



The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

Vanik Voice

December, 2016

Chairman

Mr Manharlal Mehta

General Secretary

Mahesh Gandhi

Regional Vice Chairmen

(North Region)

Mr. Kiran N..Mehta

(Midlands)

Mr. Rajnikant V. Shah

(Greater London)

Mr. Vijay H. Sheth

(South Region)

Mr. Harkishan D. Mehta

Treasurer

Mr. Jaykumar T. Shah

Deputy General Secretary

Mr. Bharat H. Mehta

Executive Committee

Members

Mrs. Asha Mehta

Mr. Shashibhai Shah

Mr. Virendrabhai Bakhai

Mr. Kirit Batavia

Mr. Ramesh Shah

Mrs. Saroj Varia

e- News Letter :

VANIK VOICE Editor

Mr Anil Parekh

Hon. Auditors

P.S.J. Alexander & Co

EDITOR'S REPORT

We had a summer full of activities and is very heartening to note that the festive season passed with various activities during Paryushan and Diwali celebrations.

NCVA had organised another speed dating program last month which was enjoyed by all who attended with excellent feedback received.

NCVA also organized a health seminar at Navnat with emphasis on Heart disease and this was well received with good attendance. Please see report in this edition.

Our Spiritual care programme is also progressing well with more than 40 volunteers who have shown interest. We now seek commitment of at least few hours weekly on regular basis to organize the chaplaincy work. Consideration is being given for new initiatives to send volunteers to visit patients at home, hospice, care homes and hospital.

Our best wishes to Jain Sangh East London and Essex who have completed purchase of new building and planning to build a Derasar.

NCVA wish all members a happy Christmas and healthy and prosperous new year.

Anil Parekh

Inside this issue

Editors Message - 1

Tapasya-2

68 fasts by bal Tapaswi
Aradhna -4

Ratnakanika-7

Tribute to Ramnikbhai
Mehta-8

Health Seminar
Protecting Heart
Function & Heart Health -
9

Health, Eating and Weight
Management-13

Website: www.ncva.co.uk

Newsletter: www.ncva.co.uk/newsletter

Affiliated Associations

Aden Vanik Association of UK, Digamber Jain Visa Mevada Association of UK, East London Bhagini, Jain Association of UK, Jain Network, Jain Samaj Europe, Jain Samaj Manchester, Jain Sangh Birmingham, Mahavir Foundation, Nari Vrund, Navnat Vanik Association of UK, Navnat Vanik Bhagini Samaj, Navnat Bridge Club, Navnat Vadil Mandal, Navnat Youth Association, Oshwal Association of UK, Shree Jain Sangh East London & Essex, Shree Jain Sangh East London and Essex Bhagini, Shree Navyug Jain Pragati Mandal, Shree Sidhpuria Vanik Samaj, Shrimali Soni Mandal London, Shree Sorathia Vanik Association (UK), South East Jain Association, Vanik Association UK, Vanik Samaj Coventry, Vanik Samaj Leicester, Vanik Samaj of UK Brighton, Vanik Samaj Southampton, Veerayatan UK, Young Jains

Tapas or Tapasya

The word tapasya is often translated as austerity, but etymologically, tapas means a process of purification by which you make yourself more seasoned, more mature. The body of man is very weak, and his mind is weaker. When you have a weak mind and body, how can you complete your pilgrimage of life? When your motorcar is not working properly, then it has to be sent to a mechanic. In exactly the same way, the body and mind have to be overhauled, and that process is known as tapas.

Many people think that tapas refers to the austere life of a puritan. Well, it is not a matter of logic or dispute. When your house is collapsing, either you repair it or move out. Now, this body is composed of different organs, processes and laws. If your digestive system is weak, can eating less be considered an austerity? No. In the same way, if you are indulging in sensual life and have too many attachments that are affecting the mind, heart and body, are you going to add more enjoyments, more attachments, or minimize them? When the body is sick, you have to maintain certain restrictions, prohibitions and abstentions. That is not austerity; it is a method of treatment, whereby you can purify and free yourself of the dirt, patterns and complexes that cause pain and suffering.

Types of tapasya

Tapasya is threefold. The highest form is **sattvic tapas**, which is intended to purify the mind and body for self-realization. Sattvic tapas has a spiritual purpose, and if you want to follow it, then you have to practice meditation. In meditation, when your mind is giving you a lot of trouble, then you must practice pranayama. The breath and mind are inter-connected, therefore, pranayama is a very powerful method of controlling the mind.

Pranayama is an important form of tapasya. When you practice pranayama, yogic heat is created. This heat or fire of yoga helps in the awakening of kundalini. When the mind is possessed by the powerful force of kundalini, it becomes totally stable. This is sattvic tapas, a process whereby you generate physical heat in your body. This heat is vitally important for meditation, but if you practice pranayama without preparation, it will not fulfill this purpose.

Of course, everybody can practice pranayama, but for awakening kundalini you need to make a lot of preparations. You will have to practice asanas, bandhas and mudras, otherwise you will have difficulty in pranayama. The heat which is generated cannot be directed to the proper centres. Therefore, jalandhara bandha, uddiyana bandha and moola bandha are practiced to lock the prana from all sides. In order to practice these bandhas correctly, the practice of asanas is very important. Therefore, we can say that all of hatha yoga is sattvic tapas.

Rajasic tapas is practiced by continuous fasting and exposing the body to the elements of heat and cold in order to dissipate desires and attachments. This type of tapas usually causes repression, therefore, it requires understanding. Most people who practice this type of tapas, which can rightfully be called austerity, do not have a clear purpose and often do not

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

even know why they are fasting. Therefore, the benefits are minimal.

The third type of austerity is called **tamasic tapas**. This is practiced by forcing the body, which thereby affects the mind. For example, in India there are people called fakirs who place their body in a certain position and remain like that without moving for years on end.

Conclusively, those people who want to realize higher consciousness should practice sattvic tapas, but at the same time, it is important to avoid excesses in life. Excess makes the senses weak, when you should be maintaining a balance. Many people completely dedicate themselves to sensual life, thinking that even in a luxurious situation, self-realization can be obtained. Those who live in luxury weaken their bodies and minds because they are dependent upon sense objects.

Through tapasya, you are trying to set in motion a process of metabolism, by which all the habits that create weakness and obstruct the awakening of will power, can be eliminated. You must know what your necessities are. Your life has to be made simpler. You have to make a choice, that's all. You can't have your cake and eat it too. Either you want samadhi or you want sensual life. To some extent you may be able to continue, but there comes a moment when you will have to make a departure from sensual life.

That is why tantra is practised. Its purpose is not to indulge in drinking, meat eating or sexual life, but to transcend your addictions. This is an important aspect of spiritual life. Mind is a very good advocate; it always argues for the senses. But in fact, even if you let your senses run riot, that doesn't bring you happiness. So it doesn't matter what the mind says. Go on with your tapas.

Swami Satyananda Sararwati.



મૃત્યુ ભયજનક છે એવું નથી, બલકે મારી નજર
સામે જે કંઈ દેખાય છે એ મારે છોડી દેવાનું છે એને
કારણે મૃત્યુ ભયજનક લાગે છે



68 Fasts by bal Tapaswi Aradhna

Hyderabad, Oct 8: A Class 8 student in Hyderabad died recently after fasting for 68 days as per Jain rituals during the holy period of 'Chaumasa'.

13-year-old Aradhana was admitted to the hospital just two days after completing her fast where she died of cardiac arrest, the family said.

At least 600 people attended Aradhana's funeral hailing her as a 'bal tapasvi'. The funeral procession was called a 'shobha yatra' - a mark of celebration.

Aradhana's family runs a jewellery business and has a shop in the Pot Bazaar area of Secunderabad. Questions are being raised why they allowed her to give up school and sit on a fast.

"It has been a practice for people to undertake severe penance when they give up even food and water. They are glorified, lauded and honoured at community meetings by the religious elders. They are also showered with gifts. But in this case it was a minor and that is my objection," said Lata Jain, a member of the community. "This is suicide if not murder," she added.

Sources close to the family said Aradhana had earlier undertaken a similar fast for 41 days and survived.

"We did not hide anything. Everyone knew Aradhana was fasting. They came and took selfies with her. Now some people are pointing fingers at us for allowing her to fast for 68 days," Aradhana's grandfather, Manekchand Samdhariya said.

Pictures show a weak Aradhana sitting dressed up like a bride, surrounded by several others, on a grand chariot.

Newspaper advertisements issued after the girl completed the nearly 10-week-long fast show Telangana minister from Secunderabad area, Padma Rao Goud, was the chief guest at

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

grand event for 'Paarana'- the completion of fast. Zaheerabad lawmaker BB Patil is also seen in the photos of the event.

According to Jain religious leaders, Santhara is usually meant for elderly people, who have lived their life and want renunciation.

"There should never be any element of force or coercion in tapasya or fasting. This was a tragedy and we must learn our lessons from it," Maharasa Ravinder Muniji of Kachiguda Sthanak said.

Child rights activist Shanta Sinha says a police case must be registered and the child rights commission must take action.

"A minor is not deemed to have a voluntary will to take decisions that can endanger their life. Religious leaders also need to re-look at what should be allowed and what is not," she said.

----Report as it appeared in various Indian and international media-----

This report is throwing a very important light on some of the misunderstandings, and misconceptions prevailing in our community. We have to really be very clear in our minds about the purpose and benefits or otherwise of a very important aspect of Tapasya as prescribed in the Jain Religion.

Any Tapasya of any length or type by itself cannot lead to Moksh or happiness. It can only give that person an opportunity to introspect and quieten his mind by control of desires to find his or her true self. Tapasya is only a karma with its own fruit (punya) that can still cause further rebirths and sufferings. The severity, type and duration of tapasya is less important than the efforts that should be put in deriving spiritual uplifting during tapasya. Tapasya can be of enormous help in focusing on the goal and progressing on the spiritual path.

In Jainism, there are twelve different types of tapasya. Six are outward focused and six are inward focused. Unless the outward focus is synchronised with inner tapasya no lasting benefit is obtained. Moreover, the purpose of tapasya are of three types: dukh garbhit (for the relief of suffering), moh garbhit (to get worldly rewards) or gyan garbhit (to come out of ignorance).

A parent's role is to guide the children in differentiating between rights and wrongs and importance of our scriptures, customs and traditions. The parents should not coerce or impose their beliefs and values and understanding on their children. Parents have the responsibility for the correct upbringing of the children until they are themselves able to make their own decisions based on their own findings to pursue their own choices in life. Any indoctrination on the wrong beliefs and instructions of others can cause enormous harms to oneself and one's loved ones.

The law of Karma is very clear that only the actor of Karma can reap the fruit of his/her karma and no one else can benefit or suffer karma performed by someone else in any way. If a Jain

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

Muni suggests that the father's business will benefit from the fasting of the daughter, it is not only against the law of Karma but the whole Jain doctrine whose purpose is to disengage from worldly attachments.

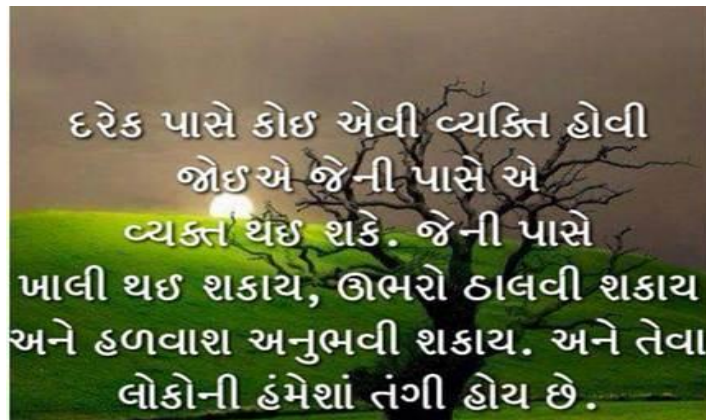
There is absolutely no benefit or point in playing the number game and trying to break the Guinness book of records by doing 68, 100 or 200 fasts at whatever age. Actually, from spiritual viewpoint, this can be counter productive and take you further away from Moksh because it will only strengthen the Ego and take you away from self-realization. If there is a desire for moksh when doing a tapasya moksh will not be attained, because desire and Moksh are opposite of each other.

It is said that when we are appreciating the tapasya of a tapaswi (anumodna) we also benefit from the tapasya. This concept should be understood properly, our appreciation should be for the spiritual progress of the tapaswi and not his/her ability to starve. Our benefit really comes from the changes that appreciation brings into our selves and changes our focus and vision and purpose of human life and not in coercing or encouraging others to fast.

Like in all religion, there are many Sadhus and gurus who have lost their way and are engaged in expanding the numbers of followers, gaining publicity by preaching severe fasting and establishing their own cult and organisations. If we blindly follow such practices, we will have to suffer the consequences of our own karmas. One should be careful not to follow anything without question. After all, vedic faiths give the responsibility and authority to question. Only by questioning one can progress in their chosen paths. Jain munis and acharyas have to ask themselves if they are conducting themselves rightly when allowing their disciples to extreme tapasya irrespective of age, understanding and physical abilities for a prolonged period.

Over the ages, women, children and innocent people have been subjected to many atrocities and exploitation in all manners with the use of religion, traditions, rules and laws to impose the power of few over the masses. We have to ensure that we do not fall victims or participate unknowingly in such practices.

Anil Parekh



રત્નકથિકાઓ

- ફેશન અને વ્યસન, ઘૂંટાવે નરકના લેસન.
- બધે Fit થશો તો ક્યાંય Fight નહિ થાય.
- બીજાઓએ કરેલા સત્કાર્યો તરફ બાળકોનું ધ્યાન દોરવાથી તેમના સંસ્કાર દ્રઢ બને છે.
- માણસ કરતાં ફેશન વધારે કપડાં ફાડી નાખે છે!
- ક્રોધ ખરાબ છે ક્રારણ કે પહેલા પરેશાની, પછી પરસેવો અને અંતે પસ્તાવો.
- જીવનનો Fuse ઉડે તે પહેલાં સાચો Use કરી લેજો.
- અન્નનો અપયો તેનું નામ ઝાડા, શબ્દનો અપયો તેનું નામ ઝઘડા.
- જે અન્યને બને ઉપયોગી, એ જ કહેવાય ખરો યોગી.
- તન શુદ્ધ કરો સ્નાનથી, પૂજા શુદ્ધ કરો જ્ઞાનથી, ધન શુદ્ધ કરો દાનથી, આત્મા શુદ્ધ કરો ધ્યાનથી.
- સુખી થવાનો રસ્તો, આવકનો વધારો નહિ પણ જરૂરિયાતોનો ઘટાડો છે.
- ક્રોધની આગ, કરે ઘરની રાખ.
- શરીરનો આધારસ્તંભ તો શ્વાસ છે, તો આત્માનો આધારસ્તંભ સદ્ગુણોની સુવાસ છે.
- જગથી વિભક્ત એનું નામ ભક્ત.
- જ્યારે આળસનો અસ્ત થાય ત્યારે પ્રગતિનો ઉદય થાય.
- આપીને જે આનંદ વધારે તે અમીર, લઈને જે લાલસા વધારે તે ગરીબ.
- જીવનનો સઘળો થાક જેને છાંયડે માણસ ખંખેરી નાખે તેનું નામ ધર્મવૃક્ષ
- હારને જીતમાં પલટાવવાની કળા તેનું નામ હિંમત.
- ભાષા એ વશીકરણ મંત્ર છે - જો એમાં મીઠાશ હોય તો.
- 'કમ ખાઓ' શરીર સ્વસ્થ, 'ગમ ખાઓ' જીવન સ્વસ્થ, 'નમ જાઓ' પરિવાસ સ્વસ્થ.
- જ્ઞાનને ક્રિયામાં મૂકવું તેનું નામ ચારિત્ર.



SAD DEMISE OF SHRI RAMNIKBHAI MEHTA



Our past treasurer Shri Ramniklal Ravjibhai Mehta passed away on 31 October 2016 at the age of 91.

In early 1980s, he joined The National Council of Vanik Associations(UK) {NCVA} as a representative of Navnat Vanik Association of the UK. He was elected as a member of NCVA's Executive committee in 1983 and then as the treasurer in 1985. He remained as the treasurer till he retired in 2007.

He also co-ordinated NCVA's matrimonial Register for many years.

NCVA honoured him in 2009 for his service to the Vanik Community in East Africa, and in the UK.

We all at NCVA pray for the peace to his soul.

Om Shanit !

NCVA

श्री पुष्पदंत स्वामी का

प्रश्न : मोक्ष का कारण समभाव है । क्या समभाव करें तो मोक्ष होगा न ?

पू. गुरुदेवश्री : समभाव अर्थात् वीतरागता । यह वीतरागता द्रव्य को पकड़े तब हो । द्रव्य के आश्रय बिना वीतरागता नहीं होती । समभाव का कारण वितरागस्वभावी भगवान आत्मा है, उसका आश्रय करने और परका आश्रय छोड़ने से मोक्ष होता है । यह अति संक्षिप्त कथन है ।

HEALTH SEMINAR

Report by Akash Gandhi

Protecting Heart Function & Heart Health by Dr Ameet Bakhai

On 30th October, members of the public were invited to listen to learn about how they can protect their own heart and keep it healthy.



Over 250 people attended the event organised by the National Council of Vanik Associations (NCVA) and NVA at the Navnat Centre in Hayes, in collaboration with Dr. Ameet Bakhai.

Following an introduction to the day by Akash Gandhi, Dr. Bakhai, Consultant Cardiologist at the Royal Free hospital, delivered a presentation on how the heart functions. He then demonstrated how it can be assessed with a live echocardiogram, angiography and videos of abnormal hearts.



The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

Over the day, Dr. Bakhai spoke on key issues about how individuals at risk of developing heart conditions must take matters into their own hands, to help prevent heart attacks, valve disease and “heart failure”.

Dr. Bakhai added: “It is our current lifestyle of spending hours in front of the TV every day, lack of sleep and low physical activity that is driving the increase in the number of cardiovascular diseases within our population.”



Four patients were then invited to share their own experiences of procedures and conditions such as coronary bypass, atrial fibrillation and valve disease.

Members of the audience were then provided with an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have for Dr. Bakhai.

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

Mrs Alpa Kothari introduced the work undertaken by NCVA as part of the Jain spiritual care. This session also included new initiatives being pursued and the chaplaincy programme within hospitals and how the community could help.



Mr Manhar Mehta and Mr Dhiru Galani closed the session by thanking all the volunteers and provided a gift to Dr Bakhai and to those members who shared their experience with the audience. Following this, all attendees were treated to a healthy lunch.

The event was attended by Akash Pattni, a 5th year medical student at UCL in London, who said that he attended because despite training to become a doctor, so little is taught about heart prevention.

He said: “I find it fascinating that despite spending hours at medical school learning about the heart, what can go wrong and how to treat it, so little is taught about what steps we can take to prevent them in the first place.”

“I hope to carry forward these prevention strategies into my clinical life as a doctor, which I hope will go some way in protecting the heart function and health of the patients that I encounter.”

In summary the health seminar was a great success with all those who attended provided excellent feedback and wanting more seminars of the same kind.

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

NCVA would like to thank Dr. Bakhai, all of the co-ordinators and volunteers who helped to organise this event, without which this would not have been a success.



Healthy Eating and Weight Management

Written by Dhaval Bakhai

When was the last time you thought about your own health and gave it the same level of time as you do in catching up with friends, families or watching TV? After our initial health awareness day in May where Jenny attended from Weight Management Sussex and offered a series of classes led by Katie to inform, educate and exercise all the participants.

Over the years we have evolved into a thriving and respected community that contributes in varying professions but the constant we have is our traditional food, taste and ingredients that have stood the test of time. However, is it now time for the change and evolution to ensure the safeguard of not just our traditional food but our health as well.

From 10th September began a series of classes covering several topics including cholesterol impact, fibre intake, glycemic index, sugar and saturated fat content levels, portion sizes as well levels of exercise.

Cholesterol is a common topic of discussion within our community but are we clear on it's impact, importance and what can be done? We were advised that cholesterol can build up within our arteries and is like a white waxy substance. The build up can lead to difficulties in blood flowing easily throughout the body and hence it's intrinsic link to heart disease and deeper health problems. There is good news though, it is never too late to change and even reverse the impact of cholesterol. We have learnt that increasing our fibre intake, lowering our saturate fats and exercising can help increase our 'good cholesterol'. A good starting point, however, is to gain a cholesterol test from your GP Surgery MOT Nurse. If necessary, she will advise you to consult your doctor as your cholesterol may need to be medicated / monitored by your GP.

Fibre is generally low in our vegetarian diets as traditionally most of us use white flour or white bread or even rinse and reduce the quality of fibre we can consume through pulses and lentils. During the classes, we learnt the importance of fibre and how it impacts the digestive system but also how switching to more wholemeal 'brown' products such as brown or granary bread or wholemeal flour can aid our diet whilst retaining our traditional dishes. For most of us this will not be an easy change and our natural tendency is to defer or delay it, but if we persist and overlook the most common rationale of 'it doesn't taste the same' it really will be beneficial for us all. The key to remember is that after a period of time our taste can change and we adapt to a healthier diet quicker than we think.

As we got further into the classes and built up some fundamental knowledge of sugar, we were introduced to the Glycemic index. This allowed us to really appreciate how and why we crave certain items like chocolate for a quick sugar hit but it also helped us identify ways of reducing and controlling what we consume combined with being more mindful of what we eat. The glycemic index in summary highlighted how the food we consume is converted into

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

energy and the need to ensure we mix food and portions to allow for energy release throughout the day to avoid peaks and troughs. If, we can manage the peaks and troughs better than not only will we have energy throughout the day but also minimise items like chocolate which give rise to peaks and get converted into fat as the body stores sugar for the troughs that we may not experience and in turn increasing our weight and leading to an unhealthy outcome.

Two key components we covered throughout the series of classes was portion size and the amount of exercise we undertake. We were taught about the importance of a balanced dish with half of our meal comprising of vegetables with tips specifically for our community to improve our intake of fibre, vitamins, good cholesterol amongst other vital nutrients. A simple tip we discussed and enacted within our local group was to reduce one chapati but replace that with a higher portion of lentils or pulses that we eat together to give a better mix to our platter. This was then further enhanced by looking at options to mix white and brown flour before switching to brown flour entirely to help with higher fibre content, lower saturate fats, slower digestion and therefore gradual release of energy allowing us to be fuller for longer too.

Throughout the classes we were also fortunate to have had a great trainer, in the form of Katie Woodgate, who ensured we didn't just learn the theory but also exercised. Katie showed us various exercising regimes including sitting down exercises to allow everyone to participate and use different methods to increase heart rate, improve strength and exercise core muscle groups. A simple tip and goal that everyone could target was 100 steps per minute when going for a walk and doing 30 minutes of exercise 5 days a week but this could be broken down into a short 10 minute walk in the morning, afternoon and evening.

As the weeks went by and people started new diets, changed habits and adapted to new tastes we all started to notice reductions in our weight quicker than most anticipated but by being armed with our new found knowledge it allowed us to improve not just our health but also the ones around us as the knowledge started to become a foundation to build up from and continue to adapt, adopt and enact the new routines we had set up for ourselves.



In summary, the classes have been fantastic in educating us all in the simple things that we can take control of and change within our lifestyles as well as providing us with a great

The National Council of Vanik Associations (UK)

Live and help to live

foundation to ensure we keep up the journey of a healthy diet and routine. We would all like to take this opportunity to formally thank Katie for her immense energy, insightful discussions and great knowledge that has allowed us to embark on this journey.

(South East Jain Association)

APOLOGY

We apologize that the article in Gujarati in our last issue, on Health awareness that was held by South East Jain Association, was written by Bhavnaben Parekh and this was missed in our type setting.