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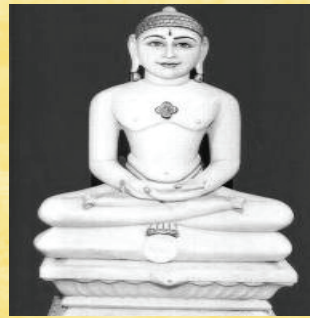
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SADHARMIK VATSALYA

All those who meditate on and remember the Navkar Mantra; and who have devotion and reverence for Shraman Bhagwan Mahavir, gather at a place and dine together and feed one another. This celebration is called Sadharmik Vatsalya. On this day, worship of the Lord and other devotional activities are organized. These community dinners are controlled by the code of Jain customs and practices. It is called **Swami Vatsalya** or Navkarshi in the spoken language.

Apart from this, other religious activities such as worship and undertaking of spiritual activities are



done or arranged. Of course, the responsibility of organizing activities during all festivals is undertaken by pure minded and devout Shravaks. The Sadhus pro-

vide only the necessary guidance for these activities.

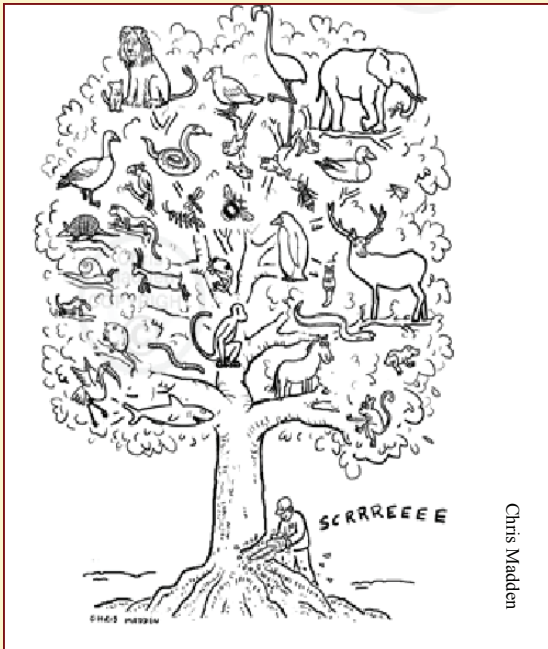
In all the Jain festivals, prayers are offered for the peace, felicity and prosperity (spiritual) of oneself, of society, nation and the whole universe. The following activities are given special importance: giving charity to the poor and the needy, rendering help, giving fodder and water to animals, giving grain to birds, giving free medicines to the sick and the disabled patients because in the Jain Dharma, benevolence is given the first place.

Whatever you wish for yourself, wish the same for others."

Pathshala News

Pathshala and language classes are in full swing. We have approximately 160 registered students. The Pathshala open house was on September 20, 2009 and we appreciate lots of parents attending with some good suggestions. If you are not able to attend and have suggestions or comments, please contact **Mr. Dhanesh Shah at dbshah@hotmail.com**.

New Pathshala backpack were distributed. Please contact your kids Pathshala teacher if you were not able to pick up the backpack.



The Tree of Life being felled by human activity

The global ecological crisis cannot be solved until spiritual relationship is established between humanity as the whole and its natural environment. Jainism has been staunch protector of nature since inception of the Jain faith. The religion of nature, Jainism paves the way to understanding nature's utility and the essential nature of plants, worms, animals, and all sorts of creatures that have their own importance for maintaining ecological balance. Jainism therefore says that the function of souls is to help one another (Parasparopagraho Jivanam-Tattvarthasutra, 5.21).

The plant, animal, and human populations are merely part of the landscape. For Jainism, the landscape is itself lives and breaths and merits protection.

(Source: www.jainworld.com)

HISTORY OF YOGA By Nidhi Turakhia

The yoga we know today was developed as a part of the tantric civilization which existed in India and all parts of the world more than ten thousand years ago. In archaeological excavations made in the Indus valley at Harappa and Mohenjodaro, now in modern Pakistan, many statues have been found depicting deities resembling Lord Shiva and Parvati performing various asanas and practicing meditation. These ruins were once the dwelling place of people who lived in the pre-Vedic age before the Aryan civilization started to flourish in the Indus sub-continent. According to mythical tradition, Shiva is said to be the founder of yoga and Parvati, his first disciple and wife.

Lord Shiva is widely considered to be the symbol or embodiment of supreme consciousness. Parvati represents supreme knowledge, will and action, and is responsible for all creation. This force or energy is also known as kundalini Shakti, the cosmic force which lies dormant in all beings. Parvati is regarded as the mother of the whole universe. The individual soul is embodied and bound to the world of name and form, and also liberated from the bondage of the world and united with supreme consciousness through her grace. Out of love and compassion for her children, she imparted her secret knowledge of liberation in the form of tantra, the techniques of yoga have their source in tantra and the two cannot be separated, just as consciousness, Shiva, cannot be separate from energy, Shakti.

Tantra is a combination of two words, tanoti and trayati, which means 'expansion' and 'liberation' respectively. Therefore, it is the science of expanding the consciousness and liberating the energy. Tantra is the way to attain freedom from the bondage of the world while still living in it. The first step in tantra is to know the limitations and capacities of the body and mind. Next it prescribes techniques for the expansion of consciousness and liberation of energy whereby individual limitations are transcended and a higher reality experienced.

Yoga arose at the beginning of human civilization when man first realized his spiritual potential and began to evolve techniques to develop it. The yogic science was slowly evolved and developed by ancient sages all over the world. The essence of yoga has often been shrouded in or explained by different symbols, analogies and languages. Some traditions believe that yoga was a divine gift revealed to the ancient sages so that mankind could have the opportunity to realize its divine nature.

Right faith is the root of the great tree of liberation

HISTORY OF YOGA (Contd.)

By Nidhi Turakhia

In ancient times, yoga techniques were kept secret and were never written down or exposed to public view. They were passed on from teacher or guru to disciple by word of mouth. In this way there was a clear understanding of their meaning and aim. Through personal experience, realized yogis and sages were able to guide sincere aspirants along the correct path removing any confusion, misunderstanding and excessive intellectual contemplation.

The first books to refer to yoga were the ancient tantras and later the Vedas which were written about the time the Indus valley culture was flourishing. Although they do not give specific practices, they allude to yoga symbolically. In fact, the verses of the Vedas were heard by the rishis, seers, in states of deep, yogic meditation or Samadhi, and are regarded as revealed scriptures. It is, however, in the Upanishads that yoga begins to take a more definable shape. These scriptures collectively form Vedanta, the culmination of the Vedas, and are said to contain the essence of the Vedas.

Sage Patanjali's treaties on raja yoga, the yoga sutras, codified the first definitive, unified and comprehensive system of yoga. Often called the eight-fold path, it is comprised of Yama, self-restraints, Niyama, self-observances, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, and disassociation of consciousness from the outside environment, Dharana, concentration, Dhyana, meditation and Samadhi, identification with pure consciousness.

All yoga as practiced today is based on the yoga sutras, a collection of aphorisms offered more than 2000 years ago by the Indian sage, Patanjali and still regarded as authoritative.

In the 6th century BC, Lord Buddha's influence brought the ideals of meditation, ethics and morality to the fore and the preparatory practices of yoga were ignored. However, Indian thinkers soon realized the limitations of this view. The yogi Matsyendranath taught that before taking to the practices of meditation, the body and its elements need purifying. He founded the Nath cult and the yogic pose matsyendrasana was named after him. His chief disciple, Gorakhnath, wrote books on hatha yoga.

Indian tradition previously required that original texts be written in Sanskrit. In some cases they clothed their writings in symbolism so that only those prepared and ready for a teaching would be able to understand it. One of the most outstanding authorities on hatha yoga, Swami Swtmarama wrote the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, or 'Light on Yoga' in Sanskrit, collating all extant material on the subject. In doing so, he reduced the emphasis on Yama and Niyama from hatha yoga, thereby eliminating a great obstacle experienced by many beginners. In the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Swatmarama starts with the body and only later, when the mind has become more stable and balanced, are self control and self-discipline introduced.

The relevance of Yoga today

Today, as we prepare to enter the 21st century, a spiritual heritage is being reclaimed of which yoga is very much a part. While yoga's central theme remains the highest goal of the spiritual path, yogic practices give direct and tangible benefits to everyone regardless of their spiritual aims.

Physical and mental therapy is one of yoga's most important achievements. What makes it so powerful and effective is the fact that it works on the holistic principles of harmony and unification. Yoga has succeeded as an alternative form of therapy in diseases such as asthma, diabetes, blood pressure arthritis, digestive disorders and other ailments of a chronic and constitutional nature where modern science has not. Research into the effects of Yogic practices on HIV is currently underway with promising results. According to medical scientists, yoga therapy is successful because of the balance created in the nervous and endocrine systems which directly influences all the other systems and organs of the body.

For most people, however, yoga is simply a means of maintaining health and well-being in an increasingly stressful society. Asanas remove the physical discomfort accumulated during a day at the office sitting in a chair, hunched over a desk. Relaxation techniques help maximize the effectiveness of ever-diminishing time off. In an age of mobile phones, beepers and twenty-four hour shopping, yogic practices make great personal and even business sense.

Beyond the needs of individuals, the underlying principles of yoga provide a real tool to combat social malaise. At a time when the world seems to be at a loss, rejecting past values without being able to establish new ones, yoga provides a means for people to find their own way of connecting with their true selves. Through this connection with their real selves it is possible for people to manifest harmony in the current age, and for compassion to emerge where hitherto there has been none.

In this respect, Yoga is far from simply being physical exercises; rather, it is an aid to establishing a new way of life which embraces both inner and outer realities. However, this way of life is an experience which cannot be understood intellectually and will only become living knowledge through practice and experience.

The Power of Temperament by Shri Shrutpragya Swamiji

Individual's have an inner desire that they get respect and honor and that people should look upon them and give them importance. It is every man's desire that everyone should like him and he should become popular. But just by desiring, this cannot become a reality. For that, one needs to achieve the capability and the fitness and should become worthy of it. For this, the most important thing is ones temperament and behavior towards others.

Some people have the habit of starting to talk about their own problems anytime they meet somebody. They start a never-ending talk about their home, their money, their feelings, relations etc. They don't realize that the other person may also want to say something. Even if they realize, there is so much stuffed up internally that they have to take it out first. People start staying away from such individuals and run away as soon as they see them. From this, one should never talk about personal successes or capabilities. Instead, learn to listen to others and learn to be a good listener.

When someone comes to meet you, they probably have come to say something to you. Therefore become receptive, serious, remain silent (maun) and listen to what they say not just with your ears but with your mind too. In doing this, one respects him and in turn increases ones own dignity. One popular person was asked, what was the reason of his popularity? He replied, "Whenever someone comes to meet me or I go amongst people, I never talk about myself. Instead, I talk of what would be of use to them and would be beneficial to them. I give importance to people who come to meet me and not myself.

Therefore listen to others, but keep in mind to avoid conversations that are wasteful, slanderous or gossiping.

Anger spoils good relations, pride destroys humility, deceit is detrimental to friendship,

WE ARE ON THE WEB!
WWW.JAIN-HOUSTON.ORG



JAIN SOCIETY OF HOUSTON

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Houston, TX 77063

Phone : 713-789-2338

E-Mail : ecjsh@jain-houston.org

Regular Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday : 7:30AM to 11:30AM
3:30PM to 7:30PM

Saturday : 8:00AM to 6:00PM

Sunday : 8:00AM to 6:00PM

(Temple hours are subject to change)

Jain Society of Houston is non-profit religious organization in Compliance with Section 501(C)(3) of IRS.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Jain flag have five different colors. These five colors represents Panch-Parmeshthi (the five most respectable and ideal categories of persons in Jainism). The red color represents for Siddha, Yellow for Acharya, White for Arihanta, Green for Upadhyaya and Blue for Sadhu. There is a symbol of swastik in the central strip. Swastika represents the four states of existence of life. The three dots above the swastika represent the three jewels of Jainism: Samyak Darshan (Right Faith), Samyak Jnan (Right Knowledge), and Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct). Respect for Jain flag is respect for Panch-Parmeshthi.

To be Anekāntvādi: 1) Do not insist on your own approach, 2) Accept partial truth as expressed by others, 3) Accept the truth even if it is expressed by adversaries, 4) Accept that the truth can consist of seemingly opposing views, 5) Develop a strong urge to seek truth, 6) Believe in possibilities and 7) Exercise equanimity