



JAIN AHIMSA TIMES

IN COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR 14 CONTINUOUS YEARS
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Volume : 109

Issue No. : 109

Month : August, 2009



**I Forgive All the Living Beings
I Seek Pardon from All the Living Beings
I'm Friendly toward All the Living Beings
And Seek Enmity with None**

PARYUHAN

PARYUSHAN means festival of self friendship and realization of soul. Festival of sacrifice, penance & endurance. Festival of soul purification & self search, time to keep aside the post, wealth & prestige & be with the God. The time to forget & forgiveness make the enemy a friend & increase the love and kindness.

The Jain community like other communities throughout the world celebrates many social and religious functions annually. The superb Jain festival popularly known as 'Paryushan Parva', organized every year in the auspicious month 'Bhadrapad' of the Hindu calendar extends from the fifth day to fourteenth day of the bright fortnight. The festival ordains the Jains to observe the ten universal supreme virtues in daily practical life. Besides assuring a blissful existence in this world and the other world for every living being, it aims at the attainment of salvation - the supreme ideal for mundane soul. The non-Jains also express high reverence for this Jain festival. All members of Jain community- high and low, young and old, and males and females, participate with full vigor and zeal in the various religious rituals and cultural programs. They listen with rapt attention to the holy sermons of the saints and learned Jain scholars arranged during the ten-day festival.

In these celebrations lie dormant the seeds of the well being, peace and happiness of the common man. On the eve of this festival all activities, which add to social discord or bitterness are declared taboo

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from the temple pulpits. These celebrations harbinger social harmony and amity and preach the lofty Jain motto 'Live and Let live'.

The 'Paryushan Parva' celebrated annually for self-purification and uplift is meant to adhere to the ten universal virtues in practical life; and leads us on the right path, far from the mad strife for material prosperity, which ultimately leads us to our true destination i.e., salvation. Two popular titles of this festival, viz. (i) Paryushan Parva and (ii) Dash Lakshan Parva are in vogue; but the mode of performance and aim of the festival is same. I.e., The celebration through which the karmic matter attached to the soul is totally burnt or vanquished (both internally and externally) is known Paryushan i.e., self-purification. Paryushan Parva gives expression to the perfectly purified trait of the soul, through which one gets rid of worldly discords and allurements and one gets fully absorbed in the eternal truth on experiencing and realizing the true nature of soul. This festival puts an end to all evils in man; gives him realization of the eternal bliss, and spiritualism becomes alive by the celebration of this festival.

In the Digamber, The ten cardinal virtues, Dashlakshan Dharma, are celebrated during Paryushan to remind Jains of the characteristics of the soul. The ten dharmas or the virtues of the soul are forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, contentment, truth, sensual restraint, austerities, charity, non-possessiveness, and celibacy. During these days monks and scholars lecture each day on each specific virtue. Also, Jains undertake various fasts depending on their devotion and strength and take vows such as not eating green vegetables or root vegetables. Fasting is done by taking only one meal a day or by not taking any meals for one day or the entire ten days. The sixth day of Paryushan is Dhoop Dashmi, a day to clean temples and hold special gatherings. Many married women take vows to observe fasting on this day every year for ten years. The last day, Anant Chaturdashi, is celebrated by fasting and spending time in prayer and meditation at the temple. Two days after the end of the Dashlakshan, Digambar Jains celebrate Kshnavani, a day of forgiveness. Just as Jains exchange sweets during Diwali, on this day Jains exchange words of apology and forgiveness. At the conclusion of the festival, the Sravakas request each other for forgiveness for all offenses committed, in words, thought or deed during the last year. This occurs on the the last day of Paryushan for the Svetambara and on Pratipada (first) of Ashwin Krishna for the Digambara.

This festival has its own age-old history, but nothing definite can be said about its origin and since when it is being celebrated. In fact, the celebration of this festival is beyond the scope of known history. The truth is that spiritual matters like self-purification and renunciation cannot be measured by Time scale. When the auspicious month of Bhadrapad comes every year, the whole Jain community celebrates this festival unitedly without any difference of high and low, rich and poor. The Digambaras and the Swaitambaras, both sects of Jain community celebrate the self-uplifting festival with great enthusiasm. The fifth day of the bright fortnight of the holy month of 'Bhadrapad' is auspicious for both. The Digambaras celebrate this festival annually for ten days, from the fifth day to the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month. Whereas the Swaitambaras celebrate it only for eight days, and the fifth day is the main day of their celebrations held under the title 'Samvatsari Parva'.

References about the celebrations of 'Paryushan Parva' or Dash Lakshan Parva are available here and there in ancient literary books as well; which show that it has been a popular festival since ages. The householders celebrate it jointly suspending all their business, agricultural and commercial activities for the time being. A fine description of the closing ceremony of this festival is available in the 'Bhattarak' era extending from 1350 AD to 1450 AD. In that age the householders got manuscript copies of the prominent holy books prepared by the scholars, and offered these to the 'Bhattaraks' and their disciples with due devotion at the end of ceremonies. Even today 'Dash Lakshan Parva' is the most suitable occasion for giving donations and charities; and on the last day of the festival the house-holders observe full day fast and make every attempt to donate to religious and social institutions in cash or kind some thing within their capacity. Very often the Jain scholars viz. poets and writers get their literary works initiated during the festival days and thus pay their homage to this grand festival.

Similar to the modern age, the Dash Lakshan Parva was celebrated with great zeal and joy thousands of years ago as well; austerities viz. self-meditation, doing penance, fasting and study of holy scriptures were performed during that period. The householders purged their soul by keeping fast on the last day of the ceremonies and celebrated the closing ceremony with great pomp and show. When the ten day celebration are over, this festival leaves behind deep impress on the mind and heart of every Jain - young and old. All Jains - Digambers and Swaitambers, all celebrate this sacred festival throughout India and abroad. Jainism is a prehistoric religion propounded by the first Tirthankara Lord Aadi Nath. Thus, the celebration of Paryushan Parva is a holy tradition coming down from the ancient past to the present times. To sum up, Paryushan Parva is a grand Jain festival of self-introspection, self-enlightenment and self-achievement, which ultimately leads to the one and only one final goal, i.e., liberation or salvation.

Paryushana is a time of reflection on actions and meditation on the past year. Paryushana is marked by strict observance of the ten cardinal virtues: Forgiveness, Charity, Simplicity, Contentment, Truthfulness, Self-restraint, Fasting, Detachment, Humility and Continence.

During the eight-day Paryushana festival, the Murtipujak sect devotees of Svetambaras recite the religious text, the Kalpa Sutra (including a section on the birth of Lord Mahavira), on the fifth day. During this festival, Jains of all ages visit the divine Temples/Derasar or Upashrayas to listen to the discourses and readings of Kalpa Sutra. However, the devotees of Sthanakwasi and Terapanth sects recite the famous "Antagarh Sutra. In the evenings, Jains perform a kriya called Pratikraman, a form of meditation to reflect on the spiritual journey.

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Most Jains fast in some form or the other in these days. It is not and uncommon sight to see 8 day fasters, who do not consume anything in these eight days. Every now and then one does come across a faster who has not eat for a whole month too!!! Penance and fasting are the key words in these days. Almost all jains abstain from onions, garlic, potatoes, fermented food, root vegetables and green vegetables and avoid taking meals after sunset. In the Svetambaras an 8-day festival is celebrated that ends Bhadrpada Shukla panchami. The last day is called Samvatsari, short for Samvatsari Pratikramana. Seven days are days of attainment and the eighth day is one of fulfillment or achievement. It is at this time that Jains embark on their respective annual pratikramana - a reflection on their spiritual journey for the past year.

On this day they also observe a unique custom, where they ask every individual they may have offended during the year for forgiveness. Old quarrels or differences are forgotten and friendships and relationships renewed, as they fold their hands and ask for "Micchamidukadam" or forgiveness. Michchhami means to be fruitless (forgiven) and Dukkadam (Dushkrut) means bad deeds. Therefore the meaning of Michchhami Dukkadam is my bad deeds (with you) be fruitless. So concept behind saying or writing someone "Michchhami Dukkadam" is that if I have done any harm to you then those bad deeds to be forgiven (be fruitless).

Samvatsarik Pratikraman, as recited by Murti-Pujak sect, is now available on MP3. Mr. Pravin K. Shah, of Jaina Education Committee, +1-919-859-4994+ 1-919-859-4994, E-Mail : education@jaina.org may be contacted for any assistance. Efforts are being made for obtaining Sthanakvasi, Shrimad, Kanjiswaami, Dada Bhagvan, and English Pratikraman also in MP3 format so that these can be made available on the website.

TEMPLES



TIRTHANKARA SCULPTURES RETURN TO KOLAPAKKAM

CHENNAI: Two beautiful sculptures of Jaina tirthankaras, which "disappeared" from Kolapakkam near Chennai about a month ago, have come back to the village, and thereby hangs a tale. The panchayat leaders have resolved to build a shrine for the sculptures.

The artifacts were lying on a piece of land adjacent to a house. Several readers wrote to say they were not sculptures of the Buddha but those of Jaina tirthankaras, and a debate broke out. The presence of three umbrellas above the head of one tirthankara was a clear indication that he was a Jaina tirthankara and not a Buddha, some readers said. The tirthankaras were depicted in the dhyana (meditation) pose. There were fly-whisk bearers behind them. Navrathanmull Jain, managing trustee of the Jain temple, said a female Jain monk, Chitra of the Digambara sect, after reading the news item, suggested that the sculptures be brought to the Karambakkam Jain temple. So he approached Mr. Paranthaman, who gave the sculptures to the temple. He returned them because the villagers wanted them back.

AHIMSA

NEPAL JAINS COMBAT FEMALE FOETICIDE

Marwari followers of Jainism in Nepal have started a fight against sex-selective abortion after finding that the practice is on steady rise in their community. Jain marwaris are working to launch various awareness programs against the practice. "In the first phase, we will be holding rallies in different cities urging parents to not abort their female fetuses," says Usha Naulakha, president of Jain Shwetamber Terapanth Mahila Mandal, an organization of Jain women that held an interaction program recently with lawmakers, doctors and intellectuals on the ways to eliminate sex-selective abortion. According to Naulakha, the Mandal will be visiting cities like Biratnagar, Birgunj and Nepalgunj. "Our primary focus is Jain community in Kathmandu," says Naulakha. "We, however, want to go beyond the capital and our community in the long run as this practice is not confined to one particular region or religion."

The Mandal has already launched two programs that aim to prevent female feticides apart from encouraging morality in society. "Under the first program, we reach out to girl students in different schools and educate them about female feticide as they are future mothers," says Sharada Pragya, a Jainism preacher. The second program is focused on sensitizing parents. As in India, dowry system and male preference are the two main reasons that cause female feticide. In societies largely dominated by Hindus, sons are considered as incomes whereas daughters as expenses. "This deep-rooted thought is the main problem."

VEGETARIANISM

LESS PROTEIN NEED NOT MEAN LESS CALCIUM IN THE HUMAN BODY

One common belief among vegans is that they need less calcium because they eat less protein, and high-protein diets are known to speed up bone loss. But the new views suggest, even if you are eating a relatively low amount of protein, you still need calcium to build strong bones. Vitamin D, which most people get from fortified milk, also is crucial and is in many products acceptable to vegans. Dairy products are great sources of both nutrients, she adds, but other foods and supplements are just fine. Exercise, body size and genetics also play roles in bone health. While vegans might need to think a bit more about calcium and vitamin D sources, they've got fiber, fruits and vegetables covered and can reap many health benefits.

HONOUR / AWARDS



KOLKATA TERAPANTHI SABHA ADJUDGED THE 'BEST SABHA' IN TERAPANTH -

Shree Jain Swetamber Terapanthi Sabha, Kolkata was honored as the "Best Sabha" amongst over 475 Terapanthi Sabha's under Mahasabha at Ladnun during the three day seminar (Terapanthi Sabha Pratinidhi Sammelan-2009) of representatives of Terapanthi Sabha held in the pious presence of H. H. Acharya Sri Mahapragyaji, Yuvacharya Shri Mahashramanji and Sangh Mahanirdesika Mahasharmani Sadhvi Pramukha Kanakprabhaji. The seminar was attended by over 550 delegates from all over the country. In the seminar, various issues were discussed on improvement of the workings of the sabha's to spread the contribution and teachings of Lord Mahavira, Acharya Bhikshu, Terapanth and of Acharya Mahapragyaji, in the field of Anuvrat, Preksha Meditation and Science of Living in improving the personal, social, national and international

arena by enhancing moral and human values.

H. H. Acharya Mahapragyaji Yuvacharya Shri Mahashraman and Sadhvi Pramukha Kanakprabhaji gave discourses to the delegates to begin from self to make the society strong. Open house discussion amongst delegates was held to find solution to the present day problems. Vows were taken by the delegates to work hard in injecting moral values and safeguarding the cultural values in each and every member of the society. Shri Jashkaran Chopra - the President of Mahasabha General Secretary Sri Binod Choraria and national convener Sri Bhanwar Lal Singhi, announced the Kolkata Sabha as the 'Shrestha Sabha'. Whereas Mumbai Sabha, got consolation by being second amongst the larger Sabha's. In the category of small Sabha's "Udhana" was adjudged the Best where as "Maninagar-Kankaria" got the consolation prize.

Sri Karan Singh Nahata, President of Kolkata Sabha Expressed sense of gratitude towards the kindness of H. H. Acharya Shri Yuvacharya shri Mahasharmanji and Mahasharmaniji, Sadhvi Nirvan Shree ji, Sadhvi Kanak shri ji . He further said that this has been possible with the support given by all the organizations of the Terapanth Sect, the cooperation of the lay followers of Greater Kolkata and the active role of the general secretary of Kolkata Sabha Sri Narendra Kumar Manot and the team of Kolkata Sabha which is always keeping its glorious past with it to make the present motivating. The honour was given based on its performance in the year 2008-09, in which various activities and programmes were organized in the pious presence

of Sadhvi Nirvanshriji, Sadhvi Kanakshriji, and Samani Malaypragya. The General Secretary of Mahasabha Sri Binod Choraria and the whole team was present in the Programme. Sri Bhanwar Lal Singhi compared the function.



INTELIUS CEO NAVEEN JAIN TO SPEAK AT GOPIO ECONOMIC, BUSINESS AND DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE - Naveen Jain, Founder and CEO of Intelius - a Bellevue-based company that empowers more than 10 million consumers and businesses with information to make intelligent decisions - has been selected to speak at the Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Economic, Business and Development Conference, taking place August 20-23 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in New York. Jain will speak on the topic of the Indian Diaspora in the Emerging Global Economy. The GOPIO Economic, Business and Development Conference gathers leaders of Indian descent from around the world to discuss India and the Indian Diaspora in the context of impending global economic challenges and development. Formed in 1989 to defend victims of human rights violations, GOPIO has since expanded its focus to promote the general well being of people of Indian origin and to enhance cooperation and communication between Indians living in different countries.

Other notable speakers at the Economic, Business and Development Conference this year include Bharat Bhargava, President of the US-India American Chamber of Commerce, Hon. Dr. A.M. Gondane, Deputy Consul General of India and Dr. Arvind Panagariya and Jagdish Bhagwati of the Columbia University School of International & Public Affairs. This year's conference marks the 20th anniversary of the organization. For more information about Intelius, www.intelius.com



VINEET JAIN GETS INDUSTRIALIST OF THE YEAR AWARD

MUMBAI: Top achievers from different walks of life were presented the Rajiv Gandhi Awards at the 12th awards ceremony in Mumbai. The Times Group MD Vineet Jain received the 'industrialist of the year' award at the 12th Rajiv Gandhi Awards from Union minister for food processing, Subodh Kant Sahay, in Mumbai. According to Mr. Vineet Jain, "Rajiv Gandhi will be remembered as a great youth icon who promoted modern technology in the country. He also believed in our cause and stood for the freedom of press." He accepted the trophy on behalf of every employee of the Times Group. The function was attended by Union ministers Vilasrao Deshmukh, Subodh Kant Sahay, Kamal Nath, Jyotiraditya Scindia and MPs Rajiv Shukla, Mohd Azharuddin, Milind Deora, Sanjay Nirupam, Eknath Gaikwad and Sanjay Patil.

CONFERENCES & EVENTS



PREKSHA MEDITATION CAMP TO BE HELD AT LADNUN

Preksha Meditation Camp. This will be held from 11th September 2009 to 18th September 2009. This 8 days residential camp is being organized in the land of peace and penance at Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun, (Rajasthan) India. Sages & Seers have performed meditation over the centuries at the campus of Jain Vishva Bharati. This is the holy place where Acharya Mahapragya meditated for many years to rediscover Preksha Meditation, which was originally practised and propagated by Bhagwan Mahavir according to our scriptures. Preksha Meditation is the combination of ancient knowledge, modern Science and experience. Preksha Meditation is the practice of purifying our emotions and our Conscious (chitta) and realizing our own self. Preksha Meditation is a technique of meditation for attitudinal change, behavioral modification and integrated development of personality. Confirmation to attend the conference may be sent as earlier as possible. Details about the camp and online application form are available at www.preksha.com

HISTORY JAINISM

EXCAVATIONS AROUND MYSORE REVEAL EXISTENCE OF JAINISM IN THE TENTH CENTURY

Archaeologists involved with excavations at historic Talakad village in Mysore region have unearthed an inscribed stela which authenticates the existence of Jainism in the region. According to a press release issued by the archaeology department here, this inscribed stela with a Jain image pertaining to 978-79 AD period was unearthed from already excavated Basadi site at Talkad. The inscription reads that sage Balachandramuni known for his unblemished character and quality attained heaven in 978 AD. This relic and inscription throws open vast of information about several facets of Jain culture. Balachandramuni was the disciple of Maladharideva of Kondakundanvaya, Desigana and Pustakamnaya, and a great scholar. The release said the inscription reveals that Balachandramuni attained his heavenly abode after five days of

fasting and Kundana Somidevi who erected this stela was the sister of King Nolamakulantaka Marasimha II (963-74 AD). The inscription was written by scribe Immadi Perumadiachari Bahavelenga. The release disclosed that Kundana Somidevi is none other than the lady who had gifted a beautiful Jain bronze image now preserved in Sharavanabelagola Jain mutth and she was the daughter of Ganga King Butuna III(940-63) and wife of Rajaditya of the Chalukya dynasty. Note said the carving of this stela is unique in the sense that it is designed and decorated like a small shrine.

MISCELLANEOUS

BIHAR PROMOTES JAIN CIRCUIT FOR TOURISTS

Bihar government has come up with a Jain Circuit to promote Jainism and woo the community in the state. It was in Bihar that Jainism, which has millions of followers today, was first propagated. The chief proponent of Jain religion and 24th tirthankara, Lord Mahavir, was born near Patna, capital of Bihar. The most revered Jain pilgrim spot in Bihar is lotus temple complex at Pawapuri.

The prominent Jain spots are Vasokund, believed to be the birthplace of Lord Mahavir, Rajgir, Kundalpur, Lachhaur Nalanda, Pawapuri, Shikharjee among others. This is the first time Bihar Tourism has prominently displayed their tourist destinations with this attractive religious circuit.

TAMILNADU KIDNEY RESEARCH FOUNDATION - There is a foundation called TANKER (Tamilnadu kidney Research Foundation), where they treat all kidney related problems free of cost. They even do Dialysis free of cost. Please forward this message and let people utilize this opportunity. It can help people who are in need. For further Details contact : 044 - 28273407 and 044-28241635. Courtesy: Mr. Nemu Chandaria, E-Mail: nemuc@hotmail.com

U. P. GOVERNMENT WITHDRAWS CLOSURE OF SLAUGHTER HOUSES

Lucknow : The U. P. Government withdrew its order regarding closure of slaughter houses and meat shops across the state for nine days during Paryushan Parv observed by Jains. "An order issued by the government earlier this year imposing a ban on slaughter of animals and sale of meat during Paryushan Parv is being withdrawn with immediate effect as the Supreme Court order on the basis of which the Government Order was issued was not found applicable for UP. " The state government on February 10 issued an order imposing a ban on slaughter of animals and sale of meat during Paryushan Parv of Jains. The GO was issued by animal husbandry department on the basis of an order issued by the Apex Court on March 14 last year for Gujarat.

DELHI HIGH COURT ORDERS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO CLEAR THE STATUS OF THE MINORITY BILL - During the hearing of the petition of VJS, which was accepted in May 2008, the Delhi High Court ordered the Central Government to clear the status of the Minority Bill. For details, contact: Sanjay Jain, E-Mail : vishwajains@yahoo.com

INDIAN ARMY CURIOUS ABOUT JAIN FASTING

AHMEDABAD: How jains survive without food for over two weeks, living only on boiled water and they may hold answers to quests other than spiritual. So thinks the Indian Army, which has made the rigorous fasting by Jains during the holy period of Paryushan a subject of focussed study to find solution for the Indian soldiers who have to face harsh situations in adverse conditions. During Paryushan period, a team of 18 scientists from the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences camped to seek answers: How does the body and mind of the fasting Jain react to such nutritional deprivation for days? Can fasting be consciously imbibed by people, especially soldiers and astronauts, for survival in challenging situations? Scientists are studied about 45 Jains in Ahmedabad who were fasting ranging from three to eight days. Some were also fasting for 16 days. Children, youth in their 20s who had never fasted were part of this voluntary study project being undertaken at Ramnagar Mota Derasar in Sabarmati area. The project began on August 8. The test reports of chemical, physiological and the psychological testing of the volunteers before, during and after the fast period would be documented and analysed," said neuro-physician Dr. Sudhir Shah. The project will study parameters, including brain blood flow, sensory activity, oxygen consumption, blood pressure, ECG monitoring and cholesterol and lipid profiles. The results of this study may help the Indian soldier who go through great adversities, having to stay in areas where food is not available. It can also be applied in prevention and treatment of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and heart diseases.

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NEWLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

1. JAINA TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE IN INDIA, The Development of a Distinct Language in Space and Ritual, By Dr. Julia A. B. Hegewald, Monographien zur Indischen Archaeologie, Kunst und Philologie, Volume 19, 2009 240 x 300 mm 693 pages, 966 colour illustrations, 366, maps and drawings, Deluxe hardcover edition Rs. 13000. Jaina Temple Architecture in India is the first comprehensive study of the development and uniqueness of Jaina sacred structures. The monograph analyses Jaina temples in all regions of the Indian subcontinent and outlines clear continuities by covering the period from the early centuries BCE till the present day. It identifies a distinct approach to the shaping of ritual space in Jaina temple edifices, which involves often complex spatial layouts on numerous vertical levels as well as conglomerates of interconnected sanctums and building elements on various horizontal levels. These accommodate a multitude of venerated sacred objects and mirror specific Jaina ritual needs, patterns of worship as well as the translation of specific Jaina mythological and cosmological concepts into architecture. These aspects of multifaceted spatial planning are shown to be equally common to Jaina temples in the diaspora outside India. Book available at - Hindi Granth Karyalay, Mumbai 400004 India, Phones: + 91 22 2382-6739 + 91 22 2382-6739 , 2035-6659, E-Mail: manishymodi@gmail.com

2. Jain Agamas (Publication of Jain Agamas in A Series) have been published by several different publishers, and there exist several recessions of critically edited Agamas. A number of excellent translations of the Agamas are available. Many Agamas have been translated into Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Gujarati, German, etc. What was felt by the lay reader, was that the Agamas that were published, generally carried translations that that were meant for the scholar rather than the lay reader. Here is a new publication series of Agamas, focused on explaining the gatha in simple reader friendly language. The books in this series contain the entire unabbreviated text of each Agama. Each verse (gatha) has been printed in Prakrit, along with the literal meaning (anvayārtha) , connotative meaning (bhavārtha) and commentary (visheshārtha) on each verse given in Hindi. In the Visheshārtha, the commentator has explained the verse using simple language that even a non-specialist reader would understand. The commentator, Acarya Jnanacandra has used everyday examples to lucidly present the meaning of each verse. The translation and explanation are succinct rather than verbose. The books are all cloth bound editions, handsomely printed in a large font size, heavily subsidised and a must read for all those who wish to study the Jain Agamas but do not know Prakrit and Sanskrit. Currently, there are only three Agamas in this series. These are: Upasakadashanga Sutra, Anuttaraupapatika Sutra and Dashavaikalika Sutra. Further Agamas are under print. These may also be available at - Hindi Granth Karyalay, Mumbai.

3. THE LOST ART OF HAPPINESS - By Prof. Dr. Arthur Dobrin, Mumbai : Hindi Granth Karyalay, 2009, 2009 220 x 140 mm 160 pages, ISBN 978-81-88769-11-7 Paperback Rs. 250. Happiness is the central pursuit of all sentient beings. They seek happiness in different ways. Mankind, clever enough to take care of itself and greedy enough to destroy the environment in its pursuit of materialistic pleasure, has often found happiness to be elusive. Perhaps because mankind has often sacrificed bliss at the altar of greed. In this book, the author examines the concept of happiness, explores its links with innate bliss and arrives at some very interesting and humane conclusions. He gives suggestions on how an ethical and humanitarian approach could work in bringing happiness in our day to day lives and how we can train ourselves to be happy in all circumstances. Courtesy: Yashodhar Modi, Hindi Granth Karyalaya, 9 Hirabaug C. P. Tank, Mumbai 400004.

VIEWS FROM READERS

AHIMSA IN CRISIS. PAINFUL OBSERVATIONS

From Gary L. Francione, Distinguished Professor of Law, Rutgers University, USA. - I regard veganism (pure Vegetarianism) as a matter of "lifestyle," "diet" "health" (except the health of my Atma) or anything less than a fundamental commitment of the individual to Ahimsa. Veganism represents a crucial and necessary step in the Atma turning away from the violence of the material world. I do not think that the concept of Anekantavada gives us a "free pass" to say that veganism is a matter of option or choice. There are very few clear principles in Jain Dharma that admit of no exception despite the general recognition that truth is often a complex matter: inflicting intentional suffering and death on innocent, multi-sensed mobile creatures is one of those principles. And there can be no doubt that *all* animal products involve suffering, torment, distress, and death. Indeed, denying that is on the same level as denying gravity.

Unfortunately, Jainism as a general matter has not embraced veganism. Indeed, I had the honor of giving the keynote talk at an event celebrating Gurudev Chitrabhanu Ji's birthday. The event was held this past Saturday, August 1. One of the issues that came up was that Gurudev lost many followers when he started talking about veganism. How very sad. People accept that Gurudev is a great spiritual leader--until he tells them that their ice cream or ghee is Himsa. As someone raised in the Christian tradition, I always found it sad that so many Christians accepted what Christ said--until it came to something that they wanted to do. Chitrabhanu Ji was once considered one of the most important figures in modern Jainism. And he has lost followers to raita and ice cream and wool!.

The fact that we are not embracing veganism is not only a problem in itself, but it is increasingly making flesh eating a matter of "choice," "opinion," "lifestyle"--a matter for more "free passes" under Anekantavada. An increasing number of Jains are turning to flesh/meat eating and more Jains are now investing in and owning stores and shops that sell flesh/meat products. I have seen statements that the number of Jains consuming flesh is rising in both the U.S. and the U.K. Apparently, more and more Jains are accepting that these issues are all just matters of personal opinion and not fundamental moral doctrine. More and more Jains are using Anekantavada as an excuse for moral relativism. Anekantavada means only that truth is complicated; it does not mean that there is no truth because everything is relative to the whim of the individual. Indeed, if Anekantavada means moral relativism and denies that there are any clear moral truths, then Jainism collapses and loses all meaning.

I gave a lecture on animal ethics/veganism at Princeton University last winter. One of the students agreed with me that all animal products involved suffering and death but he pointed out that Jains did not reject dairy so Jain Dharma was arbitrary on the point of Ahimsa and Ahimsa means whatever the individual thinks it means. The student (who was not a Jain) made a correct observation: we are behaving inconsistently on this issue. Others see this; why don't we? Jainism is the religion of Ahimsa. And Ahimsa is very clear. The fact that many Jains have not traditionally embraced veganism is now bearing its fruit. In this age of relentless narcissism and materialism, it is quite natural that the failure to reject all violence against nonhumans will lead to more violence against nonhumans given that there is no logical distinction between flesh and dairy, ghee, raita, milk, wool, etc. And that will only facilitate acceptance of violence toward humans as well. That is precisely what is happening. We are living in a time of unparalleled violence in conduct, speech, and thought.

From: Ajitkumar Benadi Dear Prof. Francione, I have read your article and I understand your concern. But, your comparison of Veganism and Ahimsa is not correct. If you study deeply the principles of Jainism, you will see that Ahimsa as explained Jainism is not the same as in any religion, or philosophy, let alone Veganism. Ahimsa in Jainism is more deeper than Veganism. Just because, milk, milk products and any animal products not eaten by Vegans, it does not make them superior to that of Ahimsa of Jainism. Application of Anekantavada or Syadvada is also, in my view not correct. E-Mail: ajitbenadi@yahoo.com

According to Jainism, the whole life has been categorized into 5 groups.

living beings with one sense

living beings with two senses

living beings with 3 senses

living beings with 4 senses and

living beings with 5 senses

Human beings belong to the highest category, 5-sensed living being and that also only human beings are capable of realizing Atma in its pure form.

One-sensed living beings have been divided into movable (chara) and non-movable (sthavara) living beings.

Only the living beings of the non-movable group are to be used by us for our living.

Himsa has also been categorized as Arambha Himsa, Vyavahar Himsa etc.

Those who practice Jain Dharma have been also grouped as Shravaka (laymen), Shraviki (laywomen), Sadhu and Sadhvi.

Then there is Anuvrata for the laymen and laywomen and Mahavrata for Sadhu and Sadhvi.

Ahimsa for laypeople is not of the high order. Ahimsa for Sadhu and Sadhvi is gradually of higher and highest order. Lord Mahavira is supposed to have lived without food and drink after attaining Kayivalya Jnana. Part of the Jain community does not believe in this. But we have even today a living example. His name is Hira Manek, who is almost 72 years old and hardly eats any solid food. He advocates solar healing and travels to USA, Canada and Europe to explain. Now, coming back to our main subject, Vegans do not eat any animal products, but anything grown underground like potatoes, carrots, onion, garlic and similar are not forbidden. The basic thinking of Ahimsa of Jainism and Veganism are not the same. Ahimsa of Jainism advocates a gradual process of attaining Ahimsa of the highest order, to free the soul from the cycle of birth and death. This, as far as I know, does not exist in Veganism. For lay people, Arambha Himsa and Vyavahara Himsa are permitted. The first Tirthankara, Lord Adinath, taught Asi, masi, Krishi., etc. which all involve Himsa of small order. There is no Farming without Himsa.

I do agree with you that Jains are involved in activities, which are against Jain Principles. This is some thing of time cycle phenomena. According to Jainism, the universe moves in a cyclic manner. The time cycle has six periods in the upward trend (Utsarpini) and six periods in the downward trend (Avasarpini). We are living in the fifth part of Avasarpini. Infringement of Ahimsa is rule of the day. This is also the reason for the drastic decrease of Jain Population. Ajitkumar Benadi, Jain Association International (Germany).



JAINA Convention in L.A. this year is over and one Major Leap Forward has been taken at the same place where JAINA was Born in 1981. It may be that the past Leadership has been aging, yet a few Historical Firsts emerged this time. Convention Theme - 'ECOLOGY-The JAIN Way' was Unique and Timely. A First Lady President from Canada, Lata Champsee has been put in charge. The Convention was held at the Jain Center, taking into realistic consideration of present economic situation. Hamilton Brewart was the First American Sanghpati. Prof. Gary L. Francione, the Key Note Speaker, pronouncing him a Jain, propounded VEGANISM as The Jain Way of Life. He got a long standing Ovation. Dr. Will Tuttle, Author of 'The World Peace Diet', also Promoted Veganism. Largely VEGAN Menu was served to All the Convention Attendees. Less crowded Stage in main Auditorium was easy for Picture taking. Less Total Number in Convention Attendance, generally led to, Not too Useful Socialization. Duplicating Lectures from Gurus and Pundits could have been eliminated as they had Nothing New to Present. It was the Same Old, Same Old Stale Material, Going Round and Around. This could have also facilitated less Late Night Cultural Events. Normal Sleep hours could have resulted in Refreshed Audiences. Less Over-Crowded Programs could have dealt with Subjects/Topics in details and thoroughly. All these are a matter of Post-Convention Critical Evaluation for avoiding Similar Repetition of Mistakes by Innocent Convention Committee for the ensuing Convention.

Now, Coming to the Topic of Practicing AHINSA through Veganism in the Violence-Turned Suffering World, is of Prime Importance for Jains in particular. In most of the Conventions, No Continuing Program emerges for Guidance of affiliated Units. We Need ACTION, Now. My Humble Suggestions are as Follows:

Dogmatists and Ritualists, who live by Dogmas written in the Name of Tirthankars and Traditions, Outdated and Promoting Blind Faith, are Not going to Change easily. It is a Waste of Valuable Time. Science and Technology will Not wait for these crawling crowd, living in the Past and Ignoring the Present Precious and Rare Human Life. Soul can be Purified Only through Compassion and Restraint towards the fellow Living Beings of our Planet. JAINA should form 'The Committee for 'Practice and Promotion of VEGANISM' headed by Prof. Gary Francione. The members of this Committee will be chosen by Gary, carefully from Young and Committed Practicing Vegans. It will be advisable to avoid Gurus, Pundits, etc. who try to keep their hands/feets on both sides, serving their Vested Interests. JAINA and this Committee should advise, guide and direct affiliated units to Implement Veganism in their Rituals and Official Lunches/Dinners, etc. to Avoid Milk, Yogurt, Clarified Butter, silk, Wool, etc. There are enough available healthy alternatives.

Gary and his Committee members should take trips to these Centers, Address their Members, and form Local Vegan Units. If necessary, One Day Conferences may be organized in Major Centers, inviting Local Other Organization Leaders, active in Vegetarianism, Animal Rights, Environmentalism, etc. A Manual for Practice of Non-Violence, in Day-To-Day Life, be Prepared and Presented at the Next Convention, 'World For Non-Violence - Jain Way'. Hope this is Enough for the time being. YES, WE CAN.

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