

Assuming that remote of my path to Moksha/ultimate liberation is only in my hands...
... why not go “pause” on the channel of worldly theatrics...

... and for few moments...
... make an attempt to consume pure bliss emanating from very own pious, all knowing,
eternal reality of Him within?

With Compliments to Jain Digest from Members of Jain Centers in North America



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Anyatva Bhavana

By Smita Shah



Smita Shah B.Sc. is a retired realtor and loan broker. She currently spends her time listening to spiritual discourses and reading on religious topics. Her passion is health, science and naturopathy.

Anyatva Bhavana makes us realize that everything other than the soul is "Anya" – not ours. All other living beings and all material things (pudgal) are "Anya" from the perspective of the soul.

Just as a foreign body, will cause harm to the body if allowed within, any feelings of attachment or aversion towards people and things will cause karma particles to attach to the soul and create a big havoc. Our focus moves away from the virtues of soul – such as knowledge, peace, bliss, etc; - and we miss our direction and real goal.

In *Anyatva Bhavana* our attachment to world around us is of primary concern. Effect of our involvement and attention given to others and all material things is the main issue that we have to contemplate upon. We need to move away from the belief that I am the body. Once that happens then anything associated with the body – people, things – will not be 'ours'. The goal of *Anyatva bhavana* is to loosen our grip on our relationship with the body and to strengthen our belief that "I am a pure, peaceful, powerful soul."

Our main goal is to recognize who we are – the Soul – and submerge ourselves in it!

How did we get in our current situation?

A child is born. He is helpless. For his survival he needs help from mother, nurse and family members. He is happy when comfortable and well fed and cries if he is not comfortable or not well fed. Slowly he learns to like the people who provide for his needs and wants. He develops likes and dislikes for various things according to his past *sanskaras*. This goes on for years and continues throughout his life span.

Our likes and dislikes, attachments and aversions, pleasure and pain, all dualities create good or bad karma and get attached to the soul. The process of accumulating such karma has been going on since eternity. We accumulate more karma than we shed.

Life is a game; a drama created by fruition of our good and bad *karma*. We do not have control over when and which way our past *karma* will put us in various circumstances. But we do have control over how we act under any

situation. Due to lack of awareness of who we really are, most of the time we get carried away and waste our time in reacting to the situations. We forget their temporary nature. This in turn causes bondage of more karma and the cycle continues.

"Bhed Gyan" – A way to increase our awareness

How do we increase the awareness of who we are? It is not that easy to understand who we really are. However, we even make mistake in understanding the true nature of things that are external to us. We have to know clearly who I really am and what really belongs to me. We have to understand that something that is not intrinsic to me, is not mine and can never be mine.

Anything that is temporary in nature and can be taken away from me, can't be mine. What I see with my eyes and know with my senses is all external to me – 'anya'. It is not me. This body is also not me or mine. I am the soul, who knows them all. I am separate from them all. I am the knower of all that can be known and a seer of all that can be seen. I am the *Gyata* and *Drashta* of all that is happening around me. This is *Bhed Gyan*.

To believe that I am this body and this family and friends are mine or this wealth is mine is *Mithya Drishti* - wrong belief. This is the main cause of pain and suffering in life. They are all temporary, will leave us sooner or later. We can keep relation with family and friends, do our all duties towards them but we have to make sure not to get attached to them. We have to be



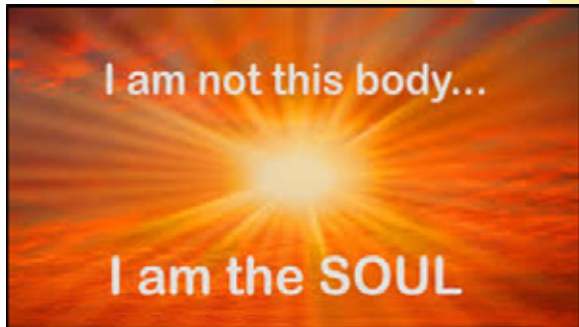
aware that "I am a soul, performing this role. My first duty in this life is to work towards my own salvation. No one else can help me with that, I have to do it myself."

To solidify our understanding Upadhyayshri Vinayvijayji Maharaj explains in *Shant Sudharas* as follows:

Do not love the ones, who do not or cannot love you in return. It could be living being or *Pudgal*. It will only end up in your suffering. *Pudgals* do-not have raag or dwesh towards anybody but we humans love or hate them and cause pain to our own self. So "*pudgal ras tyag*" is the best way to save ourselves from that problem.

Contemplation of Anyatva Bhavana

In order to contemplate on the *Anyatva bhavana* it is important to learn from the *Guru* and do regular satsang. It is only through the guidance from the learned that we can distinguish between what belongs to us and what does not. Here are some examples of contemplation that one can do:



"I am the Soul. I am the treasure of innumerable attributes like *Daya, Shanti, Samata, Kshama, Satya, Tyag and Vairagya*. They are all part of me. Their true potential is covered due to my *Karmas*. I have to unveil, realize, and experience them.

I have to stop thinking about *Pudgals*. I have to be aware not to get entangled in likes/dislikes and the material world.

I have to remember my indestructible and permanent nature. I want all my virtues to shine freely. I am the the *Chetna*, I am the soul. I do not need anything from anybody. I am complete in myself."

Bhinna Chhu Sarvathi, Sarva Prakare, Maro Koi Na Sangi Sansare

We have to contemplate on all these and own it. Reduce our desires. This will help us to develop *Anyatva bhavana*. Practice *Bhed Gyan*.

*Na Mara tan rup kanti yuvati, na putra ke bhrat na,
Na Mara bhrut snehio swajan ke, na gotra ke gyat na.
Na Mara dhan dham yauvan dhara, ye Moh agyatvana,
Re re jiv vichar em j Sada, Anyatvada Bhavana.*

Historic Examples of Anyatva Bhavana

- Bharat Chakravarti Maharaj had all the wealth and pleasures of this world and a beautiful body. One day when he was getting ready in front of a mirror and saw one of his fingers looking bare. He realized that one of the rings had come off from that finger. He contemplated on it and then took out all the rings and then all the jewelry. He realized that his beauty was dependent on external things such as the jewelry and the clothes he was wearing; it was not his own. His contemplation got deeper and deeper. He developed "*vairagya*", left everything and took diksha and attained Kevalgyan.
- Marudevi Mata was devastated after her son, Bhagavan Rushabhdev took diksha. She worried about her son's wellbeing. She cried so much over the years that she became blind. One day when she heard that Rushabhdev had achieved Kevalgyan and was giving a sermon in a Samavsharan, Marudevi Mata was very happy and wanted to meet her son. Since she could not see anything, her grandson, Bharat, described the whole scene of the Samavsharan to her and she realized that she had unnecessarily worried about Rushabhdev. She realized that her attachment with her son was the main reason for her misery and all her concerns about her son were a needless waste of time. With such contemplation, she herself achieved Kevalgyan.

Hence the message of Anyatva Bhavana is: "Chetan, Tu Nij Ghar Sambhaal"

ANYATVA BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF SEPARATENESS

Contemplation that everything other than the soul is "Anya" not ours - and all other living beings and all material things are separate from the soul is Anyatva Bhavana.



Ashrav Bhavana

By Anop R. Vora, Rochester, NY

Anop Vora is involved in Community services and Promotion of Professional Education in the Jain Community. His current interests include: Listening to the Spiritual Discourses, Meditation, Reading and Writing on the religious topics. e-mail: vora5000@yahoo.com

The Ashrav Bhavana gives us a platform to reflect upon one of the very important aspects called Ashrav of the Karmic Philosophy. It is considered to be the primary reason for the cycles of births and deaths we have been going through since the time immemorial. It means the inflow of all types of karmic particles onto the Pradeshas (space points) of soul obscuring its real attributes and making us go astray from the path of liberation. Since it is the one that initiates the vicious karmic process; we need to understand it clearly and then do our very best to stop it right at the onset. Ashrav Bhavana is structured to remind ourselves repeatedly that Ashrav is worth rejecting (heya) by disciplining our mind and exercising restraint over our thoughts, spoken words, and deeds.

Causes of Ashrav:

To stop Ashrav, let us first understand its origin. Jain Scriptures have spelled out 5 causes. They are:

1. Mithyatva
2. Avirati
3. Pramad
4. Kashays
5. Yoga

Mithyatva means wrong perception or distorted vision, lack of conviction in the teachings of Lord Mahavir, and holding wrong beliefs such as looking for happiness in people and material things, not understanding our true nature, etc. It makes us forget what is right and what is wrong and prevents us from seeing the truth. It makes us feel incomplete, discontented, and unhappy and therefore makes us run non-stop after more wealth, power, prestige and other worldly pursuits. It is indeed the real culprit and primary cause of Ashrav, the remaining causes are just its by-product.

Mithyatva is of two types: Agrahit and Grahit. The former is the result of the karmic impressions and inborn tendencies (Sanskars) we are born with. The latter means the wrong beliefs we pick up from our environment i.e. family, relatives, friends, teachers, misleading Gurus and social environment as we grow up. These factors shape our character

during the formative years leading to a hard-core conditioning. This in turn drives our subconscious thought processes, verbal and physical behavior till we take proactive steps to erase it. Unfortunately, most of us are not even aware of this phenomenon.

Avirati means not making efforts to apply the teachings of the Lord in one's life although one has the energy to do so. Avirati person is a thinker and talker but not a doer and therefore gets only limited benefit from the scriptural knowledge.

Pramad and Avirati go together. Pramadi jiv is usually lazy, inactive, lacking enthusiasm and awareness. Although he may be knowledgeable, he lacks the motivation to put forth the precepts into action.

Kashays entail toxic emotions and passions stemming directly from Mithyatva. There are of four types: Anger, Arrogance, Deceit, and Greed. They are subdivided into 16 categories depending upon the intensity of the emotion(s) with which one responds. No-Kashays, auxiliary group of Kashays, are a group name for 9 auxiliary emotions. They are: Laughter, Fear, Disgust, Regret, Likes, Dislikes, and Sexual emotions of male, female and trans-gender individuals. These 25 types of emotions cause havoc in our lives. With strong emotions, the Karmic bondage is ultra-strong; with mild emotions, it is weak and can be shed off easily.

Yoga refers to the use of mental, physical and verbal faculties through mind, body and speech giving rise to Ashrav. The wholesome use (i.e. activities done with good intentions) will generate Punya and unwholesome Pap - both are broad categories of Ashrav. The important point worth noting is that the mind, body and speech are insentient by nature and would not generate karma till soul interacts with them through attachment and aversion. They are the cause of karmic generation till the end of 13th Gunasthanks (stage of Sayogi Kevali). Although the bodily functions slow down remarkably at that stage, inflow of mild karma still continues. When one achieves the Nirvikalpa Dasha (thoughtless state) without any trace of attachment and aversion, flow of karma particles ceases, paving the way for liberation.

Why study Ashrav Bhavana:

Ashrav bhavna is designed to help us attack the karmic enemy before the fact, before the damage is done. Thus it is preventive in nature. It's purpose is to help us get a better understanding of the reasons why we accumulate karma. There are times when we wonder why events, situations are happening the way they are and the karma philosophy provides us with an explanation. The reasons for Ashrav provide us a more in-depth look in to how we ourselves are instrumental in bringing those karma to us. Contemplation of these reasons and then our own introspection tells us what we are doing wrong. Once we understand that and accept our faults, we can look for what changes we need to make in our lives, our behavior. That is the reason a constant reminder of this bhavana and its regurgitation is very essential. It is a giant step for our spiritual progress. Once we understand the mechanism and apply the learning every moment, karmic factory running 24/7 will slow down measurably and our destiny will take a turn for better. At that point, we can focus on destroying the old stock of karma through Nirjara and quicken our pace towards liberation.

Difficulties in the path towards liberation:

We have perhaps heard the concept of Ashrav and Ashrav bhavana several times during our life time. We have perhaps studied and discussed them repeatedly while studying the Theory of Karma. Then, why do we forget the essence of this learning when a real life situation occurs? Why does this important teaching go out the window and why do we react blindly? Why do we repeat the same mistake over and over again?

There are many reasons for this. Acquiring knowledge is one thing and applying that knowledge is another. Many of us are content with just learning as it satisfies our curiosity, our thirst for knowledge and provides intellectual stimulation. We may get closer to identifying our faults and feel guilty; but then we do not attempt to fully introspect our behavior and accept our faults. There is no real desire to make any changes to how we live and we do not feel the need for any transformation. Hence, we do not increase our awareness and forget that every thought, every spoken word and every act we perform has karmic consequences. We then repeat old mistakes and continue to accumulate new karma.



In addition to increasing our awareness and accepting our faults, we can also learn how to stop the inflow of karma which is called Samvar. That is the topic of Samvar Bhavana, covered in another article in this magazine.

One well known monk has said: "Bandh Samay Chitta Chetiye, Udaye So Santap." - meaning we need to be extra careful at the time of karmic bondage –at the time we attract karmic flow (Ashrav) to our soul. If we are not, there is no point in

complaining and crying at the time of karmic fruition. We had a choice when we reacted to a catalyst but we stumbled, made a mistake out of ignorance or unawareness and allowed the karmic flow to enter. Through Ashrav and Samvar Bhavana, our scriptures are trying to train us early in the game to do the right thing. We are indeed very fortunate that our seers have shared with us these powerful concepts for our spiritual well-being. Now it is up to us to take them to heart and put them in practice.

ASHRAV BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF INFLUX OF KARMA

To contemplate that passions, attachment, animosity, ignorance, belief in the world as the reality, etc. are the reasons we get karma is Ashrav bhavana. Contemplation of these reasons and then our own introspection tells us what we are doing wrong which helps us in improving ourselves.



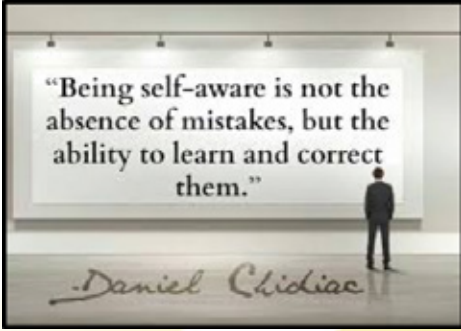
Samvar Bhavana

By Ramesh K Khandhar

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By immersing in knowledge and meditation, the soul does not bind new karma. That is the eighth Samvar Bhavana.
— Shrimad Rajchandra, Vachanamrut

Samvar Bhavana is about disciplining the body and the mind to abstain from karma-inducing thought, speech and action. Samvar means awareness of our faults, our shortcomings. Samvar Bhavana means earnestly thinking about how can I get rid of my faults and advance on the spiritual path.



The opposite of Samvar is Ashrav which is influx of karma. The reasons for Ashrav are Mithyatva (Wrong Belief), Avirati (Lack of effort for

spiritual advancement), Pramad (Carelessness), Kashay (Passions) and Yog (Actions of Body, Mind and Speech). Since, these cause influx of karma, it is obvious that the opposite of these will stop the influx of karma. Hence our goal should be to achieve Samkit (Right Belief), Virati (Doing efforts to advance spiritually), Apramattata (Awareness), Veetragata (Control over passions) and Ayog.

There are specific steps we can take in order to stop the influx of karma. Jain Scriptures have identified 57 steps. Some of them are a daily practice of 3 Guptis (restraint of mind, speech and body), 5 Samitis (maintaining vigilance while performing any activity), 10 Yati Dharma (focusing on 10 attributes of soul), 12 Anupreksha (reflections on 12 bhavanas), 22 Parishahjay (Detachment from body) and 5 Charitra (observing code of conduct).

Let us see how these steps help us achieve our goal.

1) Samkit: Right Belief

Due to our ignorance about our true nature, we have

many wrong beliefs such as

- I am the body.
- My happiness depends on material things, people, my relationship, my achievements.
- I am unhappy because of other people and events.
- I make things happen.
- etc; etc.

Due to such beliefs ingrained in us we have all kinds of emotional attachments. We are attached to our body, its well-being. We are attached to people – family, friends, colleagues. We are attached to our capabilities and skills. Since we believe that these things make us happy, all our efforts are focused on these external things. All our thoughts – Sankalp/Vikalp – are about people and events which in turn increases our attachments to them.

But a careful observation and introspection tells us that such attachments are the root cause of our unhappiness. The happiness we get from external means is temporary and often results in to unhappiness. Hence developing detachment will take us closer to Samkit or Self-Realization. Let us look at this in more detail.

a) Detachment towards people

Detachment is not about having no emotions or desires, but having control over our emotions, actions and desires and be able to manage them. Free our emotion of love from the sense of control, and we are free of our emotions! Detachment is not the opposite of attachment, but detachment is freedom from attachment. Detachment in real life does not mean indifference; on the contrary, it will empower us to live every relationship with love and intensity, knowing that it could end at any moment.

You don't need to renounce your relations with our family or society. These relations are karma-related and we may have to fulfil our obligation as long as we remain in the 'sansar' (material world). We have to transform the internal belief that they are part of you and that they will help you remove any adverse situation that may arise in future. Before he became monk 'Anathi muni' went through intense introspection about his acute disease.

This led him to make a firm resolution about spiritual path and decided to become a monk.

b) Detachment towards events

“Let go’ is certainly the most fundamental in the path of spiritual development. We have to realize the temporary nature of events – no matter how important they seem at the time. Often, we give too much importance to the events and spend a lot of time thinking and worrying about them. This is due to ignorance, fear and desire to control the outcome. Many times, we make situations worse for ourselves – and for others – by too much thinking. We create our own misery.

All the external happening are karma related ‘effect’ arising out of ‘cause’ you had given in the past. Therefore, any effort to change the ‘effect’ is simply a waste of time and energy. Additionally it leads to new karmic bondage. Acceptance of the circumstance ‘as is’ or with conscious response sets the stage for samvar bhavana. We must remain an observer to happening in and around without bondage of new karma. We must go inside of ourselves and become detached from judgment and projection. Enjoy each moment without clinging to it and when that moment starts to disappear just ‘let it go’ without having any effect on your subconscious mind or inner self.

**ACCEPT—THEN ACT.
WHATEVER THE
PRESENT MOMENT
CONTAINS, ACCEPT
IT AS IF YOU HAD
CHOSEN IT...THIS
WILL MIRACULOUSLY
TRANSFORM YOUR
WHOLE LIFE.**

ECKHART TOLLE

You have to learn to do your best and then detach from the outcome. Who is preventing you? Your own past experiences and expectations of the future. Just “drop the past, drop the future, just simply be.” In that moment of simply being, immense blessings descend on you. Chandanbala is an excellent example of ‘letting go’ at every stage of adverse circumstances. She was even thankful to Mula shethani to fulfill the conditions required to satisfy the ‘abhigrah’ Lord Mahavira had assumed before he accepts the elms from Chandanbala. This ‘let go’ principle took her all the way to self-realization and beyond.

c) Detachment towards material things

Many people are also attached to money, social status,

jobs, and more. Basically, anything you can use to describe who you are can be a sign of attachment. It is the illusive oneness with external objects, name, fame recognition, social standing in society that gives rise to influx of new karmas. The more we become detached, the more we feel liberation or freedom. We have to understand the temporary nature of everything that is external and detach from it.

2) Virati: Doing efforts to advance spiritually

After learning about Jain principles, karma theory, various rituals from scriptures and from Guru, we need to put them in practice. For example, after learning about the Bhavanas, (12 Anupreksha) we need to contemplate upon them and make them part of our belief system. This will stop the influx of karma. After knowing about importance of Tap, we need to do an effort to do whatever is our physical capacity. Such actions purify us and help us advance spiritually.

3) Apramattata: Awareness

We need to increase our awareness about the actions of our mind, speech and body. 3 Guptis (restraint of mind, speech and body), 5 Samitis (maintaining vigilance while performing any activity) help us do that. We need to realize that we are the masters of our mind. Mastering the mind means having control over our thoughts, our emotions, our desires. We need to be careful when we speak, what we speak, how we speak and only speak when necessary. With our body, we need to be careful not to cause anyone any harm. Such awareness will reduce the influx of karma.

4) Veetragata: Control over passions

The passions such as Anger, Ego, Deceit and Greed cause the influx of karma. The way to combat these is by developing the virtues (10 Yati Dhama). Of the 10 virtues, 4 are directly related to the 4 passions.

- To remove anger, we need to practice forgiveness. We need to be able to forgive others and ask for forgiveness.
- To get rid of ego, we need to develop the virtue of humility; be respectful of the learned, elders and those that are guiding us on the spiritual path. The more we will learn to appreciate virtues in other people and learn to observe our own faults, the more humble we will become.
- To get away from deceitful behavior, we need to be straight-forward; like a child.
- To stop greed, we need to learn to be content with what we have and practice glad acceptance.

We also need to reduce our attachments, as described above, as well as any aversions. Strong likes and dislikes often are reasons for karma bondage. Practicing equanimity stops the influx of karma.

What capabilities and tools are needed to stop the influx of karma?

As per Jain scriptures, all of the above discussion can be summed up in two words: Upsham (Reduction of Passions) and Vairagya (Detachment). In order to succeed at this we need to develop certain capabilities and use certain tools as described below.

1) Discriminative Judgement:

All the happening takes place only to our periphery. When we connect with Higher Self, we are at the center and remain detached all the time. When we mentally associate ourselves with peripheral activity then the bondage comes into play. This association is strictly mental, illusive and voluntary arising out of ignorance. With understanding and discriminative judgement we can remain detached, and this detachment is not forced. You simply know it is so. This is not a forced detachment; this is not any effort on our part to remain detached. Any effort to remain detached, will take us on the periphery and that we have not known the center. The center (Higher Self) is detached; it has always been so. It is transcendental. It is always the beyond. Whatever happens on periphery never happens to the 'center'.

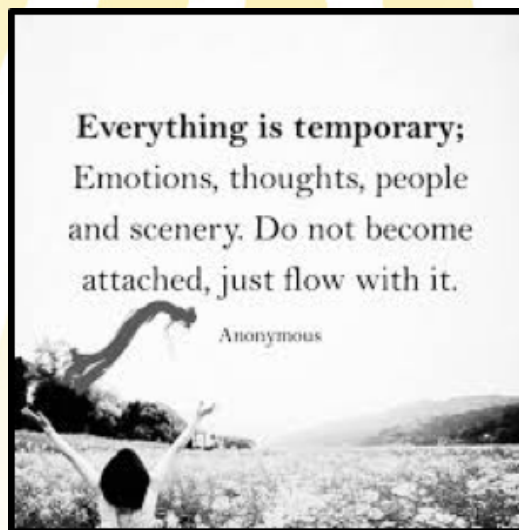
Once we have the feeling of the natural detachment, nothing can disturb us. We will remain silent. Whatever happens in the world, we will remain unmoved. Even if someone is killing you, only the body will be touched - not you. You will remain beyond. This "beyondness" leads you into existence, into that which is bliss, eternal, into that which is true, which is always, into that which is deathless, into life itself. Unless we move from the periphery to the center and unless we become aware of the eternal in us, 'samvar' has not happened to us. This is called 'samyakatv'. This 'sakshi bhav' (gnata-drashta bhav) arising out of connection with Higher Self

is samvar followed by nirjara. Lord Mahavira calls this 'dravya drashti'. Attention is focused primarily on the center with some bare attention observing external happening without any clinging. You must give emphasis to knowing and bare attention to happening on the periphery.

Our primary emphasis must be to our 'knowing' and not on what is being known. Then the discrimination is there. Never say, "I am becoming old." Just say, "The body is becoming old." Then in the moment of death also you will know, "I am not dying; my body is dying. I am changing bodies, just changing the house." If this discrimination deepens, one day, suddenly, there will be enlightenment. Detachment from success and failure, from pleasure and pain, will bring you back into connection with the only thing that is invariably present, stable, and safe: your center of pure awareness and pure love.

Emotional detachment is necessary to reach a state of equanimity, and to be able to live fully in the present moment, without worries or regrets. All those who attained self-realization and higher 'gunsthan' invariably went through inner process of discriminative judgement followed by external process of 'glad acceptance' all happening.

The only way to stop the influx of new karma is to connect ourselves to the inner Higher Self. We must realize that we are pure, peaceful and powerful soul with infinite knowledge and perception. It is the psychic bond between us and body, family members and society that prevent us from focusing our attention inward to make a connection with Higher Self. A constant vigil will cleanse the mind and thereby our speech and actions. We must understand and realize that all the happening in our life are just the results of our doing in the past. The 'Glad Acceptance' must be accompanied by wisdom of discriminative judgement and detachment from past as well as future expectation.



2) Meditation:

If you practice meditation, you will notice reduction in your passions. You will become more calm and

in control of your emotions. Soon you will start to experience detachment also. You will discover that you stay undisturbed under circumstances that previously made you anxious, stressed, angry or agitated. You will find that you can handle your daily affairs of life

in a calm and relaxed way.

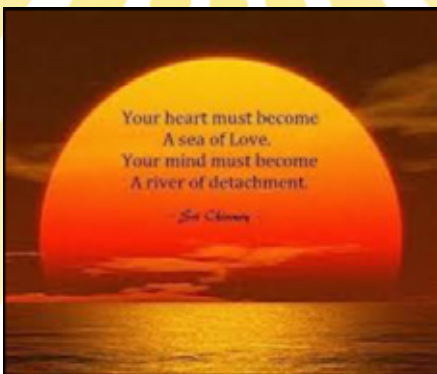
Buddha was asked what have you gained from meditation? He replied, "Nothing however Buddha said let me tell you what I lost: Anger, Anxiety, Depression, Insecurity, Fear of Old Age and Death."

S a m v a r b h a v a n a tells us how crucial it is to bear our karma with fortitude.

Our oneness with our suffering creates a cyclical bind of new karma whereas bearing our pain calmly relieves us of that karma at some point. Knowledge of right awareness goes a long way in practicing samvar. Awareness of an object – any idea, thought or emotion that stems from attachment – has to be forfeited as it breeds attachment. Awareness of the self is real awareness that protects us from creating new karma. Meditation helps create such awareness.

3) Service (Seva):

Selfless service is also a very important spiritual practice. We are detached because self-less service means that there is an absence of selfishness and our hearts are filled with compassion and love. We experience universal love and our own pristine purity and glory.



One should therefore contemplate the purpose of life, carry out spiritual practices, read spiritual books, donate money and time to spiritual activities and perform service for others without any intention of reward. Such activities are important, or rather essential for spiritual development and no spiritual development can happen without them.

The samvar bhavana empowers you to carve the spiritual path which will end the cycle of birth and death. The samvar bhavana invariably leads to 'nirjara bhavana' The first moment of oneness with Higher Self is called samvar and the succeeding moments are called nirjara. During this inner connection, all the external activities of mind, body and speech have stopped and therefore the new karmic bondage has also stopped. The absence of external focused attention is termed as 'samvar' and the internal oneness with Higher Self is termed 'nirjara'. Thus the samvar and nirjara are two sides of the same coin.

Don't beat yourself up for falling into old habits. The first step in making change is recognizing what it is you want to change. Instead of getting frustrated or disappointed when you fall back into an old habit, celebrate that you are now noticing when you repeat the pattern of thought or habit. In time, this will allow you to transform your behavior.

SAMVAR BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF STOPPAGE OF KARMA

To keep the mind engaged in activities such as seeking right knowledge and practicing meditation, thereby refraining from actions that will bind karmas to the soul, is Samvar Bhavana.

Nirjara Bhavana

By Hema Pokharna, PhD



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"It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things." - Leonardo Da Vinci

Clutter is stuck energy that has far-reaching effects physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The simple act of clearing clutter can transform your life by releasing negative emotions, generating energy, and allowing you to create space in your life for things you want to achieve.

Feng Shui is the art of balancing the flow of natural energies in our surroundings to create beneficial effects on our lives. These natural energy flows were well known and understood by the ancients, and their knowledge still exists in some cultures today. In Bali, people still live in total harmony with both the physical, seen world and the ethereal, unseen world of invisible energies.

Karen Kingston, in her book "Clear your Clutter with Feng Shui," spells out three ways to deal with our clutter:

1. The Let-Nature-Take-its-Course method. Put it in a place where it will disintegrate to such a point that you no longer want to keep it.
2. The Wait-Until-You-Die-and Let-Your-Relative-Sort-it-Out method. This has been a great favorite throughout the centuries. You can even draw up a will telling people exactly what to do with it all!
3. The-Take-Responsibility-for-the-Stuff-and-Clear-it-Yourself method. This is the method highly recommended and is far more empowering, has much better karma, and allows you to get on with your life immediately, instead of waiting for you or your clutter to expire!

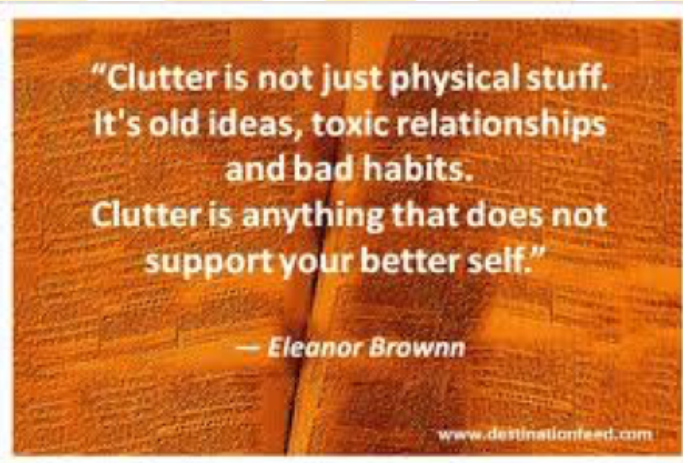
Similarly, Nirjara is a process of shedding karma particles, which, like dust, have adhered to our soul from endless times. It is clearing

the debris that prevents us from connecting with our higher Self and with God. This shredding process of shedding karma particles from the kaarman body of the soul is said to occur as naturally as fruits falling to the ground upon maturation or ripening. This can be likened to the Let-Nature-Take-its-Course method. In other words, the karma gives its results and it is shed off. This natural, unintentional process of shedding is called "Akaam Nirjara." In Akaam Nirjara, as the karmas get away from the soul, there is a new influx of karmas which replaces them and gets bonded to the soul. This outflux and influx of karmas becomes a vicious cycle for the soul born again and again. When the soul is clean and devoid of such karma particles, it is called liberation, or moksha. Moksha is the ultimate spiritual goal of human life, and so knowing the process of Nirjara becomes a key spiritual practice.

There is another type of Nirjara that is called "Sakaam Nirjara." It is a proactive process to use soul energies to actively shed karmas, instead of the karmas maturing and releasing their grip on the soul and creating a path of salvation.

This can be compared to the Take-Responsibility-for-the-stuff-and-Clear-it-Yourself method. This intentional shedding of the karmas is done by penance or tapas, internal as well as external. They are called Antar-tapas and Bahya-tapas, respectively.

This process can be explained by the example of a boat. If there is a hole in the boat, we put a stopper or a lid on the hole to block new entry of water into the boat. This is called Samvar, stopping the influx of water, or karmas. The water already accumulated in the boat is like the karmas



that have been accumulated over many lifetimes. This accumulated water needs to be removed so we can move forward in our journey. One way of removing it is by allowing the water inside the boat to evaporate in the heat of the sun, in its own time and rate. This could be like "Akaam Nirjara".

The more proactive way is for the boatman himself to work hard to throw out this accumulated water with his own hands. This is what is referred to as "Sakaam Nirjara". Under this reflection, one thinks about the evil consequences of karma, and striving to destroy the previously acquired karma by austerity and meditation. This means that our prayers for liberation come with an inbuilt responsibility for us to take action and that we are responsible to create the life we want.

Just like de-cluttering makes it easier to find inner peace, to focus, and to keep our attention on what is most important and meaningful in life, clutter can create stress and confusion that you may not be aware of. After you have uncluttered, you usually feel calmer and lighter, a bit more upbeat and are able to think more clearly. Uncluttering a drawer, a shelf, or some kind of space in your life can be an unexpectedly positive experience, not just practically, but both emotionally and mentally.

Similarly, the practice of Nirjara connects us with the inner source of energy whose power makes us face ourselves, allowing us to free ourselves from physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual clutter forever. It is the connection with the inner source of energy that results in Nirjara.

So, what should a soul do to remove its karmas? The answer is the practice of both the internal and the external tapas or austerities or penances. This leads to proactively shedding the accumulated karmas in a short time, or before their maturation. In addition to getting rid of the existing karma, one also needs to stop accumulating new karma – that is the subject of "Samvar Bhavana" – covered in another article in this magazine.

We all live with attachments to worldly life, because we believe that our happiness comes from worldly things and people. This attachment to worldly life enhances the influx of karmas. Tapa, or tyag, is about releasing the belief that anyone and anything outside of us is responsible for our happiness. The belief that leads to

dependency on anything external— beyond our soul— is called Mithyatva.

Observing austerities or tapa are inner and outer practices, and involve increasing awareness of the purity of our soul, along with the independency of the soul, to take our mind off the desires. Observing austerities can be a consistent action over a longer period of time.

The six external austerities include the following: 1) Anasan, fasting for a day, for some days, or throughout one's life, renouncing food and drink completely; 2) Unodari, eating and drinking less (water) than one's hunger and thirst call for; 3) Vritti Sankshep (reducing desires), managing to live with the minimum amount of necessities; 4) Rasa Tyag, renouncing food and drink that provoke the passions and encourage the instinctive excitements and provocations; and 5) Kaya Klesh and 6) Samlinata, ways of building bodily endurance.

The six kinds of internal austerities are mainly related to the mind: **1)** Prayaschit (atonement), in which we review and introspect our faults that have occurred through thoughts, words, and actions, and repent and make atonement for the faults; **2)** Vinay (politeness), mindful politeness towards elders and spiritual superiors and refraining from condemnation; **3)** Vaiyavachch (service), serving with devotion religious teachers, ascetics, and virtuous people; **4)** Swadhyay (spiritual studies leading to self-realization), which involves studying, learning, and reflecting on sacred books to support and inspire us to attain self-realization and avoid entanglement in mundane life; **5)** Dhyan (meditation), or concentrating all the inclinations and potentialities of the mind on a contemplation of the true form of the Atma; **6)** Vyutsarg (renouncing attachment to the body), which involves renouncing all bodily inclinations and activities, and then attaining stillness.

One important thing to note is that all the above austerities have to be done with a clear understanding of why one is doing them. Nirjara Bhavana is the contemplation of the main goal of such activities - which is shedding of karma and as a result, attain higher spiritual state.

"It is not a daily increase, but a daily decrease. Hack away at the inessentials." - Bruce Lee

NIRJARA BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF SHEDDING OF KARMA

Contemplation of various ways of shedding karma by external and internal austerities and doing so with right knowledge and with intention of achieving spiritual elevation, is Nirjara Bhavana.



Lokswarup Bhavana

By Sanjay Bhandari

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The Lokswarup Bhavana focuses on the nature of the Universe or 'Lok'. As we know, as long as the soul is bound by karma, the cycle of birth and death will continue. After the soul leaves its current form or body, it takes another form as one of the four types of beings such as human, animal or plant, heavenly beings or hellish beings. Physically, where does the soul reside in the new form? What are the reasons the soul takes one form vs. the other? To answer such questions, one needs to understand the description Jainism provides of the Universe. Study of the nature of Universe leads to contemplation about how to get out of the cycle of birth and death. Such contemplation is called Lokswarup bhavana.

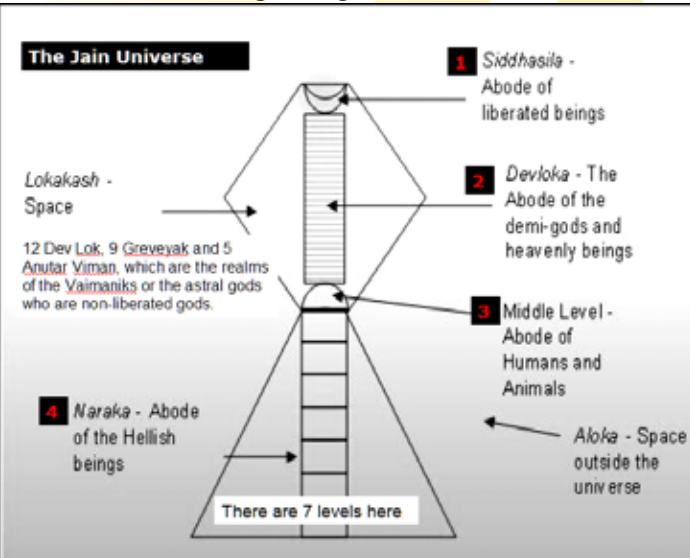
Jain Universe

According to Jain philosophy Universe comprises of Dravya (substance), which is broadly divided into two categories of Jiva (living) and Ajiva (non-living). Everything in this universe is either Jiva or Ajiva.

Ajiva (non-living) is of five types: 1) Matter (pudgalästikäy), 2) Medium of Motion (dharmästikäy), 3) Medium of Rest (adharmaästikäy), 4) Space (äkashästikäy) and 5) Time (käl). Thus, we have six basic substances (Dravyas). The universe is made of these six substances. All these substances are indestructible, imperishable, immortal, eternal and continuously undergo transformation. If we compare these substances with Einstein's fundamental ideas, it would be seen that his five elements; time, mass, space, motion and gravitation are the same as five Ajiva substances of Jainism. Time is käl, space is äkasha, mass is pudgal and motion is dharma and adharma (no motion). Gravitational force is also a derivative of pudgal. We also consider electromagnetic force as a derivative of pudgal. We can therefore state that Jain approach is identical to the fundamental ideas of unified field theory. But Jainism recognizes one more substance: Consciousness (Jiva).

Jain scriptures narrate that the universe is divided into Lok Akaash and Alok Akaash. Lok is part of the gigantic universe that has life. It is spread in the shape of a man standing with both hands on his waist and legs stretched wide whereas Alok is the infinite space beyond Lok.

In Lok Akaash, living beings wander from one life to another without ever finding lasting peace and happiness.



All living beings in Lok experience pain. Those living beings with five sensory organs, with or without a mind, crave to be free of pain. Unfortunately, real happiness eludes us because of ignorance and attachment that creates bondage and ties us down to the vicious cycle of births and deaths in the universe.

Lok is divided into 3 parts:

- 1) Urdhvaloka: where the heavenly beings reside
- 2) Madhyaloka: where humans, animals & plants live
- 3) Adholoka: where the hellish beings reside

At the apex is Siddhashila, the abode of liberated souls. That is the aspirational destination for all living beings. Reaching there is possible through a series of steps, the most important one being self-realization.

Contemplation of the grand universal expanse makes us realize how infinitesimal we are in the larger scheme of things and how much smaller our sorrows and worries are in perspective. Our self-created cocoon of desires and emotions, successes and failures, angsts and agonies which seem so real to us melt into nothingness when we place them in the intimidating largeness of the universe.

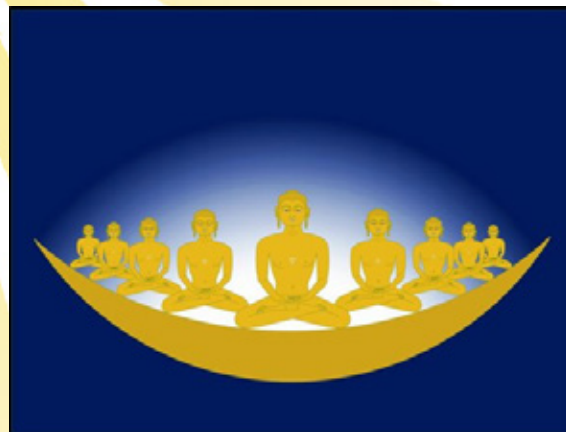
How to contemplate on Lokswarup Bhavana?

The main purpose of learning and thinking about the nature of Universe is to detach ourselves from the worldly, temporary pleasures. It is good to learn about the geographical aspects, about the adobes of heavenly and hellish beings, etc. Under this bhavana, one thinks about the real nature of this universe. Judging from the standpoint of substance, it is eternal but from the standpoint of modification it is transitory. Thus all objects of the world come into existence and perish. This thought makes one understand the true nature of reality, which is necessary for right knowledge and faith. Therefore, one needs to understand that the soul migrates from one form to another because of the karma bound to it. To stop this endless wandering, one needs to think about the reasons for the bondage of karma and transform themselves by reducing one's attachments to people and things, stop looking for happiness that is temporary, get rid of one's ego, stop blaming others, etc.

According to the scholar, Shri ChandraKant Mehta, "Ye Jiwan Rangmandap ki Natyashala hai (Life is like a stage). Isame Mann ki sthirata se Aadhyatma Sukh ki prapti hoti hai sabhi lok ke liye (mental stability gives spiritual happiness for all Lokas)". Try to get four Durlabh (priceless) things – Manushyatva (humanity), Shravan (listening capability), Shradha (faith), and Sanyam (Control)" and this will give you eternity for all Lokas.

According to the scholar, Paras Bhai, Managing Trustee, Shrimad Rajchandra Ashram, "Mithya Drishti Sarwatra Dukhi, Samyak Drishti Sarwatra Sukhi" (Delusion or wrong view gives sadness and right view gives happiness all the times in all worlds).

So, why not focus on the eternal and drop the ephemeral? Let's drop the corporal shell from our minds and attach to the substratum of our being. Let's be free of worries, fears and sorrows and endeavor to join the sublime consciousness of our Tirthankars at Siddhashila. What we know, let's dwell upon. What we dwell upon, let's experience. What we experience, let's ensure it endures. Once on this trajectory, the Siddhashila is within our reach.



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- <http://www.rajsaubhag.org/news-blog/lokswarup-bhavana>)

LOKSWARUP BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF NATURE OF UNIVERSE

To contemplate on the nature of universe and the transitory objects in it and thinking about what keeps us in the cycle of birth and death, is Lokswarup Bhavana.

Bodhi Durlabh Bhavana

By Pravin L. Shah



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

Bodhi Durlabh Bhavana: This bhavana contains two words that we need to understand – Bodhi and Durlabh.

The word Bodhi means knowledge; acquiring knowledge of who we are. It also means having right faith - faith in the teachings of Lord Mahavir – which also means achieving "Samyak-Darshan". The word "Durlabh" means difficult to achieve. Indeed, Samyak Darshan or Self Realization is difficult and is achieved by very few. The subject of Bodhi Durlabh Bhavana is contemplation and practice of what is necessary to achieve Samyak Darshan.

Why is it difficult to achieve Samyak Darshan?

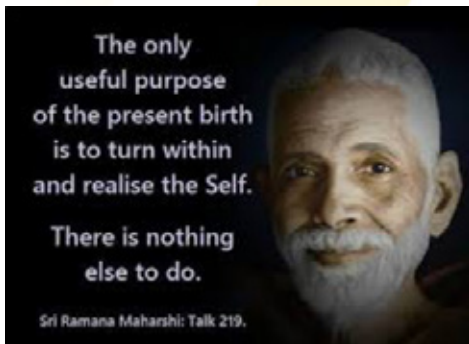
In Uttaradhyayan Sutra, Lord Mahavir cites following well-known verse:

Chattari Parmanganam, Dulhanin Jantuno;
Manusatam Sui Shraddha, Sayammiya Viryam
(Uttaradhyayan Sutra – chapter 3 verse 1)

During his last sermon Lord Mahavir spoke about the importance of above verse in his non-stop forty-eight hour sermon on the most precious and rare four entities required to attain Bodhi to Pujya Gautam Swami.

- 1) **Human life:** Human life is very precious and rare, attained after infinite birth and death cycles in lower life forms like vegetation and animal kingdom. It provides unique opportunity to every soul to pursue spiritual growth and liberate from the bondage of karma. However, the quality of human life required to attain liberation requires additional conditions as listed below.
- 2) **Shruti or keen interest in Jain scriptures:** According to Jain teachings, a person becomes eligible for pursuing genuine spiritual growth after one is exposed to the teachings of Jain masters with keen interest and develops genuine quest to know his real Self. So the word Shurti in above verse means listening to and study of Jain scriptures from a self realized master to awaken one's consciousness or soul. According to Jain Agam texts, all of us have had numerous human experiences in the past lives, but never did we truly wake up to pursue the path of enlightenment. Due to our endless desire for material pleasures, we do not have any inclination towards spiritual advancement or interest in knowing our true nature.
- 3) **Right Faith:** Finding a genuine self realized Sadguru or teacher is very rare according to above verse which makes it difficult to develop right faith and acquire a burning desire for liberation. Having right faith is the most important attribute or quality to attain self-realization or Samyak Darshan, and it requires a lot of self-discipline and commitment to acquire right spiritual qualification.

- 4) **Spiritual Practice:** The last few words in above verse mean that a seeker needs to practice and live his life according to the teachings of Jain masters. This is also not easy to do. Due to the many shortcomings we have – mental, emotional, physical – it is difficult for most people to devote time and energy towards satsang, penance, religious rituals, etc.



As described above, even though we have been blessed with a very rare human life and have all the facilities to advance spiritually, many of us fail to do so. We are too deeply attached and involved in whatever is happening in our daily lives. We fail to realize that this is all a game of good and bad karma and everything is temporary. We get too involved in the drama of life and forget that we are a soul playing a role. Our lives and actions are influenced by passions, wrong beliefs and our desires. Add to that the difficulty of deciding the path, and finding the Guru to follow, most people give up the search for eternal happiness.

It might be rare to see a shift in faith, goal, thinking and attitude but is not impossible. Let us explore further what the Jain scriptures say about achieving Samyak Darshan.

How to achieve Samyak Darshan?

In Tatvarth Sutra, Bodhi or self-realization is defined as follows:

Tatvarth Shraddhanam Saymakdarshanam (chapter 1 , sutra 2)

Tad Nisargmad Adhigamatva (Chapter 1- sutra 3)

When a worldly soul awakens in human life to understand and develop right faith in the teachings of Lord Mahavir, he becomes eligible to attain self-realization. And the self-realization can be carried over from previous life as all Tirthankaras are born with self-realization, or it can be attained in present life with proper spiritual practice described below.

Once a person commits to spiritual growth, he/she needs to acquire five precious attributes of self realization as described by Shrimad Rajchandra in Patrank 135

- 1) **Sham:** It means calming down or pacification of passions. Worldly soul is in bondage due to the attachments and aversions towards external entities such as people and material objects. The passions such as anger, ego, greed, deceit are the inner enemies that prevent one from making spiritual progress. These obstacles are the primary root cause of bondage and misery. The good news is these obstacles which originated due to the delusion or ignorance of self can be tamed and dissolved by understanding and contemplating on Bhavanas and by seeking guidance of a Sadguru to pursue right spiritual path.
- 2) **Samveg:** It means burning desire for liberation. We need to develop a strong desire to understand, realize, experience who we really are. Achieving the blissful state where all worldly desires are dissolved should be the only goal of our precious and rare human life. A true commitment to studying the scriptures, attend satsangs and discourses, practice what we have learned is necessary.
- 3) **Nirved:** It means detachment from worldly pleasures. One has to realize that "since eternity I have been trying to find peace and happiness in external objects. It is time now I stopped looking for worldly pleasures and find the eternal happiness within me".
- 4) **Astha:** It means genuine faith in the teachings of the spiritual masters. Since at this stage one has not experienced the soul and its blissful state, all his/her efforts will require a genuine faith in the spiritual master or Guru. Such faith is of utmost importance in order to achieve Samyak Darshan.
- 5) **Anukampa:** It means compassion for all living beings. This is a natural outcome after one firmly believes that he/she is not the body but a soul. Then the person sees every living being as a soul and develops compassion for them.

Guidance from the Guru, satsang, contemplation, introspection, meditation and experimentation are the tools we can use to turn our focus within. We are so fortunate that the three revered Sutras in Chaitya Vandan keep on reminding and resetting our focus on attaining Bodhi or self realization daily: For example, Namuthunam sutra states Arihanta is "Bodhidayanam and Sharan dayanam" meaning grace of Lord Mahavir is upon us to attain self realization every time we recite this sutra with proper meaning, Loggas Sutra states " Arogya-Bohilabham, Samahivaram Uttamam Dintu" meaning asking God for blessing us with good health and Samyak Darshan and Samadhi. And Jayvihray sutra teaches us to pray for "Samahimaram cha Bohilabho" meaning peaceful death with self-realization.

BODHI DURLABH BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF RARITY OF TRUE KNOWLEDGE

Thinking that it is very difficult for the transmigrating soul to acquire right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct in this world is Bodhi Durlabh Bhavana. We should take full advantage of the opportunity and put in our full effort to achieve Samyak Darshan

Dharma Bhavana

By Mahendra Khandhar



Mahendra Khandhar was the first president of Jain Center of Southern California in Los Angeles. He served on the Executive Committee for over a decade. He was instrumental in the formation of JAINA and its First Convention in LA in 1981. He taught Pathshala for 14 years and organized children's camps. He conducted Swadhyay for 18 years in LA and does it regularly in Koba (Shrimad Rajchandra Adhyatmik Sadhana Kendra, near Ahmedabad), where he spends 6 months in a year.

Dharma Bhavana: This Bhavana is also known as Dharma Durlabh Bhavana. When referred to as "Dharma Bhavana" the contemplation focuses on proper understanding of what Dharma – religion - is and how beneficial it can be for worldly as well as spiritual life. When referred to as "Dharma Durlabh Bhavana" it also includes scrutiny about the rarity or difficulty in proper understanding of Dharma or difficulty in finding a Guru that can explain what the real Dharma is. In this article we will focus on the importance of Dharma, its various definitions and its benefits.

Importance of Dharma

The Indian Aryan culture states that there are 4 eternal truths:

1. Everybody (all living beings) desire happiness
2. However, everybody is unhappy (miserable)
3. Misery can be removed
4. There are means to eliminate misery.

Why is everybody miserable? Because they have not understood correctly their true nature, their blissful state. They have not experienced what true happiness is. Since the understanding and goal are wrong, the path and means are wrong and as a result they become miserable.



What is true happiness? Shrimad Rajchandra says that any happiness, followed by misery, is not true happiness. Further, he says that getting worldly happiness (external, sensual, delusive) eliminates spiritual happiness (internal, non-sensual, real) in Mokshamala Lesson-67.

Kundkundacharya says that the so-called worldly happiness is external, with obstacles, in pieces, causing bondage and non-uniform, while spiritual happiness is plenty, soul-generated, non-sensual, incomparable, time-infinite and continuous (Pravchansar-76,13).

Bhagwan Mahavir said that happiness is non-anxiety and misery is anxiety. Enlightened ones say that real happiness is independent, internal and self-controlled, while delusive happiness is dependent, external and outside-controlled.

Infinite souls have been wandering in the world of four destiny of human, hell, heaven and animals since time immemorial due to lack of real understanding of true happiness. Shrimad Rajchandra said that we all suffered infinite pain, not knowing the reality of true happiness (Atmasiddhi-1).

After understanding the true happiness, question may arise as how to get it, i.e. what are the means to achieve it? Tirthankar Bhagwan says that happiness is achieved only by Dharma (religion), be it real spiritual or delusive worldly, and without religion man is like an animal.

Dharma does good to us, in this life and then beyond. It does good to all living beings and the whole universe. It gives peace, bliss and serenity. Externally, Dharma is a set of rituals with do's and don'ts. Internally, Dharma is soul-centered and soul-oriented.

Various Definitions of Dharma

The word Dharma is derived from Sanskrit, meaning it holds us in good destiny (human & heaven) and do not let us fall into bad destiny (animals & hell). If we protect the Dharma, it will protect us. Dharma is defined and described in many ways (nature, form, types, usefulness, result, position in life and spiritual growth) in the scriptures and by the enlightened ones. The following is a brief compendium. There is no particular order and there may be some overlap.

- 1) **Basic Nature:** Vatthu Sahavo Dhammo. There are infinite objects in this world, each having infinite natural properties or Dharma. Each stays in its nature. Sweetness of sugar, coolness of water, heat of fire are all time-tested eternal Dharma of the objects. Similarly the main Dharma of the soul is knowledge, i.e. to know (Gnata or Gnayak Bhav).
- 2) **3 Jewels (Ratna Tray):** To perceive, to know and to act are soul's Dharma.
- 3) **10 Virtues (Lakshana):** Forgiveness, Humility, Straightforwardness, Contentedness, Truth, Restraint, Austerity, Renunciation, Detachment and Celibacy are soul's Dharma.
- 4) **Protection:** To protect and save any and all living beings is religion.
- 5) **Sentience (Upyog):** Internally, to see and to know is sentience (Chetna, Upyog) and externally being aware (of soul) & careful (not to hurt) in all activities is religion.
- 6) **Obedience:** Following the teachings (Agnā) of God (Bhagwan Mahavir) and Guru (religious preceptor) is religion – Anae Dhammo.
- 7) **35 Virtues:** The 35 virtues of a true Jain follower (Marganusari), as outlined in the scriptures, constitute the religion (Hemchandracharya).
- 8) **21 Essentials:** The 21 essentials (Lakshana) of a true Jain householder, enumerated in Natak Samaysar, constitute the religion (Banarasidas).
- 9) **4 Activities (Purusharth):** Religion (Dharma) – Wealth (Arth) – Desires (Kam) – Liberation (Moksha) are Dharma described in all Aryan religions. Wealth and desires should be in accordance with the scriptures with the goal of liberation.
- 10) **4 Dharma:** Donation (Dan) - Celibacy (Sheel) – Austerity (Tap) – Reflection (Bhav) Dharma destroy the corresponding age old ingrained habits of Possessiveness (Parigrah) - Sex (Maithun) – Food (Ahar) – Fear (Bhay). It is said in 'Shanti Parva' of Mahabharat that religion is borne by truth, enhanced by donation, stabilized by forgiveness and goes away by the passions. Bhagwan Shri Krishna said that greed destroys the religion (Bhagvat Geeta 16-21). Well known examples are Shalibhadra, Shreyanskumar, Vijay Sheth-Vijaya Shethani, Sudarshan Sheth, Subhadra Sati, Dhanna Anagar and Bharat Maharaja.
- 11) **Restraint (Samyam):** There are 2 types, scriptural (Shrut, 12 Ang) and conduct (Charitra: 5 Mahavrat, 12 Shravak Vrat).
- 12) **6 Daily Duties:** Tirthankar worship (Dev Puja), Guru devotion (Guru Bhakti), Swadhyay, Restraint, Austerity and Donation constitute Dharma.
- 13) **Pratikraman 6 Essentials:** Samayik, 24 Tirthankar Prayer, Obeisance (Guru Vandana), Pratikraman, Meditation and Vow also constitute Dharma.
- 14) **5 Tenets (Panchachar):** Conduct relating to perception, knowledge, character, austerity and energy is Dharma.
- 15) **Remove Sins:** Haribhadrasuri says that 5 large sins (violence, lie, stealing, sexual misconduct, possessiveness), 4 passions (anger, pride, deceit, greed), wrong beliefs, 4 gossips (related to food, sex, politics, local), oversleep and lethargy should be removed by understanding and by taking vows.
- 16) **4 Tests:** Like gold, true religion should pass the four tests of monks; character, non-contradictory knowledge, tenets of conduct and salvation.
- 17) **Morality:** The living should be based on non-sinfulness, morality, local laws and civility (Shrimad Rajchandra Vachnamrutji # 12, 48, 496).
- 18) **Dutybound:** Duty towards family, community, nation, mankind and all living beings is part of religion.

- 19) **Religious Meditation (Dharma Dhyam):** Contemplation of Tirthankar's teachings (Agha Vichay), misery in life and world (Apay Vichay), fruits of the deeds & thoughts (Vipak Vichay), cosmos (Sansthan Vichay).
- 20) **Rituals:** Do's and Don'ts of external worldly religious physical activity are essential for smooth functioning, continuity and progress of the Religious Order.
- 21) **Internal:** Soul purifier, annihilator of karmas, destroyer of sinful activities, forgiveness-humility-straightforwardness-contentedness, form the internal real religion.
- 22) **Highest Auspicious:** Dasvikalik Sutra says nonviolence-restraint-austerity is religion and it is auspicious in the highest.

The list above provides various ways one can think about and practice Dharma. Practicing Dharma Bhavana means contemplating on the above in order to increase our interest in Dharma, increase our reverence for Bhagwan who has shown us how to live a meaningful life. But how does one benefit from practicing Dharma? The following is a list of some of the benefits described in Jain scriptures.

Benefits of Practicing Dharma:

By practicing Dharma one can get desired outcomes of one's efforts, experience favorable situations, go to heaven or achieve liberation. Dharma provides 10 Durlabh (rare opportunities): movability (Tras), mind (Sangni), human body, long life, disease-free handsome body, full 5 senses, religious era/area, religious family, good living and virtues.

The benefits of Dharma are described by using 12 adjectives as follows:

- (1) Mangal Kamala Keli Niketan : Home of joy, happiness, wealth and auspicious.
- (2) Karuna Ketan : Compassion, protector of all beings.
- (3) Dhir : Strong, discerning, constant.
- (4) Shiv Sukh Sadhan : Liberation provider.
- (5) Bhav Bhay Badhan : Remover/destroyer of all dangers (see Bhaktamar Stotra 38-47).
- (6) Jagat Adhar : Sheltering, loving, protector.
- (7) Gambhir : Broad, deep, grasping.
- (8) Dev Asur Nar Pujit : Worshipped by heavenly gods, demons and humans.
- (9) Sarva Tantra Navnit : Essence of all religions and religious activities.
- (10) Sanatan : Eternal (see Mul Marag – 4).
- (11) Siddhi Sadan Sopan : Ladder to salvation and liberation.
- (12) Prati Lambhit Shant Sudha Ras Pan : With inclination and humility, provides nectar of serenity and bliss.

In conclusion, knowing the nature of real happiness and true religion, we should make our faith firm & strong. We should strive to understand and experience our true nature; that is the teachings of Lord Mahavir & all enlightened ones. With the auspicious prayer that may all achieve soul purification, self-realization and ultimate liberation, we ask forgiveness if anything said here is inconsistent or against Tirthankar's sermons (Jin Vani), Michchha Mi Dukkadam.

--- Dedicated at the Lotus Feet of the Sadguru ---
-- Om Shanti Shanti Shanti --

References:

- (1) "Shri Shant Sudha Ras", Pujya Mahopadhyay Vinayvijayji, Motichand Kapadia (discussion).
- (2) "Bhavna Bhav Nashini", Pujya Panyaspravar Arunvijayji Maharaj.
- (3) "Samadhi Sopan", Pujya Brahmchariji (Agas).
- (4) "That Which Is" (Tattvartha Sutra), Pujya Acharya Umaswati, Nathmal Tatia (translator & commentator).
- (5) "Tattvartha Sutra", Pujya Acharya Umaswati, Manubhai Doshi (translator & commentator).

DHARMA BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF DHARMA

Contemplation of the true nature of Dharma, its importance and benefits in our worldly and spiritual lives is Dharma Bhavana.

Ashuchi Bhavana

By Dilip Parekh

Ashuchi Bhavana makes us aware of the impurity of the body. The body is a pit of excretory filth, adobe of disease and ageing. Contemplating that I am distinct from such a body is Ashuchi Bhavana.

The body is made up of flesh, blood, bones and waste matter. We do not realize this because it is covered by the skin. The sight of flesh and bones is revolting to us. Anything that the body comes in contact with tends to get dirty. The clothes we wear have to be washed. When we shake hands with other people, we can feel the grimy and sweaty touch. When we see delicious, mouth-watering food in a plate it looks so appealing. We take the food and put it in our mouth and enjoy its taste. However, if for some reason, that same food comes out of our mouth, we run to the sink to throw it away! What happened? The food that was appetizing a minute ago became repulsive just after it entered our body.



The body is the breeding ground of disease. Composed of 3.5 crore such cells, the body is a veritable stockpile of crores of potential health problems. We have to keep washing our hands in order not to spread germs of diseases like cold and cough. As we get older we are susceptible to various diseases. Our senses get weaker, memory starts fading and activities that were easy for us in earlier life, start getting difficult. That is the reality of life.

This does not mean that we should condemn our body. We feel that the body is impure because of various bodily discharges. But they fulfill vital physiological functions that help us survive. So instead of condemning the

body for its tendency to age and decay, we need to appreciate it for its utility in taking us through our day and helping us fulfil our role in life.

However, we need to achieve a balance between appreciating the body and hating it. Excess focus on appreciating the body can lead one to identify the self with the body. We can easily slip in to thinking that we are a body with a soul instead of thinking that we are soul, temporarily in this body form. We end up harnessing all our resources including our mind to cater to the body, its needs and its relationships. This keeps us revolving in to an endless cycle of birth and death.

It is for this reason that we are advised to see our body as a composite of flesh, blood, bones and faeces. We can then understand how temporary and deceptive the beauty of the body is. This will help us in exploring our inner being which is the core of our existence. With this understanding we will be able to separate ourselves from the body and be appreciative of the fact that purpose of human life and body is to achieve spiritual growth.

Sanatkumar, a king of supremely magnificent looks, was once bathing when two devtas descended from heaven in human guise to verify whether he was really as handsome as he was famed to be. Awestruck by his looks, they nodded their head gently in approval. A chuffed Sanatkumar then invited them to his court where he would dazzle, decked up in royal finery. The devtas obliged him, and after looking at him in his king's gear, shook their head. When a puzzled Sanatkumar asked them why did they look disapproving, they told him that his body had changed. It had become poisonous. To prove their point, they asked him to spit. Sanatkumar did and watched a housefly die on consuming a fraction of his spit. The message of the body's frailty and destructiveness having sunk in, Sanatkumar abdicated his throne, shed his robes and took off on spiritual quest as a monk.

The body came with birth and will go with death. Only that which does not have a beginning can be conceived to not have an end. And there is just one such entity - the soul. It has been around forever and will be around forever. It has no beginning or end. Once we grasp the importance of this divine knowledge, we open the doors to the boundless power of happiness that is bursting within, waiting to be acknowledged, aching to be experienced.

ASHUCHI BHAVANA - CONTEMPLATION OF IMPURITY

The body is made up of flesh, blood, bones and waste matter. It is a pit of excretory filth, adobe of disease and ageing. I, the soul, am separate and different from the body. Any attachment to the body is useless. To strongly believe and feel that way is Ashuchi Bhavana.



YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA

Young Jains of America

Reconnecting with Our Roots | 13th Biennial Convention

In Partnership with the Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago

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Jai Jinendra,

To wrap up the 2018 YJA Convention, the four of us would like to share some final words:

To those of you who traveled from the far reaches of the country to the corners of the globe, we hope you've safely returned home. Though wherever 'home' may be, we want you to remember the second home you found at this year's Convention. From the family of attendees that surrounded you to the symphony of events that unfolded, we hope those 4 days in Chicago were a time you'll remember forever. In the past 10 days we've received heartwarming stories and an outpouring of positivity from the impact this experience had on each of you.

Some of you reconnected with a part of your inner self that has stayed dormant for years. Some of you discovered that being Jain in today's world isn't easy – that it involves discovering a hidden truth, facing fear with clear eyes, and taking a bold stand. And some of you saw what amazing things come of being surrounded by your roots – by the people who were brought up in similar ways you were and understand your story in ways others cannot.

We hope you discovered the power you hold to shape not only your future but also the world around you during the Keynote with Nikita T. Mitchell. We hope you enjoyed the novelty of our YJA App and found long-lasting friends aided by your ability to scan attendees' QR codes. We hope you learned how to dive into Jain principles and can now envision how to change communities through the Jain Academic Bowl and Jains in Action competitions. And we hope you will forever reminisce on dancing the night away at Garba in the Galaxy and the Windy Wonderland Formal.

As our journey comes to an end, we cannot forget those who helped make it possible. This Convention could not have happened without the support of the Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago and JAINA. We would also like to thank our Convention Committee, our Adult Volunteers, our Session Speakers, our Subcommittee members, and our Donors for uniting with us on this incredible journey.

And now as we close one chapter and begin another, let's march forward into the unknown – strengthened by our communities, supported by our history, and empowered by our roots. With that, we can't wait to see you at #YJA2020!

With #yjalove,
Chintav Shah, Dharmi Shah, Jinen Shah, and
Siddharth Shah
2018 YJA Convention Committee Co-Chairs
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CONVENTION ON STAGE



Six teams of five YJA attendees, each team led by a dynamic YJA peer mentor, were given the challenge two months before Convention to develop “a creative, forward-thinking, community-based solution to a pressing problem we face in our local Jain communities.” They worked together remotely, and eventually in-person, hack-athon-style, to brainstorm an idea, test it at their local Jain Centers, and finally present on stage to the entire YJA audience. From a service to help young people get rides to events at their Jain Sanghs, to a Jain Mentorship Program, the ideas were incredibly diverse!

Other JIA teams are also continuing to work on their projects now that Convention is over - look out for their initiatives in your own Jain sangh!

The winning JIA team was “Maharaj Saheb Messages”. The team created a platform where youth could post their questions and they would be sent to Maharaj Sahebs across India and the US, who would post the answers back in a forum like style so everyone could see post like tidbits of knowledge. They prototyped this with 30 real questions and sent it to Maharaj Sahebs at Siddhayatan US in Dallas, TX.

“We hope students will ask questions for curiosity and to strengthen their faith in Jainism instead of asking questions as “doubts” to poke holes in Jainism so that Jainism and the values it preaches can be spread to the next generations instead of dismissed for “lack of proof”. --Sheily Shah

The Jain Academic Bowl (JAB) is a team-based competition for young Jains. Topics range from Jain scriptures, prayers, and philosophy to Jain geography, history, and Jainism in the modern world.

20 JAB Semifinalists competed for 1st place!

- Winning Team:
 - Nitya Jani
 - Rihi Jain
 - Riya Shah
 - Shreyal Gandhi
 - Vaarin Shroff

- Admin Team:
 - Ayush Jain
 - Darshi Shah
 - Divya Shah
 - Juhi Shah
 - Milan Jain
 - Parin Shah

- Daytime Team:
 - Bansari Shah
 - Forum Shah
 - Neelam Savla
 - Parshva Vakharia



CONVENTION DAY ONE



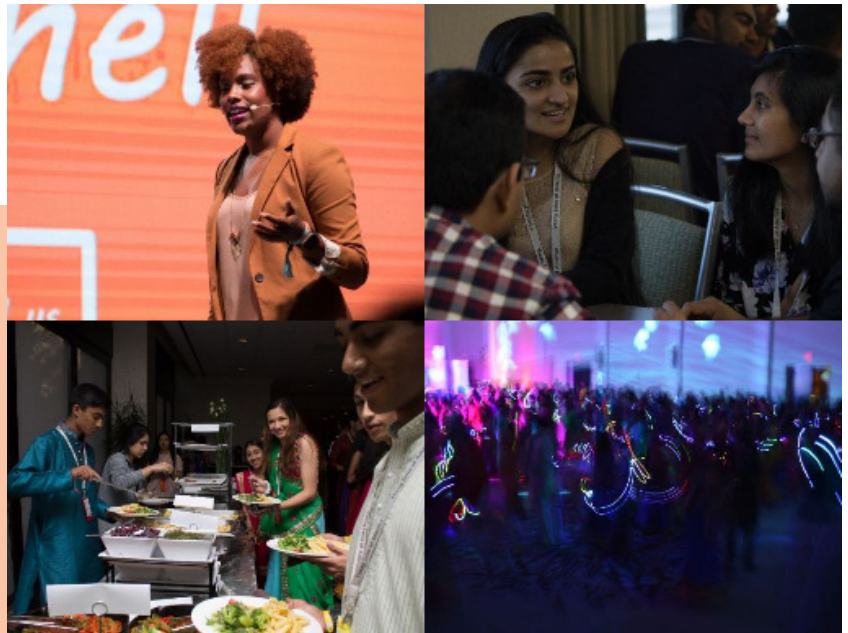
Convention kicked off with attendees connecting and reconnecting through ice breakers and a Mediterranean dinner. After dinner was our Opening Ceremony. The first social event of the night was our Netflix & Skillz Talent Show, followed by YJA Madness or whadaYJAKnow (JNF) mixers.

"While performing in front of a large crowd like this was a nerve-racking experience, it was a relief to see everyone cheering you on and supporting you."

--Achal Shah, Talent Show participant

CONVENTION DAY TWO

The day began with a choice of yoga, zumba, or English Pratikaman, followed by breakfast. We engaged with interactive Daytime sessions, keynote speaker Nikita Mitchell, and a networking hour for JNF attendees. We sampled Mexican and Italian cuisines for lunch and dinner. After, we danced until our dandiyas dropped at Garba in the Galaxy and enjoyed the Lassipalooza and All of the Lights (JNF) mixers.



"While sharing her story, [Nikita Mitchell] asked us to reflect on and share a defining moment for our faith. For me, I thought back to the couple distinctive points in how I approached Jainism and where I concentrated my efforts: my journey in understanding Anekantvad." --Vishwa Shah

Check out this video which highlights the best parts of the 2018 YJA Convention! bit.ly/yja18highlight

CONVENTION DAY THREE



The evening featured an Indian dinner and an Enchanted Garden dinner (JNF). We were blown away by the Windy Wonderland formal and the All Night Slumber Party.

"From being able to contribute by helping the participants, in the same way I was helped and encouraged as a JAB participant two years ago, felt truly rewarding. It not only helped me enhance my multitasking, prioritizing, organization, and management skills, but also gave me an unprecedented opportunity to connect with like-minded people, and build a greater sense of community."
--Darshi Shah, YJA JAB Admin Team 2018

Attendees continued to reconnect with their roots through Daytime sessions. In between sessions, attendees watched JAB and JIA Finals and loved an All-American lunch. JNF attendees participated in a Community Service event and heard from JNF Keynote Speaker, Ashwani Jain.

CONVENTION DAY FOUR



"As my term comes to an end, I have finally taken a chance to reflect on the journey that has brought me here. I have come to realize that one small idea and action can make all the difference in the lives of so many. For me, it was the objective to help young Jains connect with Jainism in America, specifically in my hometown of Chicago back where it all started in 1994."

-- Miten Shah

French Vanilla

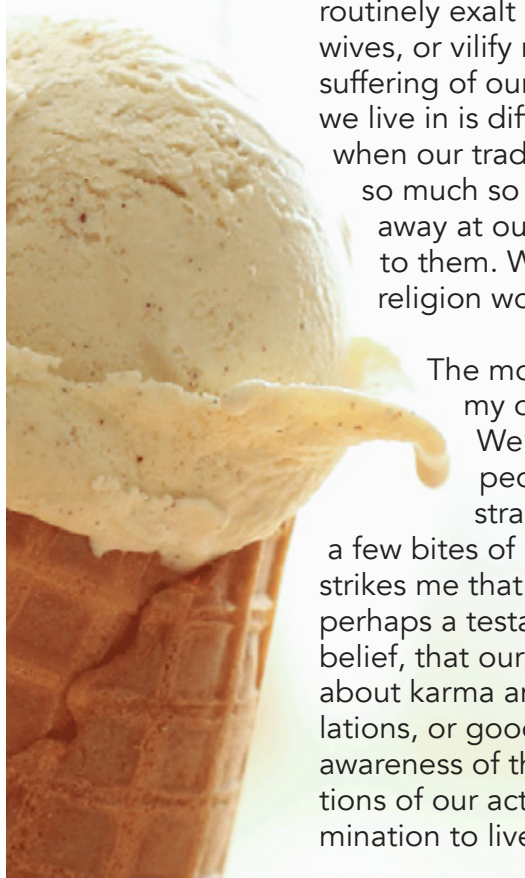
A longtime family friend offers me ice cream at a New Year's party. "It doesn't have eggs," she promises me, stopping the question on the tip of my tongue. Normally, I'd check for myself, but I decide to trust her. She's known my family for ten years, and I don't want to offend her. My dad sees me eating ice cream and takes some himself, indulging the incorrigible sweet tooth that runs in our family. A few bites later, however, his instinctive suspicion returns, so he picks up the carton to reassure himself that the ice cream is fine to eat.

When he calls my name, I don't need to turn and see the carton in his hand or hear the rest of his sentence to realize what had happened. The more carefully you stick to your beliefs, the more sickening the pain of each transgression. My vegetarianism has always been a core part of my identity, forged in no small part from the paralyzing experiences of having to hungrily deny a guilty-eyed host or waitress every time I was offered food, the frustrating sensation of having to repeat to wide-eyed, incredulous classmates that I wouldn't die if I ate meat, but was vegetarian out of choice, the awkwardness of having to frame every conversation about food through a restrictive lens that people didn't want to understand. The vanilla ice cream, once cold and sweet, turns to napalm in my stomach--a hungry, angry flame that refuses to burn out, threaten-

ing, ironically, to consume me from within.

In a society where it is already hard to talk openly about religion, it is even harder to speak about Jainism. Who are we to talk of non-absolutism in a world of alternative facts and fake news? Why lend any credence to our theory of karma when it is part of the same metaphysics that tells us our universe is geocentric? How can we extol the virtues of celibacy when our scriptures and stories routinely exalt men who married multiple wives, or vilify materialism in the face of the suffering of our country's poor? The world we live in is different from what it was like when our traditions were first written down, so much so that every inconsistency chips away at our beliefs and our will to adhere to them. What, then, are the roots of our religion worth?

The mostly silent car ride home gives my dad and I a chance to reflect. We're not the most emotional people, and for a moment I find it strangely silly about how upset a few bites of ice cream have made us. It strikes me that the depth of this reaction is perhaps a testament to the strength of our belief, that our religion at its core is not one about karma and penance, rules and regulations, or good and evil. It's about absolute awareness of the consequences and implications of our actions, and our unyielding determination to live our lives accordingly.



Siddharth Challani (East Windsor, NJ) is the First Place winner of the 2018 YJA Convention's Essay Content.

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How to Make Giving Feel Good

By Elizabeth W. Dunn, Michael I. Norton

(Elizabeth W. Dunn, Ph.D., is an associate professor of psychology at the University of British Columbia. Michael I. Norton, Ph.D., is an associate professor of business administration and a Marvin Bower Fellow at the Harvard Business School. This essay is adapted from their new book, Happy Money. Reprinted with permission from Greater Good, the online magazine of the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC). Based at UC Berkeley, the GGSC studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society.)

Since you get more joy out of giving joy to others, you should put a good deal of thought into the happiness that you are able to give. -- Eleanor Roosevelt

Studies show giving makes people happy, and happiness makes people give—but not always. Elizabeth Dunn and Michael Norton offer three ways to help people feel good about giving.

On a fine summer morning in Vancouver, British Columbia, our graduate student Lara Aknin approached passersby with a box of envelopes and an unusual request: “Are you willing to be in an experiment?” If people said yes, she asked them how happy they were, got their phone number, and handed them one of her mysterious envelopes.

When people opened the envelope, they found a five dollar bill, accompanied by a simple note. For some of them, the note instructed:

Please spend this \$5.00 today before 5pm on a gift for yourself or any of your expenses (e.g., rent, bills, or debt).

Others found a note that read:

Please spend this \$5.00 today before 5pm on a gift for someone else or a donation to charity.

In addition, some people got similar envelopes, but with a 20 dollar bill rather than a five. Armed with this extra bit of cash and their instructions about how to spend it, people went on their way. That evening, they received a call asking them how happy they were feeling, as well as how they had spent the money.



How did their purchases affect them? By the end of the day, individuals who spent money on others—who engaged in what we call “prosocial spending”—were measurably happier than those who spent money on themselves—even though there were no differences between the two groups at the beginning of the day. The amount of money people found in their envelopes—five dollars or 20—had no effect on their happiness. How people spent the money mattered much more than how much of it they got.

This experiment suggests that spending as little as five dollars to help someone else can increase your own happiness. Similarly, in a representative sample of more than 600 Americans, the amount of money individuals devoted to themselves was unrelated to their overall happiness; what did predict happiness was the amount of money they gave away: The more they invested in others, the happier they were. This relationship between prosocial spending and happiness held up even after taking into account individuals’ income.

And it extends well beyond North America: A survey conducted by the Gallup World Poll between 2006 and 2008 found that in 120 out of 136 countries, people who donated to charity in the past month reported greater satisfaction with life. This relationship emerged in poor and rich countries alike—again, it held up even after controlling for individuals’ income. Across the 136 countries studied, donating to charity had a similar relationship to happiness as doubling household income. The link between prosocial spending and happiness seems to be remarkably universal.

But these findings don't mean that people always experience pure, unmitigated happiness from helping others: Research shows that the nature of the giving situation matters. Investing in others can take a seemingly limitless variety of forms, from donating to a charity that helps strangers in a faraway country to buying lunch for a friend.

When does giving promote the most happiness? Understanding the answer to this complex question can help us get the biggest happiness bang for our own prosocial buck—and can help us create positive giving experiences for our children, clients, customers, employees, and donors. Below, we describe three strategies designed to boost the impact of investing in others.

1. Make It a Choice

Most of us have experienced a situation in which we felt cornered into providing help, whether by an overeager street canvasser, a colleague's child selling overpriced chocolate bars for her basketball team, or a friend's awkward request for a loan (an event so ubiquitous that Googling "awkward loan requests" gets about 90 million hits). Not surprisingly, feeling cornered can suck the joy out of giving.

Research by Netta Weinstein and Richard Ryan backs this up. In one study, 138 college students kept a daily diary over a two-week period, reporting how they felt each day and whether they had helped someone else or done something for a worthy cause. Students reported feeling better on days when they did something prosocial, but only when their actions felt self-chosen. If students helped because they felt like they had to or because people would be mad otherwise, they felt worse on days when they did good things.

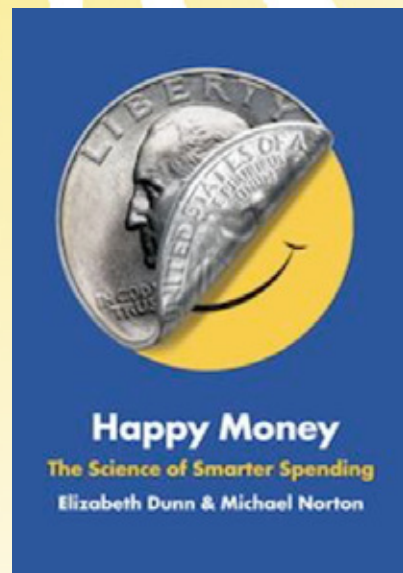
The value of choice can also be seen in brain scans. In a study at the University of Oregon, researchers gave \$100 to people, who then donated some of this money to a food bank—all from the inside of a scanner that assessed brain activity as they donated. Sometimes people could choose whether to give money, but sometimes the donations were mandatory, more like taxation.

Even when donations were mandatory, giving to this worthwhile charity provoked activation in reward areas of the brain. But activation in these reward areas (along with self-reported satisfaction) was considerably greater when people chose to donate than when their prosocial spending was obligatory.

So what does this mean if you're a professional fundraiser? Maybe you should just set up a pretty website and then let people decide whether to donate of their own accord. There's just one problem with this strategy: You're not likely to collect much money. One of the most common reasons people report donating to charity is that someone asks them to give. The trick, then, is to craft charitable appeals that encourage people to give—without making them feel forced to comply.

Even subtle changes in the nature of a request can make all the difference. In one study, a graduate student requested a bit of help and ended her plea by saying either, "It's entirely your choice whether to help or not" or "I really think you should help out." In both cases, the personal plea was highly

effective. More than 97 percent of people agreed to help. Importantly, though, helpers felt happier if they had been reminded that helping was their choice rather than being told they should help. What's more, people reminded of choice provided higher-quality assistance and felt a closer



sense of connection with the person they helped.

2. Make a Connection

It may seem obvious that gifts can help strengthen relationships. Indeed, after learning that their girlfriends have selected a desirable gift for them,

men in long-term relationships are significantly more likely to say that the relationship will continue—and culminate in marriage.

But not only do gifts make us feel close to others; feeling closer to others makes us feel better about gifts. Research shows that people derive more happiness from spending money on “strong ties” (such as significant others, but also close friends and immediate family members) than on “weak ties” (think a friend of a friend, or a step-uncle).

How you give and experience this connection is important, too. To explore this idea, Lara Akin, who is now a professor at Simon Fraser University, decided to hand out \$10 Starbucks gift cards. She told some people to use the gift card to take another person out for coffee. She told others to give the gift card away to someone else, but she insisted that they refrain from accompanying that person to Starbucks. So, people in both groups got the chance to invest in others, specifically through the gift of caffeination, but only one group was allowed to spend time with the beneficiary of their gift.

Meanwhile, Lara handed out additional gift cards to a different group of lucky people, telling them to spend the gift card on themselves; half of these people went to Starbucks alone, while the others visited Starbucks with a friend but spent the card only on themselves.

Who was happiest by the end of the day? The people who used the gift card to benefit someone else and spent time with that person at Starbucks. Investing and connecting provided the most happiness.

Think of your own pro-social spending budget in terms of levels of connection. You’re likely to get the biggest happiness bang for your prosocial buck if you invest in others in ways that help you connect with people, especially people you care about.

But it’s possible to create a sense of connection even with total strangers. A particularly strong example of that is the website DonorsChoose.org,

which allows donors to purchase supplies or fund projects for a specific group of students. Creating links between a specific donor and a specific classroom enables an emotional connection to emerge from what would otherwise be a cold financial transaction. Teachers send thank-you notes to donors, and students often do so as well. “When we deliver the initial thank-you note to the donor, our first ask is not for money,” says DonorsChoose founder Charles Best. “Instead, we ask the donor to write back to the classroom, and we measure success in the volume of two-way correspondence that we see between donors and classrooms.”

3. Make an Impact

A donation to UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) helps children around the world. There is no denying the importance of this cause, but it can be hard to see how a small donation to such a large, nebulous organization will make a concrete difference in a child’s life. Contrast that with Spread the Net, which allows donors to contribute \$10 to send one malaria net to sub-Saharan Africa. Their slogan? “A child dies needlessly from malaria every minute. One bed net can protect up to five children for five years. 1 net. 10 bucks. Save lives.”

Both UNICEF and Spread the Net are worthy organizations devoted to children’s well-being, and the two are partners. But it’s a lot easier to see how your donation to Spread the Net will make an impact. And, sure enough, research we’ve conducted has found that when donors give money to Spread the Net, they get a bigger happiness boost than when they give money to UNICEF.

As that finding suggests, people feel better about giving money when they can sense the real-world impact of their generosity. Knowing that we’re having an impact on someone else is another critical factor in transforming good deeds into good feelings.

What’s more, enabling donors to see the specific impact of charitable initiatives carries a huge

potential payoff: By maximizing the emotional benefits of giving, the strategy can make people more willing to behave generously in the future.

Evidence for that claim comes from a recent study we co-authored with Lara Aknin. After reflecting on a time when they had spent money on themselves or others, students received an envelope filled with cash. This time, though, they were allowed to choose how to spend their windfall. Not only did people feel happier after reflecting on a time when they spent money on others, but the happier they felt after thinking about their past spending experience, the more inclined they were to spend the new cash-filled envelope on others rather than themselves. Giving and happiness reinforce each other, creating a positive feedback loop.

Is it possible to let people taste the joy of making a positive impact for as little as a dollar? It's tough to imagine how such a small donation could make a difference—unless you join forces with others. In 2012, Daniel Hawkins formed the Dollar Collective. Members each contribute one dollar, and the group decides what random act of generosity to perform with the pool of money. As their first act, they surprised a young couple out for Valentine's Day and paid for their entire meal. And the couple who received the unexpected free meal? They decided to give the money they saved on dinner to a local charity (as well as buy some treats for their cat).

Just one example, but it points to a larger scientific truth: When prosocial spending is done right—when it feels like a choice, when it connects us with others, and when it makes a clear impact—even small gifts can have a big effect on happiness, potentially spurring a domino effect of generosity.





YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA

Young Jains of America

Federation of Jain Associations in North America

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Jai Jinendra,

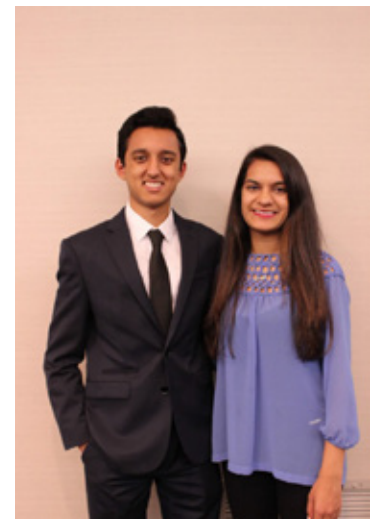
In 1991, a group of pioneering young Jains came together with a vision to promote and spread Jain values amongst the youth of America. Since then, YJA has continued to spread awareness of Jain values through social, educational, and networking opportunities. Over the years, YJA has grown immensely, connecting over 10,000 young Jains with a passion for bettering their communities and learning about their Jain roots.

Throughout the years, YJA has worked hard to create a number of projects and platforms that allow youth to not only learn about Jain principles, but to also connect with them and apply them to their own lives. In these next few pages, we are excited to share with you some of what our organization has accomplished this year.

- Our Regional Retreats take place annually in each of the six regions, where Jain youth from around the region and the country meet other young Jains, learn principles and values through educational sessions led by youth, and partake in social and service activities throughout the weekend!
- Our College Chapters allow for Jain youth in college to connect with one another and get involved with the community on their campuses.
- Our Young Minds project is a series of online publications, with articles written by young Jains on a variety of topics, ranging from life experiences to Jain and Vegan diets to careers and networking.
- YJA Forums allows young Jains from around the country to lead and participate in virtual discussions on many topics that affect Jain youth in today's day and age.
- YJA Pathshala brings the Pathshala classroom setting to our youth in an online, easy to understand version, with quick videos and detailed handouts that allow anyone to learn about Jainism!
- Our biennial Conventions bring over 750 youth from around the world for an unforgettable 4-day experience filled with sessions, networking, and social activities.
- Finally, download the YJA Mobile App. We will soon enough have the latest YJA breakthroughs, projects, and events near you featured in the app.

As an organization, YJA strives to create exciting social, networking, educational, and service opportunities. We collaborate with national sanghs, JAINA, donors, and supporters to ensure that our initiatives touch the lives of Jains around the world in a meaningful and impactful way. We look forward to continue working to empower the next generation of young Jains in America.

with #yjalove,
Siddharth Shah and Dharmi Shah
2017-2018 YJA Executive Board Co-Chairs



Young Jains of America (YJA) is the umbrella youth organization of the **Federation of Jain Associations in North America (JAINA)**. The mission of YJA is to be recognized nationally and internationally as an umbrella youth organization for establishing a network to share Jain heritage and religion through youth.



YOUNG JAINS OF AMERICA

JAINA's youth arm, YJA, was founded in 1991 to serve Jain youth ages 14-29 across the country.

PROGRAMS

College Chapters

Find your Jain peers in school through student organizations at campuses across the country.

yja.org/colleges

YJA Pathshala

An online self-paced course for learning more about Jainism. Intended for youth ages 16-29.

yja.org/pathshala

YJA Forums

Interact with and learn from others, discuss, respond, comment, and dive into Jainism like never before.

forums.yja.org

Regional Retreats

Each region hosts a weekend retreat to bring youth from across the region together.

yja.org/retreats

Local Events

Join in on movie or bowling nights to community service activities to Jainism-related discussions.

yja.org/regionalevents

YJA Mobile App

The central location for all things YJA related, coming soon with info on local events and education resources.

yja.org/app

LEADERSHIP

Get more involved with YJA!

Local Representatives

Coordinate local YJA events and gain valuable leadership skills! Applications will open in the fall.

yja.org/localrep

Executive Board

Be one of 16 leaders shaping YJA's work nationwide! Learn a multitude of skills and join the YJA Board family.

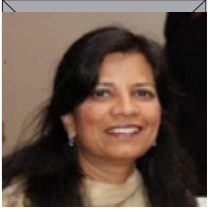
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Convention Committee

Help organize and execute YJA's largest and most impactful event. Look out for Convention Committee applications in Fall of 2020!

Importance of Ethics on the Spiritual Path

By Reena Shah



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

Neeti or ethical code of conduct is a set of moral principles used to govern the conduct of an individual or a group in accordance with primary values and ethical standards. It is not a burden to bear, but a prudent and effective guide which furthers life and success. Ethics are important not only in business and worldly life but also in spiritual life because it is an essential part of the foundation on which a civilized society is built. The principles of ethics that help us solve ethical dilemmas or guide our value, behavior and even decision making in everyday life are the same principles that provide guidance in business.

Reading Shrimad Rajchandra's (Krupalu Dev) *Patrank* 496 inspired me to reflect on my own life to see if I adhered to ethical code of conduct (neeti) prescribed by him. Code of conduct not only helps run one's life smoothly, but also guides in following sadguru's teachings (aagna). Krupalu Dev wrote *Patrank* 496 to the successful Morbi magistrate, Dharsibhai, emphasizing the importance and greatness of ethics. The *Patrank* talks about establishing ethics/morality in a householder's life in totality. Failure to stick to ethical code could lead to ineffectiveness of Guru's teachings. A life observing all ethical codes will be one of truthfulness, honesty, fearlessness, compassion, love, patience, etc. These are all qualities required to surrender and follow Sadguru's teachings.

It also reminded me of *Patrank* 194 where Krupalu Dev states that the entire path of spiritual awareness starts with obeying the order of a *Sadguru*, and obedience to the master's teachings leads the disciple to self-knowledge and *Moksha*. Krupalu Dev defines neeti

as, "to remain fully and absolutely just and fair while earning one's livelihood" (*Patrank* 496). And a person following the code of conduct will be able to understand the strength, importance, and secret of sadguru's teachings and words. Krupaludev's use of the word "*Saangopaang*" encompasses all body parts (including nail and hair), and one of the four vedas. In other words, one must not engage in unethical behavior (aneeti) even slightly through any body part from toe to hair to one's thoughts (*bhaav*).

One is reminded of Shrenik Maharaja's story who embraced death to follow neeti in totality in one of his births where he was the tribal king. In that birth once a muni visited him and told him not to eat meat anymore. The tribal king showed his inability to follow and said, "if you give me such an aagna, how will I follow it as a tribal king?" The muni said, "in that case, at least avoid eating crow meat." The tribal king agreed to it thinking he would never need to eat that kind of meat. However, it so happened that he fell sick after this and the only way his life could be saved was if he ate crow meat. The tribal king refused to eat crow meat as that would break his aagna and the word that he had given to that muni. The tribal king passes away with the strong *bhaav* of not breaking aagna. This same tribal king, who was Shrenik Raja will become *tirthankar* in the future. The story explains the importance of following aagna which resulted from leading a life geared towards neeti. It is such an inspiring example of a person's determination to follow aagna even when his life was at stake.

Nevertheless, if one is faced with a life-threatening situation where one has to break the moral code, it should be done with immense amount of remorse, to attain the state of freedom from worldly pleasures (*vairagya*). Neeti in fact is the first step in the spiritual journey. In other words, neeti has the ability to help us experience true faith through right conduct. The way we behave and conduct ourselves, our disposition, our stage of progress in this path, our tactfulness, our solution, what we attain, what we donate, our support or where we take refuge, or even our relationships is all *neeti*.

There are times when I personally find it difficult to follow ethical code in all situations especially in current times



when people take advantage of others for being honest and fair. My master (*sadguru*), *Param Pujya Pappaji* told me, "what is yours that someone will take from you? The only thing you have is your soul and it is good if people take advantage and take away the unwanted things." This really opened my eyes and clarified my doubts that were bothering me. Pujyashri's compassion and *karuna bhaav* towards me helped me understand the importance of *neeti*. Typically we all try to follow some of the rules of ethical code and feel satisfied with so little. For instance: when we pay tax, we evaluate various tax options to determine how to conduct business and personal transactions in order to reduce or eliminate tax liability with the intent of saving money. We also tend to favor our family or community member to help them out by breaking or bending rules at workplace. Once we do that, we are guilty of breaking the moral code of conduct.

Only a person walking on this path of *neeti* is *moksha* worthy. For instance, in any sport or board games, rules provide an agreement of understanding to competition. Players are expected to follow rules governed by their team such as behavior, attending practices, camps and drills and wearing the correct uniform. However, if these rules are broken or compromised upon, players could suffer mild to severe consequences. They could even be asked to step out of a game for the season depending on the severity of offence. In similar fashion, if one breaks the code of conduct, one removes oneself from *mokshamarg* as one also breaks *sadguru aagna*.

Hence one should remain truthful, humble, practice non-violence, and follow *sadguru's* teachings. Once a person understands this and makes *sadguru bhakti* his sole purpose in life, then, *sadguru's* unprecedented (*apurv*) words (*vaani*), and guidance, will lead to unprecedented changes in thoughts (*bhaav*) and result in advancement on the spiritual path.

There is a story in *Jin aagam* that describes the importance of *sadguru's aagna* and *neeti*. During the time of king *Shrenik*, there was a householder (*shravak*) named *Punia* who lived with his wife in that kingdom. He earned his livelihood from the business of cotton trading that he ran with moral code of ethics. Both husband and wife lead a life of *neeti*. *Punia* would not eat his food until he fed a monk or a

person seeking food every day. Once, it so happened that due to low earnings in business, the couple could not afford feeding more than two people every day so they decided to eat on alternate days taking turns and continued to feed monk. Lord *Indra* praised him for his devotion. It is really inspiring to see his steadfastness in following *neeti* and maintaining equanimity even during tough times.

Punia shravak also did *samayik* every day. One day while doing *samayik* he experienced restlessness and wondered why this was happening to him. Each day he would stay in equanimity and be focused on his soul, but it was a different that day. He shared his mental state with his wife and wondered if they had broken the code of conduct in any way. Suddenly the wife remembered that she had borrowed *cowdung* to light up her stove. However, she forgot to return it back to the neighbor. She then returned the *cowdung* to the neighbor immediately. Thereafter *Punia Shravak* could once again focus on his soul during *samayik*. Even Lord *Mahavir* praised his *samayik* ritual in his sermons.

Once King *Shrenik* asked Lord *Mahavir* how he could destroy his bad *karmas* to avoid being born in hell in his next life. He was ready to give up his entire kingdom for that. Lord *Mahavir* knew that it is not possible to change such *karma* once acquired by a person. However, to convey this message properly to the King, he said, "If you can buy the *punya karma* of one *samayik* from *Punia Shravak* then it may be possible to change the birth *karma* of your next life." As the picture shows, *Punia Shravak's samayik* was much more valuable than the king's wealth.

One cannot help admiring the integrity with which *neeti* was followed. This is an excellent example of following ethical code reminding us to not ignore or forget to return things of little financial value also. Though the *Patrank 496* is written to *Dharsibhai*, it sets the tone and path for all *mumukshus* on this path emphasizing the importance of following the moral code of conduct prescribed by a *sadguru*. Ethics provides us with a moral map, a framework that we can use to find our way through difficult issues such as the ones listed below:

- How to live a good life
- Our rights and responsibilities
- The language of right and wrong (truthfulness)
- Moral decisions - what is good and bad?
- When to stop earning or accumulating? (*aparigrah*)
- Intent to earn
- Managing Relationships (*abrahmcharya*)
- Ahimsa through mind, body, speech





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