



The Inner Light

Jain Vishwa Bharati USA for Non-violence, Preksha Meditation, and Yoga

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Deva Vi Tam Namamsanti Jassa Dhamme Saya Mano

One who remains always absorbed in Religion even the Gods bow down before him

Bhagvan Mahavir – Life and Teachings

by Archarya Mahapragya

Bhagvan Mahavir, son of elected ruler of Vaishali, Siddhartha, was born on March 30, 599 BCE. At the age of 28, after the death of his parents, he avowed his resolve to become a *shraman*. Though his relative wished him to remain a householder, he could not fully acquiesce. It was at this time that he realized one could, through rejection of the desires of the body, be both at home and “remain far away from it.” While at home for two short years, he practiced and perfected asceticism, developing detachment to the body. He discovered that even when among householders, he could still be alone by way of detachment to ones body.

By far one of his preminent practices was the demotion of the sense of taste. “The one who has tasted the bliss that lies beyond the body has no problem in practicing indifference to the palate.” Secondly, he accomplished profound silence, thus drastically reducing the passion-filled thoughts that distract from conscientious meditation. Self-expression can draw one away from deep concentration.

Ultimately, after fulfilling his duty to his relatives, he chose the path chosen by few: ordained monkhood. He would give his life in devotion and with the desire to build a harmonious society. With his family’s consent, he left Kshatriyakundgram and

“went to a garden outside the village.” In front of many associates, he was ordained and “from thereon he set out on the lifelong path of equanimity.

He began his penance with very noble vows. First, he vowed to pay no heed to all things related to the body. Secondly, there would be no protection from heat or cold, no medication for ailments, and a finely tuned regulation of thirst and hunger. And, finally, he would ration the amount of sleep to the barest of necessity. He fully grasped the significance of these vows, and why these vows were essential to equanimity.

It is said Jain ideology that the main source of weakness in man is fear, and, it follows, that the prerequisite for numinous powers is of course fearlessness. For sure, Mahavir realized that while attachment to body is challenging, one must gain the upper hand and confront these challenges and their effects without response.

The results of his penance were marvelous. His bodiless state procured intense understanding of *ahimsa*, goodwill, and *shanty*; absent were feelings of violence, arrogance, and chaos. From this time on, Jains and non-Jains have learned valuable lessons about the value of non-attachment to the body.

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Other principles follow from the important wisdom of non-attachment. The most important for us to grasp are non-violence (*ahimsa*), understanding truth in relative terms (*anekant*), non-attachment to body, family, material things, and power.

In addition to these principles, Mahavira laid down practical rules for good organization of *Dharam*: share equally (do not hoard), shelter the homeless, be ready to teach the unenlightened, serve those in poor health, take no sides during conflict or disagreement. These set of laws are, moreover, fundamental to the social order taken as a whole. In particular, Mahavira made valuable use of the principle of relativity to disclose the order of the world, including human sociality. He made sound use of the principle chronicling the relative equanimity of conditions of “distinction” and “sameness.” I am you; you are me; and together we are one. We can only “be” being together. This aptly said, violence, hatred, and conflict are not characteristic of human co-existence. By this he means that even if we acknowledge our differences—and perhaps hate others because they are different—we also recognize, love, and respect others because we are, in essence, the same. This, then, is true religion because we endeavor to be aware of ourselves and others, but we are deeply committed to perceiving our soul because in this way we are beyond oneness and differences. Appropriately, then, it seems right to say that perception of the soul circumvents hatred and conflict. Acknowledging this vow gives credence to the subtle gestures indicative of the relative liaison between detachment (individualism) and oneness (socialism).

It can be said that today action is often without principle. The followers of Lord Mahavira can come from around the world; they need not be exclusively Jains.

Those who straightforwardly appreciate and practice the principles he intuitively put forth both as spiritually uplifting and as socially constructive can equally appreciate the universal integrity characterized by Jain *dharma*. Practicing relativity and detachment requires self-discipline; this is Lord

Mahavira’s lasting legacy. This being said, it is with great veneration that we reconsider the practices taught to us by Lord Mahavira; only then can the principle of *ahimsa* cultivate peace and unity in our world.

To conclude, we can be sure that only self-discipline can be the root of any other forms of discipline, both religious and social. This was the basis of Mahavira’s ordination and the ordination of others. After fasting and preaching for two days, Mahavira attained Nirvana on a moonless night of the month of Karthik (March). “The people of Mall and Licchavi celebrated it by lighting lamps. In the memory of the light, the festival of lights came to be.

Jain Vishwa Bharati USA Newsletter Committee

-- THE INNER LIGHT --

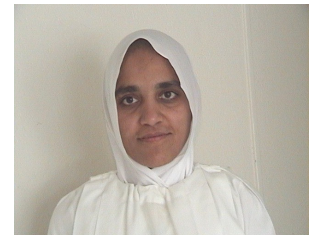
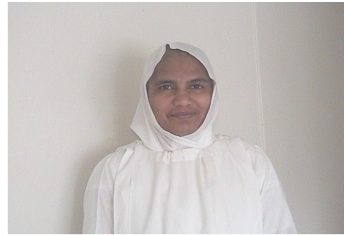
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Samanijis Arrive From India



The Orlando Jain Vishwa Bharati is very happy to receive Samani Madhur Pragyaji and Samani Parimal Pragyaji. We welcome them as they prepare for a full year ahead taking care of activities at the center as well as carrying out Preksha and Meditation Camps throughout Florida and the USA.

News From Orlando JVB Center

Miami

On March 9th 2005, Samani Madhur Pragyaji and Samani Parimal Pragyaji arrived in Miami from India. People were just eagerly awaiting their arrival and Samaniji got busy right away. On March 11th, Prakash and Madhu Nahata hosted the Samaniji at their house. The thirst for knowledge had to be quenched. The topic of the lecture was ‘Valuable things in this world’. According to Bhagwan

Mahavir, four things are most valuable in life; 1) human life, 2) listening to religious discourses and being able to discriminate between right and wrong, 3) faith in our scriptures, and 4) reinforcement of learning and practicing it into our day-to-day life.

On March 12th, Mr Lakhpat Jain hosted the Samaniji's. Once again Samaniji's enlightened the audience. The topic was different from the previous day 'If self-realization is possible'. A human being who is aware and conscious of soul and it's upliftment. To be brief, Samaniji told the people present that if a person turns a blind eye and deaf ear to external negativity, he or she can stop further karmic accumulation. At the same time be fully aware of your thoughts and action. But in this time, everything is reversed. We all need 'Atma Jnana' and strong will power for achievement of self-realization. Forsaking and renunciation are needed. It is like swimming against the current. Samaniji told the people to be strong. Any energy we have should be used constructively so that our productivity in attaining our goals is maximum.

Cypress Hall, Miami

The Jain Center of Southern Florida had another enlightening session by Samaniji. On Sunday, March 13th, Jain Community gathered at Cypress Hall to hear Samaniji. The lecture topic was 'Right vision is needed for spirituality'. Right vision takes you toward a choice of path. Samaniji asked everyone to contemplate on the idea of "may that day dawn when I will give up everything", "the day when all materialistic possessions will be irrelevant to me", "the day when I will be free from all kinds of violence that is in my thought and action". One of the most important aspects of Jainism highlighted by Samaniji's was dying with equanimity, giving up everything unto death.

Vero Beach

By Indu Jain

Samaniji left Miami for West Palm Beach and, after a short halt in Jupiter, came to Vero Beach. The community of Vero Beach, though primarily non-Jains, didn't waste any time in getting together and flocked to hear Samaniji's enlightening talk.

Samani Parimal Pragyaji started the evening session with deep breathing and relaxation. Then Samani Madhur Pragyaji spoke on the topic "Shree Sampannahum Shyam". 'Shree' means wealth. Samaniji informed the audience about the kind of wealth we should be endowed with. Wealth without wisdom can be a curse. On the other hand, wealth of wisdom is a blessing and it is the best form of wealth. Jnana of the scriptures and practice of that learning leads us towards removing our sins. The three conditions for 'Lakshmi' to reside in our house are: first, where there is respect and fulfillment of duty towards elders, second, where teachers and scholars are respected, and third, where people think before they speak. The kind of words uttered by a person have an effect on the listener. Is the effect of those words scathing and scarring for life, like the slash from a sword cut or is the effect of the words medicinal and like a tonic to the listener's senses. Words chosen with care and spoken with love invigorate the listener. On the other hand, rough and harsh words, sarcasm, words that inflict pain to the listener will have Lakshmi fleeing away. People listened with utmost attentiveness and gratitude to the Samaniji. Samani Parimal Pragyaji told stories to the children from the life of Mahavira. We look forward to more sessions with the Samaniji's.

Orlando

On Sunday March 27th The Orlando Jain Vishwa Bharati held its' first bi-monthly Swadhyay in the presence of Samani Madhur Pragyaji and Samani Parimal Pragyaji. The event started with Arthat Vandana and Preksha Meditation. Samani Parimal Pragyaji spoke on the subject of Pratikraman. -What is the meaning of Pratikraman?, Why should one perform Pratikraman?, and How many kinds of Pratikraman?.

Samani Madhur Pragyaji enlightened the attendees with the subject of "What is Scripture, and What are the benefits of reading, studying, and listening of Scripture". She explained, that doing this removes ignorance while realizing mental happiness.

Jain Vishwa Bharati Orlando Director Kamlesh Shah and Vice President Dhiren Mehta and Hansa Chitalia spoke to the audience on their experience of their trip to JVB Ladnun India in January. They told of the warm and wonderful hospitality that they got when

they visited Jain Vishwa Bharati. They had visited with his Holiness Acharya Shree Mahapragya. They saw over 500 monks and nuns and learned how multi-disciplinary the JVB Ladnun is with their schools for children, college for girls, and the Deemed University for all. They added, if any of you visit India, you must make sure you visit JVB Ladnun.

JVB Houston

Samani Jayant Pragya ji and Sanmati Pragya ji arrived in Houston on March 9th and were first welcomed by the Jain Society of Houston on a special program for them on March 13th morning and later the same day by a large group of followers of JVB Houston Inc. in an evening ceremony. The ceremony was marked by welcoming addresses by several people including young children, welcome bhajan specially choreographed for the occasion followed by an outstanding pravachan by Samani Jayant Pragya ji.

Samani jis' have been busy since their arrival, first with participation in a discussion forum organized to talk about different religions at Interfaith Ministry on March 19th where Samani Sanmati Pragya ji spoke about Jainism and Samani Jayant Pragya Ji on Meditation and later with the 4th Annual Preksha Meditation Retreat Camp organized by Jain Vishwa Bharati Houston Inc. at the Margaret Austin Center.

This year's retreat was attended by 35 participants including 7 children ranging in age from 10 to 23 and a few new couples who attended the retreat for the first time. The success of the retreat was marked by a special Quiz prepared by Samani Jis' on the system of Preksha Meditation. Participants were given a list of 75 questions with answers and tested on their comprehension and understanding of the subject matter by a uniquely designed quiz in the form of a fun filled game which included a variety of prizes. The participants won the prize of their choice by answering the questions correctly. This unique design not only tested the attendee's comprehension of the subject matter but also provided entertainment for the attendees. Samani Jayant Pragya ji's lectures are greatly appreciated. Other unique aspects of the retreat were; a) a discussion by the attendees on the concept of Sukh and Dukh and the subsequent comments that Samani Sanmati Pragya ji offered to

explain how the practice Preksha Meditation prepares one to face Dukh with far less pain and suffering as compared to someone who has not been exposed to such a system and b) Special focus of the retreat on Anger Management by Shivani Botra through lectures explaining the concepts followed by a discussion using a real life example from one of the volunteers in the retreat. The retreat was both appreciated and enjoyed by the attendees.

Story Column

Importance of Mantra by Samani Madhur Pragya

King Srenik's palace was going to be built in Rajgradh. As it was about to be completed, it collapsed. It happened many times. The king called some Brahman to find out a solution. After careful consideration they said, "Oh, Majesty, you have to sacrifice a young man for it."

The king made an announcement. "Anyone who sacrifices their son will be offered his weight in gold."

All heard this announcement, but nobody was ready to sacrifice their son.

A Brahmani named Bhadra accepted this proposal against her husband. She offered her son for sacrifice. When Queen Chelana came to know of the king's idea she did her best to make him understand that it was wrong. The king absolutely ignored her. When all the queen's efforts failed, she went to the crying child who was about to be sacrificed. She gave him consolation and said, "Amrkumar! Do not cry. Be patient. All will be alright. I will give you a mantra. Keep at it continuously."

After having heard the affectionate words of the queen his tears stopped. He spoke eagerly, "Please tell me what the mantra is."

The queen made him listen to the Navakar Mantra. He replied that he knew this mantra. The queen said, "Do not be worried. You repeat this mantra with a calm and steady mind."

The boy got assurance from the queen's words. He began to recite the mantra with full concentration. People tried to push the boy into the fire, but the fire got cool and a golden throne appeared in the place of the fire. When the king heard about this miracle. He came on that very place and embarrassed the boy. The king knew the glory of the mantra. He insisted that the boy take over the kingdom. Amarkumar spoke, "I survived by the grace of Navkara Mantra."

Therefore, he wanted to seek religious refuge. "The kingdom is nothing to me." At last he gave up worldly attachment.

How to Overcome the Ill-effects of Star Astrology

Every person is affected by different star constellations. The problems in people's lives, such as mental, physical, relationship, and behavioral problems, are due to the stars' effects on human beings. These effects increase in intensity until finally distraught persons inquire about treatment. But what treatment exists?

Essentially, there are three conventional ways that people seek help. First, an affected person might seek out medial help. This would involve taking medication or taking therapy that would minimally patch up any adverse symptoms but leave unexamined the causes of these symptoms. Without knowledge of the effects of the stars on peoples' health and behavior, modern medicine offers no protection against the intricacies of these ill-effects.

Secondly, people suffering from the effects of certain stars alignments can seek the advice of a medium that channels the effects of bad spirits towards more acceptable ones. This, however, forces "touched" person into a passive position, giving the medium's role as healer a one-sided advantage. In this position, suffers are not being treated for the correct affliction. To be frank, they are not suffering the effects of evil spirits; rather, they suffer from the ill-effects of specific stars and planets.

And lastly, people suffering problems often wear distinctive stones or charms to ward off evil spirits. Once more, crude healing techniques preclude any genuine liberation from suffering.

Spirituality suggests another therapy: chanting mantras. In place of the above unpromising and bewildering practices and folklore, chanting mantras contends with both the causes and the effects. Each affected person has privileged knowledge of their illness or unaccommodating behavior, and each person can have an impact both on his or her own shortcomings and his or her rehabilitation. Even so, people need to learn the different kinds of stars and planets with the intention of learning the correct mantras for their disorder. Below is a list of cosmic bodies and one problem associate with a specific star. Instructions for chanting the appropriate mantra follow.

1. Rahu
2. Guru (Jupiter)
3. Ketu
4. Budha (Mercury)
5. Shani (Saturn)
6. Mangl (Mars)
7. Shukra (Venus)
8. Suurya (Sun)
9. Chandr (Moon)

Rahu Grha - What should you do when Rahu is not in good position?

Psychic center: Shakti Kendra (bottom of the spinal cord).

Mantra: om hrim namo loa savva
sahunum

Mala: 10 mala everyday

Color: blue

Method: Concentrate on the Shakti
Kendra while perceiving bright
blue color.

Result: Problems associated with Rahu
Grha pacified; improved social
behavior or relevant individual
ill-health problems resolved.

Mantra: om hrim shreem namo
neminathay nemeh mum rahugrahshantim
Kuru kuru swaha

Method: At your pace, according to
your schedule, count 21,000 malas.

After you have done this, then
count only one mala everyday.

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Samani Madhur Pragyaji and Parimal
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at

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7819 Lillwill Avenue
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May 7th and 8th 2005

JVB Orlando Center 2005 Schedule

Day	Class
Wednesday	8:00-9:00PM Jain Study
Thursday Saturday	7:00 - 8:00 PM Yoga and Meditation 9:30 -10:30AM Yoga and Meditation
Sunday (2 nd & 4 th)	2:30-4:30PM Swadhyay / Pathashala

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