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Preface

July 4, 2015

Dear Convention Attendees,

The JAINA Executive Committee, Convention Board, and Jain Society of Greater Atlanta would like to thank each one of you for attending this year's most auspicious convention. The various JAINA Convention Committees and Jain Society of Greater Atlanta members and volunteers have spent countless hours to create a memorable program to help you recharge and reconnect body and soul with Jainism.

The theme of this 18th Biennial JAINA Convention is "*Jainism: World of Non-Violence.*" Jainism is a way of life. For thousands of years, Jainism has preached non-violence (Ahimsa), Pluralism (Anekanta-Vad), and non-possessiveness (Aparigraha). Non-violence is compassion and forgiveness in thoughts, words, and deeds. Non-violence is: not to condone or provide support in any shape or form to injure, harm, abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, discriminate, torment, persecute, torture, or kill any creature or living being (human or non-human). Six steps of Non-violence are: love with actions, love with speech, love by thoughts, avoid harm by thoughts, avoid harm by speech, and avoid harm by actions. We are all becoming more interdependent and therefore there is an ever-increasing need to spread and enroot non-violence globally to encourage peace, spirituality, and harmony among all living beings and environments. The Convention Committee hopes that each and every attendee will ponder the knowledge gained, implement it in daily activities for self-improvement, and spread it graciously. A Jain way of life leads to compassionate, healthy, and happy living.

This commemorative souvenir book will remind you of your participation in this four-day spiritual event with your fellow Jain community from across the world. The book contains articles written by sadhus, sadhavis, scholars, letters from political dignitaries and others, advertisements, photos, lists of donors, and volunteers. The JAINA Convention Committee is indebted to all the contributors for their intellectual, monetary, and time contributions without which this souvenir book would have been impossible. The generous donations and support extended by the Jain Center of Atlanta and other Jain Centers located throughout the USA were nothing short of inspiring. Please note that the views expressed in the articles are not a direct reflection of the opinion of JAINA or the Convention Committee.

The various Convention Committees had members located throughout the USA. Committee members had to make many trips from across the country to various Jain Centers for fund raising and to conduct meetings to plan, organize, and conclude various aspects of the convention. Souvenir Committee members tirelessly called and reminded contributors for timely submissions, developed and implemented designs, helped compose advertisements, raised funds, and finally proofread and printed this book. It's a long and challenging process that involved lots of late night work from a group of volunteers - many of whom had never undertaken such an effort. Despite the best efforts of the Convention committee members and volunteers, should you experience any difficulties at the convention or with the Souvenir book, we humbly ask "Micchami Dukkadam."

May this 4th of July weekend at 18th JAINA Biennial Convention in Atlanta be an unforgettable celebration of Jainism and our community. We hope you enjoy the speakers, themed activities, lively musical performances, festive parties, and, of course, the delicious food. And, may this Souvenir book help you remember this experience for many years to come.

Respectfully,
Souvenir Committee
18th Biennial JAINA Convention

**THANK YOU FOR THE
OPPORTUNITY TO
SERVE THE COMMUNITY**