



# Peace Messenger



Jain Vishva Bharti London Newsletter

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## NO SHORTCUTS TO SPIRITUALITY

By Acharya Mahaprajnaji

SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES have meaning only when a person observes moral restraints. Whenever moral restraints are ignored and spiritual observances are put centre stage, religion loses its meaning. In Jainism, restraint means self-control. It requires self or personal management to awaken one's innate potentialities, develop oneself and guard against unwarranted obstacles. In Jain scriptures restraints are divided into 17 types, including controlling our senses and thoughts. For a harmonious and peaceful life, one should practice all type restraints, regardless of whether they are easy or difficult. The degree of control would naturally differ from person to person.

### Search for the truth

Non violence, truth, non-stealing, restraints and non possession are the five great vows observed by Jain monks. The second vow truth is colossal and eternal. It is the greatest pursuit of life. Lord Mahavira said "Search truth yourself". The search for truth involves two things: the search for truth and the search for the self. The truth we search cannot be put to use by anyone else. Only the one who searches for truth can put it to use and enjoy the supreme bliss obtained through self-realisation. Man has highly developed brain and centres of super sensual knowledge. That is why he alone is capable of searching for the truth.

The achievement of scientific researches is put for practical use for the entire society. The achievements of spiritual exertions, on the other hand, are personal achievements. One has to walk on the road that leads to truth and self realisation.

Successful practitioners have tried to communicate their experiences to others. But spiritual experiences cannot be transferred to others. Everyone has to exert himself independently to gain them. Whatever has been spoken or written by those who gained spiritual experiences became

Sruti (Jainism literature). Sruti is useful because it prepares the background for sadhana. But this background serves no purpose unless the practitioner has exerted himself. Spiritual experiences are not social experiences. There is no point citing the Agamas, Bhagavad-Gita or Koran to prove that there is unity of spiritual experiences. Only he who has experienced the truth can say, "This is truth & I have known perceived & experienced it"....The field of self-discovery is like the field of scientific research, very particular will have to think & exert himself scientifically. A person cannot borrow the experience from another. Thus search for truth is a long and complicated process of scientific experiments. Unless one does sadhana, one cannot realize the truth & follow it.

### Peace through Preksha Meditation

Both desirable & undesirable things are present in the world. Non-violence is strength, bravery & heroism. It has no relation with cowardice. The root of violence lies in hatred. All wars and acts of terrorism in the past or present are the direct outcome of hatred of those who train the people in carrying out terrorist acts. They instill hatred in their hearts against the intended target, so that there remains no hesitation in killing and destroying. Thus changing hatred into love and friendship is of utmost importance. Where there is love, there can be no violence.

Physical & mental intolerance as the two major causes of violence. Once the attitude of intolerance is changed, non violence is automatically ensues. Modern education does not focus on developing compassion, sensitivity, love and friendship in people. Mere study cannot develop these qualities. Exercise like Preksha Meditation [concentration on the centres of enlightenment] can help to register an increase in universal compassion, love, friendship & sensuality.

Self-restraint is good. So is renunciation. To speak the truth is good & so is non-violence. Yet neither restraint nor is truth is spoken or non violence achieved. The reason for this is that man has no control over his mind. Without controlling the mind, neither can non-violence be practiced nor truth be attained. Only the right meditation techniques & the science of living can control the minds & lead the man towards the path of enlightenment

## Acharya Bhikshu commemorative postage stamp

In June 2004, the nirvana bicentenary of Acharya Bhikshu, the founder of Jain Terapanth religious sect, was celebrated with the release of a special commemorative postage stamp by the Indian government.

Speaking on the occasion, India's Vice-President,

Bhairon Singh Shekhawat observed that Acharya Bhikshu's teachings which revolved around the principles of humanitarianism, secularism and peace, are very relevant even today. A philosopher, writer, poet and social reformer, the Jain leader was a harbinger of religious reform in a society ridden with fundamentalism and blind faith.

Issued by the Department of Posts, the stamp is in Rs.5 denomination.





## RECENT JVBL EVENTS

### PRAKRIT SUMMER SCHOOL 2004, LONDON.

In June 2004, JVB and the Institute of Jainology organised a Prakrit Summer School taught by Dr Jagat Ram Bhattacharya, Associate Professor of Prakrit at Ladnun University. Over a period of 5 weeks, 16 students learnt the basics of the language of the Jain Agams.



#### *An interview with* **Dr Jagat Ram Bhattacharya :**

**Q:** What is Prakrit? Is it the main language of the Jain texts?

**Dr. B:** Prakrit is an ancient Indian language created around 500 BC. Even older than classical Sanskrit, it was the language of the common people. Consequently, Lord Mahavira and Lord Buddha used Prakrit for their discourses and this gave Prakrit its position in society.

**Q:** What is the importance of learning Prakrit?

**Dr. B:** It is necessary to learn Prakrit because the original Jain texts were written in Prakrit, and later interpreted in Sanskrit. Moreover, even today we use Prakrit as many modern Indian languages are just newer versions of Prakrit and Sanskrit.

**Q:** How was the experience of teaching Prakrit in the UK and was it different from teaching in India?

**Dr. B:** Since the language is not job-oriented, it is difficult to find students in India. Here, the experience was very rewarding with 15-16 students, who were very regular and very sincere. Indian students are acquainted with modern Indian languages so learning Prakrit is not that difficult. Here, people barely know Hindi or Gujarati but they had a strong will so they could do it.

A word of advice to the students, they should continue being in touch with the language or they will lose it. The Samanijis can also help them with this.

In the future, I would like to have two groups Beginners and Advanced with the Beginners group of this year moving to Advanced after next year.

**Q:** Interestingly, you are not a Jain by birth, so what is the reason for this involvement with Prakrit and Jainism.

**Dr. B:** (laughs) Though I am not born Jain, I feel very easy with Jain people and philosophy. It must be something from my previous birth. I love my work and studies and consider myself very fortunate. It is not my job, it is my life.

### **Prakrit language student, Nina Choraria, shares her experience**

When the Samanijis told me about Prakrit language class, I was apprehensive at the idea and was unsure if I could commit myself for a class everyday for five weeks.

However after attending only a few classes, I realised that I was actually looking forward to the next class as I was finding each class very stimulating. I think this was owing to Dr. Bhattacharya's ways of teaching. He made the class so enjoyable that we didn't realise that while we were having fun, we were also learning the Prakrit language. The class opened up my insight into Prakrit language. I hope that these classes help me to understand the Jain Agams when I read them. I am looking forward to the next Prakrit course which I am sure will be as beneficial as the last one.

### HEART DISEASE WORKSHOPS

In April and May 2004, JVBL organised 5 workshops on "Reversal and Prevention of Heart Disease through the practice of Preksha Meditation". These workshops took place all over the UK and were conducted by the eminent cardiologist, Dr S.C. Manchanda.

Dr. Manchanda works with the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in New Delhi and is the ex-Head of Department of Cardiology at AIIMS. Moreover, for many years, he has been encouraging the practice of Yoga and meditation, particularly Preksha meditation, for controlling and reversing illnesses such as heart diseases, high blood pressure and diabetes.

After an initial introduction to Preksha meditation, Dr Manchanda discussed the increased incidence of heart diseases amongst South Asians and how yoga, Preksha meditation and a low-fat vegetarian diet can help control these diseases. Dr. Manchanda corroborated his advice with scientific research findings and also answered the audience's questions regarding these issues.





## PARLIAMENT OF WORLD'S RELIGIONS, BARCELONA

From 7th to 13th July 2004, the Parliament of World's Religions took place in Barcelona, Spain. The parliament is an international meeting that brings together people of all religions and beliefs for an open dialogue about some of the world's most pressing matters.

This year's meeting saw a substantial contribution from the Jain community with a total of 30 delegates attending: 13 from USA, 5 from UK, and 12 from India. Sixteen of these delegates were speakers or presenters. In fact, the theme of this year's meeting "Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment." is directly related to the 3 tenets of Jainism: Ahimsa, Anekaantvaad, Aparigraha.

At the opening plenary session, Jain prayers and blessings were recited in Prakrit by Jain monks and sadhvis - His Holiness Amrender Muniji, Swami Devendrakeertyji, Samani Pratibha Pragyaji and Punya Pragyaji and these were simultaneously translated into English, Spanish and Catalan. The messages of Acharya Mahaprajnaji and the Indian president Dr A.P.G. Abdul Kalam were shown in the "Unity of Minds" programme which was part of the Jain community's programme at the Parliament.

All the contributions of the Jain delegation were very well received by the 8,000 leaders, activists and lay people present at this year's Parliament.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PARYUSHAN MAHAPARVA SEPTEMBER 11TH 18TH

Samani Pratibha Pragyaji & Jina Pragyaji are invited by Navnat Vanik Association, Mahavir Foundation and Veerayatan UK for Paryushan Lecture.

**Venue** : Navnat Bhavan

**Time** : 11:15am to 12:45pm

Lectures will be in Gujarati and Hindi

### PARYUSHAN MAHAPARVA PROGRAMAT JAIN VISHVA BHARATI

By Samani Pratibha Pragyaji, Jina Pragyaji and Carla Geerdes from Germany (involved in the practice of Preksha Meditation and leading Jain values in daily life)  
Time: 8 pm till 9:30pm during week days, up to 10pm during the weekend.

Programme and Pratikraman will be conducted in Hindi and English.

At JVB we will do Paryushan for children, youth and adults in different sessions.

### PARYUSHAN MAHAPARVA PROGRAM IN BIRMINGHAM

Samani Punya Pragyaji and Shukla Pragyaji are invited by Jain Sangh Birmingham for Paryushan Lecture. Lectures will be in Gujarati and English

### PREKSHA MEDITATION CAMPS

On the last Saturday of every month, JVB women's

wing will be organizing the following Preksha Meditation camps:

25<sup>th</sup> September 2004 : Preksha meditation camp for diabetes

30<sup>th</sup> October 2004 : Preksha meditation camp for anger management

27<sup>th</sup> November 2004 : Preksha meditation camp for sinus and colds

The courses will be conducted by the Samaniji at the JVB centre from 1.00pm to 5.00pm. The classes are free and all are welcome. Please contact the JVB Centre for details.

### PERFORMANCE OF CHANDANBALA

On Sunday, 28<sup>th</sup> November 2004, JVB women's wing will present the Jain play **Chandanbala**. This ever-popular play is a stage adaptation of the ancient story of a young princess Vasumati who goes on to become one of the first Jain sadhvis Chandanbala. The play will be performed in London by members of the community. For tickets, sponsorship or further details, please contact Shivani on 07764 823 962 or Nina on 0208 450 4757.

### CELEBRATING ACHARYA BHIKSHU BICENTENARY

In the week after Samaniji, JVB centre will be celebrating the nirvana bicentenary of Acharya Bhikshu as well as the release of the Indian postage stamp in his honour. For further details, kindly contact the JVB centre.





## COMMUNITY NEWS

Naina Choraria, Nina Choraria, Hina Vohra and Bindu Meheta have successfully completed Bhaktamar Stotra from JVB School.

**Nina Choraria** has completed Pratikraman from JVB School.

Newly weds **Rajni and Sachit** visited the Samaniji at the Centre for blessings and managpath right after the wedding ceremony took place.



All are welcome at the JVB Centre, to

receive blessings under the auspices of Samanijis, for weddings, house warming and all other occasions.

### Thank you for your support!

Computer	Dr.Natu Bhai Shah
CD Player	Ghanshyam Santosh Jain
Fans	Bajarang and Rajshree Sethia
OHP Projector	Jagadish and Prabal Jain
Phone & Fax	Sayer Choraria
Tape Recorder	Kamal and Rekha Choraria

### Need of JVBL!

LCD Projector, Digital Camera.

### Ad in the Chandanbala brochure

Help fundraising for JVB Centre by sponsorship in the Chandanbala brochure. Your support will be acknowledged with a banner advertisement in the brochure. The rates are:

Cover.....£500  
*(Front/Back, Inside/Outside)*

Full page.....£250

Half page.....£150

For further enquiries or to book, contact: Nina Choraria 0208 450 4757

### JVBL Newsletter Subscription

To subscribe (free) or contribute to the JVB newsletter Contact:

Nina Choraria - Ph: 0208 450 4757  
Ambika Kucheria - Ph: 0208 371 1718  
Email: [ambkraj@aol.com](mailto:ambkraj@aol.com)  
Or contact the JVB London centre

## shivani's dance classes



Learn dances on  
the latest Bollywood tunes  
Special choreography for  
sagaai and mehendi ceremonies  
Group lessons start  
Fri. 10<sup>th</sup> September 2004  
One to one lessons also available  
for children and adults.  
For more information contact  
Shivani on 07764 823 962.

This newsletter is sponsored by Tara and Chandra Prakash Singhi.  
To sponsor the next issue, please contact Ambika on 0208 371 1718

