



## President's Desk

Jai Jinendra everyone! Spring is already in the air and the second quarter of the year has begun! In the past 3 months the EC team has been working on many fronts. We are refining the JCOCO App and Website. We are also creating a Puja group that includes volunteers to help on Sunday mornings with Puja activities. You may not realize this, but the EC team and other volunteers work on many maintenance tasks, behind the scenes. A recent example is our issue with the main door. We applaud and thank those who worked tirelessly to get this issue fixed!

On a different note, have you gotten a chance to explore the JCOCO YouTube channels yet? I'll tell you more about it! Yes! We do have our own channels that hosts all past Svaadhyaay /lectures and program recordings. Simply go to: YouTube, search "JCOCO Events" OR "JCOCO Svaadhyaay". Once you are in either of the channels, explore the videos and also find more under "PLAYLISTS".

Another exciting news — upcoming very soon in the Derasar — you will find Snatra Puja books in English! This will be very beneficial to kids and adults, who would like to follow when we have Snatra Puja! We will announce once they are in! Also, I wonder if you heard about this year's MJK program? I can't tell you much....you'll have to read this e-newsletter.. there may be a hint somewhere!

Lastly, I wanted to mention that on pages 4 and 5, please be sure to read essays written by our youth in Pathshala Level 3. They have worked very hard on these!

Now sit back, relax and enjoy!!

## Did you know the story behind Ayambil Oli?

Prince Shripal and her mother had to go into hiding after death of his father due to his evil uncle. In their travels, they came in contact with group of lepers. After living with them for some time, Shripal became affected by Leprosy. When he became a youth, people made him their leader.

On other side in Ujjayini city, Princess Mayanasundari had hurt the ego of her father by claiming that only Karmas decide your fate and not the king. The king was enraged and wanted to teach Mayanasundari a lesson. He asked his men to find the ugliest man in Ujjayini. The men spotted Shripal. In utter disdain, the king instantly got Mayana married to Shripal.

—contd on page 2

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Temple Hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM

Saturday : 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM; Sunday : 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM



JCOCO members supporting Van Buren Shelter every 4th Sunday

## Spotlight

Van Buren Shelter works to rebuild lives of those experiencing homelessness by creating collaborations, developing innovative solutions, and investing in quality programs in Columbus and Franklin County.

*“Community Shelter Board oversees an annual budget of \$31 million to support homeless programs and services. Last year, these programs served more than 12,000 people.”*

JCOCO volunteers to provide service in the shelter every 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month. It is an extreme pleasure and honor to spend time in volunteering at the community shelter board, serving dinner for shelterless families. Very touching experience to see all the lovely souls fighting every day of their life and trying to make it better with a smiling face. It’s an unforgettable moment to see the smiling faces during our volunteering time at the shelter.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Alpesh Mehta at 937-594-8785.

## Did you know... Contd...

Mayana accepted Shripal as her husband and took care of him. One day they went to see Jain acharya Muni-chandra. Acharya advised them to go through the penance of Ayambil Oli, known as Navapad penance, which can cure all types of diseases.

Mayana and Shripal devoutly observed Navapad Oli penance with all its vitality. The result was miraculous: Shripal’s got totally cured of leprosy after performing it 9 times. Mayana blessed her Karma for that change too.

The Navapad Aradhana (puja) is observed by meditation and practicing a penance called Ayambil. One meditates upon Arihanta, Siddha, Acharya, Upadhyay, Sadhus (Pancha Paramesthi), Gyan (knowledge), Darshan (faith), Charitra (conduct), and Tapa (penance) known as Navapad. Ayambil is observed by having only one meal a day of very plain food without any spices, milk, sugar, salt, oil, butter, fruits or vegetables.

## Pathshala Corner

Jai Jinendra, another exciting quarter of learning has passed at PLC. Teachers and kids are doing an amazing job towards our goal of teaching/learning about our religion. This quarter we have successfully performed puja by /with our Pathshala level 1, 2 & 3, which helped with kids’ practical experience of Jain rituals. This quarter we would like to introduce & acknowledge our Pathshala level 1 teachers for their dedication.

Shilpi Mehta, who is originally from Jodhpur, Rajasthan, has been teaching at JCO-CO since 2015. She is an IT professional. She strongly believes in Jainism’s principle of Karma which means “what goes around comes around”. She believes good karma leads to good effects and she tries to inculcate the same in our younger kids. Her commitment for helping the community through teaching kids about Jainism has outgrown her learning in Jainism.

Second teacher of our Pathshala level 1 is Soham Shah. He works as a UI Developer at Chase and is originally from Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He comes from very religious background. His house was very close to temple and upashrya which helped him with his passion to learn/teach Jainism. He started teaching since he was in college. As a kid he was not interested in learning Sutras but Jain stories attracted him towards religion. As a teacher he tries make learning fun and interesting for kids.

Our young Pathshala classes are filled with Jain stories of Tirthankaras, singing Jain songs, learning sutras & learning Jain rituals, which has been a lot of fun experience for our young Jains. Thank you so much to both of our teachers, Shilpi Mehta and Soham Shah, for your dedication towards spreading your knowledge of Jainism to our little ones.

## Community News

**JAINA:** Every two years JAINA and a local Sangh host a biennial JAINA convention with over 4000 guests from all over! This year the convention will be in Ontario, California, just outside of LA. This time the theme is Jain Religion in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. You will have the opportunity to listen to discourses by many speakers. There will be many adult and youth related activities as well! Check out more details on their website, if you are considering to go this year!

<https://www.jainaconvention.org/>

**In other community news —**

**Yamaraj and Chitragupt are in Columbus!**

Yamaraj and Chitragupt are in town to enlighten us with some of the aspects of life that we possibly ignore or take for granted. Ever wonder what effect simple malignant acts can have? Jainism has defined 18 sins that de-

scribe the types of acts one can be careful about. These are the acts in which one can get involved knowingly or unknowingly, causing harm to self and/or others. Awareness of these sins helps in making the right choice for the decisions one makes. Making right choices helps attain eternal peace and lightens the path to salvation.

If you want to know more about the sins and what can be done to overcome them, **mark your calendar for 4<sup>th</sup> May** to witness talented kids of our community walk you through the 18 sin holes in the golf course of life. Yamaraj and Chitragupt have some interesting stories to tell!!!



### Special Thanks

Thank you to the following patrons for preparing the lunch for the month of **February**: Vidya Kavedia, Heena Shah, Sapna Variia, Vini Varia, Shilpi Mehta, Priya Tater, and Ami & Nirav Kapadia.

Thank you to the following patrons for preparing the lunch for the month of **March**: Nidhi & Yash Lunkad, Bindu & Kavindra Vora, Kanchana Shah, Rupa Doshi, Hema Shah, Shilpa Shah, Bharti Shah, Bhakti Patwa, Shilpi Mehta, Bharti Salgia, Sapna Varia, Heena Shah, and Anish Doshi.

### Jain Recipe

Time and again we will be sharing some Jain recipes that you might like to try at home!

Here is a different, delicious, healthy version of Dhokla, made from Oats and veggies!

Ingredients:

- 1 bowl Roast and Grinded Oats
- 1 bowl Rava
- Mix both in Curd and water
- 1 bowl add corns, Green peas, Spinach, Dry Ginger, Green Chilli
- Mix all the veggies half crushed
- Mix all the oats and curd batter, add Eno soda, little salt and sugar and make Dhokla!

## Upcoming Events

Date	Event
4/11/19—4/19/19	Ayambil Oli
4/14/19	Chaitra Sud Navami - Ayambil Potluck at temple- Details to follow
4/17/19	Chaitra Sud Teras- Mahavir Janma Kalyanak Tithi
4/20/19	Chaitri Poonam Bhav Yatra at Temple - Details to Follow
4/21/19	Chaitra Vad Bij- Snatra Pooja (Mahavir Jayanti) and Swamivatsalya
4/21/19—4/24/19	Shri Champaklal Mehta Swadhyay
5/4/19	MJK Cultural Program at Olentangy Orange Middle School
5/7/19	Vaishaakh Sud Treej- Akhatrij- Varshitap Parna Day
5/12/19	General Body Meeting with Lunch/ Temple Established - Anniversary!

Temple Hours:

Monday to Friday: 7:00 AM to 8:00 AM

Saturday : 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM; Sunday : 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM



## Essays

### Understanding The Soul

The Soul. We all know soul exists in every living being... yet we never focus on our soul. We all fall in the trap of believing that our existence is our body. We constantly nurture and take care of our body, external appearance, while ignoring our inner self "The Soul". "The actual self is the soul while the body is only a mechanism to experience the karma of that life," according to [wikipedia.com](http://wikipedia.com). In other words, your body only has one life in which it suffers, while your soul continues on its journey of attaining true happiness. True happiness will be attained through your soul, not your body. Focusing on your soul will bring yourself closer to self-realization. There are many ways to do this. You can connect to your soul through deep breathing, meditation, yoga practice, and any other activities that can help you disconnect from external world. While meditating you must block out all external distractions or conflicts- easier said than done.

As you can see it's a very complicated process of understanding the soul and to believe that "The Soul" exists in every living being.

- Aarav Gala

### Jain Food and Rituals

Jains are complete vegetarians and should only eat things made from plants or trees. Jains don't eat root vegetables such as potatoes, onions, etc., because tiny life forms are injured when the plant is pulled up. Also, consumption of most root vegetables involves uprooting and killing the entire plant. Jains don't want to hurt even small insects and other tiny animals. They take great pains to make sure that no microscopic animals are injured by the preparation of their meals, and in the process of eating and drinking. Traditionally Jains should not drink unfiltered water. This causes us to eat tiny bacteria and we are killing them by doing that. Cooking or eating at night is discouraged because insects are attracted to the fire at night.

Jain rituals include some obligations that they follow when worshiping idols. We do pooja and different types of prayers for worship. Jains pray to 24 Tirthankars and they are our gurus who guide us to follow the right path. We also do ashtaparakari pooja with eight different types of poojas in it.

Our goal in life is to attain Moksha. We go beyond heaven to find peacefulness in our soul. Jains also have a ritual called Paryushan (a fasting period) which lasts for eight days. This is a fasting period when you want to get rid of your karmas. The last day of Paryushan is when you do pratikaman. Pratikaman is a ritual during which Jains repent (Prayaschit) for their sins and non-meritorious activities committed knowingly or unknowingly during their daily life through thought, speech or action.

- Anay Mehta

### Saving our Earth and being better Jains

Recently I had a project in school about zero-wastage. I reduced waste by using reusable containers for lunch and reusable silverware, tried not to waste food and used mechanical pencils instead of wood ones. I realized that zero-waste doesn't just have to be not wasting food but, not wasting resources. I saw at school that the lunch admins passed out wet towels instead of using Lysol or Clorox wipes. That made me realize that the school had come up with a way to reduce our resources and imply no wasting into our daily life. I also noticed people using plastic forks and knives when they could be using reusable silverware and reduce wastes that way.

If we save our resources by wasting less, they will last longer and we will be illustrating a Jain principle, that is, only use as much as needed. By following the principles of aparigraha (non- possessiveness) and non-violence, we will actually reduce our desire to accumulate what we don't need and misuse resources to generate waste. In conclusion if you at least try to waste less, you will not only make a difference but also make the world environmentally friendly which will inspire others to make a change.

- Neimi Mehta

### Ocean Acidification

Ocean acidification is the overall P.H. of the ocean, decreasing/ becoming more toxic due to the increase in carbon dioxide and gas emissions. Ocean acidification has been a real problem for us because the organisms in the ocean dying due to rising toxicity. In Jainism, being conservative of your resources and only using it when you have to, can help you save a lot of living organisms and can even benefit you in the long run. Jainism conservation method can help with ocean acidification because if you conserve plastic and rubber, we can reduce Co2 emissions from factories not having to produce so much of it. I don't that just Jains can maintain this conservation but also everyone else, because Earth is our home and if we don't treat our home nicely then we are going to have problems...

- Akshat Shah

## Essays

*Our Pathshala Level 3 class is made up of a tween/teen dynamic group. They are a curious bunch and have been learning a lot about the applications of Jainism and its principles. It's a class that runs without holding back questions and ideas. An open discussion with their teachers who are doing a fabulous job, guiding them and teaching them to look beyond having rote learned so much about the "what" ( Jain sutras, principles and rituals), to now understanding the "why" (significance of the sutras, principles and rituals). Of course, the journey does not end there, as our growing youth will continue to carry Jainism in their hearts as their future unfolds. They will have a strong foundation when they truly question their own significance of existence and what their life really means and entails!*

Enjoy their essays here and get to know them! Congratulate them when you see them around for their remarkable work on topics of their choice, and speaking from their hearts about their understanding of our religion and its values!

## Essays... Contd...

### Vegan Wednesday

Recently, we began the new year. Every new year, it is a special tradition to make a resolution, whether it is a making a major difference in your life, or a small change. People make resolutions individually, as a group of friends, or even as a family. In 2019, a couple friends of mine and I made a resolution to be Vegan once a week, on Wednesdays. This relates to the 5 great vows of Jainism. Non-possessiveness (Aparigraha) comes into play, as we have to learn to hold back from our desires. Non-violence (Ahimsa) also is incorporated, as no living beings are harmed with a vegan lifestyle. As of now, 1.26 million people of the population have been either vegan or vegetarian. And now, three more people have joined that group: me and my friends. Changing your lifestyle is a challenge. No matter what you decide to do, it will impact you in some important way.

I was inspired to start this challenge, per-say, from one of my close friends. She is not jain, nor was she vegetarian, but her love for animals inspired her to become so. She has now been a vegetarian for a year and a half. Together, we watched animal cruelty videos on social media, and it angered us to see what pain the animals go through for the pure enjoyment of humans. Personally, I share her immense love for animals, and together, we came up with the idea to become vegan once a week. One more of my friends joined us in this endeavor, and we began as soon as the year started.

Every Wednesday, I start off the day with an almond-milk and banana smoothie. During lunch, I usually eat a bean and avocado sandwich. Dinner each night differs, sometimes we go out to a vegan restaurant, and sometimes my mom makes vegan wraps at home. This influences my family as well, as they have vegan dinner with me on Wednesday nights. We have so much fun, trying new vegan dishes as a family, and knowing that we are helping the environment and preventing ourselves from giving into our cravings and desires.

A challenge that I go through, is that on Wednesdays, I still have to go to school. At school, there are certain activities that occur that I cannot participate in. One week, my friends and I had presented a cake we made for a science project, but we could not eat it, as it was Wednesday. Another similar situation happened in school, but this time, only I was affected. We had a German-fest, where we celebrated the German culture and ate German foods, such as cream puffs, pretzels, apple cake, and more. Everyone was busy enjoying the desserts, but I stopped myself. I did not want to break a promise I had made to myself, or to the animals in this world that I love so much. In conclusion, I have now been vegan for the past three months, and my goal is to continue this "project" for the rest of my life. I encourage you to take the extra step and be vegan, even if it's only for one day in the week. Because even one day makes a big difference to the animal kingdom.

- Janhavi Kavedia

### Nikes to Bare Feet

One of the five important principles of Jainism is non-possessiveness. Possessiveness/Parigraha is an unwanted karma that occurs in our everyday lives whether we know it or not due to our wants/greed of owning things and craze of brand names. We should refrain from possessiveness because this sinful activity not only brings bad karma which affects our next bhav/birth in realms of existence, but it also brings clutter and disorganization in our life. You remember that time when you really wanted name brand/designer clothing or name brand accessories just because it was a latest style after owning a few things of the same brand? This is showing possessiveness because we are showing greed and we should limit this as much as possible. There are people in the world such as in India and Africa that aren't fortunate enough to buy more than one shirt or even buy a shirt! Instead of showing possessiveness we should help those in need and gain good karmas! Bill Gates, for example, is a very wealthy CEO, but he donates 22% of his earnings (which is a lot) to the needy and practices simple life/non-possessiveness by doing this. Next time you go for shopping and really want something that's a name brand choose another option. Try to think about your karma and the poverty in different parts of the world; try to practice non-possessiveness.

- Durshil Doshi

### Gender Inequality in Jainism - The Battle of Genders

**The Cause:** Jainism views women in a manner of high respect and integrity, and gives them about the same amount of authority and influence as a man. However, some issues have to be voiced and cannot go unsaid. The controversy of liberation is the cardinal reason why the Sectarian Divide occurred. The Digambara (First main branch of Jainism) believes that women cannot achieve liberation without being reborn as men first, which in my opinion is absolutely preposterous, while the Svetambara (Second main branch of Jainism) sect disagrees. Women are also considered more deceitful and harmful than a man, and are thought to have more attachments such as kids or jewelry (Another obstacle on the path to liberation) than men.

**The Effect:** Women endure massive consequences because of religion, especially in rural parts of developing countries such as India. They are deemed as second class citizens because of their inability to attain liberation. Out of the 24 Tirthankaras only one is a female (Māllinātha) and even she was a rare exception who is not to be repeated again. However, Jainism does encourage women to take Diksha which is a very positive aspect of the community.

**The Solution:** Right now the position of women in Jainism is only increasing at a tedious pace in developing countries (India), and it is our duty as a Jain to help them to the best of our ability. The best solution is by creating awareness in the community about women's status, and attempting to change the laws to make them more adaptable to the modern society. Mahavir Swami was also a supporter of women's rights and tried to uplift their standing in the Indian culture. Let's work together to make Jainism a better religion and join Mahavir Swami's belief in the fight for equal rights. I deeply hope that by 2030 we can talk about Gender Inequality in historical terms!

- Dhruvi Shah