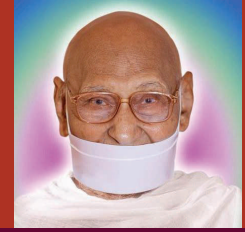




Ahimsa is Protector

# Timeless Wisdom...

**JVB Preksha Meditation Center Houston**



Search Truth Yourself

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 12

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Akshay Pragyaaji



Vinay Pragyaaji

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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## Parshvanath Jayanti

Bhagwan Parshvanath is 23rd Tirthankar (prophet) in Jain Religion. He was born about 3000 years ago in Varanasi to King Ashvasen and Queen Vamadevi. Parshva grew up in the midst of wealth and happiness.

At that time there was a mendicant named Kamath. He practiced severe penance and performed rituals called Panchagni (five fires).

When Parsva-kumar heard about Kamath's ritual, he realized the violence towards living beings involved in a fire. Kamath denied that any life was at stake because of his ritual. However, by extra sensory perception, Parshva-kumar sensed a snake trapped inside one of the burning logs. He asked his men to remove the log and chop it carefully. To everyone's surprise, a half burnt snake came out of the burning piece of wood. Parshvanath recited Namaskar-mantra for the benefit of the dying snake.

Observing the miseries that living beings had to experience in their worldly life, Parshva-kumar developed a high degree of detachment towards worldly possessions and relationships. At the age of 30, he renounced all his possessions and family and became a monk.

Parshvanath ultimately attained omniscience on the 84th day of his renunciation. That was the 4th day of the dark half of the moon of Falgun (that usually falls in April).

Parshvanath then began preaching true religion. He reinstated the Tirtha or religious four-fold order and became the 23rd Tirthankar of Jain religion. He had ten *Ganadhars*, the principal disciples of Tirthankars. He attained nirvana at the age of 100 at Samedshikhar. This hill is located in the state of Bihar and is the most famous place of pilgrimage for Jains

*Parshva-kumar demonstrated a very keen sense of non-violence and detachment from all material possessions and from relationships with people. These are the qualities essential for attaining self-realization. He showed us that one should be detached and impartial regardless of whether a person is our well wisher or enemy. We may not always know and understand the reason why a person behaves in a strange way towards us for it may be because of our karmas from a past life.*



JAIN SHWETAMBEER MOOETI BHANDAR

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## Appeal to the Patrons: New JVB Houston Center

Houston has been truly blessed by having the presence of two Samanijis in residence here for guiding the community on a spiritual path. The building of the new JVB Preksha Meditation Center marks an important milestone in the nine years journey, and will provide the facilities required to conduct the programs for many generations. JVB Houston humbly requests you to donate generously for this important cause.

### ***Building Description***

Two buildings are proposed; a two storey *Main Building* (roughly 8000 sq feet) which will house Samanijis' living quarters, a Swadhyay Room/Temple, 4 Class Rooms, Library, Guest Room, Kitchen and a Dining Hall, and a Pyramid Shaped Meditation Hall (roughly 3600 sq feet). There will be a parking lot for 76 cars in the complex.

### ***Project Sponsorship***

In addition to donating directly, patrons of the JVB Preksha Meditation Center have an opportunity to sponsor parts of the building project by selecting from the following table:

Class Room 1 (Gyan Kaksha)	\$ 31,000 (300 sq. feet)
Class Room 2 (Darshan Kaksha)	\$ 31,000 (300 sq. feet)
Class Room 3 ( Charitra Kaksha)	\$ 35,000 (325 sq. feet)
Class Room 4 (Tap Kaksha)	\$ 35,000 (325 sq. feet)
Library	\$ 71,000 (660 sq. feet)
Swadhyay hall	\$ 71,000 (660 sq. feet)
Guest Room	\$ 25,000 (260 sq. feet)
Samaniji's Residence	\$ 51,000 (510 sq. feet)
Kitchen	\$ 41,000 (380 sq. feet)
Dining Hall	\$ 71,000 (650 sq. feet)
Meditation Hall	\$ 360,000 (3600 sq. feet)

### ***Donor Program***

Donations less than \$ 5000	.....	Recognition in the JVB newsletter
Donations of \$ 5000 and above	.....	Name printed on the name plate
but less than \$ 10,000		
Donations of \$ 10,000 and above	.....	Recognized as <b><i>Bronze</i></b> Donors on
but less than \$ 25,000		the name plate
Donations of \$ 25,000 and above	.....	Recognized as <b><i>Silver</i></b> Donors on
but less than \$ 50,000		the name plate
Donations of \$ 50,000 and above	.....	Recognized as <b><i>Gold</i></b> Donors on
but less than \$ 100,000		the name plate
Donations of \$ 100,000 and above	....	Recognized as <b><i>Diamond</i></b> Donors
but less than \$ 150,000		on the name plate
Donations of \$ 150,000 and above	...	Recognized as <b><i>Platinum</i></b> Donors on the name plate

### **Donation of the month:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • Sampat Sarla Rampuria – 5000 (total 55,000)   | Bijay and Manju Banthia – 7800 (total 38,000) |
| • Pramod and Anju Bengani – 1001 (total 12,114) | Vivek and Kajal Jain – 2500 (total 10,000)    |
| • Subodh and Pallavi Mehta – 7000               | Shashank and Mukta Jain – 2000 (total 5100)   |
| • Priya and Sunil Bafna – 500 (total 1000)      | Sandeep & Bindu rampuria 501                  |
| • Manju & samarth Banthia 500                   | Vishnu Bindu Simlote 250                      |





## Tidbits

### Mantra to get rid of Headache

“Aum Namō Paramohinayanam hram hrim”

- Chant this mantra every day by completing one mala
- Keep some water near you while chanting this and drink it after chanting

### Test your knowledge about Jain religion

The answers of last month’s questions are as follows:

Q. What is meant by the Jiva?

A. Jiva means one which can breathe, regenerate or reproduce, eat and have mind to think, etc.

Q. What does a Jiva obtain by Tapa (Austerity)?

A. Jiva destroys the accumulated karmas, and purifies the soul.

Q. What does Jiva obtain by Svadhyaya (Study)?

A. Jiva destroys the karmas that obscure the right knowledge.

### **Questions for this month are:**

- Q. What are the five great vows of Ascetics (Sadhus and Sadhvis)
- Q. What are the main characteristics of Sadhus and Sahvis
- Q. What are the main characteristics of Lay Followers (Shravaks and Shravikas)

### Voice of the Omniscient

**eyam khu nanino saram, jam na himsai kancana  
ahimsa samayam ceva, eyavamtam vayaniya**

The essence of all knowledge is not committing violence. The doctrine of ahimsa is nothing but the observance of equality, i.e. the realization that just as I do not like misery, others also don’t like it. Knowing this, one should not kill anybody.  
*(Abstract From Jain Agamas)*

### Calendar of Events:

- ◆ Tuesday 07:00 to 08:00 PM : Yoga & Pranayam to Relieve Stress
- ◆ Wednesday 07:15 to 08.00 PM.: Pranayam & Meditation for Healthy Life & Positive Thinking  
08:00 to 09:00 PM : Swadhyaya (on meaning of Pratikraman and Uttradhyaya Sutra)
- ◆ Thursday 09:30 to 11.00 AM.: Yoga and meditation for General Health & Mental Peace.
- ◆ Saturday 09:00 to 10.30 AM.: Yoga and meditation for General Health & Mental Peace.
- ◆ Sunday
- 1. (1st and 3rd) 10:00 to 12:15 AM Children’s Gyanshala
- 1. (2nd and 4th) 10:30 to 12:00 AM.: Meditation, Pravachan & Bhajan

### Upcoming Events:

- ◆ Samanijis are travelling to India from 12/31st to 02/18th. Activities other than Gyanshala and Saturday morning session on Yoga and Meditation will resume upon there return.





## Vegetarianism Projects—Gyanshala Students

Over the Thanksgiving Holidays Gyanshala children conducted research and submitted their projects to Samanijis for review on Dec 7th. The main topic for the projects was Vegetarianism.

The Darshan group (above 9) researched on restaurants, food items (chips, cookies etc.) and wrote about the vegetarian alternatives available in the market, and what popular brands were really not purely vegetarian and should be avoided. For the restaurants they found which ones are safe for vegetarians and where one should not be going. Children came up with specific examples and names of the ingredients harmful to us.



The Gyan group-1 (ages 6-8) prepared a collage each for the vegetarian food groups: proteins, carbohydrates, mineral, vitamins, fats etc. and their most important sources. They displayed a variety of foods and different materials for the work.

Last but not least, the Gyan group-2 (ages 3-5) colored and decorated pictures of fruits and vegetables given to them.



Respected Samanijis reviewed the projects and commended the students for their hard work. Students also provided copies of their research to all parents. Overall it was great

learning experience for all and the kids had fun while doing it. - By: *Kajal Jain*

## Feedbacks from Samaniji's Seminar at the University of Houston



Samaniji were invited to University of Houston to teach "The Role of Saman order" and "Preksha meditation."

The seminar was arranged by Andrea Jain. Following are a couple of feedbacks from the session.

It's always interesting to see an inside view of monastic life, especially when they are women in a typically male-dominated realm. The sisters were so gracious to share their history, practice and meditation with us.

We learned that the Samani order of Jainism embraces all people as an art of living. We think it is important

in academia to expose students to all forms of religion and culture so that we may embrace each other as humans here together on a mission as spiritual beings. The Samani order is dedicated to dispelling the misconceptions and misinterpretations of Jain practice and philosophy.



The sisters also called to attention the all-important breath. During the presentation they led the class through Preksha Meditation. It was enlightening for many of us to realize that our breath, that which feeds our bodies and brains with oxygen, were only operating at a minimal level. In order to increase the level of oxygen intake, the sisters taught us the importance of taking deep conscious breaths...

> Jennifer Buergermeister & Cathal Keane

