



Inner Reflections

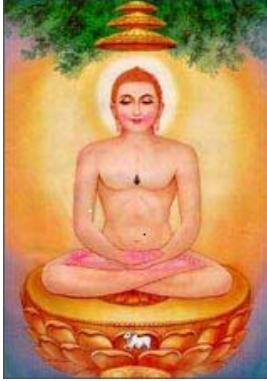
JAIN VISHWA BHARATI OF NORTH AMERICA

VOLUME IV

ISSUE 2

APRIL 2006

THUS SPOKE MAHAVIR



*Na tassa dukkham vibhayanti naiyo
Na mittavagga na suya na bandhava
Ekko sayam panchanuhoi dukkham
Kattaramevam anujai kammam*

The kith & kin, friends, sons or brothers of an individual are incapable of sharing in his agony. He has to endure it himself, as *Karma* always follows the individual liable for the actions.

MESSAGE FROM ACHARYA MAHAPRAJNA

LORD MAHAVIRA'S LEGACY

The present is short while the past is infinite. It can be a source of enlightenment for the present. Lord Mahavira has ascribed a great deal of importance to the enlightened world-view. He has made enormous contributions to both individual and society. Hence celebrating his birth anniversary is an expression of gratitude. This dimension cannot be dubbed as trivial or unimportant but it cannot be described as



worthwhile either if it is not accompanied with the will and objective to create a new society. Mahavira's philosophy lays down the basis and fundamentals of a new society.

Efforts to eliminate poverty are going on at the global level. Prosperity too is swelling. Perhaps affluence is more dangerous than poverty. The resources that we have on this planet are so meager that it is impossible for all its inhabitants to live a life of prosperity. Notwithstanding this, there is a race as well as a spirit of competition for becoming rich. The practice of individual luxury and exhibitionism has degenerated into a customary practice. That is why economic prosperity is giving rise to reactions in the form of violence and terrorism that are on the increase.

Lord Mahavira didn't say anything about the elimination of poverty but he spoke at length on restraining affluence. The code of conduct he had formulated for householders put a lot of curbs on the intoxicated elephant of affluence. Consumerism is the adopted child of riches. Epicureanism or hedonism is a branch of that very poisonous tree. Acquisitiveness is a source of its nourishment. Of the twelve basic vows Lord Mahavira prescribed for *shravaks* (votaries) the following vows directed them to limit their needs:

- *Upbhog-Paribhog-Vrat* or the vow of limiting the quantity of things one will use is a device to control consumerism
- *Digvrata* or the vow of limiting the area one will travel in different directions is a device to control hedonism
- *Parigrahapariman* or the vow of limiting the desire of possessions controls the tendency to acquire

Can socialism and communism establish themselves in a state of unlimited consumption, unlimited comfort and unlimited acquisition of wealth? Can

democracy remain pure? A new society cannot be created without practicing the *mantra* (specific efforts) or bringing about a change of heart and without developing the spirit of *vrata* or a vow.

Another undesirable by product of affluence is the production of weapons. Production of arms is an indirect way for an uncalled attempt to increase poverty. People resort to arms production with a view to imposing their ideas on others. They also do so to subdue freedom and self-esteem. Thus, one of the directives laid down in the code of conduct meant for *shravaks* (votaries) is that one should not manufacture weapons nor should one handle their parts.

Lord Mahavira conducted an experiment that resulted in the birth of a society free from the attitudes that are rooted in consumerism, hedonism and acquisitiveness. Half a million men and women enrolled themselves as members of this new society that followed a code of conduct laid down by Lord Mahavira. If that tradition had made headway and developed further, the new healthy society would have grown in size and stature but unfortunately that has not happened.

A code of conduct is only a beacon and a source of inspiration. It cannot restrain our conduct in its entirety. The way of restraining our conduct lies in creating awareness. It is our duty to direct the process of awakening in the light of that consciousness. Mahavira's birth anniversary becomes a source of inspiration for that duty and inner awakening.

JVBNA Mission Statement

- To spread the universal message of Jain philosophy and Jain wisdom to the world
- To cultivate an atmosphere that nurtures nonviolence, restraint and divergent perspectives, whereby leading to spiritual enlightenment for man
- To create an environment of unity and social harmony for all mankind

GOCHARI LABH

To arrange for Gochari Labh, please contact Vijaya Daga at (732) 326-9018 or Varsha Mehta at (732) 452-0630

JVBNA IS BLESSED TO HOST

SAMANI MUDITPRAGYAJI, a disciple of Acharya Mahaprajna, was initiated into the *Saman*



order in 1981. *Samani* has an M.A. in Science of Living, Yoga & Meditation and is an expert in *Jain Agams* and Sanskrit & Prakrit languages. She is also conversant in Hindi, Gujarati and English languages. She currently holds a position as Assistant

Professor of Science of Living, Yoga & Meditation at the Jain Vishva Bharati University in Ladnun, India. She has been teaching the Science of Living, *Preksha* Meditation, Yoga, Peace and Non Violence in India, Asia, Europe and America for over two decades and has conducted numerous workshops, camps, conferences and conventions on these subjects. She has published extensively including Insight, Articles on Management and Modern Living Problems and Solutions. *Samani* is an influential orator, energetic and committed to the cause of Jainism.

SAMANI SANGHAPRAGYAJI, also a disciple of Acharya Mahaprajna was initiated into the *Saman*



order in 1992. *Samani* has an M.A. in Jain Philosophy and is proficient in Hindi, English, Prakrit and Sanskrit languages. *Samani* has traveled to Europe and America to propagate Jainism, *Preksha* Meditation, Yoga, Peace and Non Violence

and has conducted and attended numerous training camps, conventions and conferences on these subjects. She is also very committed to the cause of Jainism.

Some additions to the JVBNA Committee List published in the January 2006 Newsletter:

Cultural Committee - Rupal Bhandari,
Cultural Committee - Jayshree Dugar
Education Committee - Kavita Kothari
Program Committee - Subhash Kothari

SAMANI MUDITPRAGYAJI SPEAKS

RELEVANCE OF JAIN MANTRAS

Darwin said, "Man strives to protect his existence", but Nitse said, "Man strives to acquire power." Everyone wants to be powerful. There are three kinds of power - Money Power, Power of Position and Spiritual Power. Today, the richest man in the world is Bill Gates while the richest woman is J.K. Rowling. There are also many great leaders in the world who govern their countries and hold the power of position. The powers of money and position play important roles in this world in providing the best opportunities to the holders of these powers. However, even these cannot endow a person with peace, happiness and health. Only spiritual power fulfills these needs. There are several approaches to acquiring and enhancing spiritual power. These include positive thinking, meditation, relaxation and the chanting of *mantras*. All the religions of the world practice the chanting of *mantras* in one form or another. We too have inherited many *mantras* and *stotras* composed by ancient Jain *Acharyas*.

The world today is beleaguered with numerous health problems such as hypertension, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. People suffer from mental stress, depression and anxiety. Anger, ego and greed are rampant. Thus, *mantras* have become even more relevant today as they take a holistic approach in addressing all of the above issues. The chanting of *mantras* has been shown to improve physical health, to enhance mental stability, and to lead to emotional purification through chemical/hormonal rebalances in the body. *Mantras* aid in the attainment of pleasure, peace, happiness and health as they enhance the power of spiritual enlightenment. They are also capable of reducing negative planetary effects, forming a protective shield around an individual, thereby reducing the effects of difficult obstacles in life.

In order to chant *mantras*, we need to find a peaceful place and a suitable time (preferably in

the morning), and seat ourselves in a lotus or cross-legged position facing North or East. We should try to control our senses and practice rhythmic breathing. We should start with chanting the *mantra* out loud. As our concentration and inner peace increases we should chant the *mantra* silently within and try to establish a connection between the *mantra* and ourselves. The true test of whether the *mantra* is working for us is in the pleasure and bliss we experience after the chanting.

There are five elements in our body - Earth, Air, Water, Fire and Space. The seed mantra of Earth element is '*Lam*'. *Lam* activates the Earth element located in the center of energy or *shakti kendra* which is the home of *Apan pran*. The practice of *Lam* affects the area of the heart and improves our health. *Hram*, *Hrim*, *Hrum*, *Hraum* and *Hrah* are seed *mantras* that are especially beneficial for strengthening of the lungs. A few key *mantras* are presented below:

****Om Aim Om Namaḥ** - This enhances memory

****Om Hrīm Arhaṃ Namaḥ** - This enhances family peace.

****Om Phuṃ Kshvīm Hriṃ Aim Namaḥ Ṭhaḥ Ṭhaḥ Svāhā** - This is chanted for a safe journey

****Hrūṃ Hruṃ** - This helps overcome insomnia

****Om Kshaum Kshaum** - This relieves tension

****Om Shānte Prashānte Sarvakrodhopashamanī Svāhā** - This helps overcome anger

****Om Hrīm Shrīm Arhaṃ Rishabhadevaya Namaḥ** - This helps overcome fear

****Om Hrīm Shrīm Bhagavate Parshvanāthāya Hara Hara Svāhā** - This relieves anxiety

****Anantavīryebhyo Namaḥ** - This relieves despondency

****Om Namo Ujjumājīnaṇaṃ Hrām Hrīm** - This helps in attaining mental peace

****Om Hrīm Arhaṃ Namaḥ Kshīm Svāhā** - This helps overcome obstacles

****Om Hrīm Vare Suvare A Si Ā U Sā Namaḥ** - This bestows prosperity

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JVBNA EVENTS IN THE RECENT PAST

JVBNA BIDS ADIEU TO SAMANI CHARITRAPRAGYAJI & SAMANI SHUKLAPRAGYAJI

A Send-Off function - one that grew to become very emotional - was organized for *Samani* Charitrapragyaji and *Samani* Shuklapragyaji as they prepared to bid adieu to the JVBNA center after a ten month long inspiring presence. The event was held on January 7 at a packed American Legion Hall in Iselin, NJ. The JVBNA Annual General Meeting was followed by *Namaskar Mahamantra* recital and a cultural program performed by the *Gyanshala* children. The children presented *Tikhutto*, enacted a song, staged a skit depicting the six *Leshyas*, performed a dance number on *Bhagwan* Parshvanath, sang devotional songs and recited poems. Adults sang a farewell song that portrayed their experiences and interactions with the *samanijis* and how their presence will be missed.



Some members spoke of their personal experiences in working with the *samanijis* and how the *samanijis* have been successful in motivating and inspiring all. The program also featured a presentation on the future plans and vision of JVBNA and an animated debate on '*Bhakti For Moksha*' Vs. '*Jain Principles For Moksha*', where two teams of four participants each contested this very fascinating subject. *Samani* Charitrapragyaji blessed and encouraged all to reach within themselves and continue on the laid out path towards a better life. *Samani* Shuklapragyaji

recited her experiences, especially in dealing with a diverse group of individuals by virtue of the *Chandanbala* play, and how she has learnt and grown in the process. The event was followed by *Sadharmik Vatsalya* and was attended by over 250 members and guests.

JVBNA WELCOMES SAMANI MUDITPRAGYAJI AND SAMANI SANGHAPRAGYAJI

After almost two months of draught, as if it rained again - the JVBNA community was thrilled - yes, it was the arrival of *Samani* Muditpragyaji and *Samani* Sanghapragyaji for a ten-month stay at the JVBNA center to guide all in their quest for spiritual bliss. A welcome program was organized to mark the *samanijis'*



arrival on March 4 at American Legion Hall in Iselin, NJ. The program included a *Bhaktamar* recital led by *samanijis* and a *stuti* of *Bhagwan* Mahavir. *Gyanshala* children presented a colorful cultural program comprising a welcome song, a group song extolling *samanijis'* teachings, a dance number depicting the holy *tirths* of Rajasthan and a demonstration of *Surya Namaskar*. Adults also welcomed *samanijis*

by performing a group song. *Gyanshala's* rapid progress was discussed and its volunteer teachers were honored. *Samani* Sanghapragyaji reminisced about her visit and stay at JVBNA in 2003 and lauded the grand strides the organization has made since. *Samani* Muditpragyaji blessed those present and said that this welcome program should be considered as a welcome of the sacrifice and restraint of holy men and women - a welcome of Indian culture and spirituality. She also discussed how JVBNA could work further to propagate the cause and teachings of Jainism. *Sadharmik Vatsalya* followed the program.

JVBNA YOGA & MEDITATION CAMP - A PHYSICAL, MENTAL & SPIRITUAL EXERCISE

Samani Muditpragyaji and *Samani* Sanghapragyaji conducted the first JVBNA Yoga & Meditation camp of the year 2006 on March 26 at



American Legion Hall in Iselin, NJ. The camp was attended by almost 40 members and guests and was a true exercise of the mind, body and soul.

The camp included prayer, *Yogic* exercises to target specific areas of the body, *Pranayam*, *Kayotsarg*, a discourse & discussion on the relevance of Jain *Mantras*, chanting of key *Mantras* and a short test on the writings of H.H. *Acharyashri* Mahaprajna that served as a means of developing concentration. The participants left the camp feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

JVBNA UPCOMING EVENTS

JVBNA Mahavir Jayanti & Akshay Tritiya Celebration - April 15, 2006

JVBNA will celebrate Mahavir Jayanti commemorating the birth of *Bhagwan* Mahavir and *Akshay Tritiya*, honoring the day when the first Jain *Tirthankar Bhagwan* Rishabhdev accepted

parna after a year of penance and fasting, on April 15 from 2:30pm - 6:30pm at American Legion Hall, 25 Brown Avenue, Iselin, NJ. The program will comprise of discourses by *samanijis*, a cultural program by *Gyanshala* children and a Jain quiz contest entitled 'Who Wants To Be Knowledgeable.' *Sadharmik Vatsalya* will follow. All are welcome.

JVBNA Prajna Diwas, Gyanshala Graduation & Picnic - June 25, 2006

JVBNA will celebrate *Prajna Diwas* (Wisdom Day) on the occasion of the 87th birthday of H.H. *Acharyashri* Mahaprajna on June 25, from 11am - 3pm at Merrill Park, Iselin, NJ. This event will coincide with *Gyanshala* graduation and a family picnic. All are welcome.

BECOME A JVBNA MEMBER

Jain Vishwa Bharati of North America, by virtue of its permanent center in Iselin, New Jersey is able to host *samanijis* year round, who provide you with spiritual guidance and promote the Jain way of life. Such a center dedicated to your well-being has to be funded to carry out different activities. Please show us your support by becoming a member and donating generously. Your donations are tax deductible.

□	Life Member	\$2,101
□	Founder Member	\$11,001
□	Patron	\$25,101
□	Chief Patron	\$51,001
□	Special Donor	Any Amount

JVBNA MEMBERSHIP PLEDGES - January-March 2006 - THANK YOU!

Founder Members Converting to Patron Status

Pratap & Kusum Jain, Surendra & Sumitra Kankariya, Ramesh & Suba Parmar

Life Members Converting to Founder Membership

Sampath & Dolores Jain

New Life Members

Mr. & Mrs. Hemant Jain, Raj & Sushma Sodhia

KIDS CORNER

Gyanshala News

Ahimsa Week

Gyanshala children celebrated last week of January as 'Ahimsa Week' in memory of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Youngest group of children observed different aspects of non-violence for a week e.g. not watch TV shows with violence, not yell at anyone, not hurt anyone's feelings, etc. Older children participated in a poster contest. The poster's theme was to do research on Srimad Rajachandra, a renowned Jain scholar, who was Gandhi's mentor. The posters will be displayed at the Akshay Tritiya/Mahavir Jayanti function to be held on April 15th.



Holi Celebration

Gyanshala children celebrated Holi on American soil in an improvised manner. They smeared each other with washable hand paints and savored *Gujiyas*, a traditional Holi *mithai* besides *samosas* and lots of other foods. They also showed their true Holi spirit by participating in a "Whacky costume" contest.

Upcoming Events

Attendance Awards

2nd trimester attendance awards will be announced in the first week of April. Attendance award is given to all children who have attended all classes in that trimester. Hope you all have been coming regularly.

Gyanshala Final Exam

Gyanshala children will participate in the final exam to be held in the month of June. Children have been working very hard. Best of Luck to all!

Gyanshala End of Year Party

Gyanshala session will end in style with its "End of the Year" party. Watch out for the details!

Graduation Graduation

Gyanshala Graduation ceremony and annual picnic will be held on June 25 at Merrill Park in Iselin. Mark your calendars!

Sand and Stone

By Priyanka Kothari

Two friends Babu and Raju, were walking through the desert, when during the journey, they had an argument. Raju slapped Babu in the face. Babu was hurt, but didn't say anything and wrote in the sand: "Today, my best friend slapped me." They kept on walking until they found an oasis and decided to take a bath. Babu started to drown when he got stuck, but Raju saved him. After he recovered, he wrote in stone: "Today, my best friend saved my life." Raju asked, "After I hurt you, you wrote in sand and after I saved you, you wrote in stone. Why?" Babu replied, "When someone hurts you, you should write it down in sand where the winds of forgiveness can erase it. But, when someone does something good for you, you must engrave it in stone where no wind can ever erase it."

Moral: Learn to write your hurts in sand and to carve your blessings in stone.

Word Search

By Vishaal Kothari

I X H W H V N G C V N R E H I M C A O Y S Y X U Q
W M H T G T U E I E I G T F A S D O V L I N W U D
S A A V A R A M M S H A F R M L M L X B T C L K K
U A P W R N A N H I N P M A W H J H L V L V H R P
H S M D S L A A U A N F Q H S R X R X U A R K W O
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F H M A M R V O N U A I K O U R M K G V H F M A G
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V U S X D U Z P A A W I R E S C A J H J G M R N F
S U M A T I N A T H T D H K A X V C T K Z C W A H
J P F C C G U S F E N H D B V A I O A K N O A T Z
L M O D S K F T F A W I N C A T R Y N B M S A H R
H U B E H J Y V H T A N I T N A S K T J C N X T V
M Y J E C A G C H C Q A D N T R W O I W I I N D Z
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H Z V Y Q V B M Q F S J B D T Y A D I T N I X R A

ABHINANDANSWAMI
RISHABHNATH
SHREYAMSANATH
AJITNATH
CHANDRAPRABHU
MAHAVIRSWAMI
NAMINATH

SUVIDHINATH
SAMBHAVANATH
VASUPUJYASWMAIVI
ANANTHANATH
DHARMANATH
MALINATH
SITLANATH
NEMINATH

PARSHVANATH
SANTINATH
MALNATH
ARANATH
KUNTUNATH
MUNISUVRATA
SUMATINATH

Kids Write!

By Arham Jain

Oops! Looks like I forgot to add a section. This section is the Kids Write! Section, in which all you kids can write to me, the editor. You can give suggestions to me for what to do in the Kids Corner. You can even give suggestions to make Gyanshala better by telling us what can be improved. I will only publish a few of the responses I receive, so try to make yours convincing! Please e-mail me at: arock3756@aol.com or give me the response at Gyanshala on Fridays. This is the first issue so hurry up and write so I can add a section!

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Directions to JVBNA Center

* Take GSP exit 131 towards Iselin, turn left onto NJ-27/Lincoln Highway, turn left (North) onto Middlesex Avenue, and pass Oak Tree Road. JVBNA Center will be on your left a little after Subzi Mandi.

* From US-1 (South), turn left onto Plainfield Avenue, turn right (North) onto NJ-27/Lincoln Highway, turn left onto Middlesex Avenue, and pass Oak Tree Road. JVBNA Center will be on your left a little after Subzi Mandi.

TO

JVBNA REGULAR SESSIONS - APRIL - JUNE 2006

Samani Muditpragyaji and Samani Sanghapragyaji will conduct the following sessions. For updated information call (732) 404-1430, email jvbnj@yahoo.com or visit the JVBNA site at www.jvbna.org

MONDAYS 9:30AM - 10:30AM	Yoga for General Fitness	JVBNA Center 151 Middlesex Avenue, Iselin, NJ
TUESDAYS (Except Apr 25) 6:30PM - 7:45PM	Yoga for General Fitness	North Edison Public Library 777 Grove Avenue, Edison, NJ
WEDNESDAYS 6:30PM - 7:45PM	Yoga For Stress Management	First Presbyterian Church 1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ
THURSDAYS 7:30PM - 9:00PM	Bhaktamar Jeev/Ajeev Swadhyay	JVBNA Center 151 Middlesex Avenue, Iselin, NJ
FRIDAYS 8:00PM - 9:30PM	JVB Gyanshala for Children Hindi Class for Children	First Presbyterian Church 1295 Oak Tree Road, Iselin, NJ
SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS Various Times (Call for details)	Pravachan	Various Locations (Call for details)

THE EDITORIAL TEAM WISHES YOU SPIRITUAL BLISS ON MAHAVIR JAYANTI & AKSHAY TRITIYA

ADVISOR - Samani Muditpragyaji
ADVISOR - Samani Sanghapragyaji

EDITOR - Madhumita Sacheti
KIDS CORNER EDITOR - Arham Jain