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MAUN EKADASHI

Importance of Silence
And Much more ...

By Kishor Bhimji Shah



Namaskāra Mahāmantra ...Navkar Mantra...

namo arihantānam.
namo siddhānam.
namo āyariyānam.
namo uvajjhāyānam.
namo loe savva-sāhunam.
eso panca-namukkāro,
savva-pāva-ppanāsano;
mangalānam ca savvesim,
padhamam havai mangalam.

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय





Maun Ekadashi 11 December 2024



The festival of Maun Ekadashi (also known as Maun Agyaras) is an auspicious Jain festival which falls on the 11th day of the month Magshar (Magshar Sud 11).

Maun Ekadashi is the Sanskrit term and in Gujarati it is known as Maun Agyāras or 'Silence Eleventh'.

According to the English calendar, this year, Maun Ekadashi falls on 11th December 2024. It is, a very important day because 150 Kalyanakas of the Tirthankaras of past, present and future took place on this day. Festival of Maun Ekadashi is as important as the other Jain festival such as Paryushan and Diwali. On this day, the punya (good karma) due for any penance, austerities undertaken, good deed or thoughts is multiplied 150 times.

Neminatha Bhagwan (22nd Tirthankara), when asked by his cousin Shri Krishna, replied Maun Ekadashi was the most important Jain festival. Because of this, Acharayas Ratnaśekhara-sūri and Bhuvanavijaya consider Maun Ekadashi as a kind of essence of all Jain festivals.

Significance of Maun Ekadashi

The day of Maun Ekadashi is considered very auspicious as five Kalyanakas of three different Jinas took place on this date.

**Aranath Bhagwan (18th)
Diksha Kalyanak**

**Mallinath Bhagwan (19)
Jamna Kalyanak
Diksha Kalyanak
Kevaljnan Kalayanak**

**Naminath Bhagwan (21st)
Kevaljnan Kalyanak**

The 5 Kalyanaks of the above mentioned three Tirthankaras are celebrated on this day.

Maun Ekadashi

As well as the Chauvishis (24 Jinas) in the Two and A Half Continents of Jain cosmology who live in the present era, there are other Jinas. They live in other continents (kshetra) in eras other than the current descending cycle of time. There are also Chauvishis in other kshetras, namely Bharatkshetra and Airavatkshetra which also had 5 Kalyanaks. So, 5 kalyanaks in 5 Bharatkshetras comes up to 25 Kalyanaks (5 X 5) and 25 Kaylanaks in the 5 Airavtkshetras. Hence, 50 Kalyanaks in all the kshetras for the past, present and future chauvishis gives us 150 Kalyanaks.

5 Kalyanaks X 5 Airavtkshetras = 25
Total Kalyanaks in all Kshetras = 50
50 Kalyanaks X past | present | future
3X 50 Total Kalyanaks in all Kshetras
and all times = 150

HOW TO CELEBRATE MAUN EKADASHI

It is worth remembering that Punya for any penance, austerity, good deed done on this day is **multiplied by 150 times**, so even one fast, garners the fruits of 150 fasts.

Some suggestions on how to celebrate Maun Ekadashi

- Take a vow to keep maun or silence for the day. If you can not do that, try and observe silence for an hour, few hours or as much time as you can. Silence is not just of speech, but also includes silence of distractions and negativity in thought and action.
- Silence of social media for the day or few hours – so take a break from the mobile phone | Ipad etc.
- Perform Samayik | Pratrikraman | Meditation
- Listen/watch - spiritual discourses on YouTube or via Zoom.
- Read about Jainism.
- Upvas (fasting) for the day or partial fasting as per one's capacity.
- Take a vow not to eat one's favourite food items.
- Avoid eating root vegetables.
- Perform the religious Vidhi, including Dev Vandan, for the day as prescribed. This includes Fast | Kaussagga of 12 Logassa | 12 Khamasaman | 12 Swastiks | 20 Narvkaar Vali of Jap Pad: "Om Rhim Shrim Mallinath Sarvagnay Namah"
- Paushada – is a discipline for living the life of a Jain mendicant for a specific period. It is said that, one can attain moksha in an upcoming life if one observes Paushada and takes the vow of complete silence -maun – on this day for 11 years and 11 months.

Maun Ekadashi is a very significant and auspicious day, however we should try and undertake some/all of the above practices throughout our daily lives, especially the practice of Maun, even if it's only for a short time daily.



BY KISHOR B SHAH



JANMA KALYANAK (BIRTH EVENT)

This is the event when a Tirthankara is born.

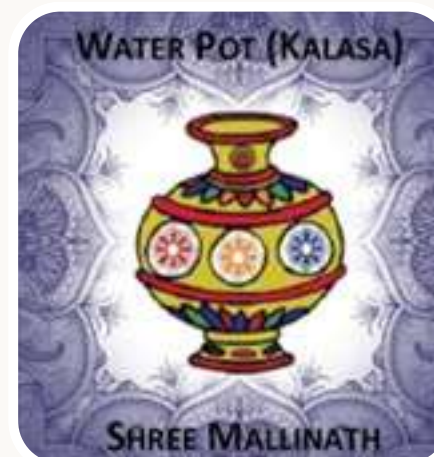
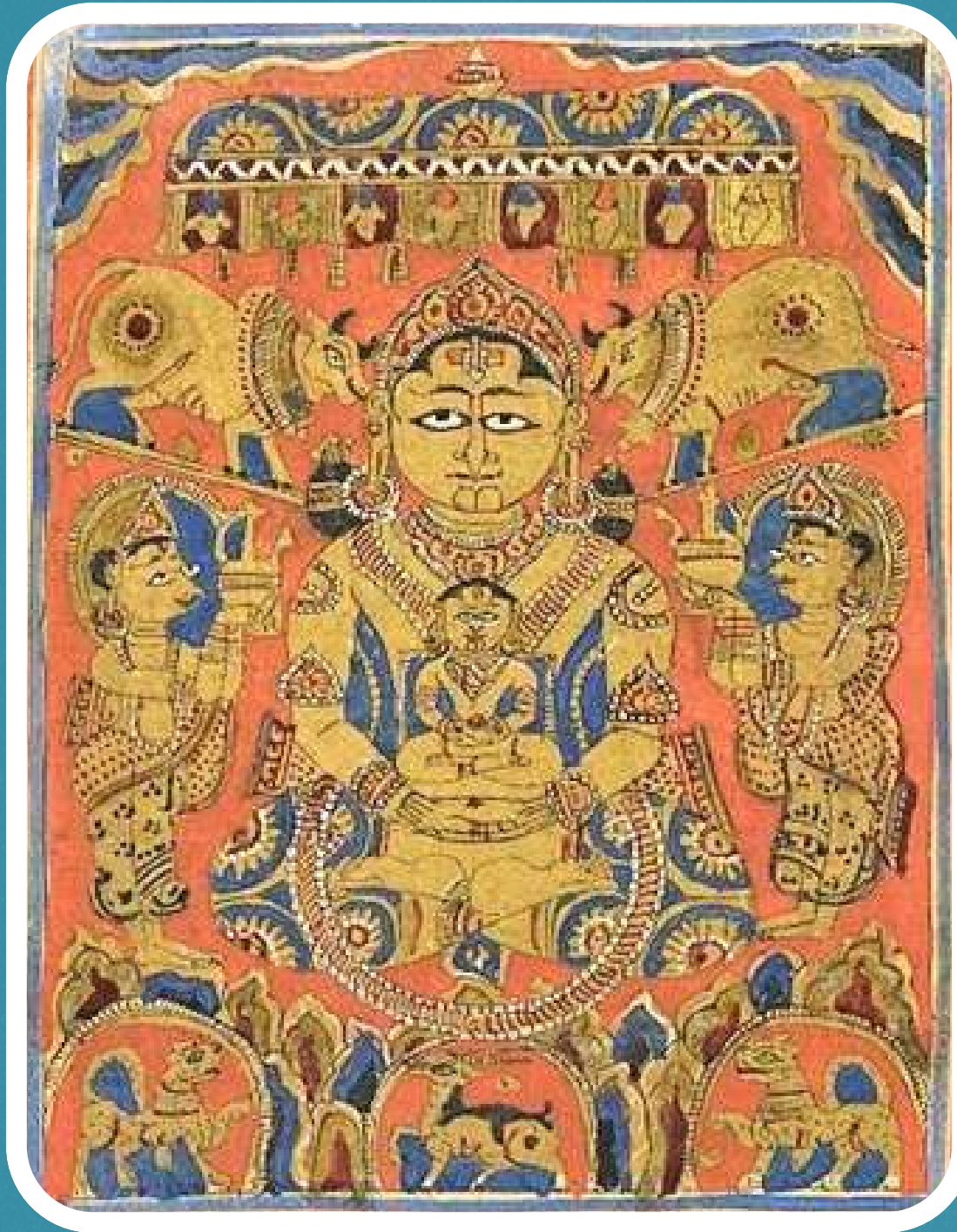
This event of the birth of a Tirthankara is incomparable. The night of when the Tirthankara is born, numerous celestial beings descend from heaven to earth. Fifty six Dik-Kumaris (Goddesses of direction) come to celebrate the birth of the Tirthankara. With symbolic material they go around the Tirthankara's mother three times, whispering to her – "oh Great mother, we bow to you. You are the mother of the unique Tirthankara, who is going to be compassionate to all the world's living beings, who is going to propagate the path of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. He is going to be the excellent pro-pounder of Dharma. Oh mother, you are providing the lamp in the form of omniscient Tirthankara to the world. You are very lucky, meritorious and praise worthy"

Indra throne trembles and he perceives the birth of the Tirthankara. He moves in the direction where the Tirthankara was born and with utmost devotion glorifies the Tirthankara by reciting the Namathanam Sutra.

The newly born Tirthankara is taken, by Indra, to the summit of Mount Meru, where together with other crores of celestial beings, facing east perform the anointing ceremony. All the celestial beings bathe the new born Tirthankara with pious water from many different rivers and oceans and feel blessed by paying their respect to the Tirthankara.

The celebration by the Dik Kumaris and anointing ceremony is described in "Snatrapuja" performed regularly in our Derasars.

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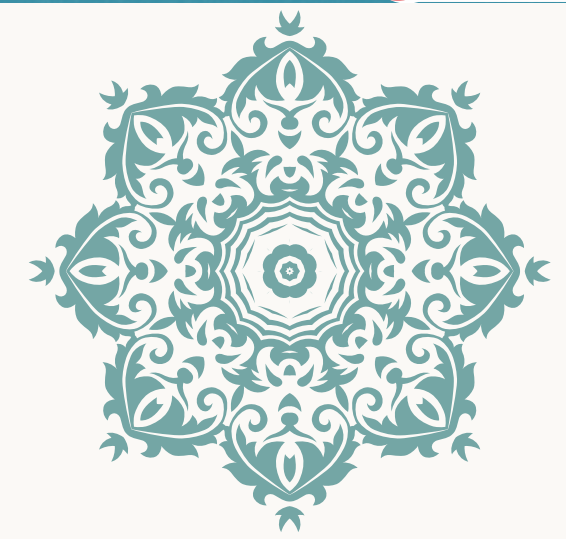


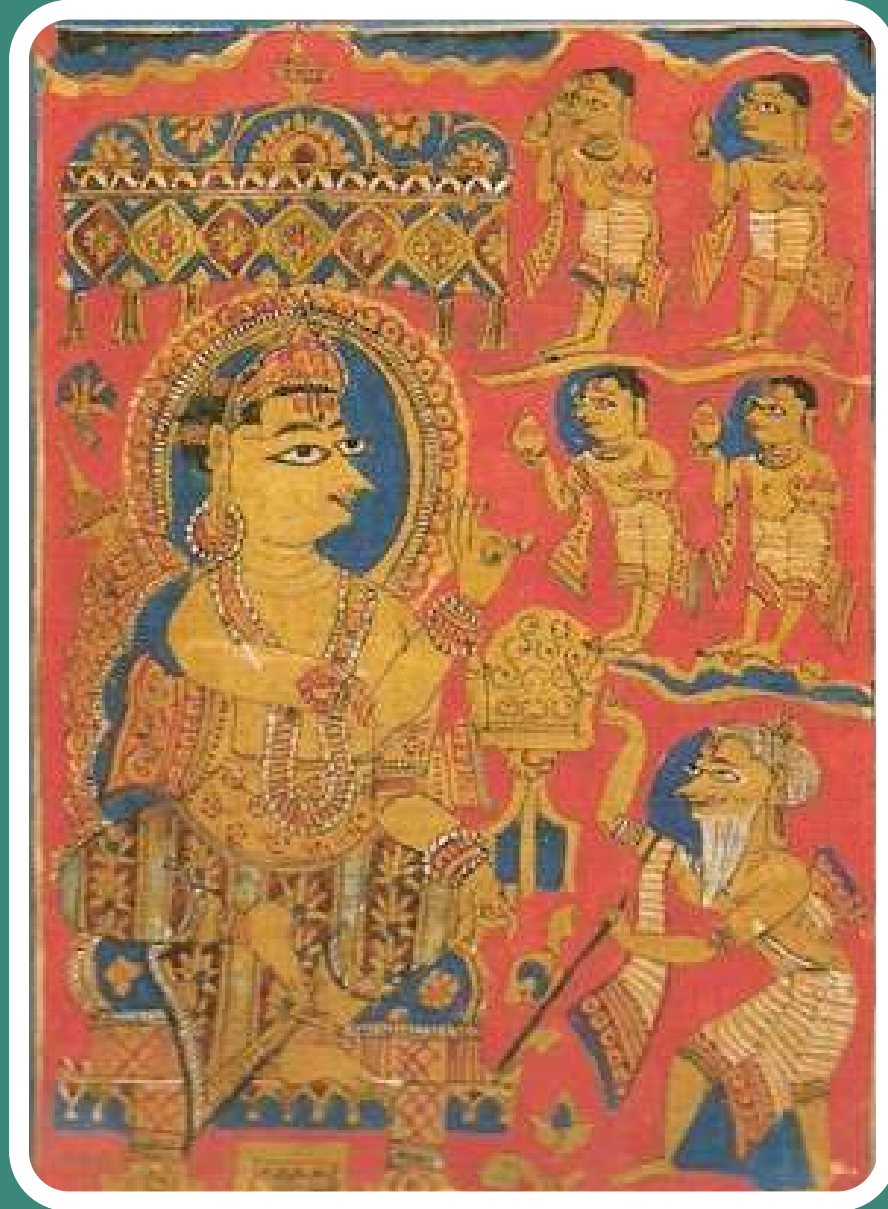
Janma Kalyanak

On this day, Jains try & do at least one 'mala' reciting:

"Om Hrim Shri Mallinath Arhate Namah"

Magsar
Sud Agiyaras





Mahavira's one Year Varsidan Before Diksha
Kalpasutra manuscript, Patan, Gujarat

DIKSHA OR TAPA KALYANAK (INITIATION INTO MONKHOOD)

The event when the Tirthankara gives up all his/her worldly possessions and family relationships and becomes an ascetic. One year before the time of renunciation, a group of celestial angels comes to pay homage to the future Tirthankara. They request him/her to renounce the world and re-establish religious order for the benefit of all living beings.

The Tirthankara accepts the conduct of equanimity by uttering "I renounce all sinful activity" and at the time of initiation recites "Karemi Sutra" but does not utter the word 'Bhante'

After accepting initiation, the Tirthankara is endowed with the fourth type of knowledge – Manah-paryaya Jnan (telepathy).



BY KISHOR B SHAH

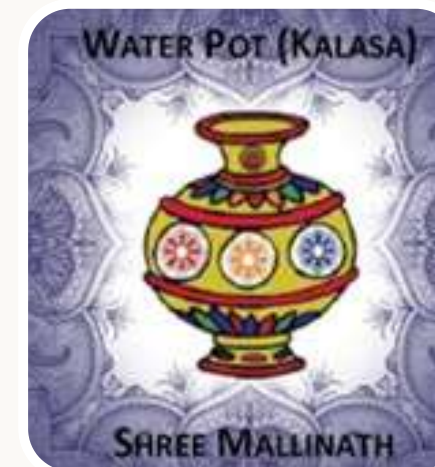
Magsar Sud Agiyaras



Diksha Kalyanak

On this day, Jains try & do at least one 'mala' reciting:

"Om Hrim Shri Aranath
Nathay Namah"



Diksha Kalyanak

On this day, Jains try & do at least one 'mala' reciting:

"Om Hrim Shri Mallinath
Nathay Namah"

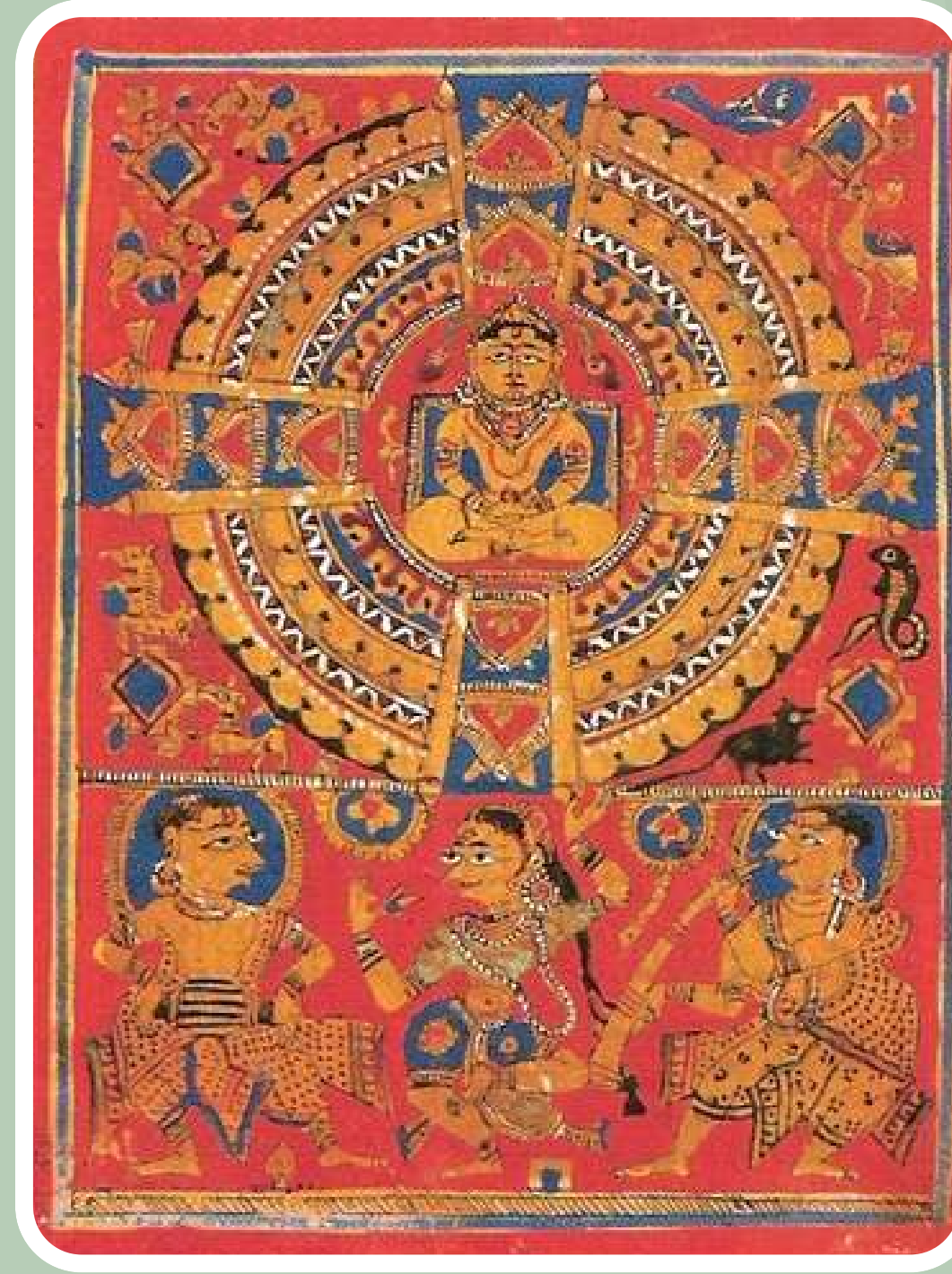
KEVALJNANA KALYANAK (OMNISCIENCE EVENT)

This is the event when a Tirthankara completely eradicates the Four Ghati and attains omniscience – Kevaljnan – absolute knowledge. The four Ghati (destructive karmas) are:-

- Mohaniya Karma (Deluding Karma)
- Jnanavaraniya Karma (Knowledge Obscuring Karma)
- Darshanavarniya Karma (Perception Obscuring Karma)
- Antaraya Karma (Obstructing Karma)

The Tirthankara eradicates Chaitra Mohaniya Karma and attains Anant Sukh (infinite happiness). This is the 12th stage of Gunasthanak and is called the Vitaraga stage. Then he/she eradicates Jnanavaraniya, Darshanavarniya, and Antaraya Karma and attains Kevaljnan (infinite knowledge), Keval darshana (infinite perception) and Anant virya (infinite power and energy). This is the 13th stage of Gunasthanak and is called the Kevali or Arihanta stage.

On attaining omniscience and becoming a Tirthankara, Indra (supreme celestial God) creates eight Pratiharya for the Tirthankara and a Samavasran, from where he/she delivers the first sermon. The Tirthankara reinstates the four fold Jain Sangha consisting of Sadhus (monks), Sadhvis (nuns), Shravaks (male householder) and Sharavikas (female householder) ; organises the Jain religion to suit the changing times and preaches the path of purification and liberation. This is the most important event for the Jain Sangha.



Mahavira Attains KevalJnana
Kalpasutra manuscript, Patan, Gujarat

BY KISHOR B SHAH

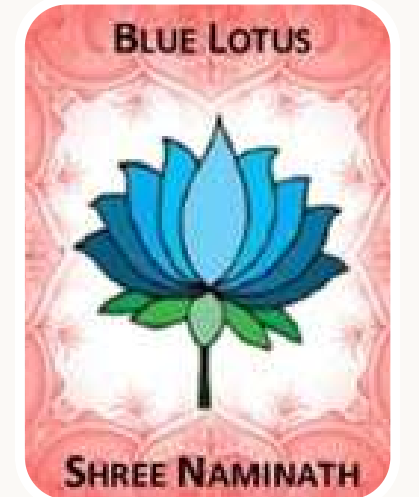


Magsar Sud Agiyaras KevalJnana Kalyanak

On this day, Jains try & do at least one 'mala' reciting:



“Om Hrim Shri Mallinath
Sarvagnay Namah”



“Om Hrim Shri Naminath
Sarvagnay Namah”

The Importance of Silence (Mauna)

BY KISHOR B SHAH

There is much beauty and tenderness in silence. In this world full of noise as well as the daily challenges of stressful living, the practice of silence offers profound benefits.

My introduction to the practice of silence was the worldwide popular television programme 'Dallas' in the eighties. The main antagonist in the series was a character called 'JR', played by the actor Larry Hagman. I learned at that time that Mr Hagman used to observe silence every Sunday – a practice which he observed for over twenty years.

Silence is the source of all that exists. "Silence is where consciousness resides. True silence is the silence between the thoughts and represents the true self, consciousness, soul."

The dictionary meaning of silence is "complete absence of sound". There are many nuances inherent in the practice of silence, and the meaning of silence is more subtle than the absence of sound. In Sanskrit, the word used is Mauna (or Munitva), which means "silence, taciturnity, silence of the mind" i.e Mauna is not mere absence of sound, but it is silence of mind.

Vrata means a vow. Thus Mauna Vrata means a vow of silence, which can be practiced with varying degrees of intensity. The practice of silence is important for spiritual growth. According to the Bhagavad Gita, mauna is about training our minds, not just our mouths, to be silent. It is not merely practicing silence of the speech, but also silence of the mind. A still mind allows for self-introspection and self control over the thoughts, action and speech. Mauna is a way to gain understanding of that which is beyond words. This inner silence is a gateway to our Soul.

Since ancient times, the value of silence has been recognised by philosophers and Saints, Yogis and ascetics. Pythagoras, a great Greek philosopher imposed a strict rule of silence on his disciples. Almost all religions have exhorted the virtues of silence as a path to contemplation, self-awareness, self-purification, and the divine. The practice of silence is an integral part of Jain, Buddhist and Hindu philosophies. Jain ascetics practice mauna vrat as a way of detaching themselves from the mundane world and gaining control over their mind and senses.





Silence breaks the outward communication and channels a dialogue towards inner communication to attune our minds to the spiritual consciousness within. Most of us have experienced this power of silence, like when we observe 2minute silence to remember and honour someone's passing, when meditating, when praying and in other worship practices.

Meditation is a way of achieving silence.

BENEFITS OF MAUNA

- It gives immense peace of mind and strength to the body.
- Mauna helps to redirect our imagination towards self.
- Energy wasted in idle talking and gossiping. Mauna conserves energy.
- Develops will power and determination.
- Mauna - silence of speech helps to acquire purity of speech and to minimise Himsa through words.
- Mauna aids in limiting our kasayas of krodha, lobha, mana, maya, raga and dwesh, making way for spiritual progress.
- Mauna is good for overall health and well being.
- Medical studies have shown that two hours of silence could create new cells in the region of brain linked to learning, remembering and emotions. Another study showed that two minutes of silence relieves tensions in the body, and is more relaxing than listening to music. (Source:Health) PubMed National Inst of Health)

POWER OF MAUNA

Whilst researching this subject, I read that Nelson Mandela was once asked in an interview, sometime in the early 's, how it was that he came to embrace forgiveness and reconciliation after all that been done to him by the apartheid regimes. Mandela recalled the many years he spent in prison alone and in silence. He then told the interviewer that once he truly had seen his soul in this way, he knew something about his own failings and need for forgiveness. And in the silence, trying to face up to his own failures and need for forgiveness, he became committed to the path of forgiveness and reconciliation for all peoples. The rest of the story is now history.

Two lessons for us to learn from this. The importance of silence for true introspection and before we change the world, we need to change ourselves.

Mahatma Gandhi practised silence on Mondays every week. He believed that abstaining from speaking brought him inner peace and happiness. He said, " I know the wonderful efficacy of silence. I visited a Trappist monastery in South Africa. A beautiful place it was. Most of the inmates of that place were under a vow of silence. I inquired of the Father the motive for it and he said the motive is apparent: 'We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak'. I understood that precious lesson. I know the secret of silence."

The Importance of Silence (Mauna)

Deepak Chopra, in his book, The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success, writes extensively about the importance of observing silence in daily life and recommends that everyone should observe silence for twenty minutes every day.

Mauna is extremely important in Jainism. Mahavira was in Mauna for most of the time during his twelve and half years of sadhana. Today mauna vrata is observed by Jain ascetics. Many devout Jain lay people also observe mauna vrata, not just during Maun Ekadashi, but also during Paryushan, Diwali and other times of the year.

Let us resolve to do our best to make Mauna, for at least 20 - 30 minutes, a daily habit and reap the benefits.



BY KISHOR B SHAH



Inner Listening

Listening to your heart, finding out who you are,
Is the place to start.

It is not simple, it takes time for the chatter to stop.

In the silence of just being, we begin to feel

And know life is not only about doing.

As our thoughts go by swiftly, much is being offered.

When we hear the message, we will finally know,

Anything in life is possible.

Be still and listen with your heart and your soul

There is a message of joy softly calling your name Listen

Neminath Bhagwan & Shri Krishnavasudeva



Once, when Neminath Bhagwan came to the city of Dwarka, Shri Krishnavasudeva after listening to his sermon, asked Neminath Bhagwan “Hey Lord, being a King with loads of responsibilities of the kingdom how can I continuously do my religious rites (Dharma)? Please tell me a prominent day in the whole year, on which doing any good deeds results in more punya, or good karma, than any other day. Bhagwan Neminath said that there was one such day – Maagsar Sud Agyaras, commonly known as Maun Ekadashi. He also explained the significance of this day.

Listening to this he raised a query “Lord, please tell me in the past who has worshiped this day and has achieved its fruits?” Neminath Bhagwan, then, gave an example of Suvrat Sheth who had followed the vow with complete devotion and had achieved salvation.

STORY OF SUVRAT SHETH

In the province of Ghatkikhand, in the town of Vijaypatan lived a merchant named Sur. The King of that state respected Sur and regarded him as a very intelligent man. One night, sleeping peacefully, he woke with a start in the midnight and it dawned upon him that because of the good deeds done in his previous life, he is living happily and lavishly in his present life. So, in order to live with prosperity in the next life he will have to do something fruitful in the present, as without this everything is meaningless.

Soon after sunrise, he went to meet his Guru and listening to his sermons, he got inspired by his teachings and asked him that “Hey Guru, due to the kind of work I do, it is not possible for me to continuously worship and practice my religious rites. If you could please tell me one day on which I can follow my religious rites and achieve maximum results (punya)?” At that time his Guru replied “On 11th of the Magshar month (Magshar Sud 11) which is an Ekadashi, you should fast in the Paushada form with silence for 11 years and 11 months continuously on that particular day. After completing this vow, you should celebrate it grandly.” Listening to this, he along with his family members commenced the Ekadashi fast for the said period with complete devotion. 15 days after the completion of his penance he died and went to the 11th heaven (Devlok).

After spending 21 Sagaropam in the 11th Devlok, he took birth in the Bharatkshetra, in a town named Sauripur, as the son of Sheth Samruddhidat. He was named Suvrat by his father. When he realized that he had got this beautiful life and had been to the 11th Devlok because of worshipping the day of Ekadashi, he, along with his 11 wives took the vow of Ekadashi. All his wives attained Kevalgyan and acquired Moksha (Salvation). After a while even King Suvrat while doing his penance achieved Kevalgyan. All the Devas from the Devlok celebrated his day of liberation. He then sat on a lotus and gave sermons to his deities. After a few years he acquired Moksha too.



JAIN TEMPLES OF GIRNAR, JUNAGADH, GUJARAT



SILENCE & NONVIOLENT SPEECH

A Jain monk is called a “muni.” The word “muni” means a person who keeps maunam or silence. It is believed that when Mahavira gave his first sermon sitting under the tree, he sat in silence. Animals, birds, celestial beings and humans — all came for this great event, and they all understood the message of Mahavira in their own language. Mahavira was not using any words since he was the “mahamuni.” So munis keep silence and communicate their message through living and through setting example. The lay people, in Jain tradition, are called sravakas (male) and sravikas (female). The word “sravaka” means a person who listens. Is this not a wonderful situation: the teacher is silent and the student is listening. So, when we go for darsana of our guru, we don’t have to talk to him, we just go to see him. Darsana means seeing — not merely through the two eyes which see things superficially but seeing through the eye of the heart, the eye of imagination, which we call the “third eye.” We go to the temple for darsana and sit there in the presence of the sacred image. This is one of the finest examples of nonviolence where even words are unnecessary, because there is risk that the words could be misunderstood or may hurt someone.

As a muni you keep a mukhapattika (a cloth strip covering the mouth). This is to remind you that you need to speak only when you must, speak as little as you can, and think three times what you want to say and speak only if it is appropriate. Or your words may fall on a barren ground. You do this because you want to avoid violence, and the worst kind of violence is the violence of speech. The language of the politicians is often violent. Such language causes wars. Wars start in our minds and in our speech. Only later we send the big bombers to the battlefields. So politicians should learn to practice silence, and they should learn what to speak, how to speak and when to speak. This is a great contribution of Jain religion to the world.



I am reminded of a story. One day the Mughal emperor Akbar asked his Prime Minister, Birbal, what is the sweetest thing in the world? Birbal replied: My Lord words are the sweetest and the words are the bitterest. Akbar did not believe this. How can words be sweet or bitter, he thought and dismissed the idea. A few days later, to prove his point, Birbal invited the empress for dinner at his house. When she was leaving his house, after a sumptuous dinner, Birbal instructed his servants to clean off after the queen, using swear words and bad language. The empress, overheard the words of insult and was shocked to learn that Birbal thought of her in such a negative way. She felt deeply wounded. When she returned to her palace she complained to the emperor about the abusive incident. This was, very hard for the emperor to believe. The next day, he summoned the prime minister. When Birbal arrived, Akbar asked him: How dare you insult my wife using swear words? Birbal replied: My Lord, you said words are neither sweet or bitter, so how can they cause harm or discomfort? How can words hurt the empress?

Nonviolence, therefore begins with our words and in our minds. The words are the first external expression of our thoughts. So let us practice nonviolence in our speech; speak less, think what we are going to say, and how we are going to say it.

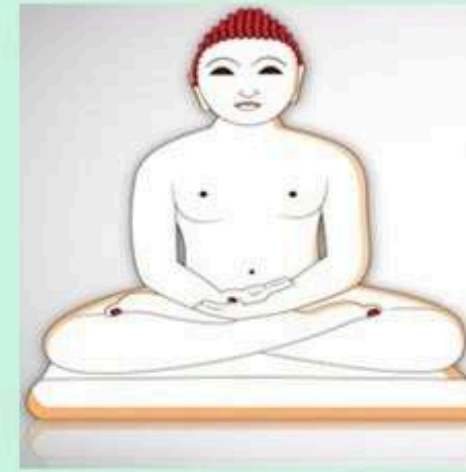
Ahimsa in speech - Talk with Love



Ahimsa is not to be practised at the physical level only but at mental -one as well. Apart from *Jiva* or *Dravya* Ahimsa there is a *Bhaava* Ahimsa. In another form, it is stated that there should be no *Himsa* by “*Man*” (mind), “*Vachan*”(speech), or “*Kaaya*”(body). The hurt feelings we cause by the way we communicate is *himsa*.

We are social beings, so communication, especially the talking form, is important for our well being. We spend so much time talking with each other every day from family members, co-workers to complete strangers we interact with, in our day to day life.

The spoken voice is the transmission of sound from one being to others. It therefore is an expression of our inner being. What follows are some insights from enlightened men, including Bhagwan Mahavira, the apostle of non-violence.



MAHAVIRA
599 BC - 527 BCE

Speech is of four kinds - a) true, b) not true, C) diluted and d) conventional speech

One should know these kinds of speeches and communicate either in truthful or the conventional speech only. One should completely give up the false and diluted speech

A wise person neither speaks without being asked nor does he interfere when another person is speaking. He does not speak about somebody in his absence and avoids deceitful untruth

As aspirant should not utter that speech which may be harmful or cause displeasure or which may put another person out of form

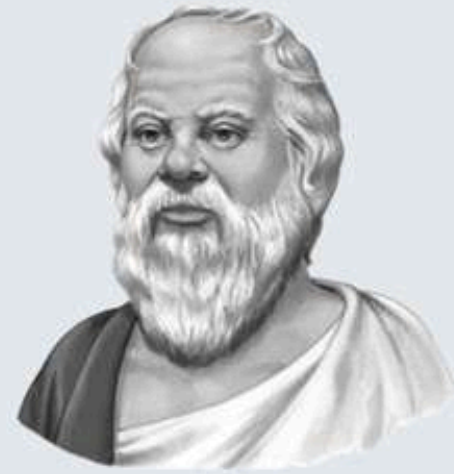
One should speak after ripe reflection. Just as a blind man needs the help of a guide to show him the path, speech also requires the guidance of the intellect

The purpose of speech is to impart the truth

That speech is proper which is beneficial, moderate, measured and affable

BY KISHOR B SHAH





SOCRATES
470 - 399 BCE

One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher Socrates and said, "Do you know what I just heard about your friend?"

Socrates said, "Before you talk to me about my friend, take a moment and filter what you're going to say."

"The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?" "No," the man said.

"Actually I just heard about it."

"Now, how about the second filter, the filter of goodness? Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?" "No, on the contrary."

"So," Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true."

There is one filter left: the filter of usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really."

"Well," concluded Socrates, "if it is not necessarily true, not good and not even useful, why tell me at all?"



BUDDHA
6th and 4th centuries BCE

Right speech always consists of five characteristics:

It is spoken at the right time.

It is true. It is sweet.

It is useful and helpful.

It is kind and compassionate.

If we cannot perform right speech, it is better not to speak. Right speech brings happiness, harmony and wisdom to life.

Speak only those words by which we would not torment ourselves nor harm others. Speak only pleasant words, which are acceptable to others.

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world.

Today I am wise, so I am changing myself

.... Rumi



Mahavira's Supreme Silence



At the age of 30, Mahavira renounced the world and took the vows of asceticism. He spent the next twelve and half years in spiritual contemplation, meditation, performing severe penance and austerities, fasting for the most part of this period.

During this period, Mahavira accepted whatever came his way with utmost equanimity – be it being abused verbally and physically by people, attacks by wild beasts, reptiles and insects, vagaries of weather or other such calamities. He was neither moved by attachment nor aversion. With perfect equanimity he continued towards his ultimate goal.

During this twelve and half years of sadhana, the most important aspect of Mahavira's spiritual practice was the silence of speech – Mauna– that he observed. He observed silence most of the time and never spoke when spoken to. When questioned about his whereabouts, he would invariably reply "I am a "Bhiksu". The Agamas have given the epithet 'Abahuvai' to Mahavira. By practicing silence of speech, lot of energy was saved, and his spiritual practice became, all the more radiant and noble.

Our Agams state that when the mind is controlled, the power of concentration is enhanced, and self-control comes effortlessly. When the Mauna is observed the self becomes unblemished and flawless. Through the control of body, there is the stoppage of inflow of

karmas. Through the purity of mind, right knowledge of reality is acquired, and false perception is removed. through the purity of speech, faith and vision become right and clear. Mahavira practiced Mauna as he realised that self becomes pure and perfect by controlling the activities of mind, body, and speech. It is important to remember Mahavira practice of Mauna was accompanied by intense spiritual self-contemplation.

To Mahavira, the world, all of nature and all forms of lives were sacred. All our interactions with other people and with the natural world must be based on this sacred trust, on deep reverence for all life. Nonviolence of the mind should be translated into nonviolence of speech.

Mahavira said:-

- **Non Violence is the principal vow.** All other vows are its subsidiary.
- **Non-violence must begin in the mind.** Mahavira put equal emphasis on violence of mind as that as actual violence. Unless one is at ease in the inner world, one cannot practice non-violence in the external world. Non-violence of mind and speech leads to the non-violence of action. Violence in thought is as bad as physical violence. Unless the mind is compassionate, non-violence is not possible. If the mind is condemning other people yet the tongue speaks sweet words, then that is not non-violence.

By Kishor B Shah

"Mahavira Said..."

Extracted from Book - **The Light of Life**
By **Acharya Shri Padmasagara Surishwarji**
Maharaj

Mahavira's Supreme Silence

- **Just as a blind man needs the help of a guide to show him the path, speech also requires the guidance of the intellect.** A wise person speaks exactly what he sees; his speech should be brief, free from ambiguity and clearly expressed. His speech should neither be deceptive nor cause anxiety to anyone. Skilful use of language is a sacred skill. Mahavira insisted that we must understand others fully before we speak. One should speak after ripe reflection. That speech is proper which is beneficial, moderate, measured and affable. . Non-violence of the mind should be translated into non-violence of speech. Harmful, harsh, untrue, unnecessary, unpleasant, and offensive speech is violence. Language can express only partial truth; therefore, non-violence is an essential guide to our spoken words.
- **An aspirant should keep his mind, five-sense-organs, hands and feet under his control and save himself from falling prey to evil thoughts and the use of evil language.** Truthfulness is asceticism of speech. Control over speech is a great experiment of non-violence. Communication is a necessity but unnecessarily loud, hostile, angry, or hurtful communication is mindless extravagance. One who observes silence can have control over his speech. Conversation enriches the understanding, but silence is the school of genius. Speaking connects with outer world whereas silence is the connection with inner world. Silence means that one should not speak non-sense. Silence is more eloquent than speech. One who is not silent cannot know the truth.
- **A monk hears many things with his ears and sees many things with his eyes, but it is not proper to reveal all such things in public. A monk should withdraw his thoughts from sensations and be silent within.** Mahavira put a very high value on silence. A monk is called muni. Muni is an Indian word. Its root word is maun, means silence. Hence muni means the silent one. Among the activities of hearing, thinking, and meditating, silence is most important because by silence one can make progress quickly. The practice of silence is like fasting of speech. The speech-fast is even more beneficial than the food-fast. Silence stops feeding ego. Silence however is not just the physical silence, but also the inner calm that is created within the mind itself.
- Silence is the process of thoughtlessness and gives rest to mind. It is a state of mind where there are no thoughts. The mind is totally silent. Watching TV and not speaking, is not silence. It involves emotions. The emotions control and direct the level and tone of voice. Mental resolve, I shall keep my speech silent, mind meditative and body relaxed. is required to practice silence. The best training for mind is gravity in thoughts. One needs to gain full concentration to stop one's thoughts. One may not speak, but the speaking continues internally in the form of thoughts

Silence is a restraint of mind, speech, and body. The practice of Mauna was, very important to Mahavira. We can all try and incorporate periods of Mauna, say from a few minutes, few hours, and even day/s as per our capacity to aid our own spiritual journey.

THOUGHTS



Jainism, probably more than other philosophy recognises the importance of one's thoughts. Ahimsa is as much mental as it is physical. Ahimsa requires us to be watchful, first of our thoughts, then speech and actions. Jainism understands that our thoughts cause our feelings, our feelings cause our actions and our actions produce the results we see in our lives.

We may imagine that our thoughts are secret, and have no external consequences as they dwell within the mind, away from the sight of others. It is said that thoughts not only help forge our inner character but also our external personality.

'Thought' is probably the most powerful force in the universe, and that by changing our thoughts we can change our lives!. We all know that we harm ourselves with every negative thoughts that we harbour in our mind whilst we uplift ourselves with every positive thought we ponder over. *Henry Van Dyke*, an American author, educator, diplomat, and clergyman, expressed this more eloquently than I can ever do in his poem "Thoughts are things"

"THOUGHTS ARE THINGS"

I hold it true that thoughts are things;
They're endowed with bodies and
breath and wings;
And that we send them forth to fill
The world with good results, or ill.
That which we call our secret thought
Speeds forth to earth's remotest spot,
Leaving its blessings or its woes
Like tracks behind it as it goes.
We build our future thought by thought,
For good or ill, yet know it not.
Yet, so the universe was wrought.
Thought is another name for fate;
Choose, then, thy destiny and wait,
For love brings love and hate brings
hate.



BY KISHOR B SHAH

Mauna Sadhana of Contemporary Jains

SHREE GURUDEV CHITRABHANUJI:

Born 26 June 1922

Died April 19 2019 aged 97



Shree Gurudev Chitrabhanuji was initiated as a Jain monk at the age of 20. During his monkhood of twenty eight years in India, he spent the first Five years in meditation and silence, talking only to his guru. As a consequence of this mauna sadhana experience, he emerged in the world with inner gaiety and enlightened spirit.

In 1971 Chitrabhanuji become the first Jain monk in 2500 years to leave India and come to the West. He won the hearts of millions of Jains all over the world, With his wisdom, lucid language and eloquent speech, he won the hearts of millions of Jains all over the world and also become a spiritual leader for Jains. A true hero, a torch-bearer for Jainism in West,

In a an interview with Forbes in 2015 he said “essentially I have not changed. I am still living a life of simplicity and living in harmony with one’s nature, which was the core of my life as a monk 40 years ago”. He attributed his long life to his daily practice of meditation, 3-4 hours of silence and a vegan diet. In an interview with the New York Times, he remarked that “the practice of silence curbs one’s desire to voice a premature opinion”

In his book “Lotus Bloom” he wrote the following, on the subject of, ‘silence’

“Silence leads to a storage of vitality. Through silence dissipated energy is focused on to a centre again. And with energy canalised, speech attains a unique power. Silence, thus provides an unfailing instrument to render one’s speech more dynamic. He who has regulated his speech through speech, whenever he chooses to speak, finds an ineffable joy in his speech, in the words he utters, in the thoughts he expresses. One who never experienced has had any experience of silence, cannot probably comprehend this secret ; but he who has been cultivating silence must realise the impact of this truth. Wherefore, to those would be orators among the young of today, I should commend the cultivation of silence as a bewitching instrument of the art of elocution!”



BY KISHOR B SHAH

Mauna Sadhana of Contemporary Jains



ACHARYA SHRI CHANDANAJI



Acharya Shri Chandanaji, affectionately also known as Tai Maharaj, and Chandanaji, became the first Jain nun to be conferred the title of Acharya in 1987.

She took diksha when she was only 14 years old. **She took a twelve-year vow of silence to study Jain scriptures**, the meaning and purpose of life and different religions. Her life encapsulates her life motto, "compassion in action". To her, "obstacles are just milestones" and she somehow always finds a solution to any obstacle she comes across, She founded Veerayatan, Bihar

in 1974. The organization's pillars are simple: "Seva" (service to humanity), "Shiksha" (education), and "Sadhana" (self-development).

In an interview some years ago, she stated "Everything we do affects us here and now: even the future is too far away, let alone the next life. Every good deed is divine." She went on to exhort everyone to love what they do, to do it with happiness, and to take pride in their happiness.

The following is an extract from 'The Jains Through Time' in which Acharya Chandanaji, writes about 'Jainism taking action...'

"Today people are logical and independent thinkers. They want answers to questions. Jainism promotes detachment from the actions you take. It does not preach the abandoning of those actions themselves. Tirthankara Mahavir said, "Asam Ca Chandam Ca Viginca Dhire" - "wise people give up their desires and attachments yet continue to do good". Jainism is about taking action. It is about finding fulfilment through one's good deeds. Tirthankara Rishabhdev, in this avarpini kal (regressive half cycle), was the first promoter of purusharth - taking action. He first taught people how to work and then he instructed them in religion. In other words, work is essential. Deeds are indissolubly linked with life and creation. If along with the doing of deeds the mind is awakened by religious teachings, then those deeds become pure because they are being performed without any desire for reward in return. That alone makes them effective and inspirational. They become good deeds. As such deeds are emulated, goodwill spreads like a chain reaction. Actions performed with detachment do not bind, rather they open the door for liberation. If abstaining from action were sufficient to extinguish karmic consequences, then why were we asked to practice actions like fasting, meditation, rituals charity and other such cardinal virtues? Why did we need to establish religious orders at all? At one time you could just go into jungle and gain liberation through solitary meditation there, but Jainism has not accepted the abnegation of action as religion, rather it has asked us to keep a taste for doing things, whilst remaining detached from the results of our actions. Inaction must be given up and selfless work towards the good should be wholeheartedly embraced."

Mauna Sadhana of Contemporary Jains

Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji



At the age of eight years old, Acharyaji fell seriously ill and it was not certain that he would survive. His mother made a vow that if he survived, she would give permission for him to take diksha - become a Jain Monk. He survived and his mother told him "you were born to live the life of a sadhu".

Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji took Diksha at the tender age of 11 under his Guru Ohmkar Suriji. He learned the basic principles of Jainism from his Guru but still struggled to find his real self. The Guru said, "I can guide; but only self can realize the true nature of self". Hence at the age of 13, Acharya Shriji embraced maun and stayed in that state for over 30 years.

About the importance of Maun, Acharyaji said in an interview conducted more than a decade ago, "Knowledge remains superficial unless one absorbs its deeper meaning through introspection. Our likes and dislikes keep us in the external world. These likes and dislikes evaporate once we realize that all these are a result of our own fault or our delusion. Words are only required to stay in the outer world; no words are required to stay close to the soul. Unless one stays within, one cannot understand the reality of the self." Acharyaji had stayed in maun until he was able to realize his self - Who I am? - That nameless self.

Why did he come out of maun?

"Only after one realizes the power of ego-less self, one can give the message of truth to the outside world.

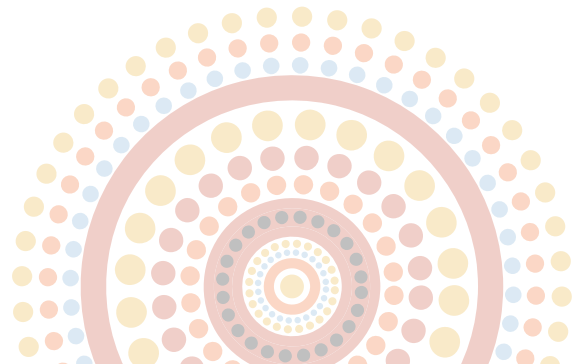
My Parmatama's message was to first realize the power of the ego-less self. With that realization came a unique joy (anand). The second part of the message was to guide others to realize the same anand. A book of knowledge only provides the outline, but the joy of one's soul can inspire another soul to the same joyful state", said Acharyaji.

He further stated " Dharma was nothing but learning and practicing the true art of living. Deep introspection brought one to reality of self (soul) and the art of living was to stay within the bounds of reality and not delusion."

For people living outside India, he emphasised the importance of imparting right Sanskar, to the younger generation. He suggested a simple ten-minute prayer daily. However, his most pertinent observation was that children always observed their parents and unless they lived the life of Dharma (not just in the traditional sense but in the sense of basic integrity and human values), all later efforts could go to waste.

Acharya Maharaj Yashovijay Suriji of the Shwetambar sect is a spiritual master. For some years now, he has been conducting five-day Maun Sadhana Shibirs in various reclusive places in India. On average about 700 Jain laypeople attend this transformational Maun shibirs, each time it is held.

In 2019, my sisters and I were fortunate to meet him. One knew, immediately, you were in the presence of someone special. It was a unique experience, one which we cherish and remember.





Wisdom of Gandhiji

Gandhiji held up before all mankind the image of what every human being could be: he held up before us all a mirror reflecting the spiritual heights all of us could reach. Subconsciously we all see in him our better self.

He transformed his introversion and 'shyness' into something that helped him, instead of hindering him. He observed a very strict vow of silence every Monday. Apparently, because of this vow, he refused to meet the King of England. Originally he took the vow to relieve the sense of pressure but Silence soon become both a physical and spiritual necessity for him. Gandhi said that his practice of silence was his cure for "spiritual deafness". He also realised that a person of few words will have to choose their words carefully, which is a great aid to conscious speech or "nonviolence in word". In fact Jawaharlal Nehru , PM of India, remarked that "Gandhi never wrote or said a word he did not mean"

Gandhiji wrote "Silence is a great help to a seeker after truth like myself. In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after Truth, and the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height."

I will end this with one of my favourite Gandhi quotes - "The earth provides enough to satisfy everyman's needs but not for everybody's greed." Its always worth reflecting on this and resolve to simply our needs.

Watch your thoughts,
for they become
your words

Watch your words,
for they become
your habits

Watch your habits,
for they become
your character

Watch your
character
for it becomes your
destiny.





WORDS

“A rude word breaks many a heart”

“A kind word leaves a lasting mark”

“Kind words can be short and easy to speak
BUT their echoes are truly endless”

Speaking ill of others

praising oneself: concealing the good qualities of others and proclaiming in oneself good qualities which one does not possess : This causes influx of bad karma

Speaking well of others and praising their good qualities without drawing attention to one's own virtues: cultivating humility in company with others, and to eschew pride in one's own achievements: This causes influx of good karma

Kind hearts are the garden,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flower,
Kind deeds are the fruits
Take care of your garden,
And keep out the weeds
Fill it with sunshine of

Kind Words and Kind Deeds



Words !! They are all around us. We see them, we hear them, use them. Harsh words, soothing words, biting words; words that give pain and sorrow, words that give you joy and pleasure. They are vital to our communication.

There are reactions, negative or positive when words are spoken. Either thoughts are triggered or emotions fired or actions performed. Words do colour our behaviour. And how lovely it is amid the verbiage of every day living to hear words that are calm and free from rancour and aggression. To hear words that lift the soul and leaves it with renewed vigour. Such words are the sparks of purity.

It is important to remember that speech indicates what is in our hearts and mind, as the thinking, so the words uttered. Mental calmness makes our words calm. A pure mind makes for pure words. It is said that one's speech may exalt one to kingship or send one to the gallows. We should never let ourselves be led to indulge in false bitter and vicious speech. Our words should reflect our true inner nature, that of purity and peace. Words once spoken, can never be recalled.

Today we utter myriads of words, what tone will they take? What hue will they colour the atmosphere into which they are released? What effects will they make on those who hear them? Will they be the words that are poisonous and cause pain? Or will your tongue be like that of the nightingale, sweet and so, so very soothing and lovely to the ear?

“ We are born with two eyes, two ears, but one mouth for the mouth is a sharp weapon. It can hurt, flirt, and kill. Remember : talk less ; listen and see more. We are born with only one heart, deep in our ribs, it reminds us to appreciate and give love from deep within.”

In silence lies the ability to listen; to listen to ourselves to others and to God. Listening is a lost art. Without it, we cannot communicate, we cannot relate to each other and so we cannot live life meaningfully. We need to learn to listen.

Sitting in silence allows us to listen to ourselves and to understand. This silence can heal. The worries, the pain can be healed when we listen. Spiritual medicine is ever-present in the soul. Whenever we need it, to whatever extent we need it, we can find it within.

The disease of anger needs the medicine of tolerance; the pain of disappointments needs the medicine of hope; the violence of revenge and spite needs forgiveness; fear needs courage; ego needs self - respect. Through inner silence we receive the strength to heal.

Truly listening means that we can perceive reality. We see our real selves in silence. If we are still and silent, if we step within, we see the blueprint of our original goodness, our true selves.

It is in the mirror of silence that our spiritual identity becomes a reality rather than a distant hope. To consolidate this reality, we must create a daily space for silence. We must listen to ourselves.

..... By Anthony Strano



THE WONDER OF SILENCE



The “Tao Te Ching” is one of the world’s oldest profound literary work, written approximately 2500 years ago in China. The book succinctly explores the nature of life, universe and man’s place in it.

Like many other philosophy, which originated at that time by the likes of Mahavira, Buddha, Confucius, the book’s wisdom is timeless and just as relevant today.

The philosophy of the Tao is rooted in simplicity, ease, effortlessness and humility. It urges us to relinquish our incessant need to strive, struggle, compete, acquire and control. Simple, subtle, yet deeply profound, the Tao offers us a way of coming into balance with who and what we are, and with the world in which we live.

Very little is known about its author, Lao Tzu (‘Old Master). It is believed he was an older contemporary of Confucius. Some sources suggest he worked as an archivist in the court of the Chou Dynasty, where he eventually became revered for his great wisdom. Troubled by the state of society and its overemphasis on status, prestige and possessions, Lao Tzu decided to leave civilisation behind and set off on a water buffalo. As he approached the gates of the kingdom, he was recognised by the gatekeeper, who beseeched him to share his wisdom before departing, and thus the Tao Te Ching was written in the space of a single night. (Compiled from various sources)

VIRTUE OF SILENCE

FROM TAO TE CHING

Those who know do not talk.

Those who talk do not know.

Stop talking,

block off your senses,

meditate in silence,

release your worries,

blunt your sharpness,

untie your knots,

soften your glare,

harmonise your inner light

and unite the world into one whole!

This is the primal union or secret embrace

One who knows this secret

is not moved by attachment or aversion,

swayed by profit or loss,

nor touched by honour or disgrace.

Such a one is far beyond the cares of men

yet comes to hold the dearest place in their hearts.

This, therefore, is the highest state of man.

BY KISHOR B SHAH



PREPARING FOR SILENCE

One of the true gifts in a busy life is an extended period of silence, a time when we intentionally turn our attention away from the rush of conversation and commitments, images and messages, and lists and obligations, and quietly attune ourselves to an inner space.

For some of us, imposed silence has been a punishment in our past, for example, a parent may have admonished, "close your mouth and go to your room." The silence we are entering here is a choice. This silence is a chance for discovery, to find out new and different things. The absence of talk is quite different when we are choosing not to speak.

- Silence is not a lack of communication. There is a subtle language that connects us to one another through the eyes, with a smile, or a gesture. Fluency in this subtle language calls for our ability to observe the small details of life. As we develop our facility with this subtle language, we find that we are less dependent on the mechanical devices that can connect us but that can also make us feel more separate.
- In moving into an inner space of silence, we are attuning ourselves to the spirit of nature and letting go of the tendency to be critical.
- Silence provides the opportunity for me to identify the qualities in myself that have the capacity to transform me. In silence I can connect to the highest quality of my lightest, clearest thinking.
- Action emerges from the seeds of thought. Actions are the fruits of these seeds. What is the soil in which I choose to plant the seeds of my thoughts? Violence or peace? Anger or love? These choices are transformative.
- The state of awareness I attain in silence connects directly to the quality of my understanding. Understanding "in sound" is a cognitive process, while understanding "in silence" is more subtle, resulting in realisations that emerge from within. These

are very different experiences.

- In silence I discover my innate qualities, the qualities that are intrinsic to who I am. Here in silence I touch my eternal self, and I come to trust this deepest essence.
- The experience of recognising my intrinsic and unique qualities increases my own power to receive. In silence I touch my inner strength and experience trust, faith, safety, beauty, worthiness. It is from this base of inner strength that my actions evolve.
- In silence I can listen to the call of God, the call of nature, the call of others in need.
- Silence is an inner space of learning. When I do not understand something, I continue to hold on to it. When learning occurred, I can release it and move on.
- In silence I discover truth by getting in touch with the true self. Silence increases my capacity to hold the truth within.
- Silence is an opportunity to rest in the lap of my own greatness. Remember to care for yourself with the special attention you would accord any great soul.

Use these thoughts about silence as a tray of hors d'oeuvres, picking what you want to support you, as you transition into a silent inner space.

By BK Mohini Panjabi

When Mahavira was asked 'how can one lead a life similar to his own. He replied "Maittim bhuyesu kappaye"; "Let there be friendship with every living being".

"Close the door of words
that the window of your heart may open.
To see what cannot be seen
turn your eyes inward
and listen, in silence."Rumi



INSIGHTS



IT IS RIGHTLY SAID THAT SPEECH IS SILVER BUT SILENCE IS GOLDEN

“True silence is the rest of the mind ; it is to the spirit what sleep is to the body, nourishment and refreshment.” *William Penn*

“The quieter you become, the more you are able to hear. ..*Rumi*

“ Learning to still the mind’s dialogue opens the door to a domain of silence that has the potential to heal and transform your life. As you tap into this inner silence, you begin the process of shifting your internal reference point from ego to soul, from fear to love, from anxiety to peace, and from constriction to expansion. *Deepak Chopra*

Through the portals of silence, the healing sun of wisdom and peace will shine upon you.
..... *Paramahansa Yogananda*

“ Speak without offending, listen without offending, love without depending, and live without pretending.” *Anon*

“ Remind yourself that your task is to be a good human being, remind yourself what nature demands of people. Then do it, without hesitation, and speak the Truth as you see it. But with Kindness. With Humility. Without hypocrisy. *Marcus Aurelius.*



“ We are at once always alone and at the same time eternally connected. We are each on our sacred path from the moment of birth until death. Many people cross our path over the length of our lifetime. Some are with us for many years, others only for a short time. Each one both a teacher and a student”

“Listen to the silence, it has so much to say” ... *Rumi*

“Listen and silent are spelled with the same words. Think about it.” *Anon*

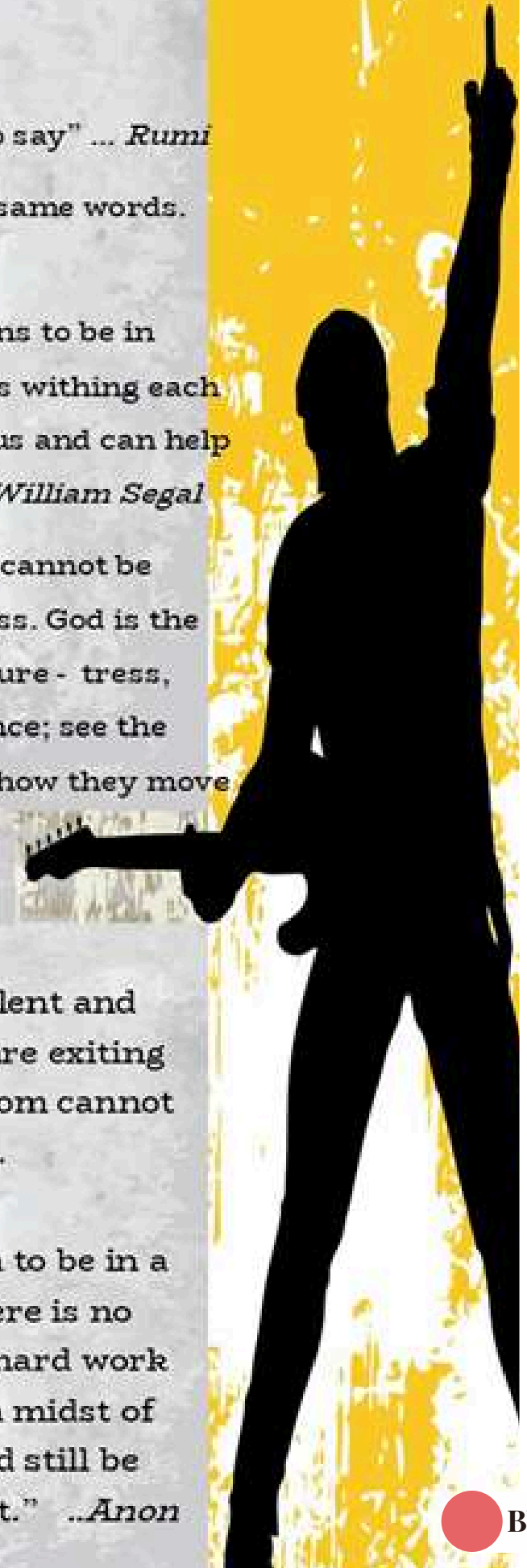
“When one is still and listens, one begins to be in touch with a mysterious element that is within each of us, which can transform and shape us and can help transform the world.” *William Segal*

“We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence. We need silence to be able to touch our souls.”
..... *Mother Teresa*

“ Observe, be silent and learn. If words are exiting your mouth, wisdom cannot come in.

PEACE

“It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work. It means to be in midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.” ..*Anon*



*If Christmas means sharing,
Then let us share together
our hopes for tomorrow ...
If Christmas means giving
Then let us give one another
Strength, encouragement and faith
If Christmas means love, then let us
Love one another with the hearts of
children ... In the spirit of peace*

Happy Xmas & New Year

Kishor B Shah

*So this is Christmas
And what have you done?
Another year over
And a new one just begun
And so this is Christmas
I hope you have fun
The near and the dear ones
The old and the young
A very Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year 2021
Let's hope it's a good one
Without any fear
(Lyrics By John Lennon | Yoko Ono)*

**Be the inspiration
Live the Jain Way of Life**



Written, Produced, Designed, Graphics by Kishor Bhimji Shah

If anything is written against the jinajna, or any unforeseen errors, then
by three ways (trividha-trividha) I ask Miccham Dukkadam

