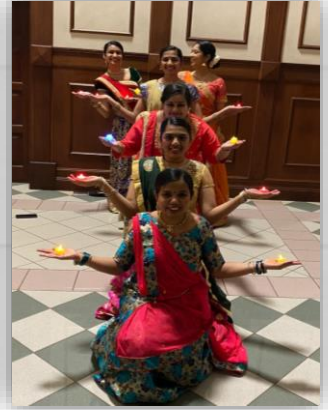


Oshwalwaz

42nd Edition – October 2020

Diwali Celebrations

VOC, Nairobi organized Online Diwali Celebrations for all the Members. Activities conducted for Diwali and the New Year included Essay Writing on various aspects of Diwali and Jainism, Diva Making Workshop, Ghavli Workshop, Diwali Cultural Programme, Shree Mahavir Swami Moksh Kalyanak, Shree Laxmi/Sharda Poojan and New Year's Prayers. All these programmes were very well attended.



Essay writing was organized by the Youth Group and the Convenors were Jinita Shah & Parshva Dodhia. Highly recommended Essays were read out during the Diwali Cultural programme.

Childrens Ghavli workshop on 14th November 2020 was organized by the Youth Group on the online platform and the convenors were Aparna Gada & Ekta Dodhia. All the Ghavli's were beautifully presented.



Diva making workshop on 14th November 2020 was organized by the Youth Group on the online platform and the convenors were Deshna Shah and Chandni Shah.

The Diwali Cultural Program was relayed on You Tube on 15th November 2020 and convenors were the VOC Pathshala Teachers Jayshreeben Gudkha, Shantiben Shah & Disha Nagaria . The program attracted a total of 21 entries involving Stuti speaking, stavans, poetry, skits, musical instruments and essay recitation. Over 1500 people viewed the program.



Shree Mahavirswami Moksh Kalyanak was relayed live via Facebook from the Shree Munisuvratwami Jinalay by the VOC Pujariji, Kishanbhai accompanied by Keval Bid who sang the stavans and provided the music. Over 1500 people viewed the program.

Shree Lakshmi/Sharda Poojan was held on the evening of Sunday 15th November 2020 and relayed online via Facebook by the VOC Pujariji Kishanbhai and accompanied in music by Keval Bid, this was viewed by 1200 people.

On Monday 16th November 2020, to mark the beginning of the New Year, Navsman Prayers were conducted by Kishanbhai live via Facebook. This was viewed by over 1000 people.

All Programs were thoroughly enjoyed by members in the comfort of their homes.





By Dhara Vishal Shah, Age: 10 years,
Kisumu

WHAT IS DIWALI?

Rows of beautiful lit Diyas, spectacular fireworks, colourful and vibrant rangolis, delicious “mithai” and the list goes on. What does this remind you of? Yes! Diwali or Deepawali, the festival of lights. According to the Bhagwat Gita “Diwali lights the lamp of wisdom and dispels the darkness of wisdom” and so allow me to enlighten you more on this festival. Diwali is celebrated around October or November depending on the Hindu calendar. It falls on Aso Vad Amas (the dark latter half of the month Aso, the last in the Hindu calendar). This festival signifies the victory of light over darkness meaning triumph of good over evil and knowledge over ignorance.

Did you know that Diwali is celebrated for different reasons in different Indian religions? The Hindus celebrate it to welcome Lord Rama to Ayodhya after fourteen years of exile. Since that day was a new moon day, the subjects of Ayodhya lit diyas across the kingdom and this tradition is still followed. For the Sikhs, this day symbolizes the release of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Nanak, from the prison of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir along with fifty-two other political prisoners. Us Jains celebrate Diwali as Lord Mahavir, our twenty fourth tirthankar, attained Nirvana (liberation from the cycle of life and death) on this day. In different parts of India, there are various other reasons for celebrating this auspicious day like the rescue of Lakshmi Ma by Lord Vishnu from King Bali, Lord Krishna killing Narakaasur, the return of the Pandavas from their twelve-year exile, the coronation of Vikramaditya and the founder of Arya Samaj- Maharishi Dayananda attained his nirvana.

Just to elaborate a little more on Jainism and Diwali. Lord Mahavir was the last Tirthankara of this time cycle, and his soul attaining moksha is celebrated. Moksha is every Jain’s ultimate goal. When one attains moksha, he/she has shed all their karmas by practicing non-violence, truth, non-stealing, non-possessiveness, and celibacy. The festival of Diwali is celebrated over five days. Two days before Diwali, known as Dhanteras, or dhanyateras dhan means wealth and teras is the thirteenth day of the month. Before attaining his moksha, Bhagwan Mahavir started giving his last sermons at Pavapuri, Bihar in India on October 15th 527 BC. In the Jain aagams this day is also called dhyana (meditation) teras. Dhyana means “Nirodh of all three Indriyas- Mann, Vachan and Kaya. The day before Diwali is known as Kali Chaudas- Kali meaning darkness and Chaudas meaning the fourteenth day. On this day Lord Mahavir spoke continuously for forty-eight hours. His last sermons are recorded in one of the Aagams called the Uttaradhyana Sutra. All the villagers were at his sermon and the villages were in darkness, hence the word Kali. Diwali is the day when Lord Mahavir’s soul was liberated at Pavapuri. All lights ceased and the whole world was enveloped in pitch darkness. Gods from heaven dispelled it with bright gems and humans lit earthen lamps. Lamps are lit to show the dispelling of ignorance. Day four is known as Bestu Varsh. The main disciple of Lord Mahavir, Gandhara Gautam Swami attained Keval Gyana (absolute or complete knowledge) on this day. New year for Jains marks new beginnings and members of the Jain community greet each other with “Saal Mubarak” or “Nutan Varsh na abhinandhan”. Day five is known as Bhai Beej. After Lord Mahavir attained moksha, his brother King Nandivardhan broke in grief and was inconsolable. His sister, Sudersheha called King Nandivardhan to her house and conformed him by preaching religious knowledge. This celebrates a beautiful bond between brother and sister.

So how do Jains celebrate Diwali? Many Jains fast in honor of Lord Mahavir. On the Diwali morning, Nirvan laddoo is offered after praying to Lord Mahavir in all the Jain derasars. Jains do not celebrate it by bursting fireworks as they believe in Ahimsa (non-violence). Diwali in a Jain house is celebrated in atmosphere of austerity, simplicity, serenity, equity, calmness, charity and environment-consciousness. Jain temples, homes, offices, shops are decorated with lights and diyas. Colourful rangolis are made depicting the Jain symbols or Gods. Relatives distribute sweets to each other. Devotees sing and chant hymns and mantras and also recite verses from the Uttaradhyana Sutra. Chopra poojan is also observed during Diwali where they reflect on the path to total knowledge and to start off new account books for the new year.

2020 has been a rough year for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike every year, this year our Diwali celebrations will be very different. Definitely no fireworks, which is in line with how Jains celebrate Diwali. Jains strongly believe in Ahimsa. Bursting fireworks involves violence in all eight types of karmas, hence let us shed a few karmas this Diwali instead of binding them. Let this Diwali be an eco-friendly one, and also set a mark for the rest of the Diwalis to come. Things done in simplicity are more satisfying and valuable. Instead of spending so much money on fireworks, we can donate that money to the needy or buy food and clothes for them. This will definitely light up someone else’s Diwali. No large gatherings with family, no chopda puja in a sangh and very limited derasar visits. We can eat healthily and celebrate this auspicious day with our close family. Chopda puja can be performed on- line and this will give opportunity for the whole family to participate. Let this pandemic help us appreciate the value of the real Diwali celebration. Let us use this opportunity to grow spiritually by learning some Jain philosophies, reflecting on the past year and setting new goals for the coming year.

Let this DIWALI FILL SOMEONE’S LIFE WITH BRIGHTNESS AND LIGHT. Wishing each and every one a celebration of light through knowledge and may we all find the true light this Diwali by walking on the true path shown by our Lord Mahavir.

HAPPY DIWALI



By Sweta Pethad, Age: 13 years,
Nairobi

What is Diwali?

Several religions across India celebrate Diwali for various reasons. Jains celebrate Diwali because the 24th Tirthankara Lord Mahavir attained Moksha and his first disciple Shri Gautam Swami gained Keval Gyan.

Asho Vadha Amaas was the day Lord Mahavir attained Moksha. Bhagwan had finished his sermon, he had been enlightening everyone with knowledge for 72 hours. It was extremely dark, so everyone who was present there lit lamps.

The following day, Gautam Swami returned from the place Lord Mahavir had sent him to. After seeing what had happened, he was aghast. He could not believe what had happened, after some while he realised why Lord Mahavir had sent him away, even though he knew he was going to die. This was because you can only go to Moksha if you have no karmas. He knew if Gautam Swami would be next to him, he would not be able to attain Moksha as he was attached to him. Therefore, Gautam Swami attained total knowledge that morning (Keval Gyan).

Nowadays, Diwali is symbolised by mithais, rangoli, colour, lamps, happiness, nice clothes! We should try apply this to our life 365 days a year.

Firstly, exactly how we light lamps in Diwali and the light of the diyas makes us delighted, we can light up the lives of those around us. We should be good to everyone and brighten their lives. This means helping others in whatever way we can. This includes helping others by doing charity, but not only that. We can do that by helping someone in their studies if they are having a hard time, or even just talking to someone for some while. Who knows what is happening in someone's life? By talking to someone you can make them feel better for at least some while.

Secondly, during Diwali we clean our houses and remove the unnecessary items in our homes. We should take some time to look outside of our windows, all we can see is plastic bottles, paper bags etc. There are excessive buildings. When we build so many buildings, we destroy boundless trees. To reduce pollution, we could plant more trees and clean our environment and remove the unnecessary items from the environment too.

Thirdly, we should speak sweet words whenever we talk to anyone. In Diwali we eat so many sweets. We could learn from the mithais which have a sweet nature and always be sweet.

Fourth, in Diwali all of us wear new clothes, we do Rangolis, and we light lamps. Does this not make us happy? Everyday we should remove some time to do things that make us happy, that will make our mental health better and we will be more positive.

Fifth, in Diwali most of us go to the Derasar and we become spiritual. We should make that a daily ritual. All of us should practise our sutras often and try to go the Derasar everyday.

All the activities we do in Diwali can be applied in our everyday lives. Everyday can be Diwali, and that is what I believe in.

Thank you very much for reading till the end. Now, it is time for you to think of the way in which you want everyday to be Diwali in your own lives.



**By Twinkle Pethad, Age: 19 years,
Nairobi**

The story of Mahavir Swami

Mahavir Swami. The sound of these two letters remind everyone of non-violence, and love. These words immediately bring to the mind a calm image of a figure sited in meditation emitting bliss and compassion. Why is this so? Who was Mahavir? Why is the story of his life worth listening to and reading about?

Mahavir was the 24th Tirthankara of the Jain lineage and his teachings are worshiped till date. His teachings opened up a new pathway of understanding misery and suffering. He laid forward a path following which each soul could live in harmony with each other. He gave mankind a new way of looking at life, at problems and at happiness. He showed us why there is a reason behind each and everything that happens in our lives. In today's era, it is extremely important for us to hear and be inspired by this great man and his life. If we wish to be more accepting towards the drastic changes in our lifestyles, we may want to trust and follow the teachings of Lord Mahavir. While humans are always busy fighting their external enemies, Lord Mahavir was the unique soul who annihilated his inner demons.

His life cannot be compressed in a few words but here is my attempt at sharing a few important takeaways from the life of this great man. Before he was born, while in mother Trishla's womb, he stopped kicking thinking that it would cause pain to his mother. He started kicking when he realised that his kicking in the womb was proof that he was alive. He was born in the palace of a prosperous kingdom. His father was King Siddhartha and his mother was Queen Trishla. As a child, he was brave enough to chase away evil demons who would stop him from playing with his friends. He grew up and at the age of 8, went to study at a Gurukul (a school in olden days). He was so smart and knowledgeable that he used to solve the doubts of his teachers and he would answer their questions about life with great answers.

He was raised to be a gentleman full of tranquility and equanimity with all creatures in the world. He had compassion for all beings; fellow humans, animals, birds, small organisms, plants, water, air, fire and earth beings too! He wanted to spend his life getting rid of his karmas and spreading the word of peace. Therefore, when he grew up, he told his parents about his wish to take diksha (the path to salvation). However, his parents did not want him to leave the palace. If he took diksha and left the palace, his parents and family would be saddened by his departure.

He would never want to cause pain to any soul. Therefore, to avoid causing pain to his family, he married. He did not take diksha until his parents passed away. This was the kind of love he had for all beings. He finally took diksha and left his luxurious life in the palace. His aim was to find internal peace and destroy all his karmas.

In the forest, he went through extreme levels of pain and misery. Yet, while going through suffering, he managed to turn so many evil lives into good beings. He brought salvation to so many lives. His teachings are conversant with current scientific findings. Those that follow the path of Lord Mahavir would never have hatred for each other. Therefore, a Jain lifestyle would be the best solution to reduce crime rate and terror in the world. He stayed in meditation for over 12 years in the forest and discovered inner peace and bliss. He showed us the importance of gaining control over our senses to live a balanced life.

After living a life full of aim and purpose, he bid the world goodbye on the last day and darkest night of the Aaso month. This day is what we now celebrate as Diwali. His first disciple, Gautama Swami could not bear the separation from his teacher and got rid of all his attachments. Gautama Swami received total knowledge the next morning, which is celebrated as New Years.

Mahavir Swami was a pure and blissful soul, whose entire life was dedicated to giving the world a good path of living. We are forever indebted to him for giving us the precious gift of Jainism. As we celebrate Diwali this year, we should try to incorporate his teachings in our daily lives too!

Happy Diwali and New year to everyone reading this!

SHREE VISA OSHWAL COMMUNITY

Ref. No. 208-2020

27th November 2020

VOC PROPERTY FOR SALE/ TO LET - L.R. 209/5017/16

The above Property is available for Sale/To Let

The details of the property are as follows:

Plot Size: Approx. 0.1515 Acres

Built up Area: 19860 sq.ft.

Location: Lusaka Road, opposite Associated Steel Ltd. near the bridge over the Mombasa - Nairobi railway line at a distance of approx. 3kms from the Nairobi City Centre.

Services: All mains services connected

Areas:

Ground Floor: Showroom and offices with Godown and covered Yard at rear

First Floor: Office space with Godown

Second & Third Floor: Office / Storage space.

Each floor with toilet facility and kitchenette

Please contact the
Visa Oshwal
Community on
0733469517 or email
admin@oshwalnairobi.org
for further
details.



Bindi R. Shah
Secretary

SHREE VISA OSHWAL COMMUNITY

Ref no. 210/2020

27th November 2020

CHILDREN'S PATHSHALA

VOC Children's Pathshala, currently being conducted online, will close from Saturday, 28th November, 2020 and will resume online on Saturday, 9th January, 2021.

If there are any changes, members shall be notified.

For more information, please contact:

Dishaben Nagaria – 0732785885

Jayshreeben Gudka – 0722905833

Shantiben Shah – 0736367025



Bindi R. Shah
Secretary

SHREE VISA OSHWAL COMMUNITY

Ref: 202/2020

21st November 2020

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Bindi R. Shah
Secretary

For more information, please contact:

bookings@oshwalnairobi.org

SHREE VISA OSHWAL COMMUNITY

Ref. No. 207/2020

27th November 2020

VOC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION

Dear Member,

The Annual Membership Subscription for the year 2021 is due and we request all **ANNUAL** paying Members to kindly contact the Visa Oshwal Community office and pay your subscriptions via MPESA Paybill No.: 781609 – A/c Number: 'VOC Number'.

The Annual Membership Subscription is Kshs. 251/=.

Any Nairobi Visa Oshwal individual who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years shall be eligible to be a Member of the Community.

Kindly ignore this notice if you have paid your subscription for the year 2021.



Bindi R. Shah
Secretary

If you wish to contribute an article to the Oshwal Awaaz please send it to:

✉ admin@oshwalnairobi.org

📍 Visa Oshwal Community

☎ 0732377475/0724177293

🌐 www.oshwalnairobi.org