



Vanik Voice

October 2014

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EDITOR'S REPORT

NCVA ACTIVITIES

A lot of activities have happened since our last issue of Vanik Voice.

Our celebrations for 35th Anniversary was the highlight with a record number of attendance. The day was packed with activities and information. A souvenir issue was published and distributed outlining the activities of the association and its participation in various projects both regionally and nationally. A full report and photos of the event is given in this issue.

Janmastmi and Paryushan were celebrated by many organisations throughout the country. There were many tapasyas in the country and the community participated extensively in the lectures, bhavnas and Pratikraman.

Micchami Dukkadam to all. If we have knowingly or unknowingly hurt any being with our actions, speech or thoughts we humbly ask forgiveness from all.

We give details of some celebrations in this issue.

A new directory of Vaniks 2014 has been published and mailed to all members by NCVA. It is important that all members check their details and keep the on line database up to date and notify any errors by visiting contact us on www.vaniks.co.uk. A lot of efforts and work has been put into preparation, publication and distribution of this directory. We thank all those who worked tirelessly to prepare the directory. A directory is only good if the data are accurate and correct. It is responsibility of all to ensure that the information is kept up to date.

We have just celebrated the Navratri festival and soon we look forward to celebrate Diwali and New year.

We wish everyone a Happy Diwali and a prosperous and healthy new year.

NCVA

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**Michchami Dukkadam - मिथ्याथाओ माडुं पाप –
May my sins be forgiven / nullified.**

Paryushan is a period of eight days for conducting austerity (self-denial of pleasures) to purify our soul and for introspection of our deeds during the year that has gone by. Samvatsari Pratikraman performed on the last day of Paryushan is a process for this introspection.

Every day, through our actions, by our speech and in our thinking we cause harm to other living beings. By becoming angry on others, deceiving our fellow humans because of our greed, and showing our superiority to satisfy our ego, we cause harm to others. Because of our hunger and thirst, for our pleasure and for satisfying our needs we destroy vegetation, disturb or kill animals, birds, insects and other creatures.

If we have no remorse for these misdeeds then the committed sins remain bounded to our soul. This will give painful fruits in our future lives i.e. lives after rebirth. On the other hand, if we feel that our behaviour to others was not appropriate and we should not have done what we did, then this feeling will reduce the intensity of sin.

A heartfelt remorse is called Pratikraman. One should do pratikraman every day. Daily pratikraman including the Samvatsari Pratikraman provide us a list of sins that we may possibly have committed and also a list of ways we may possibly have harmed other humans, animals, insects, plants etc. by our deeds, speech and thoughts.

The process of pratikraman presents us an opportunity to regret for our misdeeds and also an opportunity to seek forgiveness from those we may have harmed.

During pratikraman, by reciting the following we show our heartfelt remorse for harming other living beings and also declare our friendship with them.

Khamemi Savva-Jive,
Savve Jiva Khamantu Me,
Mitti Me Savva-Bhuesu,
Veram Majjha Na Kenai.

Meaning....

I solicit forgiveness from all living beings

All living beings please forgive me

I am friend with all living beings

I do not have any animosity towards any one

Manharlal Mehta

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Prayer: Why we pray and does it work? Is it necessary?

Definition of prayer

The word prayer or *prārthanā* (in Sanskrit) is derived from two words 'pra' and 'artha' meaning pleading fervently. In other words, it is asking God for something with intense yearning.

Prayer includes respect, love, pleading and faith. Through a prayer a devotee expresses his helplessness and endows the doership of the task to God (Ishwara). Giving the doership to God means that we acknowledge that God is helping us and getting the task done. Prayer is an important tool of spiritual practice in the generic spiritual path of Devotion.

Benefits of prayer

- **Improves spiritual practice:** Prayer impacts our spiritual practice at three levels, action, thought and attitude:
- **Action:** All actions that are preceded by prayer for spiritual benefit are performed with spiritual emotion; hence fewer errors are committed. Thus by praying, various actions in one's spiritual practice (e.g. chanting, *satsang*, *satsēvā*, etc.) occur as per the way God or **Guru** (The Guiding principle of God) would like them to happen.
- **Thought:** So long as the mind is active, thoughts will continue. They pose an obstacle to the dissolution of the mind. Useless thoughts also cause wastage of energy. Prayer is an extremely useful tool to prevent this waste. Prayer reduces worry and enhances contemplation.
- **Attitude:** A prayer done with spiritual emotion initiates the process of contemplation within a seeker, and this assists him in becoming introverted.
- **Enhances the potency of chanting the Name of God:** A seeker chants the Name of God with the aim of realising God. Only if accompanied by intense motivation for God realization and spiritual emotion with the Name repeated (chanted) be truly effective. One Saint would be so engrossed in chanting the Name of God that He would become oblivious to the world. One rarely finds someone who can chant the Name of God with such intense spiritual emotion. However, repeated prayers about being graced with quality chanting, along with chanting the Name of God, helps in generation of spiritual emotion and makes our chanting reach God.
- **Divine help in spiritual practice:** When a seeker sincerely prays to God to get a particular action/thought/attitude pertaining to his spiritual practice, done through him (the seeker), a seemingly impossible task is easily accomplished by the Guru's grace.
- **Receiving forgiveness for mistakes:** Having committed a mistake, if one makes a prayer and surrenders unto God or the Guru, then God or Guru forgives one for the mistake. However the prayer and surrender have to be commensurate in intensity with the mistake committed.
- **Reducing the ego:** While praying we plead before God; it is therefore the place where pride is abandoned and we humbly admit our need/human frailty as well as our dependence upon God. It therefore helps to reduce the ego faster. Refer to importance of prayer.

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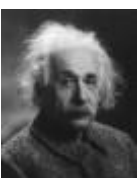
- **Protection from ghosts:** Prayer is a powerful tool that helps protect one from ghosts (demons, devils, negative energies, etc.) and creates an armour around oneself.
- **Increase in faith:** When a prayer gets answered, faith in God or the Guru increases. Faith is the only currency on our spiritual journey.

Importance of prayer

- One important criteria in determining our spiritual progress is the extent of the dissolution of our mind, intellect and ego.
- The issue that we all face from birth is that we have had our parents, teachers and friends enhance our five senses, mind and intellect. In the current world a lot of emphasis is given to things related to the five senses, mind and intellect, such as outer beauty, our salary, our circle of friends and the list goes on. For most of us, at no point are we told that the purpose of our lives is to go beyond ourselves to tap into the God within.
- So when we start spiritual practice we also have to unlearn years of conditioning that taught us to focus on our five senses, mind and intellect. Prayer is an important tool to reduce our reliance on the five senses, mind and intellect and help us unlearn years of conditioning.
- The very act of prayer implies that the person who is praying considers the power to whom one is praying to as superior to oneself. Hence by praying a person expresses his helplessness and surrenders to the higher power and pleads for help. This is a blow to the individual's ego as praying implies that one is looking for help from a higher mind and intellect than one's own. Thus by praying frequently we transcend our limited mind and intellect and access the higher Universal Mind and Intellect. Over a period of time this contributes to the dissolution of our mind and intellect. Thus, frequent and sincere prayers for spiritual growth help in the dissolution of mind, intellect and ego.

Who is really praying and to whom?

- It is generally assumed that the one who is praying is a devotee and a believer in a higher power or Almighty and is praying to that power for help, guidance or just thanking Him for something.
- Belief by definition is to acknowledge a truth without evidence. This is not always so in the eastern religion, nevertheless we are definitely aware of our own existence and experience only temporary and impermanent happiness. This in itself is an evidence that there has to be something permanent, unchanging and unborn power without boundaries that is aware of all this change.
- As such that must have the answers to all our problems, dilemmas and worries. The prayer is therefore by the one who is bound by various limits to the one who is free from all boundaries.
- This may not be so readily evident in the various practices and rituals which themselves may have changed with time.



Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty."

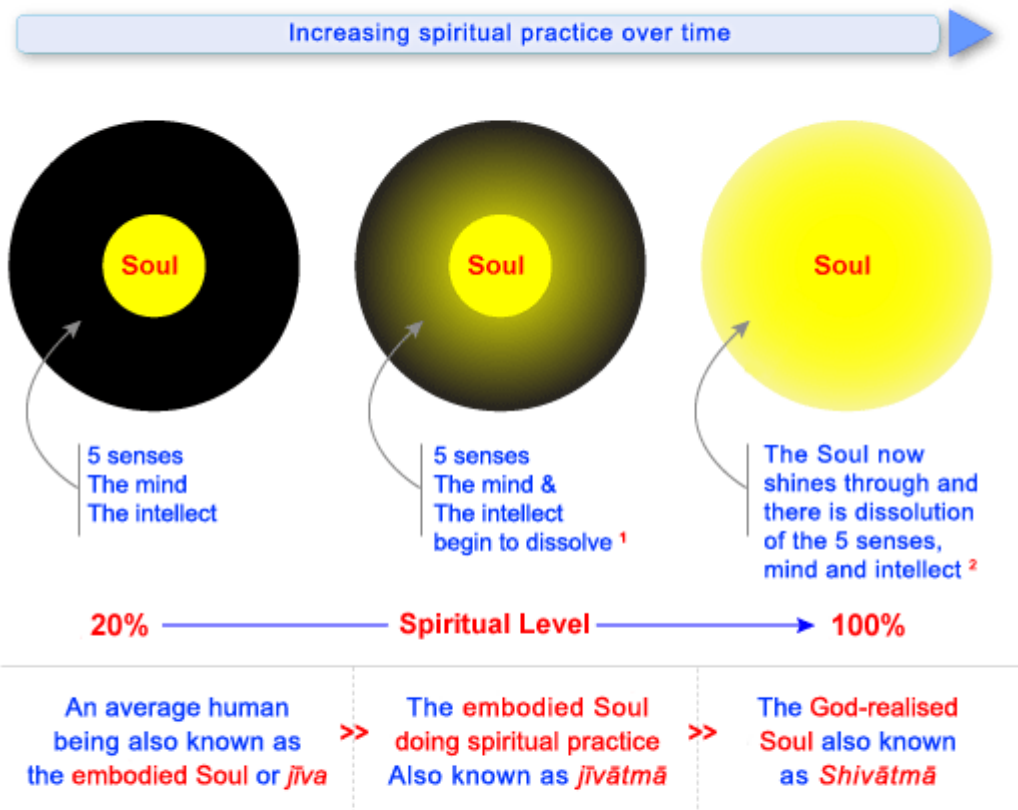
Albert Einstein

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Spiritual evolution or increase in spiritual level of the embodied Soul through spiritual practice

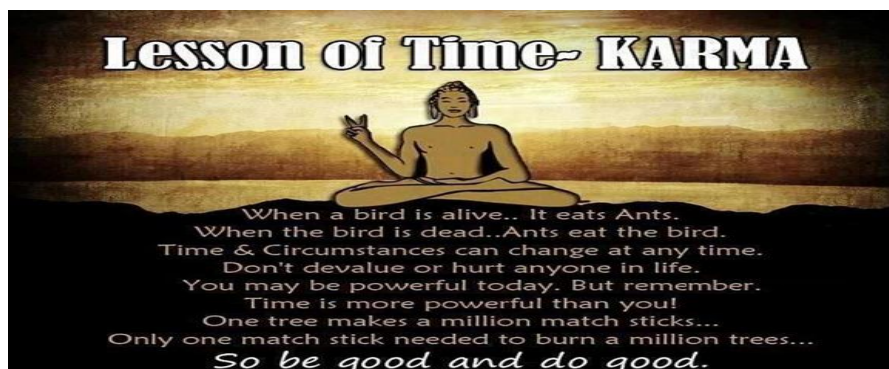
This diagram shows the internal change we go through when we do spiritual practice



Footnotes:

1. The materialistically oriented 5 senses, mind and intellect begin to be progressively more oriented to the Absolute Truth/God.
2. When we use the phrase 'dissolution of the five senses, mind and intellect' we mean that the 5 senses, mind and intellect are totally oriented towards God and the divine consciousness of the Soul shines through. The person does not identify himself with the 5 senses, mind and intellect but instead identifies totally with the Soul or the God within.

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The National Council of Vanik Associations 35 Year Celebration

The National Council of Vanik Associations (NCVA) was established 36 years ago in 1978 and last year it completed its 35 years of establishment. NCVA celebrated this anniversary on 21 Jun 2014 at Shree Prajapati Hall in Leicester.



The main aim of the celebration was to bring members from our affiliated organisations together and provide a platform for Vaniks to get together, have fun and provide entertainment for the family. NCVA is all about bringing our community together and that was the ethos behind this celebration. By bringing our community together, we can become stronger and share experiences that can help individual organisations and its members.

A lot of hard work and preparation had gone ahead of this celebration with support from many affiliated organisation. Co-ordinators were appointed to oversee various areas including Catering, Communication/ Promotions, Stage Management, Hall Management, Audio and Video, Hospitality, Cultural Event Organisation and Finance. All co-ordinators and their team devoted a lot of their own time leading to the success of the celebration.



The speed in which the tickets were sold demonstrates the hunger for these kinds of events particularly as all tickets were sold within two weeks of release - a remarkable achievement.



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The event which was organised and coordinated by NCVA with support and participation from 28 affiliated organisations. The celebration was an opportunity for all Vaniks to gather in Leicester and participate in the celebration including entertainment staged by artists from within the community. Members from across the country attended the celebration with eight coaches from London, one from Manchester and one from Southampton with many members making their own way to Leicester. More than 1200 people attended and around 100 artists from 12 organisations staging dance,



drama, magic and other entertainment items.

The day started with delicious food being served on arrival. A souvenir that included many articles of interest and a summary of services provided by NCVA was made available to all those who attended. Our thanks to the contributors of the articles.



Once all the members were served with delicious food, members were asked to be seated and the entertainment followed as detailed below



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Brass Band

Welcome by Manharbhai Mehta

Lighting Diya

Jain Network - Navkar Mantra

*Mahavir Foundation Youth Wing & Pathshala - Ganesh
Stuti*

*Shree Sorathia Vanik Association - Bollywood Dances with
Ring*

NCVA Overview by Mahesh Gandhi

Aden Vanik Association - Kathiawadi Lok Geet,

Mahavir Foundation DHOL from Ramlila

Award of Honours'

Jain Samaj Manchester - Play

Navnat Vadil Mandal - African Lady

*Jain Sangh of East London - Play, Melody, Dance and
Drama*

Shree Sorathia Vanik Association - Dandia Dance

Jain Samaj Europe - Bollywood Remix.

Navnat Vanik Bhagini Samaj - Kal Aaj aur Kal Fashion

Shree Jain Sangh of East London - Dance Dhamaka

Jain Samaj Europe - Garbo

Shree Sorathia Vanik Association - International Dances

Raffle

Magic

Vote of Thanks by Kalpitbhai Doshi



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Our thanks to all the participants who spent weeks preparing for the event. The hard work in preparation for the various events was evident in their exceptional performances and was very well received and appreciated by the audience.

As part of the celebration, members of our community who have devoted a lot of their time and effort in providing service to our community were honoured. The following members were honoured during this event - Late Shri Mahendra Mehta, Shri Rati Shah, Shri Bhupendra Shah, Dr Vinod Kapashi, Shri Viryash Shah, Shri Ramesh Mehta and Shri Dharendra Sanghrajka. Altogether 23 individuals have been honoured since the inception of NCVA.

Overall the celebration was a great success and has had a lot of good feedback from members who attended.

The preparation to the event was exceptional and the enthusiasm that many showed was outstanding. There was true dedication and commitment and in particular many who worked hard and long hours leading to the event.

The celebration also demonstrated the talent that exists within our community and from the attendance, shows the appetite for these kinds of events.

The road to the celebration has been a challenge and fairly demanding and there have been many hurdles that we have had to overcome. It is inevitable that lessons can be learnt from organising such large events particularly as the bar that was set was high in terms of our expectation. With high expectations small issues start to appear big and certainly had it not been for some unforeseen issues on the day, it would have gone a lot smoother. We will of course learn from this event and have no doubt that the experience gained from this event will help us in the future. This should be seen as a big positive.

NCVA would like to thank all co-ordinators and their teams, affiliated organisations, sponsors, participants and all members who attended this event without which this would not have been a success.



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Paryushan celebration Jain Samaj Manchester



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Jain Samaj Manchester celebrated one of the holiest festivals of Jainism – Paryushan Maha Parva from 22nd August to 29th of August 2014

The eight days long festival, popularly known, as “Paryushan Maha Parva” is a festival of Dharma Aradhana. During these eight days Jains follow total non-violence, love, and compassion through fasting. The festival ordains the Jains to observe the ten universal supreme virtues in daily practical life. The non-Jains also express high reverence for this Jain festival.

On this occasion, JSM had invited a respected and learned scholar SADHVJI SHRI SAMPRAGYAJI MAHARAJ disciple of Acharya Chandanaji from Veeryatan, Rajgir, India.

Sadhviji delivered lecture series throughout eight days both morning and evening. Chosen topics were very appropriate for day-to-day life, and kept about 200- 300 people on daily basis seated in a main hall with pin-drop silence listening and absorbing the practical message given by her. It was truly remarkable to see hall full of people past 10:30 pm during weekdays. Each morning session was ended with meditation, which took us all into the deepest of our existence and come back to find ourselves much Blissful, much Lighter and much more Pure.

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Each evening prior to lecture, a melodious musical (Bhavana) was performed by well-known singer Mr. Rajubhai from Rajkot, India. Members of Jain community participated with full vigor and zeal in various religious rituals and bhakti programs. On the 5th day a grand festivity of the “Mahavir Janma Vaanchan”, a celebration of birth of Lord Mahavir was very colorful and spectacular.

On the day of Samvatsari (last day of Paryushan) Jains greet each other by saying “Michhami Dukkadam”. The phrase translates to “forgive my misdeeds”. Following Samvatsari was the Tapasvi Parana Celebration where all the Tapasvis break their fast.

In all the Jain festivals, prayers are offered for the peace, felicity and prosperity (spiritual) of oneself, of society, nation and the whole universe. Some activities are given special importance during Jain festivals like Paryushan and members are encouraged to carry them in their lives. Giving charity to the poor and the needy; rendering help; giving fodder and water to animals; giving grains to birds; giving free medicines to the sick and the disabled patients etc. in the Jain Dharma, benevolence is given the first place. Sadhviji in her talks also passed the message of education and importance of schools.

After the eight days, Jain Samaj members celebrated the end of Paryushan by holding a community dinner that was controlled by the code of Jain customs and practices. All the Tapasvi (members who observed fasting during Paryushan) were given recognition.

The Jain Samaj is a registered charity based in Longsight, Manchester and has played an important role to promote culture and values in the United Kingdom.

Asha Mehta
Joint Secretary

Jain Samaj Manchester

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Jain recipe for breakfast



Mamra Upma

JULY 21, 2011AUGUST 13, 2014

Serving : 2 Persons

Ingredients:

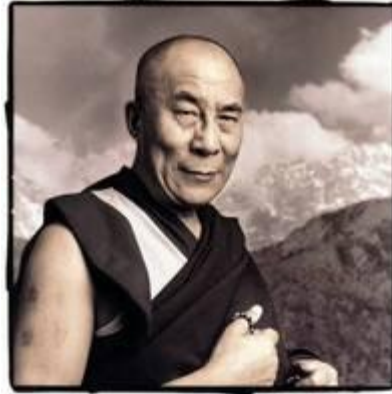
- 2 Cups Puffed Rice (Mamra)
- 1 Tomato (Finely Chopped)
- 1 Green Bell Pepper (Capsicum) (Finely Chopped)
- 1 Tablespoon Oil
- 1/2 Teaspoon Mustard Seeds (Rai)
- 1/2 Teaspoon Cumin Seeds (Jeera)
- 1/2 Teaspoon Red Chilli Powder (Lal Mirch)
- 1/2 Teaspoon Garam Masala Powder
- 1/4 Teaspoon Turmeric Powder (Haldi)
- 1 Green Chilli (Hari Mirch) (Slit)
- Coriander (Kothmir) (Finely Chopped)
- Salt To Taste

Method :

- Soak Mamra in Water for no more than 5 minutes. Keep Aside.
- Heat Oil in Pan.
- Add Mustard Seeds and Let It Crackle.
- Add Cumin Seeds, Tomatoes, Capsicum and Let it Cook till Tomatoes Softens.
- Add Red Chilli Powder, Turmeric, Garam Masala and Salt.
- Cook for a Minute and then Add Mamra.
- Cook Properly and Serve Hot.
- You Can Add Chopped Coriander Leaves before serving.

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We can reject everything else: religion, ideology, all received wisdom. But we cannot escape the necessity of love and compassion.... This, then, is my true religion, my simple faith. In this sense, there is no need for temple or church, for mosque or synagogue, no need for complicated philosophy, doctrine or dogma. Our own heart, our own mind, is the temple. The doctrine is compassion. Love for others and respect for their rights and dignity, no matter who or what they are: ultimately these are all we need.

So long as we practice these in our daily lives, then no matter if we are learned or unlearned, whether we believe in Buddha or God, or follow some other religion or none at all, as long as we have compassion for others and conduct ourselves with restraint out of a sense of responsibility, there is no doubt we will be happy.”

— [Dalai Lama XIV](#)