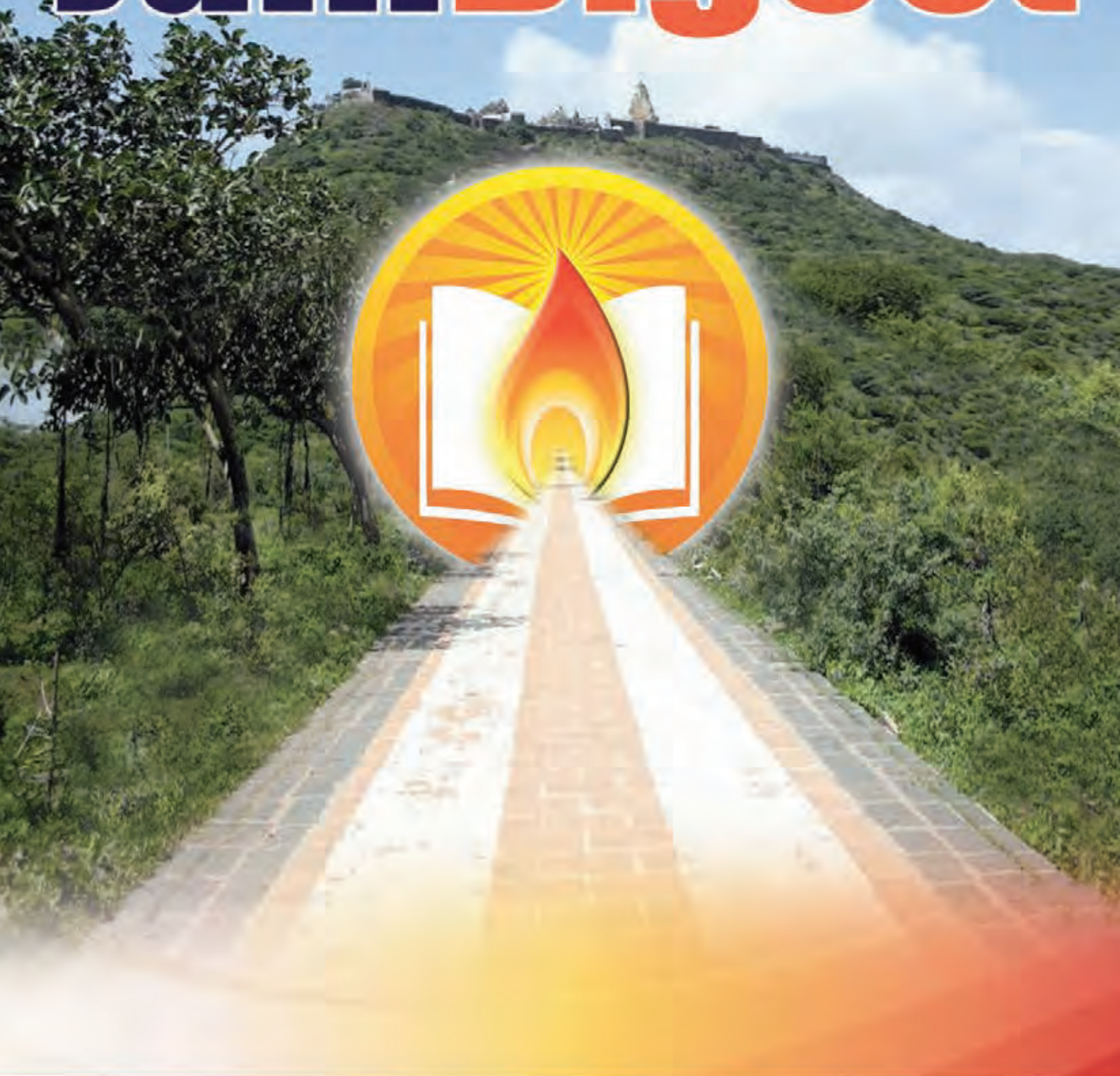


December 2015

JainDigest



A Publication by the Federation of Jain Associations in North America



JainDigest

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.

JAINA Headquarters: 722 S Main St, Milpitas, CA 95035

Tele: 408-262-6242, email: jainahq@gmail.com, Web: www.jaina.org

JAINA Executive Committee

President Ashok Domadia
ashokdomadia2009@gmail.com

First VP: Guntant Shah
profgaryshah@gmail.com

Treasurer: Rita Sheth
jainatreasurer1@gmail.com

Secretary: Shobha Vora
shvora2010@gmail.com

VP Northeast: Dr. Mamta Shaha
mamta.shaha@gmail.com

VP Mideast: Prakash Mehta
pmehta@psiint.com

VP Midwest: Hemant T. Shah
hemantil@yahoo.com

VP Southeast: Rajendra Mehta
rajikumud@hotmail.com

VP Southwest: Pradeep Shah
pshah972@gmail.com

VP West: Mahesh Wadher
mahesh.wadher@gmail.com

VP Canada: Raj Patil
drpatil@hotmail.com

Past President: Prem Jain
premjain1@gmail.com

YJA Chair: Puja Savla
chairs@yja.org

YJA Chair: Sunny Dharod
chairs@yja.org

YJP Co-Chair : Neal Daftary
neal.daftary@yjp.jaina.org

YJP Co-Chair: Purvin Vakharwala
purvin.vakharwala@yjp.jaina.org

JAIN DIGEST Editorial Team

310-721-5947

email: jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

Jain Digest Committee Chairman

Mahesh Wadher

Editors

Dilip Parekh
Sanjay Bhandari
Yogendra Bobra
Reena Shah

Art and Design

Jayana Shah
Rishita Dagli
Pooja Shah

IT Support

Giriraj Jain

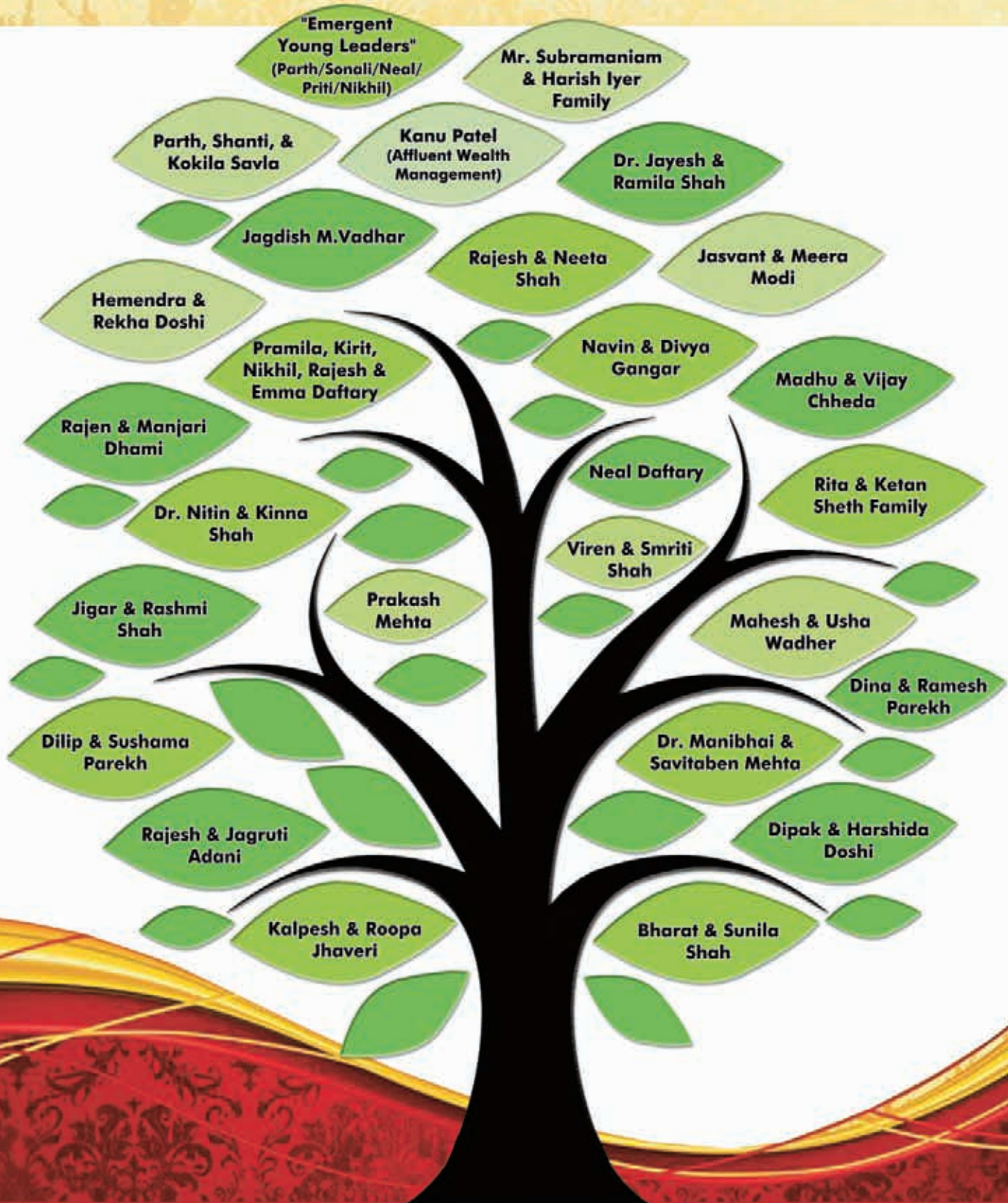
Advertisements

Mahesh Wadher
Shobha Vora

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

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



Please sponsor a leaf for \$101.00 to support Jain Digest Publication that is sent out FREE to 15,000 households. Please make your check payable to JAINA and mail it to Mahesh Wadher, 4099 Shady Ridge Circle, Corona, CA-92881. If you need any further information please email to Mahesh.Wadher@gmail.com or call: 909.376.4027

JAINA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - 2015 - 2017



*Ashok Domadia
(President)*



*Gunvant Shah
(First Vice President)*



*Rita Sheth
(Treasurer)*



*Shobha Vora
(Secretary)*



*Prem Jain
(Past President)*



*Dr. Mamta Shaha
(VP Northeast Region)*



*Prakash Mehta
(VP Mideast Region)*



*Hemant T Shah
(VP Midwest Region)*



*Rajendra Mehta
(VP Southeast Region)*



*Pradeep Shah
(VP Southwest Region)*



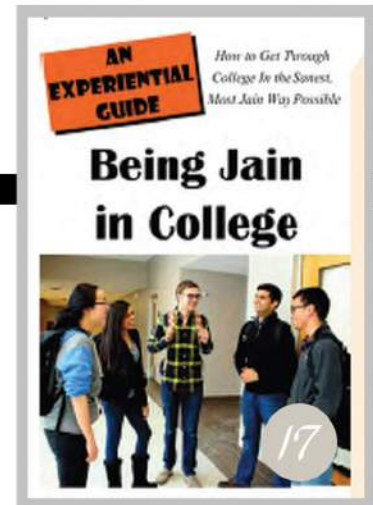
*Mahesh Wadher
(VP West Region)*



*Raj Patil
(VP Canada)*

Contents

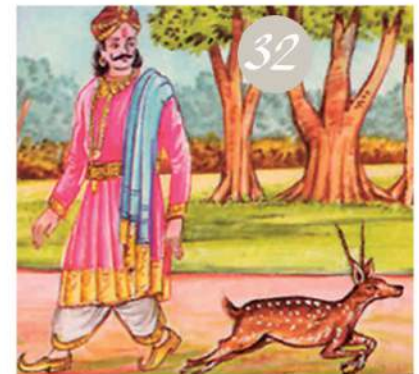
December 2015



Editor's Note.....6
 Jain Digest Chairman's message.....6
 JAINA President's message.....7
 JAINA Convention Report by Dilip Shah.....9

What Jainism Should Mean to Us By Anop R. Vora 16
 How to Get Through College in the Most Jain Way Possible by Sonali Vakharia 17

Santhara By Yogendra Bobra 18
 Sallekhana By Dr. Rekha J. Shah 20
 Bhagvan Mahavir Says - Respect the Nature By Pujya Acharya Chandanaji 22
 Parliament Of The World's Religions By Kirit Daftari, Naresh Jain 23
 JAINA Committee Spotlight, Media Production By Dr. Mamta Shaha 28
 Possessing or Getting Possessed By Pujya Rakeshbhai 30
 Children's Corner 32
 Tying The Knot (Matrimonials) 34
 Recipes 36
 JAINA Awards..... 37
 JAINA Committee List 42



Editor's Note



Jain Digest- Chairman's Message



Om Shri Veetragey Namah

Jai Jinendra,

On behalf of the JAINA the Executive Committee and the Jain Digest Editorial Team, it gives me immense pleasure to bring you the December 2015 issue of Jain Digest.

I am thankful to Jain Digest Committee chairman Maheshbhai Wadher and JAINA President Ashokbhai Domadia for trusting me to serve in the role of the Editor for Jain Digest. My sincere thanks to Lataben Champsee and Chetanbhai Sanghvi for their mentorship while working as one of the editors for eJain Digest and NewsFlash during 2010-2011. I have learned a lot from them.

With blessings from Bhagwan Mahavir, support from Dilipbhai Shah, Kiritbhai Daftary, Pravinbhai Shah and dedication & hard work by the members of the Editorial Team, we have been able to put together this issue of the magazine in a short period of two months. My heartfelt thanks to all the authors for their timely contribution. Special thanks to our Graphics team, led by Jayanaben Shah, for bringing a new look and feel to the magazine.

In this issue, we bring you detailed reports of the two important events that happened in 2015 – JAINA Convention and Parliament of the World's Religions. We have included timely articles about the current topic Santhara, which has recently attracted worldwide attention. You will also find new features such as JAINA Spotlight, Children's Corner, Recipes and more. Going forward, we plan to bring you news and stories that highlight Jain values to educate you, inspire you and help you in your spiritual journey.

We need your help. You can help us in two ways.

- 1) Please give us your feedback by filling out the form at <https://goo.gl/9rUCSw>. Please let us know what you liked, what we can improve upon, what type of articles you would like to see and any other suggestion you may have.
- 2) We are looking for editors that would like to join us in bringing inspiring stories related to Jain values and principles. Please contact us at jaindigestpublication@gmail.com.

Thank you for your interest and support. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

In Seva,
Dilip Parekh

Jai Jinendra,

On behalf of the entire Jain Digest team, I wish all a very healthy, peaceful and spiritual new year.

I am immensely thankful to Lataben Champsee, the previous Jain Digest editorial team and colleagues who have

been maintaining the standard of excellence with dedication and doing admirable work in publishing the Jain Digest for past several years.

I thank JAINA Executive Committee for giving me the opportunity to serve as a Jain Digest Committee Chairman. My sincere thanks to the new editorial team members who contributed their valuable time in putting this publication together in a very short period of 2 months.

This issue is dedicated to all those who contributed to this magazine with their wonderful articles and reports.

We humbly request everyone receiving this publication to fill out the attached card and mail it back in the self-addressed envelope enclosed herewith. This will help us in updating our database and will tell us about your preference in receiving a printed copy or a web-version of Jain Digest. We earnestly request your donations to help support Jain Digest publication that is mailed to 15000 households worldwide free of charge.

Please share your ideas and thoughts about what you would like to read in this publication. Feel free to send us articles or any information you may wish to share with the community at large.

On behalf of Jain Digest team I ask for forgiveness if we have missed or misrepresented any information while presenting the material to the best of our ability.

We are looking for more volunteers to work with our publication team, who are willing to contribute their time and talents in content development and designing..

To reach us please write to:

Jaindigestpublication@gmail.com

Sincerely,
Mahesh Wadher



JAINA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Jai Jinendra!

Wish you and your family a very Happy, Healthy and Spiritually rewarding New Year! Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your President. I am humbled by the faith you have put in me and assure you that I will strive to keep your faith by carrying out my responsibilities to the best of my abilities. I am fortunate to serve in JAINA Executive Committee comprised of eminent Jain Leaders from across USA and Canada.

JAINA and North American Jain Community have achieved a lot that is worth celebrating in 2015. Below are some highlights:

- **Nepal Earthquake Relief:** As a result of your generosity, JAINA World Community Services Committee succeeded in raising \$80,000 and has distributed all the amount for schools and infrastructure development projects in Nepal.
- **JAINA Convention in Atlanta:** Our JAINA Convention in July 2015 was a life-time memorable event. The theme was "Jainism: World of Non-violence". More than 300 Volunteers put in countless hours to create a four day event which brought together nearly 4,000 Jains from 30+ countries. We thank Jain Society of Greater Atlanta for their warm Southeastern hospitality.
- **Lunch with Prime Minister Narendra Modi:** I had the honor and privilege to represent you at a lunch with India's PM Narendra Modi in September 2015. PM Modi agreed to look into JAINA's request to stop beef export to USA and Canada.
- **Bi-weekly e-Newsletter:** We have increased frequency from monthly to bi-weekly of JAINA e-Newsletter to ensure timely and vibrant communication between JAINA and you. The e-Newsletter goes out to 12,000 Jain families with 50% click-thru rate! Visit www.jaina.org and click on register at the top to receive this informative bi-weekly e-Newsletter and free JAINA calendar in the future.
- **Jain Religious Videos:** Over 350 Jain Religious Videos are now available on JAINA website. Almost all religious videos are now in one place and you can search by keywords. Visit www.jaina.org and click on YouTube at top right to view these videos.
- **Sallekhana/Santhara:** Rajasthan high court outlawed practice of Sallekhana/Santhara in Rajasthan. JAINA collaborated with global Jain Leaders and attained stay order from Supreme Court. JAINA will continue to provide leadership to resolve this issue.





Jain

- Youth Exchange Program: 15 youths from India attended JAINA Convention in Atlanta in July and visited several Jain Centers afterwards as a part of Youth Exchange Program between JAINA and JITO in India. Youths from USA and Canada will be visiting Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad in December 2015 in second phase of this program. Please encourage youths in your community to participate in this culturally enriching program.
- Parliament of World's Religions: JAINA co-sponsored a new Ahimsa Award. A Jain Temple graced the entrance to the Parliament held in Salt Lake City in October. JAINA booth was frequently visited. Jain Scholars were Keynote Speakers at Opening and Closing Ceremonies.
- Academic Liaison: MOUs were signed for Jain Studies courses at University of California – Irvine and University of San Diego.
- Women's Committee: JAINA launched Women's Committee led by Dr. Mamta Shaha in October to focus and drive issues for women in our community.
- Wellness Committee: JAINA launched Wellness Committee led by Dr. Nitin Shah in Los Angeles to support and encourage healthy living practices within our community across USA and Canada.
- BOD Meetings in Los Angeles: JAINA held annual BOD meeting at Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) in October. Over 25 Jain Leaders gathered to further expand JAINA's vision for the next two years. All attendees agreed to build stronger partnership between member organizations, partner organizations and JAINA. Many thanks to Virendra Shah, President of JCSC for hosting the event at this beautiful Jain Center.
- Congratulations and Welcome to new YJA Co-Chairs Puja Savla and Sunny Dharod. YJA Team is planning a spectacular YJA Convention in Los Angeles over the July 4th weekend in 2016.
- Congratulations and Welcome to new YJP Co-Chairs Neal Daftary and Purvin Vakhawala. Incoming YJP Board is planning to grow YJP further. They are developing programs for YJP to connect and network according to the demands of Jains aged 25 to 40.

Looking ahead, 2016 promises to bring Jains together globally and spread knowledge of Jainism as never before. JAINA is embarking on new educational, technology, media and social media initiatives.

Together, we will continue to deliver on our shared vision to evolve and promote Jain practices, educate Jains and non-Jains to create a strong North American Jain community, expand awareness of Jainism as we collaborate globally and energize our community by evolving social change.

Warm Regards,
Ashok Domadia



18TH BIENNIAL JAINA CONVENTION REPORT

By Dilip V Shah, Philadelphia, PA



Thursday Night Raas Garba

4,000 people from all over North America, India and many other countries attended the 18th Biennial JAINA Convention that was held at the Georgia International Convention Center in Atlanta, GA from July 2nd to July 5th, 2015. The theme of the four day Convention was: "JAINISM – World of Nonviolence" and it was hosted by Jain Society of Greater Atlanta. It was a joyful gathering produced jointly by JAINA team headed by Ashok Domadia as Convener and Jain Society of Greater Atlanta team headed by Dipak shah, Past President of JSGA aided by over 300 volunteers who had worked tirelessly for over a year. JSGA team proved to be an excellent host by providing tasteful decorations, displays with religious themes and sumptuous meals for breakfast, lunch and dinners in a friendly feast like atmosphere.

The convention had many planned activities for everyone and also allowed private gatherings for associate groups like KOJAIN (Kutchi Oswal Jains), Veerayatan, IAAMJVM International association of Alumni Association of Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya, Halari Visa Oswal Samaj and Jain Health Professionals to meet and exchange views.

Thursday, July 2nd – Opening Day

The convention began in the afternoon with a blessing ceremony by our Sadhus, Sadhvis followed by Dwar opening of the on-site beautiful temple created by the Atlanta Sangh. JAINA Board and the host Committee invited the VIPs and donors to a "Meet & Greet" reception where donors were recognized and honored. This was followed by the "Swagatham" ceremony welcoming all the attendees that included singing and folk dance performances by members of Atlanta, Chicago and Southern California Sanghs. After dinner was the great ice breaker, a traditional Raas Garba



Temple opening ceremony



Swagatham Ceremony

night by Abhaysingh Rathod and his group that lasted till midnight. The vigor, joy and enthusiasm displayed by old and young participants in their colorful costumes foretold of great things to come in the days ahead.



Jain

Friday, July 3rd – A Grand Procession, Inspiring Keynote Speeches, Breakout Sessions and Entertainment

Early Friday morning provided opportunity for Yoga and Meditation sessions. After breakfast procession of all the participating Sanghs with their colorful flags started from the front of the convention center that showcased a float with idol of Lord Mahavir, scholars, ladies with traditional Kalashes on their head and dancers with traditional songs and music in festive moods. As the procession circled around and reached back to the convention hall, as if on cue, light drizzles pushed everyone back into the convention center in a hurry. The joy in everyone's heart multiplied as light showers seemed to bestow heavenly blessings. Soon every one took seats in the international Ballroom as the Plenary session was about to begin.



Procession

The hall was filled with excitement as the day's most important event was about to begin. In attendance were Counsel General of India, Hon. Nagesh Singh, Congressman John Lewis, former UN ambassador Andrew Young, Mayor of Nocrass Hon. Bucky Johnson, Nipun Mehta, members of JAINA Executive committee, several past Presidents of JAINA, Atlanta's host committee, our Sadhus, Sadhvis and scholars, Mr R. K. Sehgal and other local dignitaries. For auspicious beginning, Sadhvi Sanghmitraji recited Navkar Mantra and Acharya Lokesh Muni gave Manglacharan. After opening remarks by JAINA President Prem Jain, convenor Ashok Domadia and JSGA President Samir Shah, Counsel General Mr. Singh read a congratulatory message from Prime Minister Narendra Modi that energized everyone.

Next came a recorded video message of Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji, whose spiritual guidance along with that of Late Acharya Shri Sushil Kumar Ji inspired formation of JAINA in 1981. Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanuji has attended past 17 JAINA Conventions but this year, he could not travel to the convention due to his advanced age of 93. In his message, he congratulated JAINA for carrying forward the mission. He emphasized the three core values of JAIN dharma - Ahimsa, Anekant and Aparigraha - as guiding light by which all jains should live.

Another video message was from Gov. Nathan Deal of Georgia who congratulated JSGA for hosting a first JAINA convention in the South East region of the country. He linked the JAINA convention theme to Atlanta native Late Dr. Martin Luther King and his life long activism through nonviolence.

Before the three keynote speeches, JAINA and the JSGA honored two Maha Sangh Patris: Sawan & Riya Shah; Atul and Rupa Doshi and four Sanghpatris: Gulabbhai Mownaben Kothari, Mahendra and Madhulika Bapna, Santosh and Sarla Kothari all of Atlanta and Mafat Kaka and Vasantbhai Patel of Chicago (Patel Brothers) who donated groceries for all the meals for four days of the convention and helped with importing of many needed items from India.

Madhuben Sheth, past President of the Atlanta Sangh showed a video clip of bloody confrontations by the state troopers in Atlanta of the civil right marchers John Lewis and Andrew Young. She mentioned the courage, determination and leadership of these two prophets of nonviolence – the theme of our convention. She praised Congressman John Lewis for working tirelessly for civil rights for the past 50 years!

Seventy Five year old Congressman Lewis welcomed everyone to his home town of Atlanta and mentioned Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King for his inspiration and nonviolent path that allowed him to be present at the convention and without whom, Barack Obama would not be the President of America today. To illustrate power of Peace, Love and Nonviolence, he told story of a state trooper, a Ku Klux Klan member who had beaten him in a 1961 march in South Carolina; approached him in 2009 in Washington. The trooper with his son on his side, apologized to the congressman and asked for forgiveness for beating him.



Digest

When Lewis accepted his apology, he saw tears down the 40 year old son and the 70 year old trooper's eyes. They hugged and celebrated that peace was possible. Again he quoted Gandhi "It is Non Violence or Non Existance!" We must live together as brothers and sisters or die as fools.



Keynote Speakers Congressman John Lewis and Ambassador Andrew Young with JAINA leaders

Co- Convenor Mr. Harshad Shah of NJ introduced Civil rights leader Andrew Young Jr. Recipient of the Presidential medal of Freedom, who was America's UN ambassador, congressman and former mayor of Atlanta. When Mr Young got up and said "Jai Jinendra" to all, the crowd went wild with a long applause. He started by telling the audience that he got his first lesson in nonviolence from his wife who studied nonviolence and Gandhi as a freshman in college. From there they continued their journey to redeem soul of America from triple evils of racism, wars and poverty. He noted progress on race and war but bemoaned the lack of progress on ending poverty in US and around the world. Poverty comes from not having jobs and creates conflicts. He admired peaceful, religious and enterprising nature of Jains who create wealth and jobs and thanked everyone for being part of the global solution. As an exaple, he talked of a problem he faced as a young engineer working on Victoria dam in Uganda. He was assigned to cleanup green algee at the bottom of the dam and worked at killing it. Recently, he saw that same algee in Lousiana. But instead of trying to kill it, now his foundation helps to grow it because they discovered this algee, "Duck weed", is full of protein. A teaspoon of refined protein gives more nutrition than a whole chicken or 8 oz of steak! Respecting the enviornment, is the lesson from Jainism and he looked to work together with Jain community to reduce poverty, hunger and wars. His parting words "Peace, love and respect are the ways of Jainism that makes true revelation of God on this earth" were received by the audience with big round of applause.

The last keynote speaker of the session Nipun Mehta was introduced by the convenor Ashok Domadia. Nipun at age 25 started KARMA KITCHEN in Berkley as arestaurant where no one gets a bill for the meals they consume. It is left to the customers to drop what ever amount they wish in a box and the buisness is running fine! Next he founded "Service Space" and is preaching serial acts of compassion. In his keynote address, Nipun talked of Radical Humility. He gave an example of a scare one day in animal



Discourse by Pujya Rakeshbhai

kingdom that sky was falling. Everyone started running for cover but a little sparrow decided to do something about it. He lied down with his feet up in the air. When other animals asked him what he was doing, he told him that with his feet up in the air he was trying to preven the sky from falling! Nipun implored everyone to make efforts to give to the community whatever they can. He also pointed to Jain tradition of Michhami Dukadam – asking of forgiveness as supreme expression of humility.

The morning session ended with a group of singers from Atlanta Sangh singing "Maitry Bhav Nu Pavitra Jharnu" A respectful tribute to everyone's darling: Gurudev Shri Chitrabhanu!

After the lunch hour, breakout sessions provided ample choices to people to attend lectures from their favorite scholars: like Gurudev Shri Rakeshbhai, Acharya Shri Chandanaji, Dr. Hukumchand Bharill, Acharya Lokesh Muni, Bhattarak Charukeerti Ji, Pandit Dhirubhai Mehta (his last visit to the US), Samni Parimalji, Samni Suyashinidhiji, Samni Vikas Pragyaji, Tarlaben Doshi, Shrut Pragyaji Swami, Roopchandji Maharaj. There were some new scholars as well who came to the convention for the first time such as Rahul Kapoor Jain, Chandrasen Guruji and Shrenik Gala. There were presentations by various JAINA Committees also. These sessions were spread over two days; Friday afternoon and all day Saturday.



Shatavdhani Jay Jain with Sadhvi Shri Sanghmitraji

Shatavdhan: 27 year old Jay Jain of Veerayatan performed a short version of Shatavdhan. In a serene and pious enviornment, under the guidance of Acharya Shri Chandanaji and Sadhvi Sanghmitraji. Although he could remember 200 questions, due to shortness of available time, Jay

demonstrated his ability to memorize 35 questions put to him from the audience and later reciting them in random and also in reverse order. Of most interest to the audience was his seminar on how such memory power could be developed as he explained that human brain has much more abilities but most of us only employ about 2 or 3% of its power. He emphasized that his demonstration was neither a miracle or exercise in memory power but achievement of the soul by meditation.

JAIN Academic Education: Academic Liasion Committee of JAINA held two seminars under the chairmanship of Dr. Sulekh C. Jain to review the status of Jain Academic Education in colleges and universities in America. A total of 17 speakers made their presentations; Dr. Jagdish Sheth in his keynote address titled "Jainism: From a Footnote Religion to a Religion for the Future", mentioned that due to the changing environment and demographic diversity, Jainism must reposition itself right now. He made a very strong case for Jainism to share its richness and wisdom with the rest of the world. Nearly 20 universities and colleges offer classes in Jainism every semester. Some of the classes cover Jainism exclusively and some as part of World religions. Out of this, Jainism is offered as a full course at the following Universities: Florida International University, University of North Texas in Denton, Monmouth College in Illinois. Eastern Connecticut State University in Willimantic, University of Ottawa, Canada, Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, and Elizabethtown College in PA. During 2015, we have been able to establish regular Jain Studies at: Emory University in Atlanta, Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, Claremont School of Theology, in Claremont CA and University of California, Irvine. Additionally Jain communities in various cities have funded Jain studies programs at these places starting in Spring Semester 2016 Rutgers University in NJ, University of Florida in Gainesville, San Diego State University in San Diego, and Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, CA.

JAINA Diaspora Committee Activities: The JAINA Diaspora Committee is chaired by Dr. Manish Mehta and under his leadership, two Diaspora sessions featuring learned speakers on contemporary topics were held. The Atlanta event was the fifth such conference held by JAINA most successful Diaspora Conference Track in terms of number and quality of speakers and diversity of topics. Coincidentally, JAINA Jain Digest magazine of May 2015, focused on profiling the brief histories of eighteen Jain diaspora communities spread around the world, which greatly complemented the Convention programming. As a result of JAINA Diaspora outreach and solicitation the international speakers who

presented multi-media talks in the diaspora sessions were senior Jain community leaders such as:

Kantilal Gudhka from Nairobi, Ajit Benadi from Hamburg, Germany, Arun Jogani from Antwerp, Belgium, Dr. Natubhai Shah from London and Prafulla Parakh, President of Bhartiya Jain Sanghathan, Pune, India. Additionally, several North American speakers were also invited to participate and presented informative talks: Prof. Pankaj Jain of University of North Texas, Dr. Deepika Dalal, co-editor of Jain Digest and member of Jain Center of Miami, Dr. Mamta Shaha of JAINA Media Committee & Jain Center of New York.

Senior Citizens: Anop R. Vora, Past President of JAINA gave an hour long slide presentation that covered the critical issues vital to the senior Jain community residing in North America. He started with the discussion on social security considerations such as the timing of social security benefits and maximizing their monetary values by taking into account the impact on both spouses. He also discussed the potential old age physical and emotional problems arising out of longer life spans, relationships with the friends and family members, downsizing, vegetarian food availability, legacy concerns and other issues faced by the first generation Indians.

Entertainment Programs: After the day long sessions of learning and dinner, night time was reserved for entertainment. On Friday night, the main auditorium was ringing with presentation of "Jain Got Talent" competition. The program was hosted by Jayesh Sanghvi (Houston) and Guntant Shah (NJ) along with Atlanta Jain Sangh. Over 60 contestants took part in 46 entries ranging from 3 years young child to 73 years young adult with variety of talents consisting of "Comedy act, Rubics' Cube, Poems, Singers, Dancers and many more entertaining acts. They went through round one audition in front of nine judges, including youngest judge Mishi Jain with 10 years of Kathak, Bhangra and Raas Garba talent, President Urvashi Jain of Houston Jain Sangh, Gold medalist Rekha Sanghvi with Bharat Natyam background, Music writer and singer Narendrabhai Sanghvi, Fogana Dance and various cultural dance chairperson Ranjanben Punatar, Singer and cultural activity coordinators Alka Shah, Bela Gandhi, Jayshree Shah and Milan Shah. In the second half of the evening, various items were offered by Atlanta Jain Center members



Jains Got Talent Show

Saturday, July 4th: Bhaktamar Poojan, Breakout sessions, JAINA Awards and Bollywood night

Saturday began with an early morning yoga and meditation session and Bhaktamar Poojan in the Temple hall. Hundreds observed an authentic poojan by Vidhikar Narendra Nandu of India, giving them a feeling of being at a tirthdham in India. The Poojan was followed by Navkar Mantra Jaap. After the breakfast, breakout sessions with scholars and various presentations by JAINA committees resumed.

Health & Wellness: Newly formed Health and Wellness committee under the leadership of Dr. Nitin Shah and Dr. Manoj Jain and Manu Shah of Sarva Mangal Family Trust (SMFT) held two sessions to discuss various health related issues.

The first session was devoted to discussion of: "Is Wellness of the Community Important? Ways to improve!" In spite of Jains being the richest minority in USA, they are in lower 30% health wise! Jain Center of Northern California, Jain Society of Chicago and Jain Society of Greater Atlanta gave presentations about what they are doing for their community's health and wellness. Next, steps taken at Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) lead by SMFT were explained. They had offered the wellness program initially for six months. 300 members continued for six months. JCSC program also included blood tests before and after six months. Quest Diagnostics offered pro bono service for all the blood tests. We also learned that amongst Jains, Vitamin D deficiency is much more prevalent than Vitamin B12. JCSC's wellness has continued for those who want to participate. JAINA Wellness committee has offered all these programs to all Jain centers. The committee plans to hire a coordinator and also engage an organization for a fee to help with the program.



Delicious food served by Swaminarayan Volunteers

Dr. Kirti Shah of Atlanta led the second session on Education and Awareness of the community. Following presentations by various experts in their field were made:

- Dr. Kiranben Kamdar, Atlanta - Connection between healthy mouth and healthy body
- Dr. Manoj Jain, Memphis, TN - End of life /Withdrawal of Medical Care/DPA
- Dr. Neelima Kothari, Atlanta, GA - Snoring and Sleep related common disorders
- Neetu Trivedi, DPT, Atlanta, GA - Back Pain and joint health in aging population
- Dr. Raj Kothari, Atlanta, GA - Warning sign of Health emergency/when to call 911
- Dr. Snehal Dalal, Atlanta, GA - Knee Joint and related medical problems

All Presentations were very well received and ended with many questions from the participants.

Long Range Planning Committee: The Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee of JAINA held 2 sessions to develop Leadership Development Program. With a vision to "Live and Share a Jain Way of Life", the objective of LRP Committee is to establish long-range, 10-20 years, plans for North American Jains and JAINA. The Committee develops and executes short-term as well as long-term goals and guides JAINA in infrastructure development and operational strategies. The LRP Committee creates opportunities for leadership development, assists JAINA EC and Board of Directors by being a custodian of certain tasks, and acts as an incubator facility for launching new initiatives and JAINA projects. During the two well attended sessions, the LRP Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Deepak Jain renewed and updated Vision 20/20 document and discussed long term strategy and initiatives which can provide the basis for rolling out projects, programs, and initiatives for JAINA and the North American Jain Community.

Jain Center Liaison Committee - Presidents and Directors meeting:

This gathering of Jain center leaders was for sharing information about what works, what does not work and learn from each other's experience. JAINA is providing a forum for all the Jain Centers to come together and exchange information for smooth operations and progress of all the Jain Centers in North America. This will also help to develop strong bonding and improve connections between Jain Centers and JAINA. At JAINA, we are committed to providing as much support as possible to all the Jain Centers (small, medium, and large) to preserve, progress, and pass on to new generation. Topics of discussion were: Needs of senior citizens, Youth involvement, Governance and growth of local Jain Centers, Safety, security and insurance, Fund raising and usage of funds, Share programs over mobile apps and desktop.

Leaders of JAINA and Jain Centers shared their experiences and wealth of knowledge with entire group. All the leaders from different Jain Centers participated with great enthusiasm. Great suggestions and many new ideas emerged during this conference.



Jain

Jain Milan: Jain Milan's vision is to implement a strong network of young Jains through professional, social, matrimonial and spiritual activities. The mission is to utilize attendees' diverse backgrounds and interests to build friendships, possibly find life partner and carry Jain dharma into the next generation. Over 250 participants attended the convention from around the country and some from overseas. The most memorable part of this gathering was the two hours cruise around Lake Lanier, which provided opportunities for people to meet with others in a nightly setting overlooking the beautiful lake. Success of the Jain Milan was due to the leadership of Mr. Gunvant Shah and the team of volunteers that supported the 3 day event during convention.

Jain Academic Bowl: The JAB is an academic competition based on knowledge of Jainism and the ability to provide a quick response in a friendly yet competitive spirit. The overall hope is to encourage an even greater interest in the study of Jainism.



JAB Contest participants with organizers

17 teams (10 Junior teams and 7 Senior teams) participated in JAB during JAINA convention 2015. It required complete two days (9:00 AM to 5:00 PM – Friday and Saturday) of convention time and 3 to 5 class rooms to complete the competition. Each Senior team played 4 games and each Junior team played 3 games with different teams. The top 4 teams from each group played semi-finals and the top two teams of each semi-final group played final.

Final Result:

Senior team:

- Jain Center of Houston – 1st
(Coach – Hemaben Ojha)
- Jain Center of New Jersey – 2nd
(Coach – Sunilbhai Vakharia)

Junior team:

- Jain Center of Chicago Arham team – 1st
(Coach – Reshma Shah)
- Jain Center of Chicago Hrim team – 2nd
(Coach – Bhavisha Shroff)

Bollywood Night: Saturday night was a Bollywood night with Kumar Sonu as the star performer. Prior to his electrifying performance, students of Atlanta's Nritya Natya Kala Bharti performed "Upasargghar Stotra" that uplifted everyone's

spirits. In the finals for Jain Got Talents, top two contestants from each age group and categories (Solo and Group) were selected to perform in front of the audience of 4000. Prizes were awarded in each category with judges and audience participation. The winners were:

- Under 17 category: Solo - Anil Jain and Shilpi Shah; Group - Motor City group and Chicago Dhoom
- Age 18 & up category: Solo - Vinit Jain and Bela Gandhi; Group - Moksha Group and Rajastahni Group

After the talent show, in a somber ceremony, a tribute was paid by JAINA President Prem Jain to Dr. Jagat Jain, past President of JAINA who passed away in 2014.

Next, in a short ceremony Award Committee of JAINA headed by Dr. Nitin Shah gave out various JAINA awards – Youth awards, Adult Recognition awards, Presidential award and JAINA's highest award JAINA RATNA.

By now audience was charged up with anticipation of Kumar Sanu and his group's arrival on the stage. Kumar Sanu, had specially flown in from India earlier that day. He is a recipient of India's Padmashri award, multiple Filmfare awards as a best Playback singer and various Bollywood awards. He was accompanied by two female singers and a group of musicians. They performed for almost three hours as members of the audience rose and joined him with loud applause, cheers and dancing in the aisles.

Sunday July 5 – Day to say Good byes

All good events have to end sometime. So the Sunday morning once again began with yoga and meditation classes. After breakfast, the closing ceremony in the main hall presented all the scholars to give their final speeches. The common theme of all the presenters was reminding everyone of their duty to preserve and protect their precious Jain heritage. Everyone was directed to assemble in the Temple hall for Aarti and Mangal Divo.

Box lunches were handed to everyone in the dining hall as people congregated in the hallways for long good byes, promises to keep in touch and promises to meet again during the next convention in 4th of July weekend of 2017.



Vendor from India displaying his wares in Exhibit area



Kodak Retiree, Financial Planner, Past President of JAINA and Jain Society of Rochester, Founder President of International Alumni Association of Shri Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya (IAAMJV); Established Kanchan Foundation in India in 1998 to help the poor and needy in rural areas. Current interests: Meditation, Travelling, Spiritual reading and writing, Listening to discourses, Sharing knowledge and insight with others.

“The truth is great. The conduct is much greater”

- Guru Nanak.

“The human kind does not lack in the knowledge of religious principles, but lacks in their application”

- Mahatma Gandhi

“Knowledge combined with Application is a path to salvation (Moksha)”

- Jain Scripture (*Gyan Kriya bhyam Moksha*)

These three statements have a common thread. It is the application of knowledge. Essentially what they have said is that religion has a very limited value unless it becomes a code of conduct and is applied in daily life.

The technological era we are living in now offers a vast opportunity to us all to learn and understand the principles of Jainism. The resources are just abundant making it easier and faster to acquire the knowledge. But we need to recognize that although the learning is essential, it is not sufficient if we wish to accelerate our spiritual progress. We need to go one step beyond. What we learn must show up in our conduct. Our life must reflect the Jain values in daily encounters. This is what Jainism should mean to us.

Our religion teaches us that we are endowed with five senses, mind, and intellect and are capable of discriminating between right and wrong, differentiating between body and soul and thus have the best chance of achieving liberation. This is not possible in other forms of life—from tiny microbes to 5 sense beings without mind and intellect, hellish beings or heavenly gods. Lord Mahavir conveyed this message very clearly—in his last 48 hour-long sermon before achieving Nirvana. He stated that there are four most difficult things to obtain:

1. To be born as a human being who has a strong desire to achieve salvation
2. To have the opportunity to listen to the Lord's teachings from spiritually elevated persons
3. To develop a strong conviction in their words
4. To have the drive to vigorously apply those teachings in day-to-day life.

Being born as a human with a religious bent and also in a Jain family adds a huge plus because it allows one to imbibe the values of Jainism right from the childhood. Jain way of upbringing is usually conducive to developing important virtues such as humility, serenity, forgiveness, and compassion and invaluable habits such as being vegetarian and compromising. Many virtues and habits one may notice in a true Jain would be difficult to develop for a non-Jain because in the former case, it is a second nature, in the latter, it requires a lot of effort. That is perhaps the reason, George Bernard Shaw said, “I adore so greatly the principles of the Jain religion, that I would like to be reborn in a Jain community”

“If we want to raise our children in a Jain way, then we need to live like a Jain.”

In spite of the innate advantages we are gifted with and the resources available, many of us do not recognize our fortunes. Many of us forget the real purpose of our life; which is to explore our highest spiritual potential during the limited we have at our disposal. Often we engage in rituals without understanding their deeper meaning and go to places of worship for social reasons, forgetting the spiritual dimension. At times, we lose our senses in a mad rush to acquire more wealth, power, fame and other worldly things and thus squander away our precious life. Due to tradition or habit, we do our best to respect all organisms by not killing even a smallest creature, but then we forget to look at the detrimental effect of our wasteful materialistic life style on the surroundings. Jainism is asking us to step back and be aware of the long-term ramifications of what we do every day.



Many world religions preach ethics, but Jainism is asking us to go beyond mere ethics. It is asking us to go much deeper. It says: go beyond the mind level and function at the consciousness level. In addition, it is asking us to be vigilant every moment and not get carried away by the toxic passions of anger, arrogance, deception and greed. It is asking us to think of the karmic consequences of our thoughts, words, and deeds on not only the current life but also on our long-term destiny. It is asking us these critical questions: Who am I? Where am I? Why am I here? Then it advises us to analyze and understand them and come up with the answers from within based upon our own study and practice. We need to focus on these key points and make the best of our rare human life. This is what Jainism should mean to us.

If we want to raise our children in a Jain way, then we need to live like a Jain. The kids are going to follow what we do, not what we say. There is no place for hypocrisy in Jainism. In a larger context, this means when we interact with any individual, our reactions and behavior must reflect the Jain values.

Jainism also places a very strong emphasis on our thought processes, our feelings, and our reactions to daily occurrences. It says words and actions are important in human life; but more crucial are the thought processes and intent behind them. That is the reason the spiritual tools such as Satsang, Swadhyay Introspection and Meditation are recommended very strongly. These tools provide us with the foundation of Right Faith (*Samyak Darshan*), help us in purifying ourselves and developing the virtues which then lead us to Right Conduct (*Samyak Charitra*), thus paving the path for liberation.

On a positive note, in spite of the blunders and mistakes we make and our pitfalls and shortcomings, Jainism constantly reminds us never to forget about the ultimate potential we are all capable of achieving. No matter what our spiritual level is, most of our seers and scholars make a genuine effort to inspire us and lift us up. We need to get out of our slumber, listen to their words, take them to heart and put them in practice. This is what the Jainism should mean to us.

Call for Articles

Together, we can all make **Jain Digest** a wonderful experience for ourselves! Going forward, we would like bring you news and stories that highlight Jain values to educate, inspire and help our readers in their spiritual journey. Here are some ideas to stimulate your thinking and to motivate the writer in you.

- Do you know an activity that our kids will love to do? Do you know a story that they will enjoy learning from?
- Do you know a bhakti song that wells up your eyes? Do you want to share it with others?
- Have you come across a compassionate selfless act someone has done?
- Would you like to explain a Jain "siddhant" that challenges and engages you?
- Do you want to tell others what inspires you to do your best?
- Do you want to share your challenges and experiences in practicing Jain principles?

If your answer is "YES" to any of the above questions, then don't wait!

Contact us at jaindigestpublication@gmail.com and tell us what you want to write about. We will provide you with guidelines, deadlines and provide any assistance you may need. We want this to be YOUR magazine!

To provide your feedback for this issue of Jain Digest, fill out the form at:

<https://goo.gl/9rUCSw>

HOW TO GET THROUGH COLLEGE IN THE MOST JAIN WAY POSSIBLE

By Sonali Vakharia, Rochester, MI



Sonali Vakharia is a practicing pharmacist who resides in Rochester, Michigan. She is also a pathshala teacher at the local Detroit sangh.

To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.” This quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson has always resonated with me, and I noticed as I was teaching the high school pathshala students on a typical Sunday morning that they had one valid concern: How would they maintain their Jain values when they graduated high school and left for college in the Fall?

What does it mean to be an American born Indian Jain? Well surely, his or her mindset and upbringing will differ significantly from that of his or her parents, and learning to accept these differences is necessary. Growing up in a Jain household in North America surrounded by many Eastern values and then quickly shifting to an environment surrounded by mostly Western values in college can be mentally conflicting for our Jain youth. So, how do we help these students deal with various pressures and balancing of these values which are vital to their mental clarity as well as their spiritual progress? Being born and brought up in the U.S. myself, the transition from leaving my home and moving out of state for college was like night and day. And, throughout this process, I realized that in many aspects, there is very limited support and discussion among our Jain community on easing our students into this difficult transition. Although this move can be quite liberating and exciting, it can also be confusing and scary for anyone.

One of my deepest observations was that throughout the extensive internal conflicts I felt in college, and the many ups and downs, it took a lot of time, but I eventually found my way back to a much better, balanced, stronger, Jain-er version of myself. However, although growing into amazing and successful young men and women, many students don't always find their way back to their Jain values. These values do not include simply practicing rituals, but rather targets the deeper universal principles of non-violence, non-absolutism, truth, simplicity, modesty, acceptance, and to an extent, controlling certain desires and practicing self-discipline. For this reason, I wanted to help our Jain youth find a way to uphold their Jain values in college while still continuing to grow as open-minded, free-thinking individuals and experience the

world around them. It's all about finding that balance, and there are good values which can be implemented from all cultures!

And, that is why a team of first generation Jains and I put together the first ever “Jain College handbook” (Title: “Being Jain in College- How to Get Through College in the Sanest, Most Jain Way Possible- an Experiential Guide”), addressing topics that are not “taboo” per say, but are unfortunately approached as such in our Jain and Indian community. This handbook was more of a personal narrative which I hope that in times of need, Jain high school seniors and college students will refer to. The chapters include advice on upholding their diet, meeting and staying connected with the right people, roommates/dorm life, relationships with the opposite gender, time management/discipline, parties/alcohol/drugs, open-mindedness/exploration, explaining Jainism to others, practicing Jain rituals, and safety. The handbook also encourages them to integrate anekantavad (multiplicity of viewpoints/non-absolutism) into their thinking, mold and better themselves daily, and ask themselves before making any decision, big or small, “What value do I see in this?” in order to bring them more clarity.



I strongly urge parents to discuss the topics listed above in a very understanding manner with your kids. If they feel your support and lack of judgement, it will make the transition period much easier for them, and they may feel more comfortable sharing their lives with you.

This handbook has been approved by the JAINA Education Committee for publication, but it is still pending. Past college projects include conducting YJA sessions and a webinar on a national level, and a local college workshop in Chicago (workshop by Amam Vasanwala). Future projects include Jain college graduates continuing to hold workshops at their local sanghs and more YJA sessions for the high-school/college students in order to create a connection and show these students that they are not alone. If you are interested in this initiative, would like a copy of the book for yourself or your children, or if you or your children have any questions/comments, please feel free to contact me, Sonali Vakharia, at sonalivakharia@gmail.com. I would love to hear from you and provide any support I can. Let's work together to help our youth understand what it truly can mean to be an Indian American Jain!

SANTHARA: A DEATH WITH EQUANIMITY IN PURSUIT OF NIRVANA OR ?

By Yogendra Bobra, San Francisco, CA



Jain



Yogendra Bobra is one of the Jain Digest editors. He is an active member of JCNC. He has served JCNC in various key positions over a number of years. He also served as an editor for 2015 JCNC Convention Souvenir. He is committed to serving Jain community and enhancing harmony within all Jain traditions.

Santhara also known as Sallekhanā, Samadhi-marana, Sanyasana-marana is a deep rooted Jain tradition followed by Jain Sadhu, Sadhvis and some of the ardent followers.

Jains and Buddhists, believe that life is full of sufferings. “Ultimate Happiness” can only be achieved by freeing oneself from the cycle of life and birth, in other words, achieving Moksha. One of the steps on the path toward Moksha is to get rid of passions (Kashaya) residing within oneself. After realizing and practicing key principles of Jain Philosophy in daily life, one can start the journey to free oneself from bindings of internal passions. These four passions are anger, ego, deceit, and greed. It is believed that these passions arise due to attachment (raag) & hatred (dwesh). As per Jain literature, santhara, is described as a gradual process of getting rid of all internal passions and the physical body with the feeling of equanimity. It is expected that it would bring the devotee closer to Moksha.

The Santhara Process

So does it mean that anybody can decide to take the vow of Santhara? There are prerequisites, approval process, which includes permission from guru and family members. The guidelines must also be followed, before someone can take the vow of santhara. The first and foremost requirement is that it cannot be forced upon anybody. The decision has to come from within oneself and with the feeling of equanimity. Some of the other situations in which one takes santhara are one might be suffering from an incurable disease, great disability or when a person might be in tremendous pain and close to the end of his life. (This is based on expert's opinion). Under these situations then the person starts the process under the guidance of Guru. The devotee gradually reduces his diet that includes food and fluids. As the food intake reduces and stops, person's meditation increases sequentially. This eventually helps in getting rid of all internal passions and ultimately soul gets liberated from the body achieving Nirvana or on the path to Nirvana. This is based on the principle that, soul transmigrates

into new life possessing same passions which one retains at the time of death. Therefore, in order to achieve Nirvana one has to be completely free from all internal passions at the time of death. The entire process could take from few days to few years. (Manikchand Lodha of Pune, India, was in Santhara for 2 1/2 years.”). The devotee is taken care of as best as possible by the family with the support of community and Guru. As per Jain affairs newsletter (Published by Babulal Jain from Mumbai) on an average about 450 santhara events have taken place in the last 6 years, though recently the number has dropped off significantly.

The Lawsuit

The current attention to the practice of santhara was the result of the lawsuit filed by Mr. Nikhil Soni in 2006. It is interesting to note that, he is now a resident of Jaipur, (but originally from Churu, Rajasthan), a place which acquired the dubious reputation as world's capital of “santhara” for holding highest number of “santhara” events in recent history. He filed suit in Rajasthan High Court claiming that:

- A practice, however, ancient it might be to a particular religion, cannot be allowed to violate the right to life of an individual. (1)
- A voluntary fast unto death is an act of self-destruction, which amounts to suicide. Therefore it is no different than suicide which is illegal in India. (1)
- People were encouraged to take the vow which became a means of climbing the social ladder for family members. Any person adopting santhara is not allowed to revert back on his vow and the entire family and community forces him/her to complete the process in which he has to go through inhuman and intolerant conditions. (1)

Notes: (1) Reference: Copied from Court filings, Nikhil Soni vs Union of India & Ors. On 10 August, 2015)

Rajasthan High court, in Aug. 10, 2015 ruling, declared

Digest

Santhara to be illegal in the eyes of the law. On appeal, Supreme Court, for now at least, has issued a stay order on Rajasthan High Court's ruling. The case is not expected to come up for hearing, for next few years. The debates on this issue will surely light-up again, whenever the case comes up for hearing.

The Debate

So the debate seemingly boils down to whether santhara aka Sallekhana is a step forward for achieving nirvana or a suicide or an assisted suicide. Since it is not an impromptu action taken by an individual under duress it would be very logical for anyone to conclude that it is not a suicide, at worst or at best (depending on which side of the debate you are) it can be called an "assisted suicide". Jain perspective on ending life (regardless of whether it is called Santhara, Sallekhana, Samadhi-marana, Sanyasana- marana or arguably an assisted suicide or a religious activity performed to achieve "a death with equanimity in pursuit of Nirvana"), is unique and no other major religion seems to support such a view.

World-wide view on "Assisted Suicide"

Assisted suicide, where the patient has to take the final action themselves (unlike euthanasia), is legal in the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland. In the United States there are assisted dying laws restricted to terminally ill and mentally competent adults in Oregon, Montana, Washington, Vermont, and California.

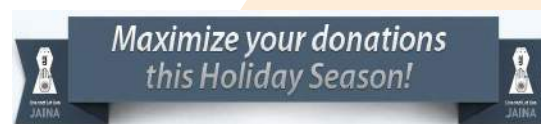
Following is the list of major religions that do not support taking life for any reason:

- Roman Catholic Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Episcopal Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, United Methodist Church, Islam and Judaism.
- Hinduism does not have any formal guidelines on assisted suicide or euthanasia, though there is a general concern that prematurely ending a person's life could negatively impact their karma.
- Buddhism teaches that it is morally wrong to destroy human life, including one's own, even if the intention is to end suffering. Though they also believe that life need not be preserved at all costs.

In conclusion, even if in future Indian legal system concludes that Santhara is illegal, Jain community could have a legal path to continue to follow the ancient tradition by getting legal approval for it in the name of "Assisted Suicide" as seemingly more and more people open up to this idea.

References:

- *Jainendra Sinddhant Kosh by Jinendra Varni*
- *Sect's Death Ritual Clashes with Indian Law by Ellen Barry and Manshi Choksi*
- *Freedom to Die by Shekhar Hattangadi*
- *Santhara -- Jain Way of Death with Equanimity by Manoj Jain*



Jai Jinendra,

In May 1981, we embarked on an ambitious mission to create an organization that would preserve Jain values and heritage in North America. JAINA envisioned establishing strong networks between Jain and non-Jain communities to sustain the Jain way of life and have a vibrant Jain community in North America. For generations to come.

Over the past three decades, JAINA has accomplished this and much more. We hold biennial conventions, which bring 3,500 to 6,000 Jains together on a regular basis. We launched Young Jains of America (YJA) and Young Jain professionals (YJP) that are making a difference for thousands of youths and young adults. We have also provided a number of networking and matrimonial services resulting in countless life partnerships.

Today, JAINA has become the hallmark of Jain organizations for others to emulate. The key to our success is attributed to support from donors and professional volunteers like you. We are organizing events in 40+ US states, at the White House in Washington DC, and with the United Nations, to express the Jain values of compassion, nonviolence, love, and peace for all.

As you can see JAINA has many charitable activities and programs it is undertaking to keep our Jain culture and heritage live in North America as well as promote a Jain Way of Life. I hope you can see that a tax deductible donation to support any of these wonderful causes and projects are a very small investment in our future. Please take a few minutes to go on website www.jaina.org/donate. During this season of gratitude, we thank you for your continued generous support to JAINA and its initiatives!

Regards,
Hemant S. Shah
Fundraising Committee, Chair

Top 10 Initiatives

1. JAINA Conventions
2. JAINA Calendar
2. Jain Digest Publication
3. Jain Education Program
4. Jain eLibrary
5. Academic Scholarships
6. Mahavira Children's Book
7. College & University-based Centers for Jain Studies
8. Uplifting Underprivileged Jains
9. Jain Leadership Fellows Program
10. Mangalam Show

For a full list, go to:

Jaina.org/jainainaction

SALLEKHANA - THE ART AND SCIENCE OF EMBRACING DEATH:

By Dr. Raksha Shah



Jain



Dr. Raksha Shah (Ph.D,M.A, B,Sc, LL.B), is a Jain Scholar, Public Speaker, journalist and a visiting lecturer (adjunct faculty) at the University of Mumbai and Somaiya Institute. She has been a delegate at three of the Parliaments of World Religions and has conducted Lecture Circuit Tours, Paryushana, Workshops (holistic healing), presented papers at various conferences, conventions and seminars in India, USA, Belgium, Spain, Melbourne and Singapore. She has also received three 'Best Journalist' awards.

Jains all around the world were taken aback when newspaper headlines on August 10, 2015 read: "Santhara would henceforth be treated as "suicide" and accordingly made punishable under Section 309 and Section 306 of the Indian Penal Code". Supreme Court, on August 31, stayed the Rajasthan High Court's decision to ban the Jain religious practice of Santhara. This has come as a relief for the members and religious leaders of the Jain community, who were up in arms against the ban.

In this article we are going to look at the meaning of Sallekhana/Santhara and the procedure of taking this vow. Before we proceed, we must understand the very purpose of the present life; understand the meaning of birth in the human realm, rebirth and the true meaning of death.

Besides the observance of the twelve vratas and twelve tapas that are obligatory, there is one optional vrata and tapa - of the highest order, called Sallekhana, which we will discuss in detail.

Death: A transition from one life to another

Most of us fear death. Learned and knowledgeable men have rightly emphasized that there are three miseries that scare people around the world. Those are: old age, disease and death. When a child is born in a family, people rejoice the event and celebrate it, whereas, the mere mention of 'death' scares the bravest and strongest of men. Why do we fear death? It is because we are so attached to our near and dear ones that we feel that their lives will be shattered if we ceased to exist. What will happen to them? Who will take care of them? How will they cope up with the loss? These, in reality, are our misconceptions. The fact of the matter is, that whatever happens, the show will go on!

We need to remember that the interactions we have with the various beings during our lifetime are to actually pay off our debts from the previous births. Once our debts here in this life have been cleared, we cannot live in this realm for even a fraction of a second more! All our relations come to an end on the spur of the moment on death and all bonds are cut off then and there! We migrate to a different realm according to our karmas. We do not know if we will ever meet the people whom we consider our family or loved ones. We will also forget everyone and everything from this life that has happened here and will be enjoying life at some other place with other people. Once we ponder upon

this thought repeatedly, the fear of death will definitely reduce. The human body is the prime instrument that assists us in getting rid of all of the accumulated karma particles. The body is thus acquired for a purpose and is to be given up when its purpose is served or over.

What is Sallekhana?

The simplest definition of Sallekhana is: "Samyag Kaya Kashay Lekhana iti Sallekhana" i.e. the gradual wearing away of the body and passions in the right / rational way. It is actually the desire of a peaceful death of a pious person, who leaves sensual pleasures, with the sole intention of perfection and self-purification. Let us see what the scriptures and learned men have to say:

1. The Acarang Sutra advocates sallekhana to all monks, when infirmity sets in, by giving up food and reducing and controlling passions.
2. In the Tattvarthasutra, Umaswamiji says that this vrata should be adopted most willingly and voluntarily when death is very near, by confessing in front of the guru for all the past sins and meditating upon the 'pancaparmeshthis'.
3. Shri Samantabhadra in his book, Ratnakaranda Sravakacara says: "Sallekhana should be adopted in times of natural calamities like severe famine/flood,

Digest

old age, and the like. A person afflicted by any of these, must give up friendship, enmity and possessiveness and should forgive relatives, friends and servants too for any misdeeds”. As mentioned above, old age, incurable diseases and certain circumstances where death seems to be inevitable, are prescribed as instances when the sallekhana vow could be embraced. But the question that naturally arises around this statement is, what could be the parameters to determine age and disease? If a person at 75 is hale and hearty, and is able to work efficiently, he cannot be asked to take up this vow, nor allowed to take up at his own will. On the other hand, a 60 year old, who might be very sick, suffering from some incurable disease, bed-ridden, not able to move himself, nor perform his normal routine work and religious duties, could be an eligible person to be granted the vow of sallekhana. Such a person could be considered to be at a stage where the sole purpose of his life and the body seem to have come to an end! At this point in time, if he wishes to take up the vow of santhara voluntarily, he can first seek his family's consent and to approach the guru bhagwant to take pachhakhan. After the guru finds the aspirant fit to take up the vow, he would systematically, in a scientific manner prescribe the method of taking this vow. In case of a monk, he would need to take the consent of his guru. This vow can be taken by both, an ascetic as well as a householder.

Benefits of Sallekhana

One who completes this rite is said to get birth either in the human realm or Devlok. Also, it is said that he attains Moksha in 5 to 7 births

Sallekhana Types and Procedures

The Acaranga Sutra describes three types of sallekhana:

1. Bhaktapratyakhana marana – (bhakta here means bhojan and not disciple). The ascetic interrogates the householder and, gradually reduces his food intake. For instance, if the aspirant has been taking four meals a day, he will reduce it to three, then two, followed by one meal and will then, stop all solid food. Next, fluids like milk, juices etc. are given, followed by bland liquid diet - gradually switching over to water alone, which is eventually stopped.

Together with this, the most important thing is to gain control over one's passions. For this, he is advised by the guru to meditate upon his soul and recite the Navkar mantra, all of the time, without thinking of the past auspicious or inauspicious moments. He needs to ask for forgiveness from all of the jivas, not forgetting to forgive them all too. This leads to the thinning of passions and abundant karma Nirjara.



2. Ingita-marana – With the stoppage of food aspirant spends all the time meditating in silence with the aim of enhancing Nirjara. However, he keeps an allowance to use certain signs to convey his message, in case of a pressing situation. The word Ingita means sign or gesture and this type is thereby called Ingita Marana.

2. Padapopagamana marana – The word 'Padap', means a 'vruksha', or tree. It is the most dignified and difficult way of embracing death. In this form sallekhana aspirants who have a lot of self control, decide to refrain from all acts and resolve to lie down or stand in a still position meditating until the end of their lives.

Sallekhana – Past and Present

In the past, Acarya Bhadrabahu and his disciple Emperor Chandragupta Maurya, took Santhara towards the end of their lives. Many more kings and royal personnel, ministers, monks and laities too have taken the vow of santhara willingly.

Comparatively, fewer munis and laities have been taking up the vow of sallekhana in the present times. In order to avoid contingencies, in current times 'Sagari Pachhakhana' is normally given out by the ascetics, so that in case of casualty or for some other reason, if the person wants to revert their decision and discontinue the vrata of sallekhana, they can do so. At 71, Mr. Kalyan Gangwal a healthy Cardiologist has already planned to die with dignity at Gajpantha, a remote cave in western India. His father too took the vow and left the abode reciting the Navkar mantra. "He (Mr. Gangwal's father) closed his eyes with a very calm expression on his face, with no agony", says Mr. Gangwal. "It was as if he was going on a new voyage". Such deaths are actually celebrated by the sangha.

Memorializing Sallekhana – Basadis and Nishadis

A number of Basadis and Nishadis commemorate the great people who successfully took up this Vrata. A Basadi is a shrine or a temple, (the word) mainly used by people in the south. A Nishadi instead, is a memorial stone installed in the memory of a Jain ascetic or a house holder who attains salvation by means of sallekhana.

BHAGWAN MAHAVIR SAYS - - RESPECT THE NATURE

By Pujya Acharya Shri. Chandanaji Maharaj



Jain



Chief Director of Veerayatan, Acharya Chandana, is also known as Tai Maharaj. She is the first Jain Sadhvi to receive the title of Acharya. She has encouraged, inspired and touched many souls through her kind words and deeds. Inspired by the vision of Shri Amar Muniji to uplift the poverty-stricken state of Bihar in India, with the qualities portrayed through the life and teachings of Tirthankar Mahavir, Acharya Shri Chandanaji has extended compassion, friendship and love to all humanity.

Two and a half thousand years ago Tirthankar Bhagwan Mahavir distinctly proclaimed: "Plants have life as well; they have a consciousness and sensitivity. Like

all other creatures, life and death also affect them. Nature experiences sorrow and joy, pleasure and pain, despair and delight, so do not torment or torture it. Do not cause it pain." Through his knowledge and experience he revealed his oneness with nature. He declared that earth, air, fire and water are all sentient; they are man's benefactors, so we should not hurt them in any way.

What is amazing is that these pronouncements were made at a time when there was no such thing as environmental pollution. There was still a feeling of equilibrium in nature. There was no question of an ecological imbalance, as water and plant life was abundant. Even so, a declaration during that era for the protection of earth, air, water, fire and plant life was extremely important in itself. Tirthankar Mahavir has gone so far as to say, "To be violent against these elements of nature is to commit an act of violence against oneself."

However, man has disregarded these teachings and advice. For his comfort and convenience, he has mercilessly exploited the environment. He proceeded to appropriate and squander nature's treasure without any feeling of remorse. Our present day attitude seems to be, 'It won't be here tomorrow, so let us use it today!' And consequently he is facing the mistakes of his misdeeds. Global warming, depleted natural resources, species going extinct, thinning of the ozone layer are but a few impacts of man's exploitation of the nature.

In the Vishnu Puran it is written, 'Where fruit-producing and flower-bearing trees are destroyed, droughts, cloudbursts, flash floods, and famine are inevitable.' Has man seen or heard this message? Man has cut down the trees that are our friends, set fire to the green forest and hunted down the wild life. The waste from our factories and workshops has not merely polluted, but poisoned such sacred rivers as Ganges, Jamuna and the Gomati. It seems that children of the future will see birds and beasts, trees and shrubs only in picture books.

Some years ago UNESCO organized a conference in Indonesia in which 150 scientists and environmentalists from countries like Australia, Canada, Netherlands, UK and USA participated. The chairman of the conference, Mr. Vladimir, issued a timely warning regarding the fearsome consequences of the indiscriminate razing of forests and cutting down of trees. He said, "If trees die out, man will die out. Tornados in America, floods in Russia and monsoons in India have become unpredictable. Earthquakes and the shadow of famine are spreading everywhere along with new strains of disease. The reason for all this is the destruction of nature. Unless timely measures are taken the whole world will become a desert!"

Dr. T. M. Das, a prominent environmental scientist attached to Calcutta University's College of Agriculture, recently revealed the amazing fact that an average tree during the 50 years of its life, provides Rs. 1.5 million worth of benefit to humanity in the form of oxygen production. On the other hand, the cutting down of one tree will bring in a maximum of Rs. 2,000 or Rs. 3,000. For this small immediate gain, a gift to humanity worth Rs. 1.5 million is lost. Trees are the lungs of the planet, absorbing our waste products and breathing out the pure fresh air we need to survive. Physicians tell us that the depletion of oxygen in the atmosphere does not merely cause infirmity but also results in the multiplication of new, highly resistant, strains of virus. In the absence of fresh winds, the stagnant air breeds mental instability. When violence and terrorism prevail, we generally find that it is due to the lack of oxygen in the atmosphere.

The voice of Tirthankar Mahavir rings out to awaken mankind, "O beloved of the gods! In the same way that nature's treasure-trove is open to you, it is there for the benefit of all sentient beings; all life forms should be able to share in the vegetation that covers the earth. Do not then use them only for your immediate gratification. Such overall destruction will be a catastrophe for all the different life forms. Rise up! Turn those hands raised in destruction into tools for creativity and compassion. Use your energy for the planting and nurturing of trees." Only in the protection of all plant-life, can we find our protection. Only as plant life grows and develops will we grow and develop.

By Kirit C Daftary, Trustee, Parliament of World's Religions
Naresh Jain, Trustee Emeritus, Parliament of World's Religions



From left: Inaugural Prayers by Jain, Hindu and Sikh spiritual leaders and Jain delegates at the temple located in the prime registration area.

The Jain community presence in the 6th Parliament of the World's Religions held in Salt Lake City Oct. 15-19, 2015 was a grand success. The history dates back to the first Parliament in 1893 which is known for introducing Jain religion to the west by Shri Virchand Raghavji Gandhi and Hindu religion by Swami Vivekananda. It had set the interfaith movement in motion. Since then the Parliaments were held in Chicago again in 1993, Cape Town in 1999, Barcelona in 2004, and Melbourne in 2009.

Conference Highlights

The Salt Lake City Parliament was attended by 10,000 participants from 73 countries, representing 30 major religions and 548 sub-traditions; and conducted 1,000 programs by 1800 presenters. Women and under 30 made up about two thirds of the participants as well as emcees. If we replicate this event of 10,000 in proportions of the religions practiced, only six would be Jains with barely one program. Instead there were sixty Jains. Forty of them were represented in 40 Jain and interfaith programs, workshops, artistic, and plenary sessions. A successful Jain presence indeed!

The Jain Temple

There were two sacred spaces created in the Parliament, a replica of the Golden Temple by the Sikhs and a Mahavir Swami Temple by the Jain community. By Dev Guru Krupa, the strategic location of the Jain temple by the entrance of the convention center made it possible to bring awareness about Jain religion among all 10,000 attendees. The building of this temple was originated and sponsored by Kirit C Daftary, Jain Trustee of the Parliament and the past president of JAINA, in consultation with Dr. Nipul Shah from Jain Center of San Diego. The temple containing a shikhar,



Inaugural prayers by HH Amrender Muniji, Bhattarak Ji, HH Lokesh Muniji, Naresh Jain, Swami Chidananda Saraswatiji, Swamiji from Swaminarayan Group and Kirit Daftary.



"The Jain Mandir replica enhanced the Salt Palace convention center during this Parliament convention - thanks for creating a nice temple for the event"

– Indra Neelamegham,
(Hindu Representative) Salt
Lake Interfaith Roundtable.

Bhagwan Mahavir Swami temple

pedestal, columns, granite elephants, and lotus flowers was assembled by Dr. Nipul Shah from Jain Center of San Diego with the support of the local Jain and Hindu communities, Shri Ganesh Temple from Salt Lake City and Ricardo Mora,

building Contractor from Waco, Texas. The inauguration ceremony was performed by Jain religious leaders followed by different prayers by leaders from many faiths.

The Jain Temple was a magnet to all attendees. HH Amrender Muni Ji and Bhattark Charukeerthi Ji used to do chanting of Namokar Mantra and Jaaps at the temple. It was surrounded by Jain Posters. People would stop by to read them or do the Darshan of Bhagwan. Flyers on Jainism and Jain prayers were made available. People would frequently stop by the entrance and take pictures. Bharat Natyam performances were also held in the temple area in the evening for two days. Singing of Bhajans by the local Hindu Community and Jains was followed by Arti and Mangal Divo. All monks, Samanijis, Jains, and others used to join us whenever they were around. After the Parliament, the temple was carefully taken down for reuse at the Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

The Ahimsa Award was presented on behalf of Jain community by His Holiness Dr. Vasanth Vijay Ji Maharaj to the Charter for Compassion International for their continued promotion of nonviolence. Dr. Joan Brown Campbell, Chair, accepted the award. The Parliament Trustee Kirit C Daftary initiated this award and got it accepted by the Parliament of the World's Religions Board. He developed the criteria in consultation with Arvind Vora and Naresh Jain of Interfaith committee of JAINA. The Ahimsa Award was given for the first time in the Parliament by generous support from HH Vasanth Vijay Ji from Krishnagiri, India, and JAINA. This award was a part of a Plenary Session on War, Violence and Hate. HH Vasanth Vijay Ji also spoke to promote peace and concluded his address with Shanti Nath Bhagwan prayers.

The Inauguration ceremony was held in the evening of Thursday, October 15 where the people from various faiths



Top: HH Acharya Lokesh Muniji offering Namokar Mantra and Mangal path in the Inaugural Plenary; Ahimsa Award being presented by HH Vasanth Vijaya Ji to Dr. Campbell from the Charter for Compassion International in presence of the Parliament Trustee Kirit Daftary.

Left: A poster on the legendary story of the Elephant entered a large plenary hall in a procession. The chair of PWR, Imam Malik Mujahid welcomed the guests and wished for a successful program. The Jain prayer Namokar Mantra and Mangal Paath in the opening ceremony were recited by HH Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni Ji. This evening was graced by

entered a large plenary hall in a procession. The chair of PWR, Imam Malik Mujahid welcomed the guests and wished for a successful program. The Jain prayer Namokar Mantra and Mangal Paath in the opening ceremony were recited by HH Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muni Ji. This evening was graced by

The Jain Exhibit

Twenty six Jain posters previously exhibited in JAINA conventions were displayed at the Jain booth by Sudhir Shah and Pravin K. Shah who chair the Exhibition and Education committees respectively. Books on Jainism and the Essence of World Religions were also given away. JAINA booth was visited by record number of people who were reading the posters and taking pictures through their smart phones and tablets. For many visitors, Jainism was a new religion, they wanted to be part of it and know more about it. Many were surprised to find out that it was one of the oldest religions.

Parliament had also given a special room for the display of articles, books etc. from several faiths. Local Jains had kept many books on Jainism and several articles for visitors. Kiran and Chandra Bhayani, Bhavi and Shruti Sanghvi, Arvindbhai, Gitaben, Bipinbhai, and other local Jains took care of monks and samaniji's dietary needs in timely manner.

“Excellent Participation from Jains”

- Dr. Mohammad Siddiqi, Parliament Trustee, Program Committee Chair

the Governor of Utah, the Mayor of Salt Lake City, and by many prominent scholars and speakers.

A fund raising Golden Luncheon was arranged in the afternoon of Sunday October 18. The featured keynote speaker HH Dalai Lama could not come due to health reasons, instead exclusive video interview with Chairman Imam Malik Mujahid was shown in which he addresses the Parliament to work in the areas of peace and ecology. Most noteworthy of this event was that delicious Jain Food was served and

nobody even realized it. It made such an impression on the owner of the Bombay Palace, Salt Lake City that he said that he would make the last Langar meal as Jain Food, no root vegetables.

An *Action Plan on Climate Change* that affects our everyday lives was officially launched by the Parliament. A plenary session on 'an Interfaith Call to action on Climate Change' was held on Sunday afternoon. The Parliament published the action plan in the Commitment booklet distributed to all. This call to action statement was drafted by the Parliament's four member committee that included the former trustee Naresh Jain.

The *Sacred Music Concert* on Sunday evening was put together by the Interfaith Roundtable of Salt Lake City and held in the beautiful Mormon Tabernacle located in the must see Temple Square, the main attraction of Salt Lake City. It is one of the oldest worship facility built in 1867 with one of the largest organs in North America. It has about 11,000 pipes. It is normally reserved for its church followers of the Latter Day Saints. This was the first time it was opened up for any interfaith event. The Jain Performance by Kummar Chatterjee in the Tabernacle was received with standing ovation. There was also a Youth Choir which was represented by multi faith youth, including Jain Children.

Master Kummar Chatterjee had the maximum number of Artistic performances representing Jain religion. He gave total of six performances. He was also on a panel session on Monday morning on Mantra, Sound Vibration and Spiritual Evolution with HH Amrender Muniji and HH Vasanth Vijay Ji. In one of his solo session on Rhythms of the Universe, the participants were dancing almost throughout the program. The Salt Lake Interfaith Round Table had organized a total of ten spaces for interfaith prayer in the Parliament. Kummar Chatterjee also gave special performance in the Hindu interfaith prayer space.



Kummar Chatterjee in the sacred Music Concert in the Mormon Tabernacle; Participants dancing in a Jain bhajan session; Jain children in a concert in the Tabernacle; Jain children reciting Namokar Mantra at the Golden Luncheon.

“Jains have taken over the Parliament”

– *Chairman of Parliament, Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid*

“Coming to this convention, I really did not know what to expect or what to take away. But during this short time, I have learned, witnessed and experienced far more than I

could ask for. I have never seen so much compassion, love, and genuine openness for one another’s faith. With so much hate and violence around the world, it is very refreshing to have attended and see the collaborative efforts to protect the interests of mankind”

– *Neal Daftary, Plano, TX.*

‘Guru Ka Langar’, a combined effort of the Sikhs across the US and worldwide was another highlight of the Parliament. The Sikh Community served Langar, a free meal to all the attendees of the Parliament at lunch time every day. They went out of their way to accommodate Jains so that they could also observe their dietary needs. They served Dal, vegetables, Salad, Nan, Rice, Yogurt, Sweet, and Tea/ Coffee to all who came for lunch. They cooked over 9,000 people every day. Sikhs came from all around the world just to cook and serve. What an amazing lesson of Seva and Guru Bhakti. The Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNSSJ) of UK had put up excellent displays on many religions in the Langar area that included a display on Jainism and another on the pilgrimage site of Shri Sammet Shikhar Ji.

HH Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji participated in a panel discussion on a crucial shift among religious leaders on promoting sanitation through spirituality and faith – from worship to WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene); including the role faith leaders can play in advocacy. This panel was organized by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance from India in cooperation with UNICEF India.



Jain



Left: Parliament Emeritus trustees Hema Pokharna and Naresh Jain, and HH Lokesh Muniji in a session on promoting peace, conflict resolution and stress management.

Right: JAINA speakers on Nonviolent Communication -Arvind Vora, Hema Pokharna, Manda Pokharna and Girish Shah.

Sessions by Jain Speakers and Scholars

Samani Parimal Pragma Ji, Samani Shukla Pragma Ji, Samani Rohit Pragma Ji and Samani Maryada Pragma Ji conducted Preksha Meditation sessions every day in the morning. During the Parliament, Samanijis led various sessions on different topics such as "Application of Non-violence", "Saving the Planet", and "Holistic Approach to Health".

There were several sessions by Jain speakers and scholars on Jainism. The first session on Friday morning on 'Peace Education, Conflict Resolution and Stress Management' moderated by JAINA interfaith member Naresh Jain included HH Lokesh Muniji, Dr. Sohanlal Gandhi represented by Dr. Hema Pokharna, Sudhir Shah and Ektaa Deora from India. Parliament Trustee Kirit Daftary was a panelist in another program 'Langar from Sikh and Interfaith Perspective'.

Saturday morning started with Snatra Puja at the temple. HH Vasanth Vijay Ji spoke in a solo session on 'Universal call for Peace – A Divine Hope to end Violence'. A shared Jain session on a variety of topics included Pravin K Shah on Jain eLibrary, Arvind Vora on Compassion for Well Being; Hema Pokharna and Manda Pokharna on Nonviolent Communication; and Girish Shah on an Approach to Sustainable Living. Another session on 'Application of Nonviolence for Existential Well Being' and Anuvrat Balodaya Model of Education was conducted by Samani Shukla Prajna ji and Sanchay Jain, a designated Ambassador of the Parliament from India. An interfaith session on 'Care for the earth from Buddhist, Jain and Hindu Perspectives' was addressed by Buddhist Abbot Phramahachanya Khongchinda from the Buddhist Council of America, Naresh Jain, and Prof. Pankaj Jain.

On Sunday morning, Bhattarak Shri Charukirtiji gave a session on 'Awake: Reborn Soul' in the North Foyer with colorful diagrams and stories based on Jainism. A shared session on 'A holistic Approach to Wellness and Breathing'

was shared by Dr. Vikram Desai and Samani Maryada Pragma Ji. The last shared session of the day on 'Death without Destruction, Jainism and Ecology, Saving the Planet, and Jain Lifestyle' was shared by Whitney Braun, Prof. Pankaj Jain, and Samani Parimal Pragma Ji.

On Monday Morning a shared session on '3 Pillars of Peaceful Life, Jaipur Foot, and the Anuvrata Code' was shared by Dr. Sulekh Jain, Tejkaran Jain from India and Kirit Daftary. Prior to the closing plenary session, Kirit Daftary had arranged for Bhakti Sangeet in the Northern Foyer to bring about a musical end to the Jain programs.

If you have been active in interfaith at your center level and want to work at the World Parliament level in various committees, which could lead to serving on the board, then please contact , Kirit C Daftary at kcdaftary@gmail.com, and Naresh Jain at njain52253@aol.com for more information.

Some of the comments from the attendees:

"Got spiritual peace and lots of interfaith people. Appreciate Kumar Chatterjee sing A Dhun like "Om Hrim Arham Namoh Namah". It's amazing in Interfaith Community they all Love this Dhoon,... its Unforgettable Experience in my life" – Kishor Shah, LA.

"This is my first time to attend the Parliament. What an amazing experience I had. It was a delight and treat to meet people of different faith... nice, peace loving and open minded. Also, I am impressed to see the large number of Jains at the Parliament. The highlight was the Jain Temple, what a perfect location. It a meeting point for people and many people would hang around the temple and pull a chair and sit there and relax and do prayers" - Kishor Pokharna, Pittsburg.

Digest

"I applaud all the efforts by planners, executors, scholars and speakers. Mission to make Jainism visible was achieved but as a group of highly educated individuals, we need to go far beyond" - Panna Shah, MD.

"Fliers on Jainism and Jain prayers were distributed from our Jain temple to the Parliament visitors. Any of you can use these materials at the local center or local interfaith org or any other place. If I can of any assistance in your interfaith activities, please let me know" - Pravin K Shah.

"Thousands miles away from the homeland, meeting with thousands of people coming from diverse cultures and religions,



Ektaa Deora, a youth speaker from India on Stress Management; Samanijis in the Northern foyer with Sanchay Jain and Tejkaran Jain; Sanchay Jain and Samani Shukla Pragayaji on application of Nonviolence.

with a common fire of interfaith burning in every heart – the whole five days were full of pure and positive, spiritual vibrations engulfing every one present there. For a volunteer like me, it was amazing to see so many people working in their own way to serve the humanity with full of dedication and devotion" – Sanchay Jain, India.

"The unity, harmony, togetherness, sharing and caring and more ... stood out to me the MOST! IT WAS OUR EVENT ... not an attempt to be seen or stand up taller than the other ... it was more about JAINS and JAINISM and not a personal agenda. Special mention of Swami Chidananda Saraswati Muniji ... He has been a long standing TRUE supporter and partner and collaborator with the Jains since the times of Sushilmuniji. Sushilmuniji and Swamiji have inspired us as Jains to participate actively in interfaith" - Manda Pokharna, MD.

"Highlights of World Religious Parliament 2015 are as follows: (1) Nipulbhai and Kiranbhai's great dedication to erect the Jain Temple was excellent; (2) Kumar Chaterjee's music really created an environment, where audience desire to know Jain Philosophy was awaken; (3) Sikh community's "langar" was an inspiration and informative. We need to adopt a lot during our Jaina conventions" - Hemant V. Gandhi, Irvine, CA.

"World Religion Parliament of October 2015 at Salt Lake City Utah was an amazing experience of our life. We felt as if we were at Journey of Peace. There were Many Faith but it was like a one family. The Goal of all the 10,000 attendees across the world & aim of all the Religion was to preserve our Earth, water and protect human being. Everyone wanted to have a World where people of diverse faiths, Cultures, and beliefs enjoy mutual respect, understanding, appreciation, acceptance, harmony, and love" - Kalpana Gandhi & Rasik Sanghavi.

"The identity of Jainism was clearly established. Location of temple and Ahimsa Award were catalysts. Efforts of Kirit Daftary, Parliament's Trustee and his team were enormous. Each spiritual leader, scholar, speaker, artist, and attendee was an active Jain ambassador. The team spirit is truly commendable" – Naresh Jain, Former Parliament Trustee.

JAINA COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: MEDIA PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

By Dr. Mamta Shaha, New York, NY



Jain



Dr. Mamta Shaha is a regional Vice president of JAINA in Northeast region and chairs Media and Women's Committees. A Board Certified Pediatrician at NYU Medical Center NY, she is a part time practicing Pediatrician. She is very active in social fields in the Local community and in the Jain community at large.

(The Media Production Committee creates high quality Jain media programs. It showcases the Jain way of life and Jains of North America, with a special platform given to our youth. The committee launched Mangalam TV show in 2007. It is broadcast on TV as well as via internet. More than 15,000 people from 51 countries watch the program. In this article Dr. Mamta Shaha, chairman of the committee, takes us 'backstage' and tells us more about the accomplishments and the people who make this happen. Jain Digest congratulates Dr. Mamta Shaha and her team for their hard work and



"Be Proud of it, Be a Part of it"

Media Production Committee was established in 2006. The aim was to present Jain Religion in a non-biased, nonsectarian way, using television as a medium. We also wanted to showcase and unite the Jains of North America with special attention given to the next generation. In 2007, within one year we launched "MANGALAM JAIN TV SHOW" on TV Asia as a weekly broadcast in North America on the pious occasion of Paryushan parva. Since then the show has been on television every week for the past 7 years. It is also available on the internet and is enjoyed in over 51 countries.

"MANGALAM" is a unique religious show as it is the only Jain TV program in North America and now in the world. It is also a religious show produced by a Jain Community Organization and not by a particular saint/monk or a group of followers of a particular saint/monk. It has given us, the Jains of North America, a strong presence in the media, world over.

Our Accomplishments:

In the past seven years, the Media production Committee has achieved more than expected:

- Within one year of establishing the committee, "Mangalam Jain TV show" was launched as a weekly broadcast throughout USA, on TV Asia Channel.
- In the second year "Mangalam Jain TV show" became international by its launch on the Canada, UK and Europe platform with Sahara One Channel.

- In the third year we launched the program on the internet at www.mangalamshow.com, thus making it available worldwide. With this, we also completed production of our 100th episode.
- In the fifth year we were thrilled to have "Mangalam Jain TV show" launched on Paras Jain Channel in India.
- In the past seven years we have produced 165 episodes and continue to work on new episodes.
- The most important accomplishment is the involvement of our young Jains with the program on a regular basis.

Our presentations:

- The program is presented in Hindi and English.
- A wide variety of topics are covered in the show such as Jain philosophy, starting with what being a Jain means to the intricacies of Karma theory, as well as presentations about the practical applications of Jain principles in daily life situations; thus helping the audience chart their own journey towards the liberation of the soul. Jain scholars from all different sects of Jain religion, as well as non-Jain scholars, who are following the Jain way of life, have personally contributed to this program.
- Besides regular lectures on Jain principles and Jain way of life, we have also presented coverage of special events happening in different Jain Centers such as Pratishtha Mahotsav, Ashtapad Pratishtha Mahotsav, JAINA and YJA conventions, Interfaith



conferences, visits with world religious leaders like The Pope and Dalai Lama, as well as special presentations on educational and social work done by Jain organizations.

- We have also presented special multi-episode series on Bhaktamber Stotra, Samavasaran, and Mahaveer Janma kalyanak celebrations.
- There are exciting and unique segments on Jain Cooking, Jain meditation, and Jain yoga as well.

Our People:

“Mangalam Jain TV show” plays an important role in providing a platform to our young Jains. Youth perspectives on Jain religion, their interviews, musical performances and art have been all showcased on this show.

- Our young news anchor, Rushabh Mehta, covers the Jain Global news and has been working with Mangalam show for more than 5 years.
- Our special host Dipti Mehta, handles the Viewer’s Mail segment presenting responses and comments by the audience about our show.
- Shefali Ajmera is our very active art director, who works with young children and adults to create different art projects. These art projects are in collaboration with the art department of Jain Center of America, New York. These projects are featured on “Mangalam Jain TV show” on a regular basis.
- Our technical team under the able leadership of Sandip Mehta maintains the website and keeps the shows current on the internet. Manish Shaha and Rajat Jain are web managers.
- The other regional members of the team are:

Northeast Region: Anurag Jain, Southeast Region: Chetan Shah
Midwest Region: Soumin Mehta, West Region: Sunil Vora
Southwest Region: Ashish Bhandari, Canada Region: Prakash Mody

Our Past and Future Projects:

We have always striven to promote Bhajans/Stavans sung in Indian classical/semi classical Ragas, thus trying to avoid Bollywood tune based Stavan singing. With this in mind, we have produced one Audio CD called “MANGALAM”. In this CD we have Stavans sung by famous artist Sanjivani Bhelande in simple ragas. They are easy to sing and the names of the ragas have been.

This is an effort to get people and youngsters to like and appreciate the Indian classical music. We are looking for sponsors to produce similar CDs to promote classical bhajan singing.

In the future we plan to

- Start 24 hour Mangalam Jain channel covering the Jain Diaspora
- Cover life stories of Tirthankars
- Showcase Jain Yatra, Jain Art and Architecture
- Interview prominent Jains from different fields from around the world

Our Success:

More than 15,000 people from 51 countries watch this program on TV or on Internet. All these achievements could not have been possible without the tremendous support we have received from Jains around the world. We owe this success to our sponsors and donors like you.

Our Contact Information:

For more information please visit us at www.mangalamshow.com
If you would like to support us financially or have any comments/suggestions, please write to us at mangalamshow@gmail.com

POSSESSING OR GETTING POSSESSED

By Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbha



Jain



Propounding the path of Bhagwan Mahavira, an ardent devotee of Shrimad Rajchandraji, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai is a spiritual visionary and modern-day mystic. The founder of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur, Pujya Gurudevshri has illuminated numerous lives across the globe through enlightening discourses and an array of meditation retreats.

(Forgetting the magnificence of one's true Self, the worldly take pride in owning things. Pujya Gurudevshri not only reveals the ugly consequences of possessiveness but also shows us the path to eternal happiness by giving up the illusory sense of ownership)

In 'The Story of a Horse', a play written by Tolstoy, the main character, a horse, beautifully describes his perspective of the humans. He sarcastically remarks on his owner, "While talking about me to other humans, he always refers to me as 'his' horse. How can I become 'his' just because he has paid for me? I am I, independent and completely separate from him. Even if he rides on me, this brief association with me cannot make me 'his'. Can a fly sitting on me become my owner? Neither am I his, nor is he mine. These humans are a creed of fools who live with a false sense of my-ness. They do not realise the futility of being possessive of fleeting associations. This is ignorance, the root cause of all their suffering."

Possessiveness is a Disease

Most of us fear death. Learned and knowledgeable men Having wealth, family, etc. is one thing but the inclination of clinging to them is possessiveness, unawareness, and attachment. The more you get attached, the more is the anxiety. Become the master of yourself by severing the bonds of possessiveness. Possessiveness is the enemy of life. It smothers life. It is a barrier to the flow of life. You are not able to enjoy life and end up only guarding your possessions. From being the master, you become a guard. The one who possesses nothing lives peacefully.

Possessiveness is a disease of the mind, bondage of the mind. It makes you believe that life cannot run without this or that. You embrace things, cling to them, become dependent, and soon begin to beg for more. You become slave to your attachments and lose your freedom and self-respect. He who holds gets caught. Mental possession is mental imprisonment.

Anulom - Vilom

Life can be lived in two ways - Anulom or expansion, and Vilom or withdrawal. Those living a life of expansion are worldly and extroverts. They are restless and want more and more of everything - wealth, status, family, etc. And so disturbance, suffering, bewilderment, power struggle, competition, jealousy, rivalry, fights etc. are natural to them. Whereas those living a life of withdrawal believe that 'nothing in the world is mine'. They are introverts and show virtues like contentment and detachment. If

they can make do with little, they will not wish to hoard more. Therefore, peace, happiness, and enlightenment are natural to them. He who lives for expansion loses everything. And he who adheres to life of withdrawal attains that which is worth attaining and becomes fulfilled.

Viloma means withdrawing one's self from worldliness. When the inclination to possess more ends, withdrawal begins. After that, the external activities may continue but you will remain centred within.

Shattered Hopes are the Moments of Grace

Every day you go through some or the other experience where you realise the worthlessness of worldliness and you can begin a life of withdrawal. Many times, your hopes regarding status, reputation, family and wealth have been shattered. So often, you have come across occasions where you could develop dispassion. But the majority hoodwinks you and your own impressions of the past do not let you take the about turn. Because everyone does, you do; they covet wealth, so you too want it. The neighbour gets a new car; you too want one. Your relatives get a new house; you too want a bigger and better house. To save yourself from the pain of insufficiency, you go on running around imitating the majority.

Like a tired horse is caned to get up and run again, caned by your deceitful intellect, you once again get up with new hopes, inspired to run in the same direction.

You cannot muster courage to move towards withdrawal. Sometimes your wife, family, friends, and colleagues cane you and you give in. Many times you get a chance to stop and turn within, your grip of worldliness gets loosened, but you divert your mind, or prompted by others, you get occupied with the outside. You lose the opportunity at hand. At that time, the mind forgets the teachings of the wise and identifies with worldly talks. Leaving spirituality, it indulges in sensual pleasures.

Realisation of Death - An Opening into Right Understanding

Think! Before long, you will be gone; leaving behind all those things you think you cannot live without. Then why can you not do it now? Why do you not willingly leave what you will be compelled to? Reflection upon your death helps you to come out of the clutches of possessiveness. You can see the futility of everything that is fleeting. They seem worthless because you realise that none can accompany you beyond death. A thought plagues, 'what is that which will come with me after death? I must pursue that alone.' He who scrupulously applies himself to the pursuit of seeking, 'Who am I? What is mine? What is not mine?' renounces the world before death snatches it away from him. All die, but he who dies before death is fortunate. He has realised that death can take away only that which does not belong to him. Therefore, withdrawing from the worldly pursuits is not painful for him.

Only if you can keep the end in mind, and looking at the saints, their detachment and ecstasy, their activities and solitude, their peace and spontaneity, if you can steadily contemplate upon them, you will stop wandering, and some revolutionary transformation will occur.

Enter the Life of Withdrawal Soon

Gautama Buddha withdrew at 28, Adi Shankaracharyaji at 9. The great ones have awakened at a young age, while the unfortunate deluded ones do not wake up even after 80 - 90. The crocodile of attachment to wealth, fame, family, etc. has seized your leg. Soon, it will devour you. From the spiritual perspective, the real death is at every moment when you indulge in dreadful thoughts and

feelings that result in cycles of birth and death. Certainly you too can come out of this vicious cycle. You too can begin the process of withdrawal. Do not waste time.

Give up inadvertence. Inadvertence means you are not utilising your human birth well. The day has dawned but you are not waking up, you continue to sleep. Where you could be earnest, dancing in ecstasy, you remain indolent, and dead like a corpse. The fate has favoured you by giving you an opportunity but you are letting it go waste.

A thought plagues, "what is that which will come with me after death? I must pursue that alone." He who scrupulously applies himself to the pursuit of seeking, "Who am I? What is mine? What is not mine?" renounces the world before death snatches it away from him.

God is calling you but you are not listening to Him. It is gradual suicide; but you are under delusion that 'I am alive.' Your wicked logic is supporting your inadvertence, 'I have a long life to live, I will do it later.' You will need to hurry; otherwise you will miss this opportunity. Like waves that touch the shores and recede, having come so close to the Lord, do you want to return? Wake up!

Counsel of the Wise

The Enlightened Ones say, 'what you call reality and what you call a dream essentially have the same property, impermanence!' The only difference is you see 'dream' with closed eyes and 'reality' with open eyes. Yet, both are dreams alone. Get awakened to the real 'I', the one that is constant, sees both, and is separate from both. When you see dream and reality, death and life in the right perspective, through the eyes of wisdom, you will realize your true nature that is pure and beyond everything that is seen. But this is possible only if you experiment.

Become free from the slavery of things, beings and circumstances. Remove the veil of fancy you have spread over them. See them as they are. Give up the illusory belief of doer and enjoyer; build a new flawless relation of the knower and the known. Renounce hoarding and possessing, and turn within. Stop being a guard and be a master.

Cultivate the yearning for liberation. Realize the worthlessness and devastating nature of hoarding and possessing. Following the path of withdrawal directed by the supremely compassionate Enlightened Ones, come to abide in the real Self.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

KING HANSA: Following Jain Principles Wisely

In the city of Rājpur, there lived a king named Hansa. He was a fair and just king, known for his devotion to truth and non-violence. On top of Mount Ratnasringa, there was a beautiful temple dedicated to Rishabhadev, the first Tirthankar. During the month of Chaitra, on the day of the full moon, people came from far to visit and worship at the temple. Once, the king decided to visit the temple. He asked his council of ministers to look after the kingdom during his prolonged absence and left with members of the royal household on this spiritual mission.

A few days after king Hansa departed, king Arjun attacked the city. In spite of putting up a strong fight, king Hansa's army was defeated, and many of the generals lost their lives on the battlefield. King Arjun gained control of the palace and the treasury. King Arjun occupied the royal throne and enforced his authority over the entire kingdom.

King Hansa heard the story of their defeat on the way to the temple. The king's courtiers were very upset and advised him to return to the city. The king said, "I have given up control of the kingdom, and we are on a spiritual mission and that is what we should be thinking about. So let us keep going to the temple." The king's courtiers were unhappy about the king's decision and worried about the safety of their families at home. One by one, they all dropped out until only one umbrella bearer was left with the king. On the way to the temple, they had to pass through the forest.

While passing through the forest, the servant was separated from the king. As the king was walking, a deer ran in front of him and disappeared. Right after that, a hunter came

running with a bow in his hand and asked the king if he had seen the deer. The king knew that if he told the truth, the deer would be killed. He decided not to answer the question and instead kept talking about irrelevant things. He said that he came from Rājpur. The hunter asked him again about the deer, and he answered that he was the king. The hunter was very upset with his answers and left in anger.



King Hansa avoiding the hunter's question to protect a deer

By now, the king was tired and decided to rest under a tree. He overheard a discussion in the bushes about robbing some monks who would pass that way in the next two days. The king got concerned about the safety of the monks. While he was thinking about what he could do, some policemen approached him and asked if he had seen any suspicious people that looked like robbers. They said, "These people are very dangerous and we have heard that they harm holy people. We are here to arrest them or even shoot them if necessary to protect the holy people."



King Hansa overhearing the robbers secretly talking in the bushes

The king was in dilemma again whether to tell the truth or not. He was concerned that if he told the police about the robbers, they would be harmed and if he did not, the monks would be harmed. He thought, "If by telling the truth someone gets harmed or killed, then telling that truth is not the best choice. Truth is supposed to protect and not harm anyone. He said, "My friends, you are asked to guard the monks. Why not go and look after the monks and worry about the robbers if they confront the monks." The policemen agreed and left to join the monks. The robbers who were hiding in the bushes heard all this. They were amazed at the mercy shown by this stranger. They came out, thanked him for saving their lives, and told him that they were at his service. The king advised them, "My dear friends, give up harassing people, the fugitive life you lead and be good citizens." The robbers promised that they would not harm the monks anymore and would try to be good citizens.

As if this was not enough, a group of soldiers came and asked him if he had seen king Hansa. The king asked, "What do you want from King Hansa?" They explained that they were the

trusted men of King Arjun and they had been told to arrest King Hansa and kill him, and if they did they would receive a big reward. King Hansa thought for a moment and said, "I am King Hansa. Carry out your duty as told by your king." After saying that, he closed his eyes, stood in meditation, and started reciting the Namaskär Mantra.



King Hansa disclosing the truth despite of danger to his life

At once, a dev (demigod / angel) appeared and said, "Oh, king! I am overwhelmed by your truthfulness and compassion. I have captured King Arjun, made him a prisoner, and have given control of your kingdom back to your ministers. Today is a great day for worship, but the temple is too far from here. There is no way you can reach there in time. My chariot is at your service. Please let me take you there." King Hansa was surprised by the miraculous turn of events. In the company of the dev (demigod / angel), he reached the summit of Mount Ratnasringa in time to worship. The demigod then escorted him back to his kingdom. King Hansa pardoned King Arjun and released his soldiers immediately. The angel appointed four lieutenants to look after the safety of the king and his kingdom and then departed. King Hansa once again ruled the city of Räjpur and the people were happy.

What do we learn from this story?

The main theme here is the importance of the Jain principles of Truthfulness and Non-Violence, and their interrelationship. Sometimes, following one principle blindly can lead to the violation of another principle, which is what King Hansa was faced with on multiple occasions. He thought about each situation carefully and found a very creative way smart and beneficial solution without violating any principles and without hurting anyone. This showed his devotion and adherence to Jainism. When faced with King Arjun's soldiers in the last situation, he told the truth since no other people or principles were involved, even though it meant the end of his life. He once again stuck to Jain principles, even though he might have been killed for it.

TYING THE KNOT

Males



M02230115

Gujarati Jain parents invite proposal from educated, family oriented and caring girl for their only son born in 1989. Born and raised in India. MS in Computer Science from a reputed University. Employed with a very renowned software firm. **Please contact: ajay.choksi15@gmail.com**

M02270115

Jain parents invite proposals for their son, born December 1985, 6' 0", US Citizen. Non-smoker. Non-drinker, physician in residency at a major university. Correspondence invited from professional girls settled in USA (green card/Citizen). Respond with bio-data and recent photos to: **padmamba6503@yahoo.com**

M02330115

Rajasthani Gujarati Jain parents seek proposal for their fair, handsome, well-cultured, vegetarian, non-smoking, non-drinking Canadian citizen son. Born November 1990, 5' 6". B.Sc. (Computer Engineering) from reputed University Of Alberta. Currently working with a multinational company Honeywell in Alberta, Canada. Correspondence invited from well-educated, professional, cultured, family oriented Jain girls. Please respond with bio-data and a recent photo. **Email: jsmnhar@yahoo.com**

M02240115

India based Shvetāmbar Jain parents invite proposal for their handsome, fair, well-cultured, caring, vegetarian, non-smoker, non-drinker and family oriented son. Born in India and brought up in USA. Born August 13, 1985, 6' 0". Currently working in a financial industry as a relationship specialist. Looking for a US citizen, beautiful girl with family values. Please respond with bio-data and a photo. ☺

Ph: 732-986-3290. Email: sushant13.jain@gmail.com

M02280115

Gujarati Jain parents invite correspondence for their US born and raised son, 6' 2", born in 1987, B.S. Business Administration, pursuing CFA, manager at a consulting company in Chicago. Seeking US born and raised professional girl. Please email bio-data and a recent photograph to: **matriakg1@gmail.com**

M02310115

Gujarati Jain parents invite proposals for their vegetarian, fair, well-educated, non-smoker and non-drinker son. He is kind, family oriented and outgoing. Born Dec 17, 1983, 5' 8". Double Master's in Finance and Accountancy from US Universities and recently passed his Certified Public Accountant exams. He is working full time in Milwaukee, WI. Enjoys travelling, playing sports and watching movies. ☺
Call: 201-850-3512 or Email: adesaih83@yahoo.com

M02250115

Gujarati Jain parents invite correspondence for their US citizen, vegetarian, non-smoker, family oriented, and hard-working son. Born July 1989. 140 lb., 5' 8". Associate in accounting. Successfully managing own thriving business. Looking for a girl with similar values. Please respond with bio-data and a recent photo to: **shahaha45@yahoo.com**

M02320115

Jain parents invite correspondence for their US born and raised son, soft spoken, intelligent, studious, family oriented, strong morals and ethics. Brown Undergrad, Doctorate-Yale law School. Born July 1986, 5' 5", slim, non-smoker and non-drinker. Works as independent foreign policy advisor. Plays competitive racquet sports, squash, tennis. Extended family in US with deep roots, Hindi speaking background. Alliance invited from US raised professional girls, slim, strong moral values, educated families. Please send bio-data with photo to: **geeta.chougule@gmail.com**

M02290115

Gujarati Jain parents invite proposals for their fair, handsome and well-cultured son. Born 1980, 6' 1". Very well educated and professionally well settled. Proposals invited from caring, well-educated and professional girls. ☺
Email: jss1512@outlook.com. Phone: 408-637-8322

M02260115

Gujarati Shwetambar Jain parents invite proposals for their Indian born and raised 25 year old, 5' 6", permanent resident, non-smoker and non-drinker, humble and well-cultured. Computer Engineer son. Working in Pittsburg, PA. We are looking for a vegetarian, educated, family oriented, fun loving person having a blend of modern and traditional values. Please send the bio-data & photos to: **jvora5864@yahoo.com**

M02300115

Gujarati parents invite proposal for their son, US born in 1988, 5' 11". Highly educated, well-cultured, non-smoker, non-drinker, vegetarian with strong family values and ethics. Currently first year MD resident. Correspondence invited from US born girl with similar values, non-smoker, non-drinker, vegetarian and well-educated girls, preferably from Chicago area. Please respond with current photo and bio-data to: **sriyahas11@gmail.com**

M02340115

Jain parents invite proposal for their smart, handsome, fair, vegetarian son, born in October 1980, 5' 6" tall. Well educated, holding green card and working at a top management consulting firm in senior leadership position in Bay area. Outgoing, non-smoker and never married. Please respond with recent photos and bio-data to: **floatingpoint01@yahoo.com**

Please note that due to space limitations, we were not able to print all the matrimonial ads in the Jain Digest.

For a complete list, go to <http://www.jaina.org/?page=MISHome>. To place an ad, please fill out the MIS registration form available at: http://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/JNF_MIS/MIS_REGISTRATION_FORM_ver_3.pdf.

Send the form, your ad written on a separate piece of paper and a check in the amount of \$30.00 payable to JAINA to:

Purvin Vakhawala, 3665 Ellington Place, Johns Creek, GA 30022. Email: purvin@gmail.com. Tel: 404-409-0945

We update JAINA website MIS ads about once a month. So once you place your ad, it may take up to one month for your ad to appear on the JAINA web site. Your ad will remain on JAINA web site for one year or until cancelled by you.

TYING THE KNOT

Females



F02840115

Gujarati Jain parents invite alliance for their daughter, BS-MS Information Systems (Drexel Uni.), working as a management Consultant in Silicon Valley. Born April 1983, 5' 2", Divorced (NO kids), green card holder, well-travelled, vegetarian, slim, outgoing, family oriented, social; enjoys dancing, photography, baking and travelling. Correspondence invited from non-smoker, family-oriented, well-educated professionals with bio-data. **Email: sshah0308@hotmail.com**
Phone: 408-300-3737

F02880115

Jain parents seeking alliance from well educated, cultured, vegetarian, US based, professional for their 1980 born US citizen daughter - 4th year medical student, vegetarian, non-smoker, non-drinker, intelligent, attractive and family oriented. She enjoys dancing, cooking/baking, travelling. Bollywood movies, listening music, reading, watching football and trying new foods. She is fluent in Hindi and Marwari. Please respond with bio-data and recent photograph to: **rimatrim@gmail.com**

F02850115

Rajasthani Jain parents invite proposals for their daughter, very fair skinned, slim, beautiful, vegetarian, non-smoker, non-drinker. Born February 1983, 5' 2", Doctor of Pharmacy. Please email bio-data with recent photo to: **sumervardhan@yahoo.com**

F02890115

Gujarati Jain parents invite correspondence for their physician daughter, born in USA, 1986, 5' 5". Highly educated, vegetarian, non-drinking and with high family values. Currently doing PGY 1 residency. Correspondence invited from boy with similar values, non-smoker and non-drinker. Please respond with current photograph and bio-data to: **qmlim@aol.com**

F02900115

Gujarati parents invite alliance from US born, family oriented, vegetarian, non-smoker boy for their US born and raised, M.D., vegetarian, fair, and slim daughter. Born August 1984, 5' 4". Currently working at UCLA hospital in LA. Looking for US born/raised professional boy. Please respond with bio-data and photo. Email: **samaj1958@gmail.com**.
Phone: 516-319-2333

F02940115

Rajasthani parents invite correspondence for their daughter. Born in NJ in 1992, 5' 3". She is raised in Jain culture and currently studying B.A. - M.D. Did Arangetram. Possess great family values, down to earth, perfect blend of East/West. Fluent in Hindi. Correspondence invited from Vegetarian, Jain professional, US born and raised, non-smoker and non-drinking boys. Please respond to: **naharmd@ymail.com** or **Call: 732-266-3286**.

F02860115

Girl from South Mumbai, B.M.S. (Bachelor in Management Studies, M.Com. (Masters in Commerce) from Mumbai Uni., India. Aspires to be an MBA. Her hobbies are listening music, reading and surfing. Looking for a boy who is very well independent and who understands and respects family values. Please forward bio-data and pics to: **9mukeshshah@gmail.com**

F02910115

Gujarati Jain parents invite correspondence from US raised, educated, non-smoker, vegetarian, professional boys for pretty, US born daughter, born June 1985, 5' 3". She is down to earth, witty, and family oriented. B.S. in Business Administration. Previously worked for Google and Adobe in Silicon Valley. Currently working with a start-up company in San Francisco bay area. Email bio-data and photos to: **adshah44@yahoo.com**.
Phone: 510-565-0695

F02930115

Gujarati parents invite alliance from US born, family oriented, vegetarian, non-smoker boy for their US born and raised, M.D., vegetarian, fair, and slim daughter. Born August 1984, 5' 4". Currently working at UCLA hospital in LA. Looking for US born/raised professional boy. Please respond with bio-data and photo. Email: **samaj1958@gmail.com**.
Phone: 516-319-2333

F02870115

South Mumbai based, cultured, educated Gujarati Jain business oriented family invites proposals for their daughter, born in 1986, 5' 1", fair and good looking, has done Masters in Business Management. She enjoys reading and painting. We seek alliance from well educated, cultured, well-settled, vegetarian boy, preferably Jain, with strong family values. Interested families please contact on: **9819592526** or **prexammodi@gmail.com**

F02920115

Canada based Gujarati Jain parents invite correspondence for their well-educated, family oriented daughter. Born in 1988, 5' 1". She is vegetarian, non-smoker and non-drinker. Works in pharmaceutical industry in post market surveillance. Looking for Canada/US citizen, non-smoking, vegetarian partner with good blend of modern and traditional values. Please respond with bio-data and recent photo to: **smodi2892@gmail.com**

F02950115

Gujarati Jain, US-born, outgoing, caring girl, 33 years old, 5'2, fair skin, double major in business, a Vice President in Commercial Real Estate, divorced (brief marriage). Looking for humorous, vegetarian, professional, US-born boy.
Contact: shahmc0@gmail.com or **937-657-1101**

Please note that due to space limitations, we were not able to print all the matrimonial ads in the Jain Digest.

For a complete list, go to <http://www.jaina.org/?page=MISHome>. To place an ad, please fill out the MIS registration form available at: http://www.jaina.org/resource/resmgr/JNF_MIS/MIS_REGISTRATION_FORM_ver_3.pdf.

Send the form, your ad written on a separate piece of paper and a check in the amount of \$30.00 payable to JAINA to: **Purvin Vakhrawala, 3665 Ellington Place, Johns Creek, GA 30022. Email: purvin@gmail.com. Tel: 404-409-0945**

We update JAINA website MIS ads about once a month. So once you place your ad, it may take up to one month for your ad to appear on the JAINA web site. Your ad will remain on JAINA web site for one year or until cancelled by you.

For more questions and information please contact: **Gunvant Shah** at prof.garyshah@yahoo.com or call: **732 253 7049**





Black Bean and Quinoa Pilaf

Ingredients:

2 tablespoon olive oil
½ cup thinly shredded cabbage
1 medium-small cucumber chopped
1 medium-small zucchini chopped
1 cup quinoa
2 cups vegetable broth or water
1 12 oz. can vegetarian black beans drained
6 cherry tomatoes sliced into half
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoon fresh lime juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

In a large skillet, saute the cabbage in olive oil for 3 to 4 minutes.

Add quinoa and vegetable broth or water.

Cover, bring to a boil and then reduce heat to a simmer.

Allow to cook for 20-25 minutes, until quinoa is cooked and can be fluffed with a fork.

Add sliced tomatoes just minutes before quinoa is done.

Remove from heat and stir in black beans, chopped cucumber, zucchini, lime juice and season generously with salt and pepper to taste.

Stir in chopped parsley leaves just before serving.



Avocado Pudding

Ingredients:

1 large ripe avocado
¼ teaspoon saffron powder
6 tablespoon plain soy yogurt
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
8 teaspoon terbinado sugar
½ cup grated apples
¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 tablespoon slivered pistachio nuts

Method:

Peel avocado and remove pit.

Puree in a blender along with yogurt, sugar and spices.

Empty puree in a serving bowl.

Gently add grated apples, mix and chill.

Serve in individual bowls.

Garnish with slivered pistachio nuts.

Avocado is actually a fruit, but is generally used as a vegetable in salads and dips. To test for ripeness, take the fruit and press with your fingers for softness. It should be soft to touch. A cut avocado can be refrigerated for several days, if the pit is left in.

JAINA AWARDS 2015

JAINA RATNA AWARD

Dilip V. Shah, Philadelphia



A visionary and a leader, Dilipbhai Shah has devoted his life for the betterment of mankind for over 40 years. Highlights of few of his accomplishments:

- Was JAINA Secretary, First V.P. President and convener of 2007 JAINA Convention
- Frequent contributor to JAIN DIGEST – Book Reviews, Conventions and Yatra reports
- Helped raise funds for building 250 homes in the aftermath of 2001 Kutch earthquake
- Helped build school in Lachvad and Pawapuri with Veerayatan.
- Helped bring academic studies of Jainism to American Universities
- Helped build an Upashrya for Sadhvijis in Ahmedabad
- Helped JAINA obtain NGO status at the UN, launch a JAINA Patron Program and amend JAINA Constitution
- Led JAINA Pilgrimage Committee for many years and taken over 1000 people to India for Teerth yatra.

JAINA SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

Girishbhai Shah, Jain Center of Southern California, Buena Park, CA



Shree Girishbhai Shah is a well respected and a well-recognized Shravak for his humbleness, equanimity compassion and patience. He has advanced the cause of Jains and Jainism. His contribution in teaching Jainism for last three decades is simply unmatched. He has taught not only young and adults but a whole cadre of teachers in Los Angeles and many other centers across USA. He is a shining example of promoting Jainism and Jain way of life without putting down any sects or practices or favoring one over other. He continues to teach in an all-encompassing way while emphasizing the main tenets of Jainism. He is an institution by himself.

JAINA PRESIDENTIAL AWARDS

Individual Awards: Outstanding Leadership for Promoting Jain Way of Life

Dr. Dipak Jain, SASIN: The leading Business school in the Asian Region



Dr. Dipak Jain has played a pivotal role in the long range planning of JAINA and the Jain community as well as keynote speaker in many YJA and JAINA Conventions. He has been a leading light in the Jain Education and Research Foundation of Miami and had been instrumental in the establishment of Bhagwan Mahavir Professor of Jain studies in the Florida International University.



Jain

Dr. Jagdish Sheth, EMORY: Goizueta Business School



Dr. Sheth is an American Psychological Association Fellow and past President of the Association for Consumer Research (ACR). His personal and professional life has been guided by his Jain upbringing and three principles of Jainism (Ahimsa, Anekant and Aparigraha). He was a keynote speaker at LA JAINA Convention where he eloquently presented the case of how the core Jain values can play an important role in the market dynamics of the future.

Partner Organizations: Outstanding Service and Education Awards

Ahimsa Center, Cal Poly Pomona, CA



The Center was established in 2004 at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona by Dr. Tara Sethia, a professor in the History department. The purpose of the Center is to mainstream the understanding of Ahimsa both as a core value of good life and a powerful force to bring about peaceful social change. The center offers, interdisciplinary minor in non-

violence studies; trains k-12 teacher to take Ahimsa lessons into classrooms throughout America and engages the community through seminars on ongoing exploration of Ahimsa as a way of life.

Jain Vishva Bharati (JVB) & JVB Institute



With inspiration from Ganadhipati Gurudev Shri Tulsi and Acharya Shri Mahapragya, JVB was established in 1970 at Ladnun in Rajasthan. In addition to being a center of excellence in the field of Jain studies and the Prakrit Language, this institute has also become an international center of learning on Ahimsa, Jeevan Vignan and Preksha Dhyana with goal of upliftment of socio- spiritual values. The practice of pragmatic principles such as anekant, non-violence , tolerance and peaceful co-existence are the noble ideals of this institute.

JAINA Adult Recognition Awards

Deepika Dalal, Jain Center of South Florida, Fort Lauderdale, FL



Very helpful and backbone of pathshala program of South Florida, positive with new ideas leading through volunteering, instrumental in bringing youth and adults together and very resourceful.

Dilip Punatar, Jain Center of Cincinnati Dayton, Liberty Twp, OH



A pioneer in establishing two Jain Centers in North America, Dilipbhai has devoted more than 20 years of his life to Jain Religion, JAINA and Jain education. He has served on numerous committees of local Jain centers as well as of JAINA. He is well known for his philanthropy with special inclination towards Jain education.

Gunvant Shah, Jain Center of New Jersey, Essex Fells, NJ



A founding member of Jain Center of NJ, Gunvantbhai has dedicated 25 years of service to the center in every possible position and capacity. He has been serving JAINA for many years being treasurer for the last two years and in charge of youth programming at this convention. He is well known for holding Jain Milan programs with many success stories of marriages between participants.

Hasmita Parekh, Jain Center of Southern California, Buena Park, CA



Her desire to get involved & help motivate others is very inspirational. Always available with friendly and cooperative attitude. Her "Never Say No" has earned her admiration and appreciation from all young and old. She has contributed not only to Jain Center of Southern California but also regularly for JAINA as well.

Megha Doshi, Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington, Washington DC



Megha is a director of Education at JSMW and she has made an enormous impact on how her center runs Pathshala curriculum. She has displayed un-selfish devotion for advancement of Jainism for more than a decade. She is very kind hearted and humble with a positive can-do attitude.

Niranjan Shah, Jain Society of Greater Detroit, Troy, MI



Lifetime dedicated service to Detroit Society. Successfully lead Detroit Convention in 2013. Advisor, true contributor, fund raiser and inspirer for young generation, generous donor, devoted with energy and financial resources for the advancement of Jainism everywhere.



Jain

Sharad Shah, Jain Society of Greater Detroit, Troy, MI



Sharad is selflessly committed to the advancement of others and of course JAINA itself. A natural in taking photos and uploading to benefit others for all the Jain religious events. Has always contributed to the cause of Jainism.

Tejas Shah, Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago, IL



Highly energetic and motivating leader of Chicago Society brings environment friendly initiatives, promoting technologies in managing organization, dynamic, devotional and passionate to promote Jainism and a Masskhaman Tapsvi.

Vijay Chheda, Jain Center of Southern California, Buena Park, CA



Vijaybhai is a well known philanthropist whose kindness is well recognized in USA as well as India. Presently serving as President of Bidada Sarvodaya Trust in Kutch, Gujarat. Vijaybhai has devoted his life and finances towards service to humanity. He has been a member of Jain Center of Southern California and JAINA since its inception serving both relentlessly.

Vipul Shah, Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago, Chicago, IL



Vipul shah has successfully led the JAINA program called Campus Outreach Initiative during YJA convention in Chicago. He has streamlined the entire operations/administration of JSMC by implementing IT technology. He has the ability to present any event with his special touch of branding and marketing which ultimately results in more participation.

JAINA Youth Awards



Arpit Mehta: Arpit is a bioinformatics scientist at the University of Miami School of Medicine. He has contributed to the Jain community through his outstanding work with the Jain Education Research Foundation and two terms on the YJA Executive Board.



Charmi Vakharia: Charmi is currently a student at Rutgers University studying Bio-mathematics. She has served Jain community through multiple terms on the YJA Executive Board, involvement and participation in Jain Academic Bowl and as a youth leader at the Jain Center of New Jersey.



Priyal Gandhi: Priyal has been highly influential by leading, promoting and spreading Jain education to our future generations of Jains. She has been YJA Director of Education for two years and has coached and played during the Jain Academic Bowl competitions both in Detroit and Atlanta.



Sapan Doshi: Sapan is a highly involved member of the Jain Center of Southern California as the Youth Committee Director of Media for the last two years, which has allowed him to coordinate the Mahavir Jayanti and Paryushan programs. He is also growing entrepreneur, having founded a non-profit organization for underprivileged children.



Sejal Dhruva: Sejal has been instrumental in leading YJA and JAINA. She served as the co-chair of YJA for two years from 2013 to 2014 and was the West Regional Coordinator prior to that – planning many events to bring the community together. She has been vital to taking YJA to where it is today.



Shikhar Shah: Shikhar has been a versatile contributor and leader of YJA and JAINA. He was the Mid-West Regional Coordinator for YJA, a security co-chair during the YJA Convention and a speaker and Jain Academic Bowl Moderator during the past JAINA convention.



Sunny Dharod: Sunny Dharod is currently a student at the University of Michigan studying Economics and Spanish. He has served the Jain Community through exceptional fundraising for the past YJA convention as well as founding of a Jain Students Association in his college.



Vishal Mehta: Vishal Mehta is currently a student at the University of Michigan studying political science and communications. He has served the Jain community greatly through his work on the YJA Executive Board as well as volunteering with the youth group at the Detroit Derasar.



JAINA Committees

Committee	Chairperson	City, State	Phone	e-mail Address
Academic Liaison	Sulekh Jain	Sugar Land,IL	281-494-7656	scjain@earthlink.net
Academic Scholarship	Udai Jain	Sugar Land,TX	281-980-0741	udaijn@yahoo.com
Ahimsak Eco-Vegan	Jina Shah	Berkeley,CA	650-296-3197	jina.shah@gmail.com
Awards Committee	Nitin Shah	Long Beach,CA	562-244-9035	Nitinshahmd@gmail.com
Calendar & Mini Library	Rajeev Pandya	Staten Island,NY	718-816-0083	rajeevpandya@ashdiamonds.com
Constitution Committee	Dilip Shah	Philadelphia,PA	215 868 0381	dilipvshah@gmail.com
Convention Committee	Gunvant Shah	North Brunswick,NJ	732-253-7049	profgaryshah@yahoo.com
Education	Pravin K. Shah	Raleigh,NC	919-859-4994	education@jaina.org
Election Committee	Anop Vora	Rochester,NY	585 305 4787	vora6000@gmail.com
Fund Raising, Patron Program & Planned giving committee	Hemant Shah	Detroit ,MI	248 888 8181	hshah1@sbcglobal.net
Governmental & Public Affair Organizations Relations	Pinal Majmudar	Fairfax,VA	703-984-9075	blessedjainova@gmail.com
Interfaith Activities / World Council of Jains	Shefali Javeri	Kings Park,NY	631-269-1167	avora@optonline.net
Jain Center Liasion Committee	Jayesh Shah	Monrovia,CA	626-379-5590	jayesh.shah@jaina.org
Jain Diaspora	Manish Mehta	Ann Arbor,MI	734-668-0348	manimehta@gmail.com
Jain Digest	Mahesh Wadher	Carona,CA	909-376-4027	mahesh.wadher@gmail.com
Jain Milan / JNF/MIS	Purvin Vakhawala	Johns Creek,GA	732-253-7049	purvin@gmail.com
Jivdaya	Rita Sheth	Tulsa,OK	918-398-6023	ritashethcpa@gmail.com
Loan Program	Soha Shah	Columbus,OH	947-248-3906	sohahah@gmail.com
Long Range Planning	Dipak Doshi	Long Grove,IL	847-420-9025	dipakginni@gmail.com
Media Production Committee	Mamata Shaha	Kings Point,NY	516-487-1852	mamta.shaha@gmail.com
Membership	Haresh Shah	Wilmington,DL	302-740-9232	harryshah2000@hotmail.com
Public Relations & Media Committee	Hemant Shah	Carol Stream,IL	630-933-8311	hemantil@yahoo.com
Technology	Chandrakant Vora	Campbell,MA	408-378-8765	chandra.vora@gmail.com
Uplifting Underprivilaged Jains	Sushil Jain	Dunn Loring,VA	703-525-4411	skjain99@gmail.com
Veerchand Raghvji Gandhi Scholarship Fund	Nitin Shah	Long Beach,CA	562-244-9035	Nitinshahmd@gmail.com
Wellness Committee	Nitin Shah	Long Beach,CA	562-244-9035	Nitinshahmd@gmail.com
World Community Service	Prakash Mehta	Oak Hill,VA	703-621-5840	pmehta@psiint.com
World Parliament Committee	Kirit Daftary	Waco,TX	254-756-3200	kcdaftary@gmail.com
Women's Committee	Mamata Shaha	Kings Point,NY	516-487-1852	mamta.shaha@gmail.com
Yatra	Arvind Shah	Troy,MI	248-835-7395	ashah_1941@yahoo.com



AMTEX is a leader in single-use food service packaging, delivering solutions for operators and distributors throughout North America.



Biodegradable Tableware



- Plates*
- Compartment Plates*
- Bowls*
- Spoons | Forks | Knives*

SHOP 10,000 items

For all your hospitality needs: www.myamtex.com

Depository Safe

Ideal for front-of-house cash and document management.



Amenities

SPA Green: Green cleanse from head to toe.



42" PTACS

Industry standard size makes installation easy and economical, for new construction and replacement.



Digital Control Board



TOLL FREE PHONE
800-650-3360



FAX
909-383-8628



WEB
myamtex.com

JAINA Headquarters
722 S Main St,
Milpitas, CA 95035

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
San Bernardino, CA
Permit #3515



M S International, Inc.
Premium Surfaces Since 1975



**As the leader in surfacing products,
we have over 100 million square feet of flooring, countertops,
wall tile and hardscaping material in stock, nationwide.**

19 State-of-the-Art Distribution Centers

Orange, CA • Atlanta, GA • Baltimore, MD • Boston, MA • Charlotte, NC • Chicago, IL • Dallas, TX • Detroit, MI
Dulles, VA • Edison, NJ • Houston, TX • Kansas City, KS • Los Angeles, CA • Minneapolis, MN • Northern CA
Phoenix, AZ • South Florida • Seattle, WA • Toronto, Canada



www.msistone.com