



THE INNER LIGHT



Newsletter of Jain Vishwa Bharati USA for Non-Violence, Preksha Meditation, and Yoga

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A Warrior on the Battlefield May Conquer a Million Foes, But the Greater Warrior is He Who Conquers Himself

Anasana: The Art of Dying

by Samani Madhur Pragyā

The Jain tradition gives great importance to Anasana. Anasana is regarded as an auspicious and spiritual performance. It is equally prescribed for ascetics as well as by lay followers.

In other religions we come across only the description of the art of living in their respective canons, but Jainism has one speciality that teaches the art of dying too.

A Buddhist monk, Bhikshu Kashyap, once said, "I have learnt many things from Buddhism, but I have to learn the art of dying peacefully from Jainism."

The same idea was also expressed by the Gandhian thinker, Vinoba Bhave, who actually met his death through Anasana.

The method of Anasana: Anasana means fast until death.

Really Anasana is an art of ideal death. The question is how to adopt Anasana. It has been described in detail in Jain canons like Bhagavati Aradhana, Uttaradhyayana, etc.

Before undertaking Anasana, one should observe "Samlekhana." The word "Samlekhana" consists of two

words: Sam Lekhana. Sam means in the right way, and Lekhana means to emasculate the physical body as well as the passions.

Thus, Samlekhana implies deliberate emasculation of the (karmic as well as gross physical) body and passions (like anger, pride, deceit, greed).

The Duration of Samlekhana:

The minimum duration of Samlekhana is six months and the maximum is twelve years. The Uttaradhyayana sutra describes the complete process of Samlekhana as follows:

During the first four years one should exclude "Vikrtih"- the delicacies from the diet – that is, one should abstain from taking milk, curd, butter and clarified butter, sugar, edible oil, sweets, and fried things. If one cannot do so, he should observe "Ayambila," which means not to eat more than one item, and that too only one during the day time. At night, nothing not even water should be taken.

During the next four years, one should perform two days fasting, three days fasting, etc. and one may take any kind of diet at the termination of the fast.

In the ninth and tenth years, one should observe alternate day-fasting and Ayambil should be

performed at the termination of the fast.

In the eleventh year, one should observe one day fasting or two days fasting during the first six months and Ayambila at the termination of the fast. In the next six months, three or four days fasting should be done and one may take complete diet in any quantity at the end of the fast.

In the twelfth year, one should do Ayambila on the first day, any other penance on the second day, and again Ayambila on the third day. In this way Anasana is taken after the full course of Samlekhana.

Continued on Page 2

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

- Upcoming 6th Annual Spiritual Camp
- Question and Answer Column
- Health Column
- Story column

Continued from Page 1

Reason for Anasana:

Various reasons have been described for undertaking Anasana. It can't be undertaken arbitrarily. A healthy person who is competent to perform the religious activity is not allowed to accept Anasana. The following are the conditions in which Anasana is allowed:

1. In the case of any incurable disease.
2. Someone is forced to break his/her chastity.
3. In famine, when alms are not available.
4. Those whose eyes, ears, and feet have become feeble.
5. One who is incapable of undertaking tours.
6. When any calamity arises from gods, human beings, and animals.
7. When there is a strong detachment.

Kinds of Anasana – It is two fold:

1. Itvarika and 2. Yavatkathikam
Itvarika Anasana – Short term fasting from one day to six months.

Yavatkathikam Anasana – Lifelong fasting which is undertaken to be observed unto death. The latter is again three fold:

1. Bhakta-pratyakhyana – Giving up food until death. In this penance, the practitioner can move in a restricted area in accordance with the rules of Samitis (watchfulness).
2. Inigini-marama-anasana – In this the movement is further restricted to the place he occupies for the purpose of fasting. Here, he can move

his limbs, but the movement should be as less as possible.

3. Padopgamana Anasana – In this penance, the person neither takes care of his body nor asks others to do so. He is steady like a statue until death. He remains in the same state in which he existed at the time of starting the fast. No movement at all is given to the body.

Anasana is not suicide:

Some people regard Anasana as suicide. Ordinarily suicide is done in a fit of strong detachment and aversion, as delusion through poison, weapon or any other means. The aim of such suicide is to end the life. But Anasana is neither taken in a fit of attachment nor aversion nor delusion. If anybody undertakes Anasana to kill himself immediately due to physical disease or depressed by any problem, we can't call it Anasana. Such an action would not lead him to the highest goal of emancipation. True Anasana is not aimed at ending one's life. But it is done to attain purity of consciousness, which ultimately ends in self-realization. Anasana is therefore called as Samadhi-marana i.e. death attained with complete tranquility and equanimity. He himself is not eager to meet death but it comes to him over a course of time.

Although body is given up in Anasana and suicide equally, the important thing to be considered is who is giving up the body and for what? The difficult path of Anasana can be followed only by a spiritual aspirant who has practiced spiritualism thoroughly, who has experienced that body

and soul are totally different, and whose mind always contains positive ideas such as that the body is material while the soul is immaterial. In suicide, the nervous system is always full of tension, while in Anasana it is free from all kinds of tension. At the time of suicide, the physical posture does not express calmness, but it is overwhelmed with stress. In suicide, death comes to him suddenly, while in Anasana death will be a natural phenomenon.

Anasana means removing the attachment from the body by understanding that reality of the nature of world, while in suicide one tries to give up his life due to worldly troubles. The former is accepted by a virtuous person, while the latter is embraced with negativeness. There is no bravery in suicide; on the contrary, it is nothing but only cowardice. It is an effort to run away from the problems of life. It is based on fear and desires. It is full of passions and excessive lust. There is no scope for all these vices in Anasana. Thus, although giving up the body is common to both – Samlekhana (Anasana) and suicide - their aims are quite different.

Conclusion

Anasana means the right type of death in which there is no desire to live or die. It means to give up life with equanimity. In other kinds of death the oxygen cylinder is working through which the doctors try to keep alive; the dying person is made to swallow tablets, pills, etc. or injected with life-saving drugs to the last moment. Really the patient doesn't want to die, but

no body can override the law of nature, because when life is reality, death is also a reality. The patient weeps and cries and doesn't want to leave this world, but he has to depart from here forcibly. On the other hand, in Anasana, all these things do not happen. Here the aspirant faces death peacefully and with equanimity. Such person does not fear death but death itself fears him.

Thus, there is no place for fear or temptation, compulsion or force, attachment or aversion, anger or delusion in Anasana. Anasana is a means to attain the goal with equanimity. Every ascetic and every lay follower should aspire to embrace such death.

The Jain Canons mention three aspirations for all religious persons one of which is to embrace death through Samlekhana or Anasana.

6th ANNUAL SPIRITUAL CAMP

Econo Lodge Cocoa, Florida

Friday January 18th – Sunday January 20th

In the Presence of Samani Madhur Pragya and Samani Jayant Pragya

Camp Programs will be divided into Three groups : Adults, Youth, and Children

Sessions for Adults

- Meditation and Yoga
- Several Discourses
- How to Purify Samyaktva (Enlightend World View)
- How to Lead an Artful Life (Kaisa Geeai)
- Namaskar Mantra – History and Spiritual Scientific Concept
- Asana and Health

Special Sessions for Children

- Puzzles, Jain Teachings and lecture
- Jeopardy Game
- Cultural Program

Sessions for Youth

- How to Achieve Success and Food
- Food, Health and Attitude
- Importance of Mantra
- Group Discussion

Special Evening Program for Youth and Kids

- Who will become Knowledgeable

Camp details and Brochure to be mailed soon. Also look for news on web site: www.jainvishwabharati.org



Story Column

Negligence

Once Acharya Bhikshu was giving his discourse. One of his devotees named Asoji was sitting in the first rank just in front of him. He was dozing. Acharya Bhikshu did not approve of his napping in the front ranks. He asked Asoji, "Are you feeling drowsiness?"

Getting alert Asoji told him, "no." Acharya Bhikshu had to awaken him three or four times, but each time Asoji told him that he was not napping..

Acharya Bhikshu thought that he was still refusing to admit that he was napping. He wanted to make him realize what he was doing. Eventually he asked, "Asoji! Are you alive?"

Asoji was startled and said in the same away, "No!"

When he said that, all the people laughed at him. Sleepy person never admits his weakness.

Infinite Mistakes

Once God appeared in human world. He stood in one corner of the city. Several people were gathered there. All were talking with each other. The God went to them and asked, "What are your remarks about this creation?"

Someone asked God, "Who are you?"

He replied, "I am the creator of this universe. Let me know how is my creation."

All the people were overwhelmed with devotion. The spoke, "Your wonders are boundless. Your creation is very beautiful, charming, and luxurious. You made beautiful flowers, ponds, parks, and mountains, etc. How big is the ocean?"

One person spoke, "O God! Let me tell my feelings. Seeing your creation, it cannot be said that this universe is the creation of any intelligent person. If there is any ignorant one, he is the creator of this creation. Please give a glance at your own creation. Look! You made a big ocean, but water is salty. What would have been the case if you had made the water sweet so that there would have been plenty of water and the problem of water shortage would have been eradicated.

You made very high mountains. How hard would it have been to make steps up the mountains making them easy to climb? To make a road would have been very easy for you. It seems that there is nothing in this universe that is the creation of an intelligent being. An engineer can perform better work than you. You gave a lot of money to mean people instead of giving it to generous people. O God! You made mistakes at each place. You did so many great mistakes that it is better not to say anything about it. Otherwise, you can't bear anymore." God slowly disappeared from that place.

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS IN USA

NEWS FROM NEW JERSEY

By Samani Mangal Pragyia and Vineet Pragyia

Samani Mangal Pragyaji and Vineet Pragyaji are currently living in N.J. They are invaluable in many religious activities there. A weekend retreat of Preksha meditation was held at Himalyan Institute on Aug 11 to 13. During the eight days celebration of Paryushan.

They delivered a lecture series on Jain History and other enlightening topics. They also worked with children to promote Jain values. During their stay in N.J., workshops on preksha meditation and jain meta physics were held.

Homepage newspaper took an interview of the Samniji and published it.

Samani also went to Detroit and Lansing areas and lectured there. They also participated in NGO's meeting at UNO as a member of ANUVIBHA. Now they have a plan to participate at a symposium which will be held at Connecticut University, topic of symposium is non-violence and nirvan. They also held a peace-prayer for victims of the terrorist action.

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JVB PREKSHA CENTER HOUSTON

Samani Akshay Pragya & Samani Sanmati Pragya perform all activities in and around the Houston Center

PROGRAM IN CANADA

A 3 day Preksha Meditation camp was held at Jain Center in Toronto [Canada]. Almost 40 people participated in this camp. A 2 day Preksha Yoga Workshop was carried out in London, Ontario. It was especially for woman. The group was named 'Preksha Yoga Group.' They will do exercise & meditation for two days a week. A lecture program was arranged in Niagra falls.

PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA

Samani Akshay Pragya & Sanmati Pragya stayed 10 days in Los Angeles. A 3 day camp was held on Pine Spring Ranch Camp & Conference Center. Almost 40 people [Indians & Americans] attended this camp. Both the Samanijis celebrated the PARYUSHAN MAHAPARVA with Jain society in San Diego, CA.

PROGRAM IN THE OHIO STATE SENATE

A program for jain prayer was arranged in THE OHIO STATE SENATE by the Jain center of Columbus on September 18, 2001. It was sponsored by Senator Bruce E. Johnson on the occasion of the 2600th Birth Anniversary of Lord Mahavir. In the presence was the president of the Senate, Senator Richard H. Finan, Senator Bruce E. Johnson, Matthew T. Schuler, all the Senators, and members of the fire department. The main organizers of this program were Dr T. J. Salgia, the president of JCC, Mr Rakesh Jain and all 75 members of Jain society from Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo etc. Samani Akshay Pragya & Samani Sanmati Pragya gave the invocation of jain prayer. More than 300 people adopted and praised this resolution. During the 3 days, the Samanijis also delivered lectures at the Jain Center in Columbus, Ohio.

NEWS FROM THE SAMANJIS

Saman Sruth Prajna and Stihit Prajna traveled across the USA for five months. They visited almost 20 Jain Centers. Their lectures were very provocative. They organized workshops on Preksha meditation in each center.

JVB ORLANDO NEWS

The JVB celebrated the Paryushan in the presence of Samani Madhur Pragya and Samani Jayant Pragya. During the weekend of Paryushan, Namaskar Mantra Japa was held for a continuing 24 hour period. People of all ages participated enthusiastically in Japa.

JVB organized a Bhavan (devotional song) program in the honor of Tapasvee. JVB presented books in their honor. In the evening there was Pratikarma followed by a lecture on Utradhyan. On the day of Samvatsari they performed Samvat Sari and asked forgiveness from all.

People from Jacksonville, Miami, and Ocala visited the JVB and participated in Paryushan activities at the new hall and temple.

Swadhya and Pathasala programs continue at the JVB Orlando center.

Over the summer the Samanijis visited Birmingham Alabama to conduct a workshop on "Stress Management" at the Hindu temple. More than fifty people participated. Preksha Dyana theoretical as well as practical sessions were organized at the Days Inn Hotel nearby. Two lectures were given by the Samanijis to an audience on Jains and non-jains. At a program arranged in Gadsden Alabama, the Samanijis lectured about "human life". A July Swadhya was held in Jupiter Florida at the family Varsha. Puney among the nine Tatvas was discussed and was very received by the local Jain community attending.

NEWS FROM SACRAMENTO CALIFORNIA

Samani Charitra Pragya and Sharda Pragya stayed one month in Sacramento California. Each week they had programs for youth and adults on religious discourses and Preksha meditation.

JVB ORLANDO CELEBRATES MAHAVIR NIRVAN PROGRAM

**NOVEMBER 16TH : FRIDAY LECTURE
AND JAPA NOVEMBER 16TH
8:00 PM TO NOVEMBER 17TH 8:00AM**

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS OUTSIDE USA**Hong Kong**

Samani Niyogika Mudit Pragma and Jagat Pragma visited Hong Kong. They performed a series of lectures during Paryushan. Their visit was very successful and well received.

London

Samani Pratibha Pragma, Riju Pragma and Mumukshu Anita traveled the UK for two months. They celebrated Paryushan in London where they met various organizations. Several lectures and meditation camps were conducted at different centers. Samaniji participated in an interfaith program. Their two month visit was very inspiring.

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Health Column

Samani Sanmati Pragma

REMEDY FOR DIABETES

The ancient Indian sage Sushrut in 1000B.C. diagnosed diabetes. Diabetes is a disease in which the body does not produce enough insulin or does not use insulin properly to convert food into energy. The body derives most of energy from sugars, starches and other foods. The hormone insulin is responsible for converting these chemicals into energy. Insulin is secreted by the pancreas, a gland near the stomach. Without the action of insulin, sugar piles up in the blood stream [hyperglycemia] and spills into the urine [glycosurea] slowly damaging microscopic blood vessels and tissue leading to early cataract formation, even to blindness and kidney damage. Nerves are disrupted causing pain and numbness in the extremities. Besides causing problems to the heart, it also gradually develops into a syndrome. Nowadays millions of people are suffering from diabetes.

Symptoms:

- * Increased urination
- * Excessive thirst
- * Loss of weight with normal diet

- * Sugar [glucose] in urine
- * Degeneration of small blood vessels of eyes
- * Kidney dysfunction

Causes:

- Over weight
- Sedentary life
- Excess sweet and overeating
- Rich food
- Hereditary
- Lack of physical activities

Tips:

- * Exercise is essential
- * Avoid injuries because healing is slow in diabetics
- * Take a wholesome granular food: Grains, Pulses etc.
- * Restrict day sleep, rather avoid it

Exercise:**1. Uttanpadasan [Leg raising posture]**

Lie down on your back, feet together, hands along sides your body, little bit away from the trunk.

While inhaling raise your legs up in a straight line, up to 30 degrees. While exhaling bring your legs down without bending your knees. Repeat it 3 times.

Now raise your legs up to 60 degrees. Hold it for a while, breathing out bring them down. Repeat this 3 times.

2. Ardha-matsyendrasan [Lateral spinal twist pose]

Sit upright, stretch out the leg, fold the left leg at the knee, bend the right leg also at the knee, bring it over the left leg, rest it by the side of the bent knee, catch the right big toe with the left hand, twisting the trunk take your right hand back and touch the navel, look at the back, normal breathing. Repeat this exercise for the other side of your body.

[Yogic exercise of breathing & stomach, Cobra posture, Fish posture, are also beneficial for it.]

3. Contemplation [15 minutes]

Relaxation [5 min]. Using auto suggestion, relax each part of the body from the big toe to the head. Jyoti Kandra (center of enlightenment) situated in the middle of the forehead. Contemplate on the pancreas to release insulin in proper proportion. [5 min]

Question and Answer Column

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The Inner Light is produced by Jain Vishwa Bharati USA. Its goal is to publish information important to the Jain Community as well as to the general public. Every issue will be available in English and will contain articles on Jain Philosophy of non-violence, meditation practices, leading a good life, and other issues relevant to Jainism and Preksha Dhyam. The newsletter is a valuable guide to events held at Jain Vishwa Bharati and will keep subscribers up to date on all important classes, events, and programs. All subscriptions are for one year. If you wish to help support the work of Jain Vishwa Bharati, all donations are welcome.

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