



OSHWAL NEWS

Belief in a Higher Power

PARYUSHAN 2023



ART BY
Khilna Shah

Jain Classes

The modern Jain's
journey towards Moksh

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Volunteers

Master chefs of
Ekta Centre

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Diversity & Inclusion

Focus on what I can do,
not what I cannot do

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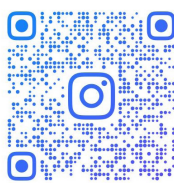
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Editor's Note

Belief in a higher power. Whatever that means to you – God, the universe, infinite intelligence, the divine mind, or loving energy – ultimately it is about reverence to absolute faith, and certainty in that faith.

In almost every story of success, the belief in a higher power shines through. When we find higher meaning in the midst of pain and fear, we become a source of love and inspiration for others. That's just what members of our Enabling Network have done for us (p28). Certainty from that belief in a higher power drives our own determination for our own journeys in life and to serve. The experiences of our volunteers on the religious front (p18) and our kitchens (p22), continue to bring to light the wonderful (and often unexpected!) benefits of sewa. There's so much to be grateful for.

It's nearly Paryushan, so in this issue of Oshwal News, we cover a number of features relating to Jainism. Many of us have learnt a lot from Jayeshbhai. We got an insight into his upbringing, as he talked about the big decisions of his life that brought him to the O AUK (p36). Some of our younger members share inspiring stories about fasting (p13) and Jainism classes (p14) which are being attended by a much more diverse range of members. We also look into yoga. Meditation has often been linked to religion; our feature (p44) talks about yoga not as a pure religious or physical exercise, but as a mental exercise.

The final few pages in this issue celebrate some incredible achievements – stories of faith, courage, determination, mental and physical strength... stories that have tested people's faith in uncertain times. It leaves me thinking that perhaps everything has a higher meaning...

As always, my deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this issue, and to you, our members, for your feedback on the Spring issue.

On behalf of the Editorial Team, I wish you all a peaceful and blessed Paryushan.
Micchami Dukkadam.

Rikhav Kirit Shah

EDITOR

Rikhav.K.Shah@oshwal.org

SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK

We would love to have your feedback about the magazine. Please scan the QR code to take part in a quick survey. It's running all the time, so if a thought or idea pops into your head that you'd like to share then please fill it in.



Oshwal News Editorial Team: Poonam, Khilna, Anneka, Basanti, Rikhav



President's Message

Dear Oshwal Member,

Jai Jinendra & Pranam! On behalf of the Executive Committee, I hope you are having a wonderful summer. I must say that there is so much positivity and reconnection in the community such that all Areas are moving forward and all our centres are experiencing significant increases in footfall! Just look at the vibrancy of our Centres, youth clubs, Gujarati schools and derasars! June also saw a very successful Health and Wellbeing Fair.

Work is also taking place (i) to make changes recommended by the Board of Advisors and other constitutional changes required to improve governance, (ii) to implement a new accounting system (iii) to tender for the audit, (iv) to acquire the new property in South London and sell the property located at Windmill Road, (v) to carry out the renovation of Shakti Centre, (vi) at Oshwal Centre to carry out the refurbishment of the caretaker's cottage, install a new derasar lift, refurbish Oshwal House, (vii) to find a solution for parking at Ekta Centre, (viii) to train key staff and volunteers on data protection and safeguarding, and (ix) to build external relations with other organisations and political parties. This is in addition to a plethora of regular events.

A huge focus for us is to bring more transparency to the management of OAUK. Those who attended the AGM are aware that as a result of the immediate past Treasurer's actions, our Committee started off with a six-month delay in the transfer of the bank mandate to the newly elected trustees, which could have limited what we could achieve. Subsequently, he chose to mislead the members present at the AGM by stating falsely that he had an automatic right to be an ex-officio member of the current executive committee knowing fully that this contradicted the Association's constitution. We have overcome some of these challenges, and we are putting in place mechanisms that will make transitions to future Committees much more seamless.

It was also pointed out at the AGM that there are significant gaps in the documentation related to the upkeep of our Association's properties and other assets. Significant amounts of money have been paid to certain contractors, but the paperwork associated to this work is currently missing. Despite repeated reminders, the former office-bearer responsible for property and finances has not shared the location of the missing documents. We are grateful to the past Secretary's assistance in this regard. We are now putting together various contractual documents relating to property projects and will be carrying out an audit to check the project expenses had proper approvals and were in accordance with the contracts. Much as one person's greed can cause so much harm, I have confidence that the improved transparency in our processes will eliminate such waste in the future.

I would like to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee, the Board of Advisors, all the Area committee members, all our staff and volunteers for all their hard work and dedication over the past year. I would also like to thank all the members, sponsors and donors for their unwavering support at all times.

Paryushan is a time of introspection, study, reflection and an increase in the level of spiritual intensity often using fasting, prayer and meditation to help. I wish you a peaceful and joyous Paryushan parva. Michhammi Dukkadam.

Jai Mahavir.

Rumit Shah
Hon. President

NEWSROUND

Here are our top stories on what's been happening in our community of late:

RELIGION

On the Jainism front at OAUk, there is always something going on locally or at Potters Bar. We're thrilled to see so much more interest in all our activities!

Our weekly activities have continued to gather more interest from members. This includes our Sunday Satsang, Jainism classes on Tuesday evenings. A new Jainism class for beginners (via Zoom) also starts shortly. In addition to his activities at the Derasar, Jayeshbhai has visited several areas to deliver a Pravachan or conduct a Pooja.

We continue to attract eminent guests - most recently from Pujiyashree Bhaishree, Atmaprit Rajuji and Atmaprit Smrutiji from Dharampur. More to come!

We have nearly completed training on Last Rites. Volunteers in each OAUk area will be available to deliver this important service.

We supported the JAINA Pure Souls Exhibition at SOAS. Our media team supported the marketing of the exhibition. OAUk was represented at the opening ceremony. During the variety show weekend, a good number of OAUk volunteers carried out several roles to contribute towards the success of the event. Some members volunteered as show guides. Many congratulations to SOAS for putting up this historic exhibition!

MAYOR OF WELWYN & HATFIELD VISIT

We were delighted to host the newly appointed Mayor of Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Pankit Shah and Mayoress Vaishali Shah at our Derasar on June 2nd. Jayeshbhai conducted a serene ceremony to celebrate this milestone achievement. We congratulate Pankit on this appointment and wish him all the success for his term ahead.

OSHWAL BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONALS NETWORK (OBPN)

As Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance take a stronger position in our world, OBPN is hosting an event in July at the House of Commons aiming to help businesses incorporate ESG thinking.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The OAUk Health and Wellbeing portfolio team organised a webinar on 29th January 2023 entitled "Men's Health: How to Take Care of Yourself". This was followed by another webinar on 26th February 2023 on "How to Improve Your Sleep." Both provided very insightful messages, often on issues that we may not consider in our day-to-day lives. Recordings are available on the OAUk website.

The team's big event was held on Sunday, 11th June 2023. A Health and Wellbeing Fair held

at Oshwal Centre covering a huge range of physical and mental health workshops and talks. Members who attended benefitted hugely from the wide range of issues covered, particularly in relation to alternative therapies.

EAST AREA

East Area is officially 50 years old this year! Thank you to our local community, ex-residents, and Oshwal, as a whole, for all your support over the years, and here's to 50 more! We will celebrate this milestone in November...watch this space!

LEICESTER AREA

We held a card game and dal roti programme in March, and a Bingo event in May.

In April, Leicester celebrated Mahavir Janma Kalyanak. Jayeshbhai conducted the Siddhi Chakra Pooja, which was done in Leicester for the first time.

In June, Oshwals from Leicester travelled to the Jalaram Mandir in Greenford and visited the Pure Soul Exhibition in London.

Leicester also hits its 50-year anniversary this year! The 50-year celebration will be held on 1st October 2023, together with the Savantsari Bhojan.

NORTH AREA

North Area had £10,000 to distribute to charities of their choice from the Paryushan 2022 and EC donations. We gave £2500 to North London Hospice, £1250 to Barnet Carers Centre, £1250 to St Barnabas Food Bank, £2500 to Homeless Action Barnet and £2500 to Grief Encounter.

We have started an exciting new Crafting Club on Fridays alongside the Social Club on Friday evenings. All abilities are welcome, and children can come along with their parents for free.

NORTHAMPTON AREA

In February, Northamptonshire area held a talk

on Wills, LPAs and Inheritance Tax programme. This event was very well attended with over 80 people attending. Shandip Shah of Balance Consultancy gave a highly informative talk on Wills, Lasting Power of Attorney and Inheritance Tax. Members actively participated in the talk, seeking information and clarification on these very important, and often difficult, financial issues.

In April, we celebrated Mahavir Janma Kalyanak at the Hindu Mandir at Wellingborough.

NORTH EAST AREA

Our Youth club reopened in January on Sunday mornings as before, at Alexandra Park School but we have also added Friday evenings for Badminton and Bollywood garba dance exercise class, both taking place at Ashmole School.

Oshwal House of cards take place once a month on Sunday evenings at Oshwal House from 4pm to 9pm. The dates are available on the website. Please contact Prasit Shah: prasit.r.shah@oshwal.org for further details.

Our regular chair yoga classes take place at Oshwal House every Tuesday. Please contact Suniben: suni.t.shah@oshwal.org.

NORTH WEST AREA

Many weekly and monthly activities continue to be run, with excellent attendance by members. The Committee continues to organise new events. We launched the Youth Engagement Cards & Board Games Nites which have been very successful which has led us to organise school holidays and half-term activities for kids which have included Arts & Crafts, Dancing, Treasure Hunt and Park Clean up activity to help our environment.



NW Area organised a park clean up on Tuesday 4th April 2023 as part of the Great British Spring Clean 2023. 41 children between the ages of 4 to 14 years worked tirelessly for a couple of hours in the morning picking up just over 65kg of rubbish in bags and another 20kg was put into the recycling facilities in the park. Kudos to Nileshbhai for initiating it, Mehul for taking the lead, Sanjeev and Umesh for the background admin support and all volunteers on the day for making this a huge success.

On of our biggest achievements has been to start the weekly Embracing All Abilities (EAA) at our Sports Club to include individuals with all abilities to be able to come and participate. Our Gujarati school is going from strength to strength, and we have now introduced classes for adults.

The Committee organised several health talks at Ekta Centre, covering a range of topics including heart health and prostate cancer.

been celebrating the 10th Anniversary of Shakti Centre this year and to commemorate this, regular weekly activities are free for our members to enjoy, and we encourage all members to come along and give these a try for the rest of the year.



In addition, there have also been one-off monthly events since January including the Pilates/Yoga session, Bhukhar competition, Holi celebration and Family Fun Day amongst others.

Most of the above events are hosted at Shakti Centre where we also celebrated the Coronation of their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla - a tea party with a twist organised by the parents of our Gujarati school students, and in keeping with our religious roots, we hosted the Paanch Tirth Poojan conducted by Pujya Shree Jayeshbhai which was broadcast live for all to have laabh of the Darshan.



A Volunteer Appreciation Dinner was held in May 2023. Amongst the many Star Volunteers recognised that evening, the Star Golden Volunteer of North-West Award went to Rameshbhai Nathoo Shah for his outstanding Sewa. The event was attended by the Leader of Brent Council Muhammad Butt, Barry Gardiner MP for Brent North, Deputy Leader of Brent Council, Mili Patel and Councillor & Cabinet Member at Brent Council, Shama Tatler.

WEST AREA

It has been a very busy year so far. We have

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Fireside chat

with our Executive Committee

We continue here with our journey of understanding the journeys of OAUK Trustees in their mission to move our community forward. Shandip Nathal Shah, who looks after the Religious Portfolio was in the hot seat, sharing his experience.

Let's start with some background. Tell us about your previous work and accomplishments with charitable organisations, including OAUK.

I have done charitable work for over 30 years. I've served on the Board of Advisors for the OAUK, Vice-President of Young Jains, a Founder member of Sansaar, a Trustee for Veerayatan UK and on the Committee of SCVP Jain School. I've also been involved in many large projects including Indian PM Modi's visit to UK in 2015. I was a UEFA Volunteer scout for Men's Euro Championships in 2020 and Women's Euro Championships in 2022. I was a Volunteer Team Lead at the London Olympics in 2012 and also volunteered at the IAAF World Championships in 2017.

Why did you want to become a Trustee?

I was awarded a lifetime achievement award by the OAUK in 2015. And after my stint serving on the Board of Advisors, I've always said that I wanted to come back. It just seemed like the right time. A few friends encouraged me to step forward, and here I am!

Dharma is a big part of OAUK. You look after the Religious portfolio; what has the experience been so far?

Seriously...nothing I have done so far compares to this challenge. The learning curve continues to rise and get steeper but there are many wonderful individuals to guide me. It has been an eye opening first year and a bit. I suppose

no one is born with all this knowledge. One has to work at it and learn as you go along. We are running a lot of different religious events (almost weekly), which means there is a lot of time spent travelling and in meetings. Perhaps, I have added my own pressure by trying to do too much. But, I do want to continue to make a change and Jainism is a priority in my books. It has been a challenge far beyond my expectations. So far, I have loved most of it!

That's a lot of work, and you also run your own business. What have you had to give up?

The key area which has been compromised is 'me' time and family time. I have some flexibility running my own business so this has not suffered. Fortunately, I have great support from my family but I suppose there is always a limit to how much. Let's see how the next year or so develops. I'm hoping also that organising events gets easier.

In your opinion, what qualities of your personality have you had to dig deep into, to serve our community?

Patience and calmness. At times, the pressures have been very testing. You learn to accept others' way of working particularly when opinions and styles differ. We have an excellent team and having faith in each member is important. I have no issues with people making mistakes but I want the team to work with integrity and the right attitude.

How do you think we can best nurture and develop younger Oshwals to take on leadership positions within OAUK?

This is a difficult one. From everything that I can see - younger Oshwals are keen to give freely to the Community, particularly where

they can stay out of politics. I think we've made and are continuing to make more headways in that area. I'll repeat my earlier point - it's ok to make mistakes, but the right attitude needs to be present. We need younger people to accept some more long-term commitment. And then we need to have the willingness to create more positions for those individuals who want to cultivate their leadership skills. I'm conscious that if we do not give young people an opportunity to lead or take key roles, we face a critical long-term issue. Maybe having a youth elected committee, with appropriate support and mentoring, would be beneficial.

If there was one change you'd like to see in Oshwal to ensure we remain a successful community in 50 years' time, what would that be?

From Jainism point of view, unity with all Jain organisations is important. We are a very small community in the overall scheme of things so sharing values and skills is important. For OAUK we must get younger people more involved, and use of technology and professionalism is now key. I am of the view that we need paid professionals to run our organisation day-to-day as it is seriously too much to ask volunteers only.

Most families have the option of being actively involved in several charities - often some that are easier to be involved in, for example, because the activities are closer to where they live. When time is a precious commodity, why do you think Oshwal should feature highly in a family's priorities?

We are all born into the Oshwal family. Somewhere along our ancestry, we have all benefitted, directly or indirectly, from this Community. I believe that, at its core, being a part of Oshwal is simply recognition of the sacrifices that our forefathers made to build a Community that supports everyone. I feel therefore, that we have a duty to respect what has been done for us, and to continue to support it so that it benefits our future generations. At the end of the day, this is a versatile support network, and it's a duty to give back where we can.

What (positive) surprises has your role as a Trustee brought?

Lots! Mostly, it's all been about working with like-minded individuals; the teamwork has been absolutely amazing! The volunteers we have on the religious front and associated work, like catering, are a dream to work with. The biggest positive has been to work with Jayeshbhai who is so positive and always willing to support.

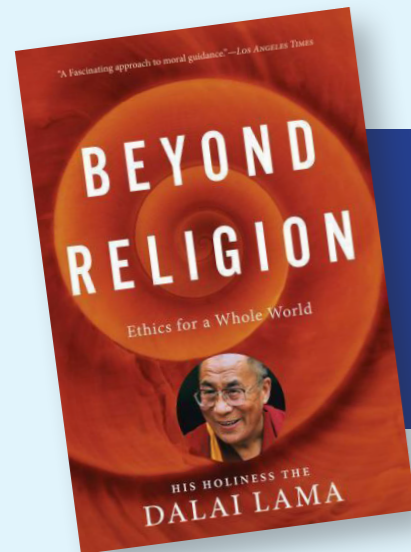




BOOK REVIEW



By Rikhav Shah



Ethics and religion often go hand-in-hand. In fact, some might even argue that there can't be ethics without religion i.e. humans can only understand the concept of good because there is a higher power that is good.

Without giving up in any way his own religious convictions, in (slightly provocatively titled) "Beyond Religion", the Dalai Lama writes to show the nature and possibility of ethics without a commitment to any specific religion or to a religious worldview. He finds that increasingly in the modern world, scientific and technological ability has outpaced human, interior growth with the result that individuals and families are increasingly discontented, unhappy, and belligerent in spite of the vast increase in the human ability to control and understand the external environment. With a focus on materialism and knowledge of things, individuals lose sight of meaning. Religion has, traditionally, been a way of attempting to meet these issues. But religion has become difficult or impossible for many people. As we live in multi-cultural societies, ethics based on a single religion would only appeal to some of us, and may not be meaningful to all of us. The book does not dissuade any person from their own faith, but simply shows the possibility of universal, secular based ethics.

In the first half of the book, "A new vision of Secular Ethics", he discusses our quest for happiness. Ultimately, we are all seeking happiness; our survival depends on some idea of future happiness. He believes that in today's materialistic world, it is easy to fall into the habit of constantly seeking sensory stimulation. This then moves into a discussion on

Compassion, as the foundation of well-being. He captures, very clearly, how compassion plays a role in so many parts of our lives, including the judicial system and finance, where unbridled capitalism is motivated by profit without ethics.

The second part "Educating the Heart Through Training the Mind" offers guides for increasing your ability for ethical behaviour. These practical guides focus on understanding your emotions, on controlling emotions such as anger and envy deemed destructive and on cultivating positive emotions such as contentment, self-discipline and generosity. He argues that all of this requires an individual's own action and commitment. "Ultimately, the source of our problems lies at the level of the individual. If people lack moral values and integrity, no system of laws and regulations will be adequate."

I expect many of our readers to call me out here, "Jainism teaches us all of this; what's new in this book?" Perhaps nothing is new. Yet, we have all seen behaviours within Oshwal societies around the world that might make us re-think the relationship between ethics and religion. Ultimately, this book is a call for renewal, for stripping away the coats of material things and psychic barriers that interfere with our "disposition to compassion." Most importantly, the Dalai Lama reminds the reader of our shared "common humanity".

FASTING DURING PARYUSHAN

By Jaini Shah



During Paryushan, many Jain devotees fast. No solid or liquid foods, other than boiled water, are consumed. The purpose of fasting is to cleanse oneself of bad karma (the accumulation of bad deeds and their consequences). Jaini Nilesh K Shah has completed 6 Atthais during Paryushan. Here, she answers some of the questions raised by her elder sister, Kinari.

What was the reason for completing your first Atthai?

As a child, I had attended several 'Paarnaas' for family members who had completed atthai. This included my cousins who are of a similar age to myself. As a result, I took it upon myself to 'try' fasting. I was intrigued as to why my relatives fast, and how it makes them feel. How could they function for so many days without food, by only drinking boiled water? At the age of 11, I decided to fast for a day during the auspicious Paryushan Festival in 2010. The first few hours were tough - it was a normal school day, I didn't exactly understand why I was fasting, and I was constantly thinking about the next meal! A day of fasting turned into two and then before I knew it, I had completed eight days of fasting (atthai), whilst still going to school. I am now 24 years old and have completed another 5 atthais; the last one in 2021.

How do you feel when you fast?

Intermittent fasting, fruit fasts, keto fasts... there is an endless list of different forms of fasting. However, fasting for religious purposes is an age-old tradition with a common purpose, which I believe is to purify our minds and soul. When I fast, I feel that my mind, and body is at

peace. During this period, I feel I have more self-control, willpower and discipline. For example, I resist luxuries like a small piece of chocolate for my sweet tooth. I develop so much self-control that the desire for food disappears. Yet, I do not feel as though I have deprived myself of food. I feel that I have cleansed my body and purified my soul.

Do you feel tired?

I am now a science teacher by profession and work in a high school with special needs students. Teaching can be exhausting. I often come home from work feeling tired, ready for a good night's sleep. Believe it or not, during the fasting period I experience bursts of energy. I strongly believe that it's the toxins that have departed my body, replaced with clean energy. This provides me with a huge sense of rejuvenation.

How do you resume your normal life when fasting is over?

On the day after the last fast, a 'paarnaa' ceremony is held. During this ceremony, my family and friends support me in breaking my fast by feeding me small amounts of specially prepared items, eg Goondni Raab, Moong Water, Jaggery Water, Pippermint na Ghanatoda, fresh sugarcane juice. For about a month after the fast, my meal portion sizes reduce significantly. However, after this time, my diet resumes as normal. Although the Paryushan Festival occurs annually, I strive to uphold the self-control and discipline that I gained whilst fasting within my daily routine and look forward to the next atthai.



The modern Jain's journey towards Moksh

An interview with an Oshwal on the journey of understanding Jainism

We sat down with Darshnaben Dhanani, a student of Oshwal's 'Jainism - An Introductory Course' classes to learn more about her experience. The classes are run by Dr Ajit Shah & other guests one evening each week via Zoom. They are conducted in English and are accompanied by question & answer sessions.

Hiya! Tell us a bit about yourself, Darshnaben.

I'm an accountant by career, based in South London. I've been an Accountant/Financial Controller for about 18 years. I'm actually not very involved with Oshwal. In my free time, I enjoy reading, meeting up with friends and family, and travelling - I've got a few holidays coming up this year. I also like playing music - I can play the piano and keyboard and would love to learn the dholki next.

So, tell us about how you got involved in the Jainism classes.

I went through a phase where, because of my limited understanding of Jainism, I stopped going to our Jain festivals, like Paryushan. My mum is quite religious and really wanted me to take part, but I felt that if I didn't understand what was going on, I was committing a sin to myself by attending. Pre-Covid, I couldn't find any English classes to help me understand. It was actually the online English pratikraman during Covid that sparked my interest. I was able to understand more about why we did each ritual. They explained the meaning behind

everything and what we are trying to achieve through practising pratikraman.

Since my first English pratikraman in the summer of 2020, my interest has developed, and I have more and more questions that I'd like answers to. The aim of finding answers to those questions was my inspiration to join the English Jainism classes.

The classes help me understand what and where I want to be. I think all of us want to attain Moksh and the classes help me understand what, if anything, I need to do to get there.

And tell us more about the classes.

They are run by Dr Ajit Shah. They can be quite intense with lots of information to digest, but the topics are very interesting. I really like the question & answer sessions and there are no limits on the questions you can ask. I've also had the opportunity to get in touch with Jayeshbhai through the classes and he has helped me answer lots of my questions too. Coming out of the classes, I try to latch on to the things that interest me and explore what more I need to do in these areas. There's no homework or anything...it's more listening and question-style open conversation. One topic that was really interesting to me was brought up in a class led by Rajivbhai. He told us about the pilgrimages he has been on. At some point I'd like to see all the sites on pilgrimages. He gave us the details of how he went

about the journey and I'm really glad this was brought up in the classes.

You mentioned one of your goals was to attend more festivals. Have you seen that come to fruition?

I have attended more festivals. Another avenue I've started to explore is fasting. I'm trying to understand the 'why' of fasting more now. I really like the English pratikraman. Every year they cover different aspects and it's all easy to understand. That's hopefully how I will be practising during Paryushan this year. I've been to some of the Navpad poojas recently too.

So, what was your biggest barrier into exploring Jainism before this?

It was definitely the language. Be it Gujarati or Sanskrit - language was the barrier. Even though I asked our elders questions about why we do certain things, the answer was always 'because that's the way we do it'.

Personally, that's very relatable and can be quite frustrating! Have there been any other frustrating moments on this journey?

When attending the poojas, I found the dress code difficult. I'm not an Indian clothes person, I prefer jeans and a t-shirt. I'd like to have more answers around why this dress code is enforced. Some of the answers I've had are hard to agree with or left me with more questions. But, I'm open to challenging the reasoning behind practices. For example, I'm not sure whether jeans and a hoodie reveal more of my body structure than a sari. And moreover, if I'm there to pay my respects to God, should I not be comfortable in what I wear? I've had a lot of questions like this about whether the roots of some practices lie in antiquity and can be modernised.

What's your view on other faiths and religion as a broader subject?

Growing up in the UK, I learnt a lot about the Christian creation story of Adam and Eve. I'm curious about the creation story of Jains and how,

if, this links to other religions. Some of the ways I interpret Jainism are based on my knowledge of other religions.

What would you say to anyone interested in exploring Jainism?

If you're on the verge of 'shall I or shall I not?', then go for the classes, try one session at least. If you are curious and intrigued, the classes are great. Sometimes I come out with more questions than when I went in, but it also sparks lots of interesting discussion. And the answers will come to you in some way or form. I have more dialogue with my parents around religion now, especially with my Mum.

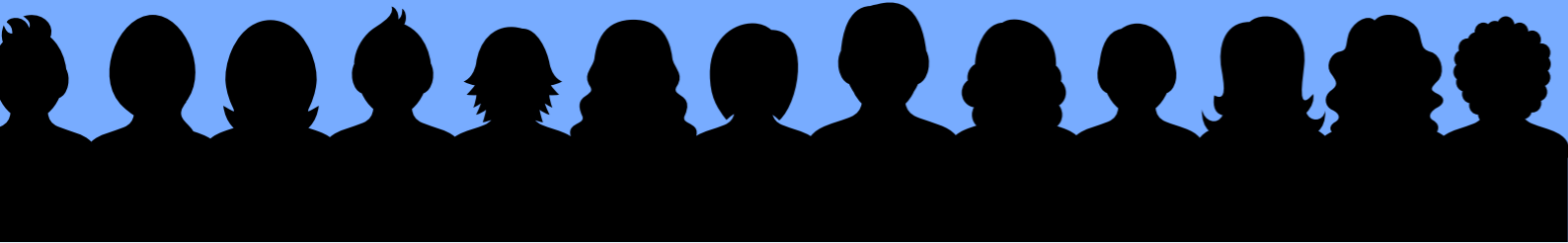
Finally, what do you think about the next generation and Jainism?

I'm not sure whether our generation are constrained by time or language, but I think the involvement has died down. I have two nephews who I'm trying to encourage to understand our religion. For example, I took them to a session I arranged with Jayeshbhai to understand the poojas and me, my mum, and my sister translated for my nephews. Despite not initially wanting to go, they enjoyed it, especially seeing the idols being cleaned. I have asked them to write a story about the experience and I will be doing the same!

It's great OAUK is trying to bring back the understanding through doing things in English and this topic has even been discussed in our classes. It is an important step in involving our generation and future generations in Jainism.

Thanks Darshnaben for your honesty in sharing your experience. Your curiosity is infectious and has left us wanting to explore Jainism and the classes!

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS



Volunteering at our Derasar at Oshwal Centre

North East Area Chair, Poonam, spoke to Pushpaben, a committed volunteer, about her involvement with Oshwal.

Poonam: How long have you been volunteering at Oshwal and what is your role?

Pushpaben: I have been volunteering since 1992 and been on the committee since 2007. My focus has been on the Cultural & Heritage and Religious portfolios.

Poonam: Tell us a little bit about yourself outside of Oshwal. What are your hobbies etc? Are you working? What do you do outside of Oshwal?

Pushpaben: Since childhood I used to be very active in every field like flower arranging, cooking. Since arriving in the UK in 1971, I have continued with cooking demonstrations. At the moment I spend a lot of time on Diwali and festival sweets.

Poonam: Tell us about a recent Oshwal event you were involved in that you're really proud of.

Pushpaben: I was involved in Panch Tirth Yatra in 2019. It was our dream for the North East Area to host all the 9 areas and it was a really, really good attempt; we had a very good response.

Poonam: Why do you like volunteering for Oshwal?

Pushpaben: Oshwal has always been a part of my life. My Dad and I used to be in the kitchen all the time. In Kenya I was actively involved with

the Mahila Mandal from a young age. Initially, in the UK, I couldn't spend too much time with Oshwal due to family health issues. Since 2007, after my husband passed away, I got really involved in Oshwal activities again.



Poonam: Do you have any message for your fellow Oshwals/Oshwals considering volunteering?

Pushpaben: Yes, just come over - if you need any help, we will help you. I believe that we are Oshwals so we should be working together for each other.

Poonam: What does Paryushan mean to you? Do you take part in Paryushan activities, and, if so, how?

Pushpaben: Paryushan is an important festival for us. I first worked with Taraben. Since she

passed away, I've taken on a lot of work. I love introducing new things during Paryushan to keep it interesting for everyone - young and old.

Poonam: What does Jainism mean to you? What is the role of faith/religion in your day-to-day life?

Pushpaben: Jainism is all about jiv daya (compassion). There is nothing very difficult about it, and I feel it is something that we can all easily follow. I have faith in it. It starts simply with a visit to the Derasar - the atmosphere in there will give you more faith in the divine.

Celebrating more of our volunteers, meet Bhavna Rashmi Shah, who has been volunteering to help with Derasar activities, and helping Jayeshbhai. She talks about her motivation to volunteer with Derasar activities:

I grew up in Arusha, Tanzania. Sewa was our dharma. Like many people, I had exposure to Sanatan and Jain dharma from a young age and would be actively involved in community activities in the town. Religion took a deeper meaning in my life in 2000, when I did my first Athai. My Dad would tell me to do the mala, but I found it too boring; it took too long. "You've started with an athai, you need to carry on - do something..." he would say. So, I learnt the logas. I didn't do anything particularly life-changing but as I grew older, I would exchange with my mother, what we were both doing with regards to religion.

I started attending Pathshala with Jayeshbhai. And quite

quickly, I found myself really looking forward to Monday evenings. In 2018, I started going to the Derasar more frequently, keen to learn to do a Pooja. I had butterflies - I worried about making mistakes... But, to my surprise, everyone who was there supported me and encouraged me to keep learning. It took some getting used to, until I was comfortable doing a Pooja without fright.

I then started helping out more frequently at the Derasar. There are 15 of us who support the activities in the Derasar, and I really appreciate their support. We don't have specific roles; everyone operates effectively, and we just make sure that everything gets done. What I've loved the most is getting people involved and helping / teaching those who might be doing a pooja for the first time. There are so many times when someone will have commented "I didn't know I could get involved." I'm really grateful to Jayeshbhai and Shandip for their trust in me, and for creating these opportunities for volunteers.

It can take a lot of time, of course. But we all spend time for our careers, social, and personal interests. We are willing to invest in our minds, our bodies, and for me this is exactly the same - this is an investment in my spirituality. I don't necessarily see my time at the Derasar as a volunteer - I'm learning, finding ways to shed my karma - it's all a part of one of my biggest life goals.

ઓશવાળ સેન્ટરના દેરાસરમાં સ્વયંસેવા

બીજા સ્વયંસેવકોનો પરીચય - ભાવના રશ્મી શાહ દેરાસરની પ્રવૃત્તિઓમાં બહુ મદદ કરે છે. જ્યેશભાઈને પણ મદદ કરે છે. તેને દેરાસરની પ્રવૃત્તિઓમાં સેવા કરવાની કેવી રીતે ઉત્તેજના મળી તેના વીંચે વાત કરશે.

હું ટાંઝાનીયામાં આવેલ અરુશામાં મોટી થઈ. સેવાને અમે અમારો ધર્મ ગણતા. સનાતન ધર્મ વીંચે મને નાની ઉમરથી જાણવા મળેલ અને ગામની સામાજિક પ્રવૃત્તિઓમાં હું ભાગ લેતી. મેં 2000ની સાલમાં મારી પહેલી અઠાઈ કરી ત્યારથી મારા જીવનમાં ધર્મએ વધારે ઉંડો પ્રવેશ કર્યો. મારા બાપુજી મને માળા કરવાનું કહેતા પરંતુ તે બહુ લાંબો સમય લેતું અને મને રસહીન લાગતું. 'તેં અઠાઈથી શરૂઆત કરી પણ હવે તારે ચાલુ રાખવું પડશે, બીજું કંઈ પણ કર', મારા બાપુજી કહેતા. તેથી હું લોગસ શીખી. જીવન બદલી નાખે તેવું મેં કંઈ કર્યું નહિં પણ જેમ હું મોટી થઈ તેમ મારા બા સાથે ધર્મ વીંચેના વિચારોની આપલે કરતી.

જ્યેશભાઈ સાથે મેં પાઠશાળામાં જવાનું ચાલુ કર્યું. પછીતો હું આતુરતાથી સોમવારની સાંજની રાહ જોવા મંડી. ૨૦૧૮થી હું દેરાસરમાં વધારે જવા મંડી- મને પૂજા કરતાં શીખવું હતું. પહેલાંતો હું ચીંતા કરતી કે ભૂલો થશે પણ ત્યાં બધા મને મદદ કરતા અને પ્રોત્સાહન આપતા. થોડો સમય લાગ્યો પણ પછી હું ચીંતામુક્ત થઈને પૂજા કરવા મંડી.

પછી દેરાસરમાં હું વધારે મદદ કરવા મંડી. અમે પંદર જણ છીએ જે દેરાસરની પ્રવૃત્તિમાં મદદ કરીએ છીએ. તે બધાએ મને પ્રોત્સાહન

આપ્યું તે માટે હું બહુ આભારી છું. જે કામ હોય તે અમે બધા કરવા મંડીએ, એવું નહિંકે આ કામ અમુક વ્યક્તિએજ કરવાનું. બધું કામ થઈ જાય તેજ અમારું નિશાન. બધાને પ્રવૃત્તિઓમાં ભાગ લેવડાવવામાં અને પહેલી વખત પૂજા કરતા હોય તેમને ઉત્તેજન આપવામાં મને બહુ મજા આવે છે. ઘણી વખત મેં સાંભળ્યું કે 'મને ખબર નહિં કે હું આવી રીતે ભાગ લઈ શકું' મારામાં વિશ્વાસ રાખવા માટે હું જ્યેશભાઈ અને સંદીપની ખરેખર આભારી છું અને સ્વયંસેવકો ને સેવા કરવાની તક ઉભી કરવા માટે.

દેરાસરમાં સેવા કરવામાં જરૂર ઘણો સમય જાય પણ આપણે જીવનની ઘણી બીજી પ્રવૃત્તિઓ માટે સમય આપવા તૈયાર છીએ તો આ ધાર્મિક પ્રવૃત્તિ માટે પણ સમય આપવા તૈયાર હોવા જોઈએ.

હું દેરાસરમાં કામ કરું છું તે સેવા માટે નહિં પણ કર્મમાંથી મૂક્તિ મેળવવાના એક માર્ગ તરીકે જોવ છું.

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નોર્થ ઈસ્ટ એરિયા ચેર, પૂનમે ઓશવાલ સાથેના તેમના સંડોવણી વિશે અન્ય પ્રતિબદ્ધ સ્વયંસેવક પુષ્પાબેન સાથે વાત કરી.

પૂનમ: તમે કેટલા સમયથી ઓશવાળમાં સ્વયંસેવા આપી રહ્યા છો અને તમારું કર્તવ્ય શું છે?

પુષ્પાબેન: હું ઓશવાળમાં ૧૯૯૨થી સ્વયંસેવા આપી રહી છું અને ૨૦૦૭થી સમિતિમાં જોડાયેલી

છું. મારું કર્તવ્ય સંસ્કૃતિક અને વારસામાં પ્રાપ્ત થયેલું તથા ધાર્મિક કેન્દ્ર પર છે.

પૂનમ: સમાજ સેવા સિવાય તમારી બિજી શું પ્રવૃત્તિ છે તે વિશે કહો. તમારા શોખ વગેરે કયા છે? તમે કામે જાવ છો? અને આ સિવાય બીજી તમે શું કામ કરો છો?

પુષ્પાબેન: નાનપણથી જ હું ફૂલની ગોઠવણી તથા રસોઈ જેવા દરેક કાર્યમાં ખૂબજ રસ લેતી હતી. ૧૯૭૧માં યુ.કે.માં આવ્યા પછી, મેં રસોઈના પ્રદર્શક ચાલુ રાખ્યા છે. હાલમાં હું દિવાળી અને તહેવારની મીઠાઈઓ બનાવવામાં, ઘણો સમય પસાર કરું છું.

પૂનમ: આપણા સંઘની એક તાજી ઘટના, જેમાં તમે સામેલ હતા અને જેના પર તમને ખરેખર ગર્વ છે તેના વિશે થોડું કહો?

પુષ્પાબેન: ૨૦૧૯માં પહેલીજ વખત પંચ તીર્થ ભાવ યાત્રાનું મેં યજમાન કરેલ. મારા જીવનનું એક લક્ષ્ય હતું કે અમારા નોર્થ ઈસ્ટ પરાને આગળ લાવીએ. અમારું એક સ્વપ્ન હતું, કે નવે નવ પરાને આ યાત્રાનો લાભ આપ્યે. આ ખૂબજ સરસ પ્રયાસ હતો અને અમને એમા સારો પ્રતિસાદ મળ્યો. અમારું સ્વપ્ન પણ સાકાર થયું અને એરિયા માટે ગર્વની વાત હતી. આવા કાર્ય એકલે હાથે નથી થતા. મને સ્વયં સેવકોનો ખુબજ સાથ મળ્યો.

પૂનમ: આપણા સંઘ માટે સ્વયંસેવક બનવું તમને કેમ ગમે છે?

પુષ્પાબેન: સંઘ સેવા હંમેશા મારા જીવનનું ધ્યેય હતું. મારા પિતાજી અને હું વધુ સમય રસોડામાં વાનગિઓ બનાવવામાં વિતાવતા હતા. કેન્યામાં હું નાનપણથી જ મહિલા મંડળ સાથે સક્રિય રીતે

સંકળાયેલી હતી. યુકેમાં આવ્યા પછી શરૂઆતમાં, પરિવારની શારીરિક સમસ્યાઓના કારણે, હું સમાજ સેવામાં વધુ સમય આપી શકતી નહોતી. ૨૦૦૭માં મારા પતિ સ્વર્ગસ્થ થયા ત્યાર પછી હું ફરી પાછી સમાજ સેવામાં જોડાઈ ગઈ.

પૂનમ: તમારા સાથીદારો, જે સ્વયંસેવા આપવાનું વિચારી રહ્યા છે, તેઓ માટે કોઈ સંદેશ છે?

પુષ્પાબેન: હા. તમે જરૂર પ્રયત્ન કરો. તમને કંઈ માહિતી જોઈતી હશે તો જરૂરથી મદદ કરશું. આપણે જૈન ધર્મને પામેલ છીએ અને મૈત્રી ભાવથી એકબીજા સાથે હળીમળીને કામ કરવું જરૂર છે.

પૂનમ: પર્યુષણનો મહિમા તમારા માટે શું છે? શું તમે પર્યુષણ પ્રવૃત્તિઓમાં ભાગ લો છો? અને જો હા, તો કેવી રીતે?

પુષ્પાબેન: પર્યુષણ આપણા માટે મહત્વનો વાર્ષિક તહેવાર છે. મેં પહેલા તારાબેન સાથે ઘણું કામ કર્યું હતું અને તેમના મૃત્યુ બાદ આ કામ મેં હાથમાં લીધું છે. મને પર્યુષણ દરમિયાન ધાર્મિક કાર્યક્રમો રજૂ

કરવા ગમે છે. જેથી કરીને યુવાન અને વૃદ્ધ દરેક માટે મનોરંજક રહે.

પૂનમ: જૈન ધર્મ માટે તમારો કેવો ભાવ છે? તમારા રોજીંદા જીવનમાં ધર્મની શ્રદ્ધા કેવી છે?

પુષ્પાબેન: જૈન ધર્મ એટલે જીવદયા (કરુણા) એમા કશું જ અઘડું નથી. તે સહેલાઈથી અપનાવી શકીએ.

અને તેની શરૂઆત દેરાસરમાં બિરાજમાન ભગવાનના દર્શનથી થાય છે. ત્યાંનું વાતાવરણ દરેક આત્માને શાંતિ અને શ્રદ્ધા વધારશે.

Master Chefs of North-West Area

By Sanjeev Shah



Do you watch Master Chef? What is your favourite Master Chef challenge? Mine is the one where contestants have to cook a 3-course meal for more than a hundred people. If you think that is a challenge, let me tell you how you can experience the thrill and buzz of a Master Chef kitchen...

Food is at the heart of every celebration. In just over a year, the Master Chefs of North-West Area have cooked more than 6000 meals at Ekta Centre. In addition, this team also prepared our community's biggest lunch at Savantsari for over 3000 people.

Our Master Chef teams are led by Head Chef and NW Area Committee Member Vinaben Dhanani. Vinaben started off as a sub-committee member of the Ladies Club Portfolio in 1993. She has been leading the Culture & Heritage portfolio since 2017. This is the largest portfolio of NW; it is responsible for some of our most popular activities such as the Ekta Monthly Meet (EMM), Family Social Evening (FSE), Weekly Ekta Arts & Crafts Club, Whist Drive Nite and Bhukhar Nite and our weekly Ekta Cards Club.

For each event, Vinaben relies on a team of 10 - 15 volunteers who start cooking the previous day to prepare the all-important Mishtan. Preparation on the day of the event starts at 7.00am and finishes at 5.00pm. The average age of this team is 70+ years. Altogether, the volunteers give over 300 hours of their time for each event. The NW Area holds over 50 events a year, so each year, they give us an incredible 15,000 hours of cooking time - the numbers make some of the televised Master Chef challenges seem small!

We have five Cooking Teams:

- EMM Team 1 lead by Rekhaben & Premataben
- EMM Team 2 lead by Vijyaben & Pramilaben
- EMM Team 3 lead by Sushiben & Manjuben
- FSE Team lead by Maltiben & Harshidaben
- Whist Drive Team lead by Vinaben & Surekhaben

The biggest cooking event is Savantsari. All 5 cooking teams come together for this event, and we get an additional 100 volunteers who come to help the day before and on the day itself. The planning for this feast starts a few months in advance and is run by Vinaben with care, precision and perfection.

In the last Savantsari (2022) we used:

96 kg of beans for the Shaak
50 kg Tuber for Daal and 80kg Rice
140 kg flour & 45kg sugar, 80kg ghee for Monthaal (Mishtan)
110 kg Flour and 100 litres of oil for Puri
6 boxes of Tomatoes, 5 boxes Cucumber, 3 boxes Capsicums and 150 Cabbages

Shocked?! Yes, I was too when I saw these quantities all eaten within 4 hours.

FACT: Did you know that according to tradition we cannot soak the beans used in the Savantsari Shaak the previous night and so someone must go and soak the beans after midnight on the morning of Savantsari. It is said that soaking beans for longer than 5 hours means you are creating a new life form in the beans and therefore by starting the process at 1am in the morning, we are sticking to our Jain principles of not hurting another life form or minimising the hurt. For the next Savantsari we need two volunteers who can soak the beans at 1am in the morning...

One of the biggest challenges that the cooking team faces is that they never know how many people will attend the Savantsari Lunch. Whilst we ask that everyone who is attending registers to reduce food wastage, we normally get only half the number of people register for lunch. Vinaben our Head Chef, urges all people attending to register, which makes the whole team's work more predictable, and importantly to have less food wastage.

I asked Vinaben what drives her to serve OAK since 1993, she said:

'My passion is to make my community be a real community to engage people. When I started

volunteering in 1993, the ladies club was running successfully as a place for the ladies in our community to socialise. I draw my inspiration from that time and today for me it's a great joy to see that we have people of all ages who are coming to Ekta Centre to increase social interaction, reduce loneliness and get the feeling of being wanted and valued. We have people who regularly attend events and we have people who volunteer regularly and have now created life-long friendships; that is what community spirit is about.'



We have encouraged more youth and their parents to come to Ekta Centre - they are the future of our community. We also have events for the elderly. Without our massive team of Volunteers, this would not be possible, and I thank all the Culture & Heritage Volunteers for their dedication and commitment to making our events successful and for making Ekta Centre alive and buzzing.'

For a new committee member like me, I am truly amazed at the amount of effort that each of the volunteers in this team puts in and how selflessly Vinaben serves the Community. I am grateful to get to learn so much from her.

Do you want to experience the thrill and buzz of the Ekta Master Chef Kitchen? WhatsApp Sanjeev on **07957635230**.



"We have people who volunteer regularly and have now created life-long friendships; that is what community spirit is about."

નોર્થ વેસ્ટ વિસ્તારના માસ્ટર શેફ

લેખક: સંજીવ શાહ, ભાષાંતર: સોનલ શાહ

શું તમે માસ્ટર શેફ જુઓ છો? તમારી મનપસંદ માસ્ટર શેફ ચેલેંજ શું છે? મારી મનપસંદ ચેલેંજ એ છે કે સ્પર્ધકોએ ૧૦૦થી વધુ લોકો માટે ત્રણ કોર્સનું ભોજન બનાવવાનું હોય છે. જો તમને લાગતું હોય કે તે એક પડકાર છે, તો ચાલો મારી સાથે માસ્ટર શેફના રસોડાના ધબકતા, ધમકતા વાતાવરણનો અનુભવ કરવા ...

ભોજન દરેક ઉજવણીનાં કેન્દ્રમાં હોય છે. માત્ર એક જ વર્ષમાં નોર્થ-વેસ્ટ વિસ્તારના માસ્ટર શેફે એકતા સેન્ટરમાં ૬૦૦૦થી વધુ લોકો માટે ભોજન બનાવ્યું છે. ઉપરાંત, આ ટીમે ૩૦૦૦ થી વધુ લોકો માટે સંવત્સરી નિમિત્તે આપણા સમાજના સૌથી મોટા ભોજનની તૈયારી પણ કરી હતી.

આપણી આ માસ્ટર શેફ ટીમોનું નેતૃત્વ, નોર્થ વેસ્ટ એરિયા કમિટીના સભ્ય અને હેડ શેફ વીણાબહેન ધનાણી કરે છે. વીણાબહેને ૧૯૯૩માં લેડીઝ ક્લબ પોર્ટફોલિયોના સબ કમિટી મેમ્બર તરીકે શરૂઆત કરી હતી. તે ૨૦૧૭થી કલ્ચર એન્ડ હેરિટેજ પોર્ટફોલિયોનું નેતૃત્વ કરી રહ્યાં છે. આ નોર્થ વેસ્ટનો સૌથી મોટો પોર્ટફોલિયો છે. તેઓ એકતા મંથલી મીટ (ઇએમએમ), ફેમિલી સોશિયલ ઇવનિંગ (એફએસઇ), વીકલી એકતા આર્ટ્સ એન્ડ ક્રાફ્ટ્સ ક્લબ, વ્હિસ્ટ ડ્રાઇવ નાઇટ અને બુખાર નાઇટ તેમજ સાપ્તાહિક એકતા કાર્ડ્સ ક્લબ જેવી

આપણી કેટલીક સૌથી લોકપ્રિય પ્રવૃત્તિઓ માટે જવાબદાર છે.

દરેક કાર્યક્રમ માટે, વીણાબહેન દસ-પંદર સ્વયંસેવકોની ટુકડી પર આધાર રાખે છે, જેઓ જમણાં ખૂબ જ જરૂરી એવું મિષ્ટાન તૈયાર કરવા માટે આગલા દિવસે રસોઈ બનાવવાનું શરૂ કરે છે. કાર્યક્રમના દિવસે તૈયારી સવારે ૭.૦૦ વાગ્યે શરૂ થાય છે અને સાંજે ૫.૦૦ વાગ્યે સમાપ્ત થાય છે. આ ટુકડીની સરેરાશ ઉંમર ૭૦+ વર્ષ છે. એકંદરે, બધા જ સ્વયંસેવકોનો કુલ સમય ગણીએ તો દરેક ઇવેન્ટ માટે તેઓ ૩૦૦ કલાકથી વધુ સમય આપે છે. નોર્થ વેસ્ટમાં દર વર્ષે પચાસથી વધુ કાર્યક્રમોનું આયોજન થાય છે, તેથી દર વર્ષે તેઓ પોતાના ૧૫,૦૦૦ જેટલાં કલાકનો ભોગ રસોઈ કરવા માટે આપે છે, જે ખરેખર એક અદ્ભુત સેવા છે - આ આંકડાઓને કારણે ટેલિવિઝન પર જોવા મળતા માસ્ટર શેફના કેટલાક પડકારો પણ સાવ નાના લાગે છે!

આપણી પાસે સક્ષમ એવી પાંચ રસોઈની ટુકડીઓ છે:-

- ઇએમએમ ટીમ એકની આગેવાની રેખાબહેન અને પ્રેમલતાબહેન કરે છે
- ઇએમએમ ટીમ બેની આગેવાનીમાં વિજયાબહેન અને પ્રમિલાબહેન
- ઇએમએમ ટીમ ત્રણનું નેતૃત્વ સુશીબહેન અને મંજુબહેન દ્વારા
- માલતીબહેન અને હર્ષિદાબહેનની આગેવાની હેઠળની એફએસઈ ટીમ
- વીણાબહેન અને સુરેખાબહેન દ્વારા વ્હિસ્ટ ડ્રાઇવ ટીમનું નેતૃત્વ

રસોઈની ટીમ માટે સૌથી મોટો પડકાર છે સંવત્સરીનાં ભોજનનું આયોજન. આ માટે રસોડાની પાંચેય ટીમો એક સાથે કામ કરે છે, અને વધારાના ૧૦૦ સ્વયંસેવકો

પણ તેઓને મળે છે જે સંવત્સરીના આગલા દિવસે અને સંવત્સરીના દિવસે મદદ કરવા આવે છે. આ મિજબાનીનું આયોજન થોડા મહિના અગાઉથી શરૂ થઈ જાય છે અને

તેનું સંચાલન વીણાબહેન ખૂબ જ કાળજી, ચોકસાઈ અને પારંગતતાથી કરે છે.

ગત સંવત્સરીમાં ઉપયોગ કરાયેલ વસ્તુઓ :

- શાક માટે ૯૬ કિલો કઠોળ
- દાળ માટે ૫૦ કિલો તુવેર દાળ અને ૮૦ કિલો ચોખા

- ૧૪૦ કિલો લોટ અને ૪૫ કિલો ખાંડ, મોહનથાળ માટે ૮૦ કિલો ઘી
- પુરી માટે ૧૧૦ કિલો લોટ અને ૧૦૦ લિટર તેલ
- ટામેટાંના ૬ બોક્સ, ૫ બોક્સ કાકડી, ૩ બોક્સ કેપ્સિકમ અને ૧૫૦ કોબી!!

જૈન પરંપરા અનુસાર આપણે આગલી રાત્રે સંવત્સરી માટે ઉપયોગમાં લેવાતા કઠોળને પલાળી શકતા નથી અને તેથી કોઈ એક વ્યક્તિએ મધ્યરાત્રિ પછી કઠોળને પલાળવા જવું પડે છે. એવું કહેવાય છે કે પાંચ કલાકથી વધુ સમય સુધી કઠોળને પલાળવાનો અર્થ એ છે કે તમે કઠોળમાં અનેક નવા જીવો ઉત્પન્ન કરી રહ્યા છો અને તેથી સવારે એક વાગ્યે કઠોળ પલાળીને બીજા જીવોને નુકસાન ન પહોંચાડવાના અથવા તો ઓછું દુઃખ કરવાના જૈન સિદ્ધાંતોનું પાલન કરવામાં આવે છે.

વિનંતી: આગામી સંવત્સરી માટે અમને બે સ્વયંસેવકોની જરૂર છે જે વહેલી સવારે એક વાગ્યે કઠોળ પલાળી શકે.

રસોઈ ટીમ સામે સૌથી મોટો પડકાર એ છે કે તેઓને જાણ નથી હોતી કે સંવત્સરી ભોજનમાં કેટલા લોકો પધારશે. જ્યારે સૂચના આપવામાં આવે છે કે દરેક વ્યક્તિએ રજિસ્ટરમાં નામ નોંધાવું, જેથી ખોરાકનો બગાડ ઘટે, ત્યારે લગભગ એવું બને છે કે આવેલ નામ કરતાં અડધા જ લોકો બપોરનાં ભોજન માટે આવે છે. વીણાબહેન, અમારા હેડ શેફની ખાસ વિનંતી છે કે જે લોકો ભોજન માટે પધારવાનાં હોય તેઓ જરૂર રજિસ્ટ્રેશન કરાવે, જેથી કામ વધુ સરળ બને અને ખાસ તો ખોરાકનો બગાડ ઓછો થાય.

મેં વીણાબહેનને પૂછ્યું કે ૧૯૯૩થી તેમને ઓ.એ.યુ.કે.ની સેવા આપવા માટે શું પ્રેરે છે? તેમણે કહ્યું, 'મારી એવી તીવ્ર ઇચ્છા છે કે મારો સમાજ એક-બીજાને જોડતી કડી બને. ૧૯૯૩માં જ્યારે મેં સ્વૈચ્છિક સેવા આપવાનું શરૂ કર્યું, ત્યારે લેડીઝ, ક્લબ આપણા સમાજની મહિલાઓને મળવા માટેના સ્થળ તરીકે સફળતાપૂર્વક ચાલી રહી હતી. હું તે સમયમાંથી જ મારી પ્રેરણા મેળવું છું અને આજે મારા માટે ખૂબ જ આનંદની વાત છે કે આપણે ત્યાં દરેક ઉંમરના લોકો સામાજિક આદાનપ્રદાન વધારવા, એકલતા ઘટાડવા

તેમજ મૂલ્યવાન હોવાની લાગણી મેળવવા માટે એકતા કેન્દ્રમાં આવે છે. આપણે ત્યાં કાર્યક્રમોમાં નિયમિત હાજર રહેતા અને સ્વયંસેવક તરીકે કામ કરતા લોકો છે જે હવે જીવનભરના મિત્રો બની ચૂક્યા છે; સમુદાયની ભાવના આ જ છે."

વધુ યુવાનો અને તેમના માતાપિતાને એકતા કેન્દ્રમાં આવવા માટે પ્રોત્સાહન આપવામાં આવ્યું છે - તેઓ આપણા સમાજનું ભવિષ્ય છે. વૃદ્ધો માટેના કાર્યક્રમો પણ આપણે ત્યાં આયોજવામાં આવે છે. અમારા સ્વયંસેવકોની વિશાળ ટીમ વિના, આ શક્ય જ નથી અને હું સંસ્કૃતિ અને હેરિટેજના જવાબદારીને સમર્પિત એવા તમામ સ્વયંસેવકોનો આભાર માનું છું, કાર્યક્રમોને સફળ બનાવવામાં અને એકતા કેન્દ્રને ગુંજતું કરવામાં મોટો ભાગ ભજવ્યો છે.

નવા સમિતિના સભ્ય તરીકે હું ખરેખર આશ્ચર્યચકિત છું કે આ ટીમમાંના દરેક સ્વયંસેવકો કેટલા પ્રયત્નો કરે છે અને કેવી નિઃસ્વાર્થપણે વીણાબહેન સમાજની સેવા કરે છે. હું તેમની પાસેથી ઘણું બધું શીખવા માટે આભારી છું.

INCLUSION & DIVERSITY



Focus on what I can do, not what I cannot do



Harshi Gudhka

My name is Harshi and I am 18 years old. I am happy and funny with cheeky smiles and I like socialising with everyone. Oh and I have Down's Syndrome, but that does not stop me from wanting to achieve the same things as everyone else. I just need some support in different ways.

What does support mean to me?

Support can simply mean including me. I will give you an example. In the North East Samvatsari on 11th September 2022, I was independently serving puris to everyone. This is because I was given the opportunity to be included in doing the same thing as everybody else.

How am I supported?

At school, when I am stuck with my work, my teachers and teaching assistants remind me and guide me on how to finish it. At Enabling Network, I am shown how to play different

sports and games like Boccia and Polybat. I enjoy playing these as I know what to do. I travel to my work experience every Friday with the support of my Personal Assistant (PA).

What I would like support with?

It helps me when people are patient with me when my speech is difficult for them to understand. I would like to feel included, not isolated in different places like at work or in the community. Focus on what I CAN DO and not what I cannot do.



Vaishali and Ronak

Sarita and Rajesh Shah have two children, Vaishali and Ronak. Both children were playful and growing as infants, but at the age of around 2 and 5 respectively, they noticed that they had physical difficulties. With no specific diagnosis or prognosis, the family has endured heartbreaking news and negativity to bring up their children and create awareness of disability.

Both children completed their education - Vaishali has a BTEC Level 3 in Business Studies and Ronak holds a Masters in Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship. He is in full-time employment, and volunteered at the UEFA Euro Championships. Saritaben gives us some insights on their family's story.

How did you feel when you first learnt about your children's conditions?

Embracing parenthood was joyous and challenging at the same time as it was a completely new chapter in our lives. Their conditions were rare, so we didn't really know what the prognosis was and what to expect. This was very disheartening and unbelievable to accept. As parents, we were torn apart and emotional. This is when my mother, one day said to me, "if you cry and sulk nothing is going to change or make them better. But if you focus and work on them, they will be stronger and accomplish things in life" - words that are engraved in me. This day turned my whole life and since then I have never looked back.

How did people react in the earlier days?

Any form of disability was a taboo subject; people's reactions were negative and blunt. Disabled people were easily labelled as "mad", "didn't understand" and "not capable of anything". These were incorrect reflections and particularly damaging to those who had ability to understand.

Some of the myths regarding Karma which our elders always commented upon were disturbing; the explanation was either never given or vague. This baffled me.

One of the most difficult disbeliefs to digest was that the woman who is carrier of the child got the blame when a child was born with problems. It was easy to say anything about disability - the science behind this never mattered.

What have been the most difficult situations from a social perspective?

When people around you are either ignorant or behave differently towards those with disability, it is very hurtful, more so when this came from our own family members and community. People kept staring at my children feeling pity ("bicharo"), or blatantly ignored them as if they did not exist.

At every stage be it schooling, travelling, community or even family events, etc we had hurdles to cross which made life difficult, when our hands were already full. There was little consideration given to our needs, and it was hard to be included and for our voice to be heard.

There seems to be more awareness of diversity and inclusiveness. In your experience, have things improved over the last decade?

Things have improved in every aspect of life. There is more awareness of diversity and inclusivity especially after the UK hosted the Olympics and Paralympics. There are now Government requirements to ensure all venues are accessible and there are more facilities that we can enjoy and organisations that provide guidance and services for your needs.

The mindsets of people have changed. People are now more willing to talk, understand and learn about different forms of disability. As they are understanding more through many medias, the support is increasing and it's getting easier to be inclusive.

How important is Oshwal (and the Enabling Network) to you?

There were loopholes in our community when it came to disability. As a parent I was aware that changes and mindsets needs changing but it was very difficult to do alone. The breakthrough came in October 2010 when there was a forum for disability as part of the OAUK Careers Fair. Since then, a team with strong, like-minded Oshwal members who had both the passion and craving to establish changes within our community, created The Enabling Network. This has been an excellent initiative and has made us even closer to OAUK.

From your own experiences, what actions can anyone take, which would be of benefit to any disabled person?

1. Take time and talk to individuals with needs directly. Then, give them time to reply and focus on your listening skills to understand their response. This will really boost their self-esteem - they love it when people approach them.

2. Be positive and treat everyone equally and, where necessary, adapt so everyone with different needs can be included.

3. Most importantly, offer them volunteering roles in our community and open employment opportunities - this is achievable as we have so many thriving businesses within our community. Wherever possible support the family too, as parents needs a break. Help in any little form can make a difference.

For the individual - always have an "I CAN" attitude. Work hard to your ability and never give up.

For parents - accept the challenge landed on your doorstep. Work as a team and be the voice for your child for the right reasons. The journey is harder and be prepared for bumps and curves but never forget how much of a difference you are making to that one individual.

હું શું કરી શકું તેના પર ધ્યાન કેન્દ્રિત કરો, હું શું ન કરી શકું તેના પર નહીં

સરિતા અને રાજેશ શાહને વૈશાલી અને રોનક એમ બે સંતાનો છે. બંને બાળકો બાળપણમાં રમતિયાળ હતા અને સારી રીતે ઉછરતા હતા પરંતુ, લગભગ બે અને પાંચ વર્ષની ઉંમરે તેઓએ નોંધ્યું કે બાળકોને શારીરિક મુશ્કેલીઓ હતી. કોઈ ચોક્કસ નિદાન અથવા ચિકિત્સા વિના, આ હૃદયદ્રાવક સમાચાર સાથે પરિવારે તેમના બાળકોને ઉછેરવા અને અપંગતા વિશે જાગૃતિ લાવવા માટે ઘણી નકારાત્મકતા સહન કરી છે. બંને બાળકોએ પોતાનું ભણતર પૂરું કર્યું - વૈશાલીએ બિઝનેસ સ્ટડીઝમાં બીટેક લેવલ ૩ અને રોનકે ઈનોવેશન મેનેજમેન્ટ એન્ડ એન્ટરપ્રાઇઝરશિપમાં માસ્ટર્સ કર્યું છે. રોનકે ફૂલ-ટાઇમ કામ કરવાની સાથે યુઇએફએ (UEFA)ની યુરો ચેમ્પિયનશિપમાં સ્વૈચ્છિક સેવા પણ આપી હતી.

સરિતાબહેન અમને તેમના પરિવાર વિશે થોડી જાણકારી આપે છે:

જ્યારે તમે તમારાં બાળકોની પરિસ્થિતિ વિશે પહેલી વાર જાણ્યું ત્યારે તમને કેવું લાગ્યું?

માતા-પિતા બનવું તે અમારા માટે આનંદકારક અને પડકારજનક, બંને હતું કારણ કે તે અમારા જીવનનો એક નવો અધ્યાય હતો. બાળકોની અવસ્થા અસાધારણ હતી, તેથી અમને ખરેખર ખબર નહોતી કે ભવિષ્યમાં કેવી રીતે તેની સારવાર થશે! જે સ્વીકારવું ખૂબ જ અઘરું અને હતાશાભર્યું હતું. માતાપિતા તરીકે, અમે ભાવુક બની અંદરથી તૂટી ગયા હતા. આ સમયે મારી માતાએ, એક દિવસ મને કહ્યું, "જો તમે રડશો અને ગુસ્સે થશો તો કંઈ પણ બદલાશે નહીં અથવા તેમને સાજા કરી શકાશે નહીં. પરંતુ, જો તમે તેમના પર સરખું ધ્યાન આપી કામ કરશો, તો તેઓ વધુ મજબૂત બનશે અને જીવનમાં કંઈક હાંસલ કરી શકશે." આ શબ્દો મારા મનમાં કોતરાઈ ગયા અને ત્યાર પછી મેં ક્યારેય પાછું વાળીને જોયું નથી.

શરૂઆતના દિવસોમાં લોકોનું રીએક્શન કેવું હતું?

લોકોના વિચારો અસ્પષ્ટ હતા અને વર્તન નકારાત્મક હતું કેમ કે આ વિષય પર વાત કરતા સૌ અચકાતા. દિવ્યાંગ લોકોને બહુ સરળતાથી "પાગલ", "સમજી નથી શકતા" અને "કંઈ આવડતું નથી" જેવાં લેબલ આપી દેવાતાં. આ બહુ જ ખોટું હતું અને ખાસ કરીને જેઓ સમજવાની ક્ષમતા ધરાવતા હતા તેમના માટે નુકસાનકારક હતું.

કર્મ સંબંધિત કેટલીક દંતકથાઓ કે જેના પર આપણા વડીલો હંમેશાં ટિપ્પણી કરતા હતા તે મનને દુઃખ અને ખલેલ પહોંચાડનારી હતી કારણ કે આ વિષયની સમજૂતી કાં તો ક્યારેય આપવામાં આવી ન હતી અથવા અસ્પષ્ટ હતી. આ વાતે મને મૂંઝવણમાં મૂકી દીધી.

સૌથી વધુ મુશ્કેલ તો એ વાત લાગતી કે જ્યારે બાળક કોઈપણ પ્રકારની મુશ્કેલી સાથે જન્મે ત્યારે માતાને તેનો દોષ આપવામાં આવતો! અપંગતા વિષે બોલવું બહુ સહેલું છે પણ તેની પાછળનું વિજ્ઞાન અગત્યનું નથી!

સામાજિક રીતે સૌથી મુશ્કેલ પરિસ્થિતિઓ કઈ રહી છે?

જ્યારે તમારી આસપાસના લોકો કાં તો અજ્ઞાની હોય અથવા દિવ્યાંગ લોકો પ્રત્યે જુદી રીતે વર્તે, ત્યારે તે ખૂબ જ દુઃખદાયક હોય છે, ખાસ કરીને ત્યારે કે જ્યારે આ આપણા પોતાના પરિવારના સભ્યો અને સમાજનું આવું વર્તન હોય. લોકો મારાં બાળકોને તાકી તાકીને જોતા અથવા તો જાણે તેમનું કોઈ અસ્તિત્વ જ ન હોય તેમ તેમની અવગણના કરતા.

દરેક તબક્કે, પછી તે શાળાકીય શિક્ષણ હોય, મુસાફરી હોય કે સામુદાયિક પ્રસંગો હોય, અમારે માટે અવરોધો ઊભા થતા, જેથી અમારી જિંદગી

મુશ્કેલ બની ગઈ હતી. એ પણ ત્યારે કે જ્યારે અમારું જીવન પહેલેથી જ મુશ્કેલીભર્યું હતું. અમારી વાત સંભળાવવી કે સમજાવવી સરળ ન હતી અને અમારી જરૂરિયાતો પર બહુ ઓછું ધ્યાન આપવામાં આવ્યું હતું, જેથી અમે બધે જઈ ન શકતા કે ભાગ ન લઈ શકતા.

હવે વિવિધતા અને સર્વેનો સમાવેશ કરવા વિશે વધુ જાગૃતિ હોય તેવું લાગે છે. તમારા અનુભવમાં, શું છેલ્લા એક દાયકામાં પરિસ્થિતિમાં સુધારો થયો છે?
જીવનના દરેક પાસામાં સુધારો થયો છે. વિવિધતા અને સમાવેશ કરવા વિશે વધુ જાગૃતિ છે, ખાસ કરીને યુકે દ્વારા ઓલિમ્પિક્સ અને પેરાલિમ્પિક્સનું આયોજન કર્યા પછી.

હવે સરકારે કાયમ કર્યું છે કે તમામ સ્થળોમાં દીવ્યંગો માટે પ્રવેશની સુગમતા હોવી જોઈએ અને હવે વધુ સુવિધાઓ છે જેનો આનંદ અમે લઈ શકીએ છીએ.

લોકોની માનસિકતા બદલાઈ ગઈ છે. લોકો હવે વિકલાંગતાના વિવિધ સ્વરૂપો વિશે વાત કરવા, સમજવા અને શીખવા માટે વધુ તૈયાર છે. જેમ જેમ તેઓ વિવિધ માધ્યમો દ્વારા વધુ સમજણ મેળવી રહ્યા છે, તેમ તેમ ટેકો વધી રહ્યો છે અને બધે જવું સરળ બની રહ્યું છે.

ઓશવાળ એનેબલીંગ નેટવર્ક તમારા માટે કેટલું અગત્યનું છે?

અપંગતા વિષે આપણા સમાજમાં શૂન્યાવકાશ હતો. એક વાલી તરીકે હું જાણતી હતી કે પરિવર્તન અને માનસિક વિચારધારાઓને બદલવાની જરૂર છે પરંતુ એકલા હાથે આ કામ કરવું ખૂબ મુશ્કેલ હતું. ઓક્ટોબર ૨૦૧૦માં સફળતા મળી જ્યારે ઓ.એ.યુ.કે. કારકિર્દી મેળાના ભાગ રૂપે અપંગતા માટેનું એક ફોરમ (મંચ) બનાવાયું. ત્યારથી, મજબૂત, સમાન વિચારધારાવાળા ઓશવાળ સભ્યોની એક ટુકડી, જેમનામાં આપણા સમુદાયમાં

પરિવર્તનો સ્થાપિત કરવા માટેનો જુસ્સો અને તૃષ્ણા બંને હતા, તેમણે ધ એનેબલીંગ નેટવર્કની રચના કરી. આ એક સર્વોત્તમ પહેલ કરવામાં આવી છે અને તે અમને ઓ.એ.યુ.કે.ની વધુ નજીક લાવી છે.

તમારા પોતાના અનુભવો પરથી, કોઈ પણ વ્યક્તિ કયા પગલાં લઈ શકે છે, જે કોઈપણ દિવ્યાંગ વ્યક્તિને ફાયદાકારક છે?

- સમય કાઢો અને સીધા જરૂરિયાતમંદ વ્યક્તિઓ સાથે વાત કરો. તે પછી, તેમને જવાબ આપવા માટે સમય આપો અને તેમના પ્રતિભાવને સમજો. આ ખરેખર તેમના સ્વાભિમાનને વધારશે - જ્યારે લોકો તેમની પાસે આવે છે ત્યારે તેઓને ખૂબ ગમે છે.
- હકારાત્મક બનો અને દરેકની સાથે સમાન રીતે વર્તો અને જ્યાં જરૂરી હોય ત્યાં સુગમતા આપો, જેથી જુદી જુદી જરૂરિયાતોવાળા દરેકને સામેલ કરી શકાય.
- સૌથી અગત્યની વાત એ છે કે, તેમને આપણા સમાજમાં સ્વયંસેવા અને રોજગારની તકો મળે તેવી જોગવાઈ કરો - આ કામ શક્ય છે કારણ કે આપણા સમુદાયમાં ઘણા સફળ વ્યવસાયો છે. જ્યાં પણ શક્ય હોય ત્યાં કુટુંબને પણ ટેકો આપો કારણ કે માતાપિતાને પણ વિરામની જરૂર હોય છે અને નાનામાં નાની મદદ પણ તેઓના જીવનમાં મોટો ફરક લાવી શકે છે.

વ્યક્તિઓ માટે: હંમેશાં "હું કરી શકીશ" વલણ રાખો. તમારી ક્ષમતા માટે સખત મહેનત કરો અને ક્યારેય હાર ન માનો. વાલીઓ માટે: તમારા માથે આવેલ પડકારને સ્વીકારો. એક ટીમ તરીકે કામ કરો અને યોગ્ય કારણ માટે તમારા બાળકનો અવાજ બનો. મુસાફરી મુશ્કેલ છે અને ઘણા ખાડા-ટેકરા અને વળાંક માટે તૈયાર રહો પરંતુ ક્યારેય ભૂલશો નહીં કે તમે તે એક વ્યક્તિના જીવનને કેટલું સારી કેટલો તફાવત લાવી રહ્યા છો.

Enabling Network brings together adults and children with disabilities, learning and physical, with the ultimate goal of inclusion and integration irrespective of ability.

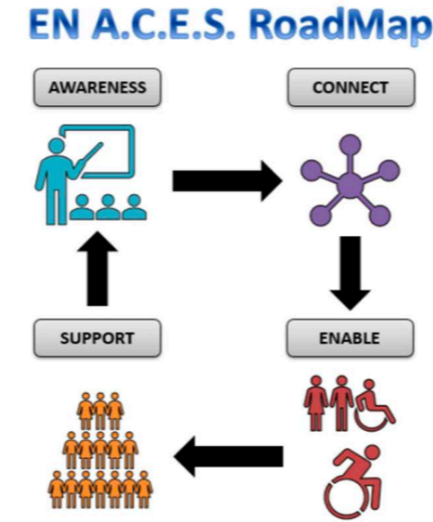


What is Our vision?



- Raise awareness** - Instil understanding about the different disabilities and change perspectives on what disability looks like.
- Create a community of openness, tolerance, and social inclusion at all levels** (such as religious functions, social events, sports activities etc).
- Inclusion and Integration** in all OAUk activities.

How can we achieve our vision?



- ♦ **Awareness** – continue to raise awareness about disability and Enabling Network within the community.
- ♦ **Connect** – with areas to engage in more activities.
- ♦ **Enable** – creating integration in all OAUk events
- ♦ **Support** – support those with disabilities within the community through larger initiatives such as supported employment/work experience.

How can you help?

For Enabling Network to achieve the above, we need your help!

- Tell everyone in the community about us.
- Tell those that you know with a disability about us and encourage them to join us.
- Volunteer for us @ ESSC and at other events.



Contact us at en@oshwal.org

ENABLING SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB

**Sports & Social Activities for Special Needs
Oshwals and their family & friends**



On the following Fridays from 8.00pm - 10.00pm

Sports Dates:

8 September 2023
13 October 2023
24 November 2023
8 December 2023
2 February 2024
13 March 2024
10 May 2024
28 June 2024

Social Dates:

29 September 2023
3 November 2023
23 February 2024
19 April 2024
7 June 2024
19 July 2024

**Ekta Centre, Karania Hall,
366A Stag Lane, London NW9 9AA**

★ **All Ages Welcome** ★

Nominal Charges Apply

For Enquiries Contact:

Smita (0782411538) or Sarita (02088637760)

email: en@oshwal.org

or visit <http://www.oshwal.org.uk/health>

JAYESHBHAI

A Summary of my Life

Jayeshbhai is one of few people who are so central to our Community. He has connected with so many of us – helping and teaching us with so much affection. We had an energising conversation with Jayeshbhai about his life.

Jayeshbhai, tell us about your early years, and how you got an interest in religion?

I was born in 1965 in Nadiad, India. I am the youngest of 5 children. More than religion, my parents focussed very much on helping others, and so they were very well known. As the youngest child, everyone in the town lovingly called me “Laadko”. I always got along with everyone, and had a very happy childhood. At the age of 15, we had a long school vacation. My Kaki, who knew I had an interest in religion, suggested that I go and learn from Kirti Ratna Vijayji Maharaj who was visiting. So, I joined. As I learnt more, I felt really connected to him, and wanted to spend more and more time there. He ran a Shibir and throughout I worked hard, spent time learning and understanding everything I was taught. I did so well, that at the end of it, I got a medal – something that was quite unexpected! That inspired me to then learn more about religion.

Did you consider taking diksha?

I met a lot of people and was very keen on taking Diksha. Everyone was prepared to take me on this journey, which just needed the blessing of my parents. My mother was unwell at the time, and was not prepared for me to go down this path. Soon, she got admitted to hospital and wanted to see me married. My mother passed away about a year after I got married.

How did you carry on with dharma after that?

I then met a Sadhviji, who was visiting the area and had noticed that I enjoyed sewa. We had

a Jain Pathshala (school), but it was not very successful. She asked me to teach the children there. I was somewhat hesitant as I had no experience of teaching. Sadhviji had full faith in me and announced that I would be the new teacher! In a few days, there were over 100 children attending.

For about 12 years, I ran that Pathshala in Nadiad, and ran my clothing business during the day. I had then reached a point where I wanted to go somewhere else where I could learn more. I had an opportunity to go to Bangalore, but the Nadiad Community didn't let me go – they wanted me to carry on in Nadiad!

Five years later, the Leicester Jain Centre was looking for a Minister of Religion. I thought I'd go for the interview. There were over 100 applicants, so I wasn't particularly confident that I would get it. The interviewers were then going to meet Ratna Sundar Surishwarji Maharaj. I also wanted to go to Ahmedabad to see my sister, so we went together. Guru Maharaj was very complimentary about me and referred to me as the jewel of Nadiad to the Leicester trustees. I believe that conversation eventually got me the role in Leicester. And although it was difficult for the Nadiad community, they gave me a great reference and I had the blessing of my gurus as I looked to move to the UK.

What was it like coming to the UK?

I had no relatives in the UK. On our flight to the UK, we met a Muslim couple. When I told them my story, they gave me their contact details and asked me to get in touch if I ever encountered any difficulty. That gave me a lot of peace – faith

in humanity. As we got off the plane, the kind gentleman gave me his mala (prayer beads). Everything was set up beautifully for us in Leicester. Everyone cared so much for us, and took us as one of their own. I stayed there for 15 years, teaching and promoting our religion. I never needed to call the Muslim couple, but I still have his mala!

Has the UK experience met your expectations?

It definitely has. One of the big differences I find is that in the UK, people really want to understand the meaning of everything that we do. In India, everyone learnt from me, and then carried on practising what they knew on their own. Here, we do so much together, so everyone keeps learning more. There are fewer people here who attend the derasar, but the number of people doesn't matter – every single person is worth helping.

What do you find difficult here?

I think it is valuable to help non-Jains have a simple understanding of Jainism and Lord

Mahavir's message. My English is not strong enough yet to allow me to do that, and I would like to improve it.

At times, it might feel that we are not the most united community. What's your view or advice?

We all make mistakes. Admitting mistakes, saying Michhami Dukkadam, is the starting point – we feel better for doing that. If others' actions hurt, they might do so for two or three days, but think of everyone like your own family members before acting. Our tirthankars have one particular bhaav (feeling) – to unite not destroy, and everyone needs to consider their own actions accordingly.

Can you advise on some simple steps that anyone can take to benefit from religion?

Is it important to support those who are doing sewa – the first step is always difficult. If you give them support, that can then inspire more activity, which will help you and others. Secondly, remember that you don't have to attend every event. But, do something.



જયેશભાઈ: મારા જીવનનો સારાંશ

જયેશભાઈ એક એવા વ્યક્તિ છે કે આપણા સમાજમાં તેઓ ખૂબ જ માનનિય છે. તેઓ આપણામાંના ઘણા બધા લોકો સાથે જોડાયેલા છે - આપણને ખૂબ જ સ્નેહથી મદદ અને શિક્ષણ આપે છે. અમે જયેશભાઈ સાથે તેમના જીવન વિશે ઉત્સાહપૂર્વક વાતચીત કરી હતી.

જયેશભાઈ, તમારા શરૂઆતનાં વર્ષો વિશે અને તમને ધર્મમાં રસ કેવી રીતે લાગ્યો તે જણાવશો?

મારો જન્મ ૧૯૬૫માં ભારતના નડિયાદ ગામમાં થયો હતો. હું પાંચ બાળકોમાં સૌથી નાનો છું. ધર્મ કરતાં, મારાં માતા-પિતાને બીજાંને મદદ કરવામાં વધારે ધ્યાન આપતા અને તેઓ ખૂબ જ જાણીતાં હતાં. હું સૌથી નાનો બાળક એટલે શહેરના લોકો મને પ્રેમથી "લાડકો" કહેતા હતાં. હું હંમેશાં દરેકની સાથે ભળી જતો, અને મારું બાળપણ ખૂબ જ આનંદમાં ગાળ્યું.

૧૫ વર્ષની ઉંમરે, અમારે શાળાની લાંબી રજાઓ હતી. મારા કાકી, જેમને ખબર હતી કે મને ધર્મમાં રસ છે, તેમણે સૂચવ્યું કે હું તેમને ત્યાં જાઉં. કીર્તિ રત્ન વિજયજી મહારાજ ત્યાં મુલાકાત લઈ રહ્યા હતા અને તેમની ઇચ્છા હતી કે હું તેમની પાસે ધર્મનું શીખું. તેથી હું ત્યાં જોડાયો. અને જેમ જેમ હું વધુ ને વધુ શીખતો ગયો તેમ તેમ મારો તેમની સાથે એક અનેરો સંબંધ બંધાઈ ગયો અને ત્યાં વધુને વધુ સમય ગાળવા માગતો હતો. તેમણે એક શિબીર ગોઠવી હતી અને મેં તેના માટે સખત મહેનત કરી મને જે શીખવવામાં આવ્યું તે બધું શીખવામાં અને સમજવામાં સમય પસાર કર્યો. મેં એટલું સારું પ્રદર્શન કર્યું કે તેના અંતે મને ચંદ્રક મળ્યો - જે મેં વિચાર્યું પણ ન હતું. તેનાથી મને ધર્મ વિશે વધુ શીખવાની પ્રેરણા મળી.

તમે દીક્ષા લેવાનું વિચાર્યું હતું?

હું ઘણા લોકોને મળ્યો અને મને દીક્ષા લેવા માટે ખૂબ જ ઉત્સાહ હતો. દરેક જણ મને આ યાત્રા પર લઈ

જવા માટે તૈયાર હતા, પણ મને મારા માતાપિતાના આશીર્વાદની જરૂર હતી. મારા માતા, એ વખતે અસ્વસ્થ હતા અને મારા માટે આ રસ્તો લેવા તૈયાર નહોતા. થોડા જ વખતમાં તે હોસ્પિટલમાં દાખલ થયા અને મને પરણેલો જોવા માગતા હતા. મારા લગ્ન થયાના લગભગ એક વર્ષ પછી મારી માતાનું અવસાન થયું.

તે પછી તમે ધર્મમાં સાથે કેવી રીતે આગળ વધ્યા?

પછી હું એક સાધ્વીજીને મળ્યો, જેઓ આ વિસ્તારની મુલાકાતે આવ્યા હતા અને જોયું કે મને સેવા આપવામાં આનંદ આવતો હતો. અમારી પાસે જૈન પાઠશાળા હતી, પરંતુ તે બહુ સફળ થઈ ન હતી. તેણે મને ત્યાં બાળકોને શીખવવાનું કહ્યું. મને ભણાવવાનો કોઈ અનુભવ ન હોવાથી હું થોડો અચકાતો હતો. સાધ્વીજીને મારા પર પૂરો વિશ્વાસ હતો અને તેમણે જાહેરાત કરી કે હું જ નવો શિક્ષક બનીશ! થોડા દિવસોમાં ત્યાં સો થી વધુ બાળકો જોડાયા હતા.

લગભગ ૧૨ વર્ષ સુધી, મેં નડિયાદની તે પાઠશાળા ચલાવી, અને દિવસના મારો કપડાંનો ધંધો ચલાવ્યો. તે પછી હું જીવનનાં એવા સ્થાને પહોંચી ગયો હતો કે હું બીજે ક્યાંક જવા માંગતો હતો જ્યાં હું વધુ શીખી શકું. મને બેંગ્લોર જવાની તક મળી, પણ નડિયાદના સમાજે મને જવા ન દીધો- તેઓ ઇચ્છતા હતા કે હું નડિયાદમાં જ ચાલુ રાખું!

પાંચ વર્ષ પછી લેસ્ટર જૈન સેન્ટર ધર્મગુરુની શોધમાં હતું. મેં વિચાર્યું કે હું ઇન્ટરવ્યુ માટે જઈશ. ત્યાં ૧૦૦થી વધુ અરજદારો હતા, તેથી મને ખાસ વિશ્વાસ ન હતો

કે હું તે મેળવી શકીશ. ત્યારબાદ ઇન્ટરવ્યુઅર્સ રત્ના સુંદર સુરીશ્વરજી મહારાજને મળવા જઈ રહ્યા હતા. મારે પણ મારી બહેનને જોવા માટે અમદાવાદ જવું હતું, તેથી અમે સાથે ગયા. ગુરુ મહારાજ મારા પર ખૂબ જ પ્રશંન થયા અને લેસ્ટરના ટ્રસ્ટીઓને મને નડિયાદના રત્ન તરીકે ઓળખાવ્યા હતા. હું માનું છું કે વાતચીતની આખરે મને લેસ્ટરની ભૂમિકા મળી. જો કે નડિયાદ સમાજ માટે તે મુશ્કેલ હતું, પણ ત્યાંનાં લોકો અને ગુરુઓએ આશીર્વાદ આપ્યા કારણ કે હું યુકે જવા માટે ઇચ્છતો હતો.

યુકે કેવું લાગ્યું?

યુ.કે.માં મારે કોઈ સગા સબંધીઓ ન હતા. યુ.કે.ની ફ્લાઈટમાં અમે એક મુસ્લિમ દંપતીને મળ્યાં. જ્યારે મેં તેમને મારી વાત કહી, ત્યારે તેઓએ મને તેમનો સંપર્ક કરવાની વિગતો આપી અને મને કહ્યું કે જો મને ક્યારેય કોઈ મુશ્કેલીનો સામનો કરવો પડે તો તેમનો સંપર્ક કરવો. તેનાથી મને ઘણી શાંતિ મળી - માનવતામાં મારો વિશ્વાસ વધારે મજબૂત થયો. અમે વિમાનમાંથી ઊતર્યા કે તરત જ દયાળુ સજ્જને મને તેની માળા (પ્રાર્થનાની માળા) આપી.

લેસ્ટરમાં અમારા માટે બધું જ સુંદર રીતે ગોઠવવામાં આવ્યું હતું. દરેક જણ અમારી ખૂબ કાળજી લેતું હતું, અને અમને તેમના પોતાના તરીકે લેખ્યા. હું ત્યાં ૧૫ વર્ષ રહ્યો, જૈન ધર્મને ભણાવતો અને પ્રોત્સાહન આપતો રહ્યો. મારે ક્યારેય આ મુસ્લિમ દંપતીને બોલાવવાની જરૂર નથી પડી, પણ હજી પણ મારી પાસે તેમની માળા છે!

શું યુ.કે.ના અનુભવ તમારી અપેક્ષાઓને પૂર્ણ કરે છે?

હા જરૂર પૂર્ણ કરે છે. મને જે મોટો તફાવત જોવા મળે છે તેમાંનો એક એ છે કે યુ.કે.માં લોકો ખરેખર આપણે જે કંઈ કરીએ છીએ તેનો અર્થ સમજવા માગે છે. ભારતમાં દરેક જણ મારી પાસેથી શીખતું અને પછી

પોતે જે કંઈ જાણતા હોય તેનો અમલ જાતે જ કરતા. અહીં આપણે સાથે મળીને ઘણું બધું કરીએ છીએ, તેથી દરેક જણ વધુ શીખતા રહે છે. અહીં દેરાસરમાં હાજરી આપનારા લોકો ઓછા છે, પરંતુ લોકોની સંખ્યાથી કોઈ ફરક પડતો નથી - દરેક વ્યક્તિ મદદ કરવા યોગ્ય છે.

તમને અહીં શું મુશ્કેલ લાગે છે?

મને લાગે છે કે જૈન ધર્મ અને ભગવાન મહાવીરના સંદેશની સરળ સમજણ ધરાવતા બિન-જૈનોને આપવી જરૂરી છે. મારું અંગ્રેજી હજી એટલું મજબૂત નથી એટલે હું તે કામ ન કરી શકું, પણ મને મારું અંગ્રેજી સુધારવું છે.

ઘણી વખત એવું લાગે છે કે આપણા સમાજમાં એકતા નથી. તેના માટે તમારો શું અભિપ્રાય કે સલાહ છે?

આપણે બધા ભૂલો કરીએ છીએ. ભૂલો સ્વીકારવી, મિચ્છામી દુક્કડમ કહેવું, એ પહેલું પગલું છે - તે કરવાથી આપણને વધારે શાંતિ થશે. જો બીજાની ક્રિયાથી દુખ થાય, તો તેઓ બે કે ત્રણ દિવસ સુધી આમ કરી શકે છે, પરંતુ સામનો કરતા પહેલાં તેમને તમારા પોતાના પરિવારના સભ્ય તરીકે ગણવા. આપણા તીર્થંકરોમાં એક વિશિષ્ટ ભાવ હોય છે - એક થવું અને નાશ કરવો નહીં. દરેકને આ નિયમો ધ્યાનમાં રાખીને કાર્ય કરવા જોઈએ.

ધર્મનો લાભ લેવા માટે કયા સરળ પગલાઓ લઈ શકાય?

જે લોકો સેવા કરી રહ્યા છે તેમને ટેકો આપવો જરૂરી છે - પ્રથમ પગલું હંમેશા મુશ્કેલ હોય છે. જો તમે તેમને ટેકો આપો, તો તે પછી વધુ પ્રવૃત્તિને પ્રેરણા આપી શકે છે, જે તમને અને અન્ય લોકોને મદદ કરશે.

બીજું, યાદ રાખો કે તમારે દરેક કાર્યક્રમમાં હાજરી આપવાની જરૂર નથી. પણ, કંઈક કરવું જરૂરી છે.



Twelve Facets of Reality: The Jain Path to Freedom

Review written by Dr Hinesh Ramnikal Shah

This book is the third, in a trilogy that takes the reader from the tentative steps in meditation to progressively deeper levels and greater dimensions of life awareness.

Gurudev Shree Chitrabhanu has drawn upon 38 years of experience in meditation to bring to life ancient reflections on reality, known as Bhavanas. This book is based on twelve classes that were taught to American students. Each chapter clarifies the different facets of reality, revealing the inherent spirituality and radiant qualities of the enlightened human consciousness.

The book offers, those who seek it, an understanding of the permanent and impermanent reality behind ever changing elements of existence in our lives. Let's consider each of these:

1. All life is transitory in nature while the soul is permanent and developing this understanding is essential to furthering our inner spirituality and inspire us to move into a higher realm.

2. Understanding that things and persons we depend on are themselves helpless. Our consciousness needs to escape from the temporary dependence on others and connect with our inner energy, ultimately merging with it.

3. Observing the multitude of changes that moves in a smooth and rhythmic motion, from a central viewpoint. Each turn can either cause bondage or freedom. The transformation is entirely our judgement, and this can free us from karmas and lead us closer to reality.

4. Experiencing aloneness is essential in understanding the meaning of oneness. We should be aware of others as living lights and realise the magnificence and potency of the soul to become universal.

5. Misidentifying oneself with that which is other than self. Bonding ourselves to material things we have become bound. By throwing light on this we hope to free ourselves of dependency and perceive life clearly.

6. Differentiating the body from the soul. What is projecting us forwards is our spirit, longing to find the beautiful, noble and divine. Let meditation dehypnotise our consciousness. Nothing binds a person who is aware, and they live in the world, with the world, but not of it.

7. Recognising consciousness as a clean body of water; clear, pure and sparkling. Standing back, we can observe the inflow of negative vibrations. We don't need to identify with them for what has come from outside shall return there. It does not belong in our consciousness. Our real nature is blissfulness. In our natural state, we are in balance. Detachment is being with ourselves and then we comprehend how to engage with others. Only conviction that comes from inner experience will endure.

8. Closing the window when anger, greed, ego and deceit enters our lives. Let us witness the pain that anger has caused, the inner cruelty of greed such that in obtaining

more others must do with less, how ego wishes to put others down and pretensions of deceit, covering up the truth from ourselves and the world.

9. We must drop, break or shred conditions, addictions and habits that bind us and free ourselves to reach our true potential. We require that which helps us grow and project us towards our permanent reality. We cannot be like others, wherever we go, we travel with ourselves. Discipline comes from this inner self-awareness. They are like the banks of the river: if we keep these banks around us, we free ourselves to flow towards the ocean in a steady stream of awareness and love.

10. There are several constituents of the universe but only the soul is aware. The soul is limitless and infinite. We need to clear the obstacles that clutter our inner universe. By opening our hearts and minds, we feel the spacious energy inside. We are a living conscious energy which should melt away the inner walls of fear, greed, possessiveness, anger and ignorance. We must free ourselves from all these forms and live beyond.

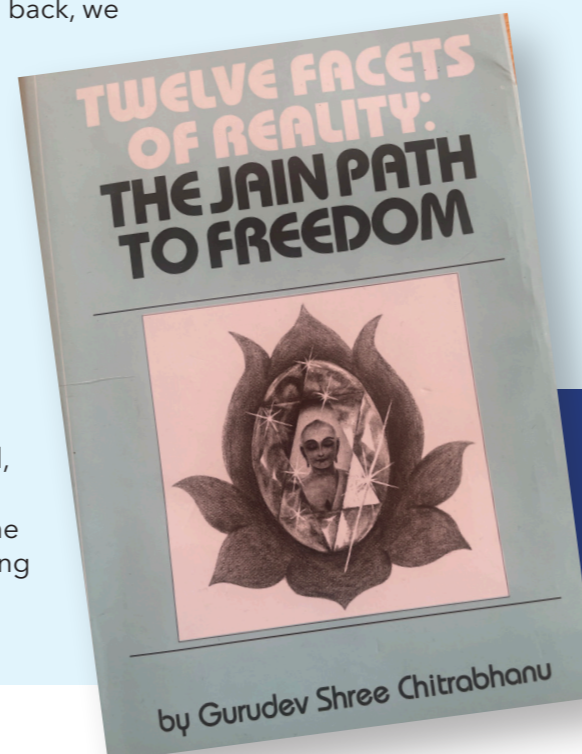
11. By confusing the desires of the body with the longing of the soul, we don't see that love is the nourishment of the soul. It exists, rather than being possessed. Celebrating the unique moment when we realise that we are eternal, unborn and imperishable represents our greatest achievement.

12. We must stop being tossed and turned by waves of unreality and realise our dharma (reality). Being separated from our inner self is why we experience pain. When we join ourselves, nothing can perturb us. We are at peace, we are an atma (soul). All else is temporary. Reality is here, embedded in us.

These teachings prevent us from clinging to a distorted and dogmatic view and correct our vision. The ultimate experience of reality is universal and unfragmented. It is radiant, luminous, reflecting its source, that in each of us, which is flawless, enlightened, pure and conscious. Chitrabhanu's purpose in elucidating the Bhavanas, is to offer contemplation, pathways and open windows from which to observe and feel the freshness of life. When the mind is not engaged elsewhere, it is possible to have a genuine experience of reality.

I found this book to be fascinating and eminently readable. Clear practical examples in each chapter assist the reader in understanding the prose. I really could not put it down.

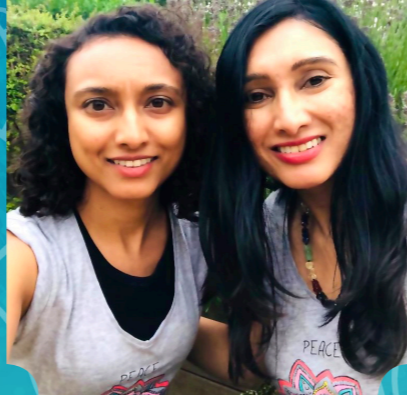
"For those who open themselves there is transformation, from age to youth, from misery to joy, from pain to peace, from dwelling on one's own mortal frame to feeling one's immortal life"



"These teachings prevent us from clinging to a distorted and dogmatic view and correct our vision."

YOGA:

A work-out and a work-in!



By Seema and Sonal

Yoga classes are widely available these days in gyms, Yoga studios and community settings. There are many different styles of classes, some traditional and others that fuse Yoga with other forms of exercise. Some are geared to beginners and others incorporate advanced postures and other yogic practices. But what is Yoga? Where does it originate from? What is its purpose?

Yoga originates from India, and the word comes from the Sanskrit word yug, meaning union. It is the joining of the individual self to the universal self. This means letting go of the 'I' or 'me' ego and seeing oneself as being a part of the vast universe, being interconnected to others and the divine. There are many classical definitions of yoga, the premise of all attributing Yoga as a skilful science to gain mastery over the mind. So, it is not primarily about the physical yogic postures, known as asana, but the main goal is about disciplining and controlling the mind.

Yogic tradition mentions that there are five layers to our existence, known as pancha kosha. The first is annamaya kosha, which is matter, our physical body. The second is pranamaya kosha, the life force that keeps us alive and breathing. The third is manomaya kosha, the mind that allows thoughts and emotions. The fourth is vijñanamaya kosha, the intellect that helps to distinguish right thoughts, words and actions from those that are wrong. The fifth is anandamaya kosha, the bliss, happiness and freedom layer.

Yoga helps to enhance one's physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual personality. It works on and benefits all five layers of our existence. At the physical level, Yoga helps to relax the muscles. This further helps to increase flexibility, improve digestion, reduce stress and have deeper, slower breathing, amongst many other physical benefits. The deeper, slower breathing

is linked to more oxygenation to all parts of the body, making the body energised and the mind more focused. A balanced body and mind increase willpower and creativity at the mental level. This further helps to sharpen the intellect and calm the mind, causing less drama in life as one learns to be less reactive. This further increases happiness, joy and bliss as one sees the positive in everyone and everything, and learns to live in the moment, with gratitude.

There are four main streams of Yoga in traditional Indian texts: karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, and raja yoga. Karma yoga is the path of selfless actions, without any expectation for the returns. Bhakti yoga is the path of devotion, which includes prayers and surrendering to the divine. Jnana yoga is the path of wisdom, self-reflection and gaining spiritual knowledge. Raja yoga is the path of willpower that includes the eight limbs of Asthanga Yoga authored in the Yoga Sutras by sage Patanjali. These eight limbs are yama (restraints, like non-violence), niyama (observances, like contentment), asana (physical postures), pranayama (breathing techniques), pratyahara (control over one's five senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (eternal bliss).

While most people will be familiar with asana and pranayama being linked to Yoga, other practices one may be doing may not necessarily be thought of as Yoga despite being so. For example, through volunteering work, being of service, gaining spiritual wisdom, prayers, meditation, fasting, finding joy in the present moment, etc. one is partaking in Yoga. During the festival of Paryushan, many of the practices (such as pratikraman, meditation, fasting, etc.) that many Jains partake in have parallels with Yoga. Yoga is not just a work-out; it is also a work-in.

Cooking Corner

...because we all love some sweet and spice!

Fresh Mint Cookies (Vegan. Nut-free. Makes 12-18)

Recipe prepared by Seema and Sonal

Mint is a great herb with various nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Studies show that it is also a wonderful source of antioxidants, which help protect your body from oxidative stress caused by free radicals, boost the immune system and have antibacterial properties. Therefore, it is used in dental products, pain relief formulations and also to help decongest when one has a cold.

These cookies are vegan, nut-free and also free from artificial colourings, flavourings and additives. Home cooking with positive vibes and intentions is a great way to add satvik (harmonious and positive) energy to your food.

Ingredients

4oz porridge oats	1 tablespoon maple syrup
5oz plain flour/gluten-free flour	1 dessert spoon water
4oz coconut/soft brown sugar	1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
4oz vegan butter	4 heaped tablespoons chopped fresh mint leaves

Method

1. Mix oats, flour, sugar, mint and bicarbonate of soda in a bowl.
2. Melt butter, maple syrup and water and add to dry mixture.
3. Mix well.
4. Roll into small balls and flatten slightly on a greased baking sheet.
5. Bake at 180°C/Gas 4 for 10 - 20 minutes until golden.
6. Leave to set before transferring to a cooling rack.

Store in an airtight container and eat within 3 weeks. Enjoy these delights!



Healthy Date Balls (Vegan)

Recipe prepared by Gita S Shah, Northampton

Ingredients

1 cup Flax Seeds	1 Cup Makwana (Lotus Seeds)
½ cup Sesame Seeds	1 tbl spoon - Poppy Seeds (Khus Khus)
1 cup Almonds	1 Slab seedless dates

Method

1. Roast the flax seeds, sesame seeds, almonds, makwana (lotus seeds) & poppy seeds, separately, on low flame.
2. Grind them fine once cool.
3. Mix together.
4. Grind the dates well and mix with the other ground ingredients.
5. Roll the mixture into balls. You may need to warm the mixture slightly in the microwave to help you roll them.

Enjoy!





STRENGTHEN YOUR BRAIN

Speak two languages

By Anneka Shah

In an ever more interconnected world, it seems that only one language is necessary - English. There are over 80 countries with English as an official language, and over 1.5 billion people speak English. It's the most commonly spoken language and is a ticket to the worlds of business, science and more. With AI capabilities and the likes of Google translate, the question 'do you need to speak more than one language?' is becoming a common one. My answer: yes, you do.

Almost all children are now encouraged to learn a new language at school. And for that matter. Some leading MBA programs also consider music or computer coding as a language. So, there is general belief out there that being bilingual helps, and so we're keen to get it onto our CVs.

But being able to speak more than one language is about more than an extra line on your CV. It is scientifically proven to help your brain health, especially in older age.

According to science writer, Ramin Skibba, "A bilingual brain can compensate for brain deterioration by using alternative brain networks and connections when original pathways have been destroyed. Researchers call this theory "cognitive compensation" and conclude that it occurs because bilingualism promotes the health of both gray and white matter."

Beyond science, my experiences of learning languages have had a hugely positive impact on my wellbeing. Being exposed to new cultures, entertainment, friends, foods and more, makes my everyday life a little more fulfilling, exciting and rich.

Many people who I speak to will have learned a language at school, and then the knowledge

drifts away over time. The benefits of the language that Skibba refers to, however, come from consistent practice, rather than a single exam pass. And that's where Gujarati can be so handy - there are so many opportunities for practice!

What I would implore parents and teachers to do is, rather than simply trying to teach a language, teach about all the positives of learning languages too. So many of my peers reflect on their experience learning languages, saying they wished they'd understood the opportunities that come with speaking Gujarati when they were younger, and, if they'd known the benefits, they would have been more likely to prioritise learning the language. And rather than focusing on the language itself, focus on the process.

When learning a language, it's not about being right or wrong, it's about expressing yourself, and being given the confidence to do so.

It's about building connections with others. It's about interacting with music, TV shows, history, books and cultures. Our Gujarati schools are making a strong effort on leading with such aspirations, rather than on exams and grammar and vocab tests. With the building blocks they provide, it's easy to continue with this at home, and continue to power up your brains!

And remember, there is no age limit on learning languages. It is never too late to start. If you have a passion for other cultures, and if you enjoy travelling like many members of our community, I implore you to discover languages. They will make your experiences richer, bring you closer to local people, and in the meantime will strengthen your brain!

WORD SEARCH

Hidden in this grid are eight words, all pertinent to this time of the year. Can you find them all?

ધ	છ	ઠ	કૃ	ગ	ભ	પ્ર
મ્	બ	ડી	ઉ	જા	હ	તિ
ળ	ઝ	ફ	પ	જુ	ની	ક
અ	નિ	એ	વા	જૈ	ષ	મ
હિં	ક્ષ	ઢ	સ	છે	ન	ણ
સા	મા	યિ	ક	વ	લ	ચ
રી	દ	ણ	સ્ત	પ્ર	ખ	થી

Jain	જૈન
Pratikraman	પ્રતિક્રમણ
Dharma	ધર્મ
Upvas	ઉપવાસ
Samayik	સામાયિક
Stavan	સ્તવન
Kshama	ક્ષમા
Ahimsa	અહિંસા

Once you've found them, check that you know the meanings of each word. If you don't know them, get in touch with one of our Gujarati schools - contact details are on the next few pages!



NORTH AREA GUJARATI SCHOOL



Classes run from
Bal Mandir to
GCSE

School times:

09:15am to 12:30pm
Term time Saturdays



Our location:
Woodhouse College
London N12 9EY



For more information:



Contact our Education Lead on
education-n@oshwal.org



Visit our website:
www.oshwal.org.uk/education

Oshwal Association of the UK (Charity Reg. No. 267037) | Ts & Cs apply
See website for details: www.oshwal.org.uk/event-term

2023-24 ADMISSION NOW OPEN

PLEASE APPLY:

[HTTPS://OSHWAL.ORG.UK/GUJARATI-SCHOOL-APPLICATION-FORM/](https://oshwal.org.uk/gujarati-school-application-form/)



QUALITY CLASSES FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN

OUR FEATURES

EXPERIENCED TEACHERS

Our experienced teachers have been working in the education field for a very long time.

STRUCTURED LESSONS

Our main focus is on teaching Gujarati with structured lessons. The set routine allows children to flourish as they are taught in a friendly, approachable environment.

BIG HALL

Our school hall is perfect to hold assemblies and workshops. In the past we have had workshops on social, health and well-being as well as Jainism.

OPEN SPACE AND PARKING

In Summer children can take advantage of playing outside and enjoy learning activities in our open space. There is also ease of parking.



OSHWAL GUJARATI SCHOOL

SOUTH AREA



Oshwal Gujarati School is an institution like no other. It builds character and integrity. The children are beautifully taught both our language and our culture, which define our identity and heritage. Festivals are celebrated and friendships are created in a resourced and nurturing environment.



I have really enjoyed my time at Gujarati school. Everyone has been very welcoming to me and I have learned a lot of Gujarati in such a small amount of time.

**EVERY SATURDAY
FUN SCHOOL: 3-5 YEARS
GUJARATI SCHOOL: 5+
YEARS
HARRIS ACADEMY,
KENDRA HALL ROAD,
SURREY, CR2 6DT**

I'm so grateful for the welcoming community for my son. It feels like he gets a special set of friends that are all on the same learning journey as he is, and it's so much fun along the way! He gets to throw colour around at the Holi utsav, make rangoli at Diwali and even dance at the navratri garba.

During these years I have made new friends in the community and learnt about my mother-tongue, it's an amazing experience!

What you and your team do each week can only be described as Love. It's a very caring and nurturing environment that provides teaching catered to each individual, whatever their needs.

Thank you for inspiring my children to learn our culture and Gujarati language in a most friendly and fun way. Your extra support has nurtured my kids to blossom, and they love coming to school.

Interactive and engaging lessons with an emphasis on speaking Gujarati, learning about our culture and building lifelong friendships.

Please contact us for a trial lesson or for more information email us at: ogssouth@oshwal.org or phone Anil: 07970 897 002

Admission of new students will be at the sole discretion of the head of school and its management team.

OSHWAL ASSOCIATION OF THE UK is a registered Charity in accordance with the Charities Act, 1960. Charity No. 267037



OSHWAL WEST AREA GUJARATI SCHOOL

WEST AREA GUJARATI SCHOOL

Oshwal and Non-Oshwal Welcome

CHILDREN AGED 4 +

**LEARNING TO SPEAK GUJARATI WITH ACTIVITIES
SUCH AS YOGA, DANCING, STORYTIME
EVERY FRIDAY**

**From 6.15PM - 7:45PM
OSHWAL SHAKTI CENTRE**

**INWOOD Road, HOUNSLOW TW3 1UX
CONTACT MAHESHBHAI ON
07984624639 OR EMAIL
MAHESH.V.SHAH@OSHWAL.ORG FOR
MORE INFORMATION**



FOR A FULL LIST OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS PLEASE SEE THE OSHWAL WEBSITE (WWW.OSHWAL.ORG.UK)
Made with PosterMyWall.com

CHARITY NO. 267037



AREA

OAUK East Area



BADMINTON

WEEKLY SESSIONS

EVERY FRIDAY 9-10PM

ATAM ACADEMY

Little Heath, Barley Ln, Romford
RM6 4XX

Members £3



Non-Members £5

RSVP Hinesh (Area Youth Officer) weekly to confirm your place

Oshwal Association of the UK registered charity no. 267037 T&Cs apply www.org.uk/event-terms



AREA



NORTH AREA REGULAR EVENTS

FRIDAY YOUTH CLUB U12 6-8PM O12 8-10PM (term time only)
SOCIAL CLUB 7.30-10PM
CRAFT CORNER 7.30-10PM
VENUE : WOODHOUSE COLLEGE N12

SATURDAY GUJARATI SCHOOL 9.15AM -12.30PM (term time only)
VENUE : WOODHOUSE COLLEGE N12

LUNCHEON CLUB ONCE A MONTH ON WEDNESDAYS £5pp
VENUE : SCOUT HALL, 104 GROVE ROAD, N12 9EA

Note: Photos & videos may be taken during the event. By attending you are giving permission to OAWK to use these in any post-event publicity
Oshwal Association of the UK | Charity No: 267037 | <https://oshwal.org.uk/events-terms/> | Management reserves the right to make any necessary changes

**Enquire now to enrol!
We want more Under 10's!**

Contact
yc.north@oshwal.org for
more info



**YOUTH
CLUB**



**Football
Kho kho
Benchball
Dodgeball
Rounders
And much more!**

**Woodhouse College Sports Hall
North Finchley, N12 9EY**

18.00 - 20.00 - Under 12's

Management reserves the right to refuse admission and to make any changes due to unforeseen circumstances.
Oshwal Association of the UK is a registered charity (No. 267037)

North East

AREA

North West

AREA

Swami Vatsalya Bhojan

NORTH EAST AREA OF OAUK

Sunday 8th October 2023 at Oshwal Centre

Everybody is welcome.
Please register for catering purposes by scanning or clicking on the QR code.

Fun and games from 11am.
Puja in the derasar.
Lunch from 1.00 to 3.30pm
Music and Garba from 2.00 to 5.00pm.
(Bring your own dandiya)





T&Cs Apply: www.oshwal.org.uk/event-terms
Oshwal Association of the UK | Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane Road, Hertfordshire, EN6 4DG | Charity Reg. No. 267037.

YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE

London Lifesaver: Emergency Life Support (ELS) Training



Shailesh Malde is a Yoga Coach and Personal Trainer focused on helping with Obesity, Diabetes, Lower Back Pain and Pain Management. He volunteers for Brent Health Matters, British Heart Foundation and London Ambulance Service focusing on educating the community on healthy lifestyle.

Did you know?

A Cardiac Arrest is when the heart stops beating, and the person is clinically dead. There are approximately 10,000 out of hospital cardiac arrests in London per Year. Fewer than 1 in 10 survive and out of hospital Cardiac Arrests.



Since September 2022, Shailesh has been volunteering his services to OAUK North West Area to teach Life Saving Skills on behalf of London Ambulance Service. As of May 2023, 90 Oshwal Members had learnt 4 Key Skills:-

1. Patient Assessment
2. Recovery Position
3. How to Perform CPR
4. How to use Defibrillator (AED)

Early recognition that a person is suffering from Cardiac Arrest and performing CPR and using the AED significantly increases the chances of survival. Early application can increase the survival rate from 10% to around 70%.

If you are interested in attending the Life Saver Training, please contact Nehul Shah on 07932982972. This training will help you understand the difference between a Cardiac Arrest and a Heart Attack, how to deal with an unconscious person, Practice CPR and use a defibrillator. You will also learn the signs and symptoms and how to help a person who is choking.

Each and every one of you can make a difference and save a life.

North West

AREA

તમે એક જીવન બચાવી શકો છો

લંડન લાઇફસેવર: ઇમરજન્સી લાઇફ સપોર્ટ (ઇએલએસ) તાલીમ

શૈલેષભાઈ માલદે યોગ કોચ અને પર્સનલ ટ્રેનર છે, જે ઓબેસિટી, ડાયાબિટીસ, પીઠના નીચેના ભાગમાં દુખાવો ધરાવતા લોકોને મદદ કરવા અને પેઇન મેનેજમેન્ટ એટલે કે દુખાવાને કેવી રીતે સંભાળવો તેની પર ધ્યાન આપે છે. સમાજને તંદુરસ્ત જીવનશૈલી વિશે શિક્ષિત કરવા માટે તેઓ બ્રેન્ટ હેલ્થ મેટર્સ, બ્રિટિશ હાર્ટ ફાઉન્ડેશન અને લંડન એમ્બ્યુલન્સ સર્વિસમાં સ્વયંસેવક છે.

શું તમે જાણો છો કે દર વર્ષે લંડનમાં લગભગ ૧૦,૦૦૦ કાર્ડિયાક અરેસ્ટ અસ્પતાલની બહાર થાય છે. આવા કેસોમાં માંડ ૧૦માંથી ૧ જેટલાં લોકો બચી જાય છે.

ઓ.એ.યુ.કે. નોર્થ વેસ્ટ એરિયા લંડન એમ્બ્યુલન્સ સર્વિસ વતી શૈલેષભાઈ લાઇફ સેવિંગ સ્કેલ્સ (કૌશલ્ય) શીખવવા માટે સપ્ટેમ્બર ૨૦૨૨થી સ્વૈચ્છિક રીતે તેમની સેવાઓ આપી રહ્યા છે. મે, ૨૦૨૩ સુધી ઓશવાળનાં ૮૦ સભ્યોએ ૪ મુખ્ય કૌશલ્યો શીખ્યા છે:

- દર્દીનું મૂલ્યાંકન
- રિકવરી પોઝિશન

- સીપીઆર કેવી રીતે કરવું
- ડિફિબ્રિલેટર (એઈડી)નો ઉપયોગ કેવી રીતે કરવો

કાર્ડિયાક અરેસ્ટ ત્યારે થાય છે જ્યારે હૃદય ધબકતું બંધ થઈ જાય છે, અને તે વ્યક્તિ ક્લિનિકલી મૃત્યુ પામે છે. કોઈ વ્યક્તિ કાર્ડિયાક અરેસ્ટથી પીડિત છે તેના સંકેતો વેળાસર જાણવાથી અને સીપીઆર કરવાથી તેમજ એઈડીનો ઉપયોગ કરવાથી બચવાની સંભાવનામાં નોંધપાત્ર વધારો થાય છે. સમયસર આપેલ સારવારથી જીવન બચાવવાનો દર ૧૦ ટકાથી વધીને ૭૦ ટકાની આસપાસ થઈ શકે છે.

જો તમને લાઇફ સેવર સ્કેલ્સ ટ્રેનિંગમાં ભાગ લેવામાં રસ હોય, તો કૃપા કરીને ૦૭૯૩૨૯૮૨૯૭૨ પર નેહુલ શાહનો સંપર્ક કરો. આ તાલીમ તમને કાર્ડિયાક અરેસ્ટ અને હૃદયરોગના હુમલા વચ્ચેનો તફાવત, બેભાન વ્યક્તિ સાથે કેવી રીતે વ્યવહાર કરવો, સીપીઆરનો મહાવરો અને ડિફિબ્રિલેટરનો ઉપયોગ કરવામાં મદદરૂપ થશે. જો કોઈને રૂંધામણથી શ્વાસ લેવામાં તકલીફ થતી હોય તો તેને કેવી રીતે મદદ કરવી તેમજ તમે સંકેતો અને લક્ષણો પણ શીખી શકશો.

આપણામાંથી દરેક જણ એક જીવન બચાવી શકીએ છીએ.



With blessings from Pujya Acharyashri Chandanaji and Pujya Sadhviiji Shilapiji



PRATIKRAMAN IN ENGLISH 2023 – In Person & Virtual

Shree Chandana Vidyapeeth Jain School (part of Veerayatan UK) in conjunction with the Oshwal Association of UK will conduct this **PRATIKRAMAN in ENGLISH**

Pratikraman is about self-analysis, self-improvement, self-control over one's mind by encouraging it to strive for humility, extending friendship, forgiving the faults of others and for asking forgiveness with an open heart. Come and join us on this journey **IN PERSON** with everyone in the community and feel the positive vibrations. We also have an online option for people who are unable to travel to the venue.

Timings: 12,14,15,16,17,18 September – 7.00pm to 8.30pm.

13 and 19 September - 6.30pm to 8.30pm

**IN PERSON AT AVANTI HOUSE SCHOOL,
WEMBOROUGH ROAD, STANMORE HA7 2EQ**

(Alternative Online Option)

ZOOM ID: 860 9952 0936

PASSWORD: Paryushan

For more information:

Email: hello@scvp.info

Tel: 07718 580596 (Nilesh Kothari)

07789 874228 (Prafula Shah)

{Please note traditional Pratikraman by OAU NW will be at the same venue}

OAUK Registered Charity – 267037

Veerayatan UK Registered Charity – 1052906



CELEBRATIONS!

Madhuben Kantilal Shah recently completed 100 Ayambil tap - an incredible feat that took 18 years to complete. We met her and spoke to her about her accomplishment.



Please give us some background to your life, and how dharma / Jainism came and grew in your life.

I grew up in Ruiru, Kenya. The rules of our home were pretty straightforward, and similar to many homes in that day. I followed my older brother, Motichandbhai. We ate early in the evening (anaathmi), and prayers were just a part of our lives. We never asked why we were doing it, we were just told that it was important, and besides everyone did their darshan before going to school. That was my introduction to the Jain faith. The focus was then on education and then settling into a new home after I got married.

My life then changed suddenly. I lost my husband 45 years ago. That was when my faith in the Navkar Mantra really grew - it practically saved me, and helped me to bring my daughter up. I believe strongly in the Navkar Mantra - it is very powerful.

What inspired you to do "Ayambil tap", and then carry on so many times over the years?

I found dharma was the key to helping me to find the way through difficulties, when there were few other choices. In 1980, my sister, Jayaben Prabhulal, encouraged me to join the Bounds Green mandal. This is when I learned about Ayambil - it's about controlling taste and shed your karmas. I decided to do it. I found it very difficult at first. I didn't like the taste of the food. I had the support of others who had done it and encouraged me to carry on, and to eat well to maintain my energy. I did a 12-day upvas while I was in Palitana. I felt spiritually uplifted, and this was the point that I decided that I was, somehow,

going to reach 100 Ayambil. Eventually, I got used to the taste of the food.

I find the Ayamil diet keeps me strong and healthy, and less lethargic. And there is scientific proof that it detoxifies your body.

Ayambil is less known than Paryushan. Why?

Firstly, there is more publicity around Paryushan. But, more importantly, Ayambil is more difficult than Paryushan. For Paryushan, you simply don't eat. For Ayambil, the lack of taste in foods makes the austerity of an Ayambil fast much greater.

Didn't you find it difficult?

Look, nobody achieves anything without going through difficulty.

Effort is a necessity for anything that you want to achieve -

we know that very well from our careers and businesses. So, I was focussed on my reason - to shed my karmas, instead of focussing on the difficulty itself.

If someone wanted to do the Ayambil fast, what would you say to them to make it easier for them to embrace the fast?

To start off, give up tea! Tea is addictive - shaking off this one habit will then allow you to be more successful at making other changes to the diet.

The conversation with Madhuben was so inspiring. Her story is bountiful with ambition and perseverance, yet so simple and pure. Congratulations Madhuben!

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

By Basanti Shah



We hosted International Women's Day on 4 March 2023 at Oshwal Centre and what a tremendous celebration it was! Over 200 women came together, dressed to impress in purple and took in inspirational words from Miss Jyotiben Shah, MBE and celebrated some truly fantastic women as part of our awards ceremony. We wanted to share the awards that were presented on the evening with you all so that we can applaud them once more. We can't wait for next year's celebrations!

Lalita Shah - Community Spirit

Lalita started working with our OAUK community in 1984, as a Gujarati school teacher for the North West Area. She has served many committee roles since, as North West Secretary and Vice Chair along with East Area Secretary and Vice Chair. She has led several community initiatives, engaging members on health and wellbeing, supporting and running Monday and Thursday clubs to bring the community together.

Her unwavering dedication and commitment to the community, over such a long span of time, sets an example for us all - we deeply appreciate and applaud her selfless service to our community.

Kiran Sheth - Inspiration

Kiran has worked on 2 major community health projects with OAUK since 2018, focussing on registering stem cell donors with the NHS. Through this work, donor matches were found for two Jain children, who had blood borne diseases. At the height of the pandemic, she worked with OAUK to create programmes in Gujarati to inform our community around the safety of vaccines.

Kiran has shown great initiative and proactivity in bringing these important issues to the forefront of our community and served as an inspiration to us all.



ધર્માનુરાગી શ્રીમતી મધૂબહેન કાંતીલાલની વર્ધમાન તપની, દેવ ગુરુ ધર્મની કૃપાથી અને વડીલોના આશીર્વાદથી ૧૦૦ આયંબીલની ઓળીની આનંદમય પૂર્ણાહુતી તારીખ ૩૦ એપ્રિલ ૨૦૨૩ના થઈ. ઉગ્ર તપસ્વી મધૂબહેનના નિવાસ્થાને લગભગ ૨૨ વર્ષ થયા શાંતિનાથ પ્રભુના પધરામણા થયા છે અને તેઓ કાયમ પ્રભુની સેવા કરે છે. તેમણે ભગીરથ અનેકવિધ તપસ્યાઓ અને ધર્મની આરાધના કરી છે. પોતાના જીવનમાં અદ્ભુત પૂન્ય ઉપાર્જન કર્યું છે. તેમનો બાઉન્ડસ ગ્રીન સત્સંગ મંડળમાં ગજબનો

ફાળો છે. અત્યારના દેખાડા અને બાહ્ય આડંબરથી અલિપ્ત રહીને પરમાત્માની આજ્ઞા મૂજબ ધર્મની આરાધના ખૂબજ વ્યવસ્થિત રીતે કરે છે અને કરાવે છે. તેમણે ઘણા આત્માઓને ધર્મ પ્રેરક બનાવ્યા છે. આપણે સહુ ખૂબ ભાગ્યશાળી છીએ કે આવા મહાન શ્રાવિકા આપણાં સંઘમાં હાજર છે. પ્રભુ તેમને ખૂબજ આરાધના અને શાસન પ્રભાવના કરવાની શક્તિ આપે. એજ આપણા દરેકની પ્રાર્થના છે. તેમની ભૂરિ ભૂરિ અનુમોદના કરીએ છીએ. જૈનમ્ જયતિ શાસનમ્



OSHWAL ANNAPURNA TREK

By Shailan Shah

Uma Shah - Entrepreneur

After completing her degree in Fashion and Textiles at Loughborough University, Uma was passionate about creating a clothing brand that reflected her Kenyan heritage. Two years later, she created a street wear clothing brand with African culture and design at its heart. She has worked incredibly hard to gain an understanding of African design and raise its awareness. Uma also used her business as a platform to release the #findyourinnerwarrior campaign, that tells the stories of inspiring individuals in the community to discuss topics such as body positivity, mental health and colourism. She has proven that you can combine your passion and heritage alongside your flare for business.



Harshi Gudka - Young Rising Star

This young lady is breaking barriers. At 18 years of age, Harshi has been raising awareness around Downs Syndrome and has even featured in Vatika's "Be Visible" campaign as well as a campaign in her local area.

She is an actively participates in our community events from sports to singing to cooking even!

Harshi is a true ambassador for diversity and inclusiveness and we are lucky to have such a young member pushing the boundaries in our community.



Gita Shah - Bravery

Gita took an incredibly serious decision and action to transform her best friend's life. She performed a true act of bravery and selflessness by donating her kidney to her best friend. She has also raised awareness in our community of the benefits of organ donation. Gita underwent what a lot of us would consider, an extremely frightening and intrusive procedure to make this happen. We take our hats off to her for her courage to go through with this and give her friend a new lease of life.



In late March, fifteen Oshwals embarked on the adventure of a lifetime, to climb at high altitude in the breath takingly beautiful Annapurna mountain range in the Himalayas in Nepal.

In 2018 Oshwal organised the Everest Base Camp trek, and this was to be followed by the Oshwal Annapurna trek in 2020 for which 40 members signed up but it was cancelled due to Covid. Thanks to the determination and hard work of dedicated Oshwal volunteer Bhavin, our smaller group of 15 finally went to Nepal for possibly the most challenging two weeks of their life.

Following a two day stay in Kathmandu, the group set off on day 3 by vehicle to the mountain village of Chame (2710 metres). The next day we commenced our hiking with a day's walk to the picturesque village of Pisang and the day after to Manang (3520m). We stayed here for two nights to help us acclimatise to the high altitude.

One of the reasons why the Annapurna Circuit is much-loved by trekkers is that it seems to only get better with each passing day. The beautiful and dramatic scenery can be incredibly breathtaking, and just when you think it can't get any better, the next day completely surpasses the one before.

On day 9, we had an early morning start to climb up Tilicho Lake. Situated at an elevation of 4,919 metres, this is one of the highest lakes in the world, and our approach up the mountain was made all the harder as much of the route was covered in snow. At the top was a large lake, which internet pictures had shown as a crystal blue lake but for us was a stunning giant ice rink, covered in snow! We then descended and after lunch moved on to the village of Shree Kharka for the night. On day 11, we walked to Thorang Phedi which is a village at 4450m and settled in for the rest of the day, largely to prepare ourselves mentally for the toughest challenge yet of crossing the Thorong La Pass the next day.





On day 12, we set off at 3am and within an hour were putting on crampons to give us extra grip due to the amount of snow. After what felt like a life time, we reached the pass greeted by the familiar flutter of prayer flags and a traditional Chorten, to mark the highest point of the Annapurna Circuit trek. At 5416m and 6 hours after leaving Thorong Phedi, we had arrived at Thorong La Pass. With big smiles on our faces we indulged in congratulatory hugs, before joining the short queue of trekkers who were waiting to have their photo taken with the congratulations sign. Formalities complete, we took a break to admire the beauty of our surroundings and to let the multitude of emotions pass over us - joy, relief, exhaustion and a massive sense of accomplishment.

We couldn't linger for too long; the pass was bitterly cold and windy and there was still a long way to go. The descent to Muktinath shouldn't be underestimated. In total, we descended 1,616m which is hard going for anyone's knees! This is where trekking poles came in very handy! Arriving in Muktinath we visited the famous Vishnu mandir.

The next evening, we arrived at Ghodepani. The next morning we arose early and climbed up to Poon Hill (3,210m) to see the famous sunrise.

We were blessed to see the moon setting and the sun rising simultaneously amongst the picturesque mountain vistas including Dhaulagiri, Nilgiri, Annapurna South, Annapurna I, Machhapuchhre and Manaslu. That evening we arrived in the beautiful lake town of Pokhara for two nights for some much needed rest! Our final day involved a long drive back to Kathmandu, during which we stopped for a thrilling 3-hour white water rafting expedition along the Trishuli river. This was the trip of a lifetime; our attention now turns to the Oshwal Skiers 60-strong trip to France in January 2024!

Thank you

Our thanks to Oshwal Trekkers, Desi Ramblers and Boot Trekkers - three excellent walking groups for giving us pre-expedition training opportunities. And a big thank you to our friends and family for their support and encouragement.

Within the group we also had four incredible North Area youth club parents and leaders - Bejal, Nic, Rakhee and Sheetal - who, days before we flew to Nepal, launched a fundraising drive to raise funds for Cancer Research UK. By the end of the trip, generous donations had crossed £10,000!



Top (Left to Right): Nylesh, Bhavin, Shalian, Nic, Bijal, Bejal, Manoj

Bottom (Left to Right): Nik, Hemal, Mita, Shilpa, Deval, Sheetal, Rakhee, Chetan