

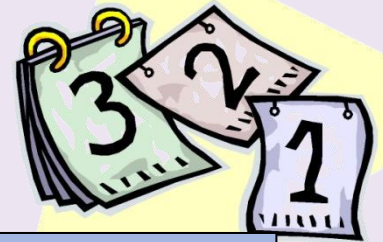
# July 2018 Newsletter

## Peace OF Mind

EXPERIENCE YOUR INNER BLISS



### Upcoming Events



#### Sneak peak inside this issue:

This month we had several exciting events across the US. We First started off with a sessions in Vancouver and then went on to California, North Carolina, Chicago and Las Vegas. We ended with attending and having a session in Chicago for the YJA 2018.

Please visit our website at [www.pomyc.org](http://www.pomyc.org)

1. YJA Chicago, IL  
July 5 – 8, 2018

Location: 6100 N River Rd,  
Rosemont, IL 60018

2. Trip to Atlanta, GA  
Pravachans  
Date: July 10 -13, 2018  
Location: Jain Society of Greater  
Atlanta  
669 S Peachtree Street, NW  
Norcross, GA 30071

3. Trip to Austin, TX  
( Pratihtha Mahotsav )  
Date: July 14 & 15, 2018  
Location: Westwood High School  
12400 Mellow Meadow Dr,  
Austin, TX 78750

4. Trip to Houston, TX  
Pravachans

\* July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Ramesh & Sudha Parikh, 3122 West  
Autumn Run Circle  
Sugar Land, TX 77479, Home: 281-  
980-3899  
Cell: 832-265-2326, 713-870-3229 ( K.C.Mehta )

\* July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Jain Society of Houston, 3905 Arc St.  
Houston, TX 77063  
Phone: 281-606-5246

5. Trip to Chicago, IL  
July 20- 24, 2018  
Contact: 331-333-0105

6. Trip to London, UK  
July 25 to Aug 2, 2018  
Contact: [pomyc.org@gmail.com](mailto:pomyc.org@gmail.com)

7. Trip to Rajkot  
Aug 5 to Spet 3, 2018  
Abhavalay, Rajkot.  
Phone: +91 94273 66164

## Saman Shrutpragyaji visited Vancouver, British Columbia

Saman Shrutpragyaji visited Vancouver, British Columbia, in Western Canada from 19-25 June. He stayed with Mahendrabhai & Ushaben Mehta who are part of a group who have been holding Satsang every Friday evening. This group had been trying to have Samanji visit Vancouver since two years and were overjoyed that Samanji could fit in Vancouver in his busy North America schedule, after a visit by Mahendra & Usha Mehta at Abhavalay ashram in Rajkot. This was Samanji's first visit to Vancouver, but the enthusiasm of approximately 20 families was immense. He was received at the airport by Jain Samaj president Shri Vijay Jain, Mahendra Mehta, Usha Mehta, Prajay Gandhi and Jinesh Jain.

Samanji held pravachan/udgosh/questionnaires in Gujarati at residences of Mahendra-Usha Mehta, Gaurav-Neha Kapadia, Prajay-Darshana Gandhi, Deepali-Neemesh Shah, Binit-Chandni Shah, Kaushal-Jigna Shah, Mayur-Jagruti Khajuria and Dhara-Kartik Shah. He also gave discourses at three Mandirs - Jain Derasar, Burnaby Hindu Temple and Laxminarayan Temple. On International Yoga Day Samanji gave a demonstration on meditation at Burnaby Hindu Temple and yoga at Laxminarayan Temple. This was covered by Zee TV Canada, which also aired an interview in Hindi. Joy TV Canada host Nirmala Raniga interviewed him in English, whereas Radio Rim Jhim/Spice Radio of Vancouver took two interviews - one in Hindi and one in Gujarati with host Deepali Shah. Some Samaj members have promised to sponsor needy schoolchildren while others have shown interest in going to Rajkot to volunteer for teaching children at school camps. Vancouver's Jain Samaj are very hopeful that Saman Shrutpragyaji will make time and visit again probably next year. All the participants felt spiritually elevated by Samanji's visit and they look forward to welcoming him in the very near future. Thanks and jay Jinendra



## San Diego, CA Trip - June 15 -17

The Jain Society of San Diego (JSSD) was privileged to have Saman Shrutpragya ji conduct a number of sessions over a three day long Shibir on June 15,16,17. The main topic here was Mangalik, it's true meaning, why it is performed at various events and what is the real importance of uttering it. Also, what type of bhav should be present while reciting Mangalik was focused upon. Initially, we might ask: what is so important about this, as we often think it simply has to be spoken, without thought or meaning? Saman Shrutprgya ji, however, explained that bhav is crucial in recitation; for it completely changes one's viewpoint or perspective . With bhav involved, he stated that our mind set changes instantly.

Yoga with simple asanas was additionally carried out, and its importance discussed, this being followed by a question and answer session. It provided a great opportunity also for the labh of gochari (service of food) to Samanji. Saman ji Stayed at Damini and Kishor Mehta's residence. All in all, being with Samanji and being present at his lectures was fun, simple and easy to follow in terms of the topics he delivered. For Samanji to grace the JSSD during Paryushan in near future is joyfully anticipated. JSSD is currently a small group of some 120 families but has growing new members. The Society is in a process of building a beautiful Shwetambar Religious Complex, with Bhagwan Dharnanath as Mulnayak, and it will be constructed on a two acre piece of land in Vista, San Diego, CA. It is a very valuable and important new venture.





## **“Understanding Life” Program in Fremont, California**

( June 11 – 14, 2018 )

Saman Shrutpragyaji conducted a wonderful 4-day program on “Understanding Life” in Fremont, California from June 11 – June 14, 2018. The morning sessions were 3 hours long and included yogic exercises, meditation, and very interactive discussions on practical topics including 1) Goal setting in life, 2) Mind beyond mind, and 3) Emotional balance. During the evening discourses, Samanji offered insights into highly engaging topics of 1) How to live life after 50, 2) Foremost priority in life, and 3) Spiritual growth.

As always, all the participants enjoyed these lively sessions and gained valuable tips on understanding life. We are very thankful to Samanji for visiting the San Francisco bay area and sharing his deep knowledge and experience in how to live a meaningful life with spirituality.

Thank you all for attending Samanji's "Understanding Life" program and for your generous donations. It was indeed our pleasure to attend all the six sessions about “Understanding Life” by Saman Shrutpragnaji.

Special Thanks to Avni and Mukesh for organizing the program that they so gracefully hosted. Their continuous involvement in arranging such programs are sincerely appreciated. We learned a lot and look forward to Samanji visiting Bay area in the future. Avni and Mukesh said, ‘It was our good fortune to host such an event and we hope you gained a lot spiritually.’



## Raleigh, NC trip ( June 29 - 30, 2018 )

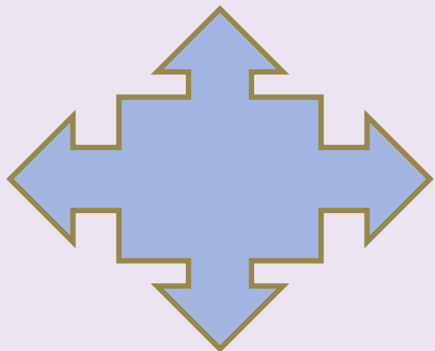
We have been hearing all through our life that real happiness is within us, that it is in our soul, not in objects. We know it, we are convinced about it, and we agree with it. Still, our *Kasay* (evils) distracts us from our journey towards real happiness. The primary one is our anger and our desire to make others think like us.

Saman Shrutpragya Ji blessed a big group of people, both Jains, and non-Jains, in Raleigh area with a series of two lectures on 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> Jun 2018. He enlightened us on day 1 he talked on how to keep the distractions away at Priyanka and Vigyan Jain residence. On day 2, Saman ji spoke how to achieve our highest priority, i.e. our goal to have real happiness at Vipresh and Ritu Jain residence. It is our *Sanskars* (values) that go with us.

In order to make progress towards our goal to achieve real happiness, to have good *sanskars*, all we need to do is practice following:

1. Speak only when required. This not only saves us from accidentally speaking wrong words, it yields energy for our goal.
2. Find time to be alone: It does not mean loneliness, in which we are hungry for someone's company. "Alone" means happy to be enjoying your own company. This causes sub-conscious mind to be active.
3. Self-retrospection: No one knows you better than you, and no one can change you except you. So, we should take out time to do self-retrospection.
4. Meditation

Vigyan Jain arranged and coordinated Saman ji's trip to Raleigh was appreciated by all members. Saman ji also gave one day dharmlabh to Lataben and Dr. Ramnik Zota.



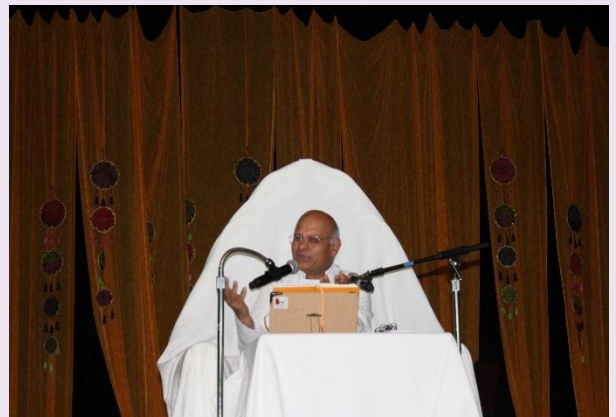
## 25th Anniversary of the Jain Society of Metropolitan, Chicago ( June 26 & 27 )

Consul General Ms. Neeta Bhushan addressed the gathering at the 25th Anniversary of the Jain Society of Metropolitan, Chicago. Saman Shrutpragyaji, Bhattarak Ji & Chairman, Mr. Atul Shah and President, Mr. Vipul Shah. Acharya Lokesh Muni Ji also addressed the gathering. Saman Shrutpragya ji gave talks on June 26th and 27th on the subject of Sankalp and Sanskara, and How to live spiritually? Samanji said that 'We should not deplete the power of the soul for temporary things. With all sincerity, dedication, and effort we should perform our professional and family responsibilities whilst at the same time protecting that which is permanent - the purity of the soul.'

Samanji also said that if you are removed from an external luxurious life because of your old age, that is not genuine detachment at all. Also, if you control or limit your food consumption because you can no longer easily digest it, it also does not mean that you achieve a spiritual objective. If, on the other hand, you are detached at a young age - while you have energy and have all your faculties - this is true detachment. Samanji stayed at Kusumben and Mahendrabhai Shah's residence. He then traveled to Raleigh, NC from Chicago on June 28th.

When we live in a society, where we work and take care of family, it may sound very difficult that how to not be disturbed by what others say or think about us. After all, all we are doing all through the day is to impress others in our society. However, Saman Ji explained that if we follow just three principles, as mentioned below, it is in fact very easy to carry out our duties without compromising our values:

1. Don't hold an object or a person responsible for your luck (*Nimit* is not *karan*): In our day to day life, good and bad instances do happen with us. We hold the object (e.g. car breakdown) or the person (e.g. someone unable to help us during our crisis) responsible for our bad luck. They are just the medium for delivering what was destined to happen.
2. Accept everyone as they are: Everyone has a different DNA, their own Karma, at different place of in the cycle of birth and death, and therefore have their own journey.
3. Don't make story out of an event: Event is short-lived, the story stays.





## Las Vegas, NV Trip, June 15 - 18, 2018

After many years Saman Shrutpragyaji visited Las Vegas, NV. Neetaben and Dr. Jaldeep Daulat arranged and hosted Saman ji's program at the Las Vegas Hindu Temple for all Indians. Saman ji delivered three talks on Anger Free Living, Stress-Free Living, and on How to Live Life Positively. He explained that there are so many ways to be free from Anger. One of the best ways, he pointed out, is to create an Anger Zone at home, just like is found with the common example of a Smoking Zone. People cannot smoke everywhere because it is harmful to other people. In the same way, Anger should be expressed in a controlled and secluded way, in a manner that does not cause harm to other people. An angry person needs to create such a zone. If a person gets angry, he or she can then go the Anger Zone location and express his or her frustrations, thus managing it appropriately. By doing it in such a contained way, Samanji emphasised, it undoubtedly enables the individual to reduce the effect that anger otherwise often has on others.

In Samanji's lecture on the subject of Living Life Positively, he said, 'For understanding life, one has to learn to be free from the past and from planning for the future, which can be achieved through determination to live life in the present moment with mindfulness and awareness. Samanji also taught yogic exercise and meditation. The Jain Sangh and Hindu Temple members made Samanji visit a successful trip. Everyone was thankful to Neetaben and Dr. Jaldeepbhai Daulat, including Samanji himself, for organising events and for ensuring a meaningful and life-changing program could be experienced. Samanji now departs for California where he will spend one day with Maheshbhai and Ushaben Vadher and one day with Seemaben and Kirtibhai Mehta.



## Young Jain of America celebrated YJA Convention @ Rosemont - Chicago

( July 5 -8,2018 )

Every two years, YJA brings together hundreds of Jains from across the country to learn together and build long-lasting friendships. With thought-provoking speakers, engaging social events, and numerous networking opportunities. This year the YJA Convention was organized by YJA Association in Rosemont, Chicago, IL from July 5th to 8th, 2018. More than 800 Kids and Young Adults participated in the convention from all over the nation. YJA also invited 128 Speakers from all over the world including Saman Shrutpragyaji, who gave one talk and conducted two Yoga sessions. The topic of his talk was ' Five Life lessons.' which are: Live with Responsibility, Live with discipline, Live with Positive attitude, Live with Gratitude and Live with Spirituality. In addition, Nikita Mitchell was the keynote speaker at this convention. She talked about three things - One - everyone has rights to raise their voice, in a truthful and humble way, Two - wherever you go, go with a community, Three - Try to help at least one person and make there life better.

Lots of youth could not join this beautiful convention due to limited availability. YJA Co-Chair Chintav, Dharmi, Jinen and Siddharth have done an extraordinary job at effectively carrying out their responsibilities and organizing such a wonderful convention. There were also more than 200 volunteers without whom the execution of the convention would not have been possible. Overall the convention was extremely successful. At every YJA convention, the standards are raised even higher than before. It was an excellent opportunity for young Jains, and they truly enjoyed the experience.





## Concept of Soul

( Extract from Saman Shrutpragya ji's new book - Jain Dharma (Reflections on the original Teachings and Practices of Mahavir Swami )

The Jain idea of the soul (atma) is premised on the view that it is neither born nor dies. It is understood to be an uncreated, eternal entity which animates the life of all living creatures. Human beings, therefore, do not stand in an exclusive position in this regard, as every single creature, both great and small, including insects and even microscopic organisms, are held to possess a soul; and the same view is expressed in relation to trees and plants as well as each and every manifestation of life (jiva). In this theory of the soul, different living entities, in fact, are held to have different degrees of sense capacity, from the lowest life forms, possessing a single sense, to the most complex creatures, which have a total of five separate senses...

Now, consciousness is the key characteristic of the soul; thus, wherever a nervous system is found within the body and to all the parts of the body it extends, those very regions in Jain philosophy are held to be the essential seat of consciousness. Or, put yet another way, one can say simply that bodily sensation involves consciousness, and this itself indicates the presence of the soul. Indeed, where there is consciousness there, too, is the sensory body; and where there is the body there also the soul is found. Consciousness can be trained and developed, of course, and it is this which enables the soul or atma to pass from lower forms of life to higher ones. If consciousness, therefore, takes a spiritual route and is thus trained appropriately so as to progress in that direction, the soul increasingly becomes free from the coverings of impurity that adhere to it, and it eventually achieves self-actualization - emancipation from all temporary bodily categories that house it on its journey. However, if consciousness remains untrained, or worse, if it fails to utilize its inherent quality of awareness in accordance with its natural capacity so as to move forward on the spiritual path, it descends into lower bodily sense living entities. For this reason, if a human being who possesses five senses elects to wallow in ignorance, he or she may be born in the next life merely as a one-sensed living entity.

Inherently, every soul is pure, having no colour, weight, or solid form whatsoever. Designations such as caste, gender and religion are completely alien to it. It is not Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, or Muslim, and has no cultural, ethnic or national identity. Atma, then, is not Indian, American, European, or Chinese, and it is entirely separate from all manifold varieties of temporary, ever-changing categories which define the ordinary stuff of the phenomenal world. Nonetheless, because the soul on its journey towards self-realization inhabits a body, a living entity which performs both good and bad actions, atma gets occluded by multiple layers of karma, just as the sun becomes hidden when it is obscured by clouds. To peel off these layers of karma, according to Jain thought, often takes numerous life times. But a crucial consideration in all of this for Jains is how to know the soul or the self. Essentially, two approaches to achieve this can be undertaken. Atma can come to be known by negotiating a path from the inside to the outside, which is the first and most effective way; or it can be done from the outside to the inside, a second, alternative route, but one that takes significantly longer. With the first of these approaches, the key practices engaged are meditation and introspection, which remove the impure coverings of the soul from within. Working from the outside to the inside, on the other hand, involves carrying out various types of penance or austerity (tapa), such as fasting, and observing self-control in terms of bodily appetite, as well as training the body to withstand or tolerate pain arising, for example, from the environment, such as temperatures of extreme heat and cold. Humbling oneself continually through the confession of faults would also be another instance of the practice of tapa. Mahavira, of course, is well known to have engaged both approaches to gain knowledge of the soul, although, as indicated, he gave greatest emphasis to meditation and introspection.

The question may arise, however, as to why it is considered critical for one to gain knowledge of the soul. The need to know the soul in Jainism is viewed as being the ultimate purpose of all spiritual life. The reason for this is that such knowledge brings infinite joy; and when this is experienced pain and suffering automatically come to an end. Knowing the soul, therefore, serves two key purposes simultaneously: it brings infinite joy or bliss (ananda) and results in the cessation of all forms of suffering (dukha).

Without knowing the soul no one can experience true happiness. This is because material things cannot lead to ultimate bliss. They are merely temporary and because of this are never fully satisfying. Pursuing material interest is, in fact, a misguided attempt to escape or run away from the path leading to knowledge of the soul, since it creates only more trouble and misery in the end. Chasing after the stuff of the material world, one can say, is a type of profound ignorance; for, although it may bring some transitory comfort, it is never truly fulfilling. Indeed, when it is allowed to go unchecked desire itself tends to increase, ever-expanding rather than decreasing thirst for the stuff of this world and never resulting in genuine happiness. Since desire, if one endeavors to respond to its demands, only expands further it inevitably increases suffering. It becomes a vicious circle without possibility of cessation. However, when a person knows the soul fully and completely, he or she becomes free from all difficulties of life, and such a person is no longer subject to the tortuous cycle of birth and death. Nothing, then, gives rise to irritation or pain any longer. Indeed, the natural state of the soul is joy itself, which is realizable only by means of self- knowledge. To know oneself, to know one's own soul, in other words, therefore, is the key to all this. Moreover, when one truly knows one's self one comes to realize deeply that all other living beings equally possess a soul. From the perspective of Jain tradition, this, it should be emphasized, is also an important quality or aspect of what is meant by soul knowledge. For knowledge of one's own soul brings awareness of the existence of the souls of others too, resulting in compassion for them. Hence, not wanting to hurt or harm them and continually observing non-violence (ahimsa) in relation to others, as well as working for the welfare of all, is part of the field or expanse of one's own knowledge of atma as well as a way by which that knowledge comes to be recognized and expressed.

# Jain Dharma

Reflections on the Original Teachings  
and Practices of Mahavir Swami



Saman Shrutpragya  
Dr. Graham Dwyer