

Prime Minister to Inaugurate Centenary Celebrations of Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj at Vigyan Bhawan

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The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, will inaugurate the Centenary Celebrations of Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj on 28th June 2025 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The programme marks the formal commencement of a year-long national tribute, being organised by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, in collaboration with the Bhagwan Mahaveer Ahimsa Bharti Trust, Delhi, to honour the 100th birth anniversary of one of India's most revered Jain spiritual leaders, scholars, and social reformers. Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Rashtrasant Paramparacharya Shri 108 Pragyasagar ji Muniraj will also grace the occasion.



The Centenary Year will be observed from 28 June 2025 to 22 April 2026, with a range of cultural, literary, educational, and spiritual initiatives across the country, aimed at celebrating the life and legacy of Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj.

Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj was born on 22 April 1925 in Shedbal, Belagavi (Karnataka). He received his initiation at a young age and went on to become one of the most prolific Jain scholars of modern times, having memorised over 8,000 Jain Agamic verses. He authored more than 50 works on Jain philosophy and ethics, including *Jain Darshan*, *Anekantvad*, and *Mokshmarg Darshan*. He travelled barefoot across Indian states for several decades, strictly adhering to Kayotsarga meditation, brahmacharya, and extreme austerity.

In 1975, during the 2500th Nirvana Mahotsav of Bhagwan Mahavir, Acharya Vidyanand Ji played a historic role in designing and introducing the official Jain Flag and Emblem, with agreement from all major Jain sects. The five-colour flag and the hand-inscribed Ahimsa symbol have since become unifying emblems for the Jain community across traditions.

He was instrumental in the restoration and revival of ancient Jain temples across India—including in Delhi, Vaishali, Indore, and Shravanabelagola—and was closely associated with the Shravanabelagola Mahamastakabhishek and the 2600th Janm Kalyanak Mahotsav of Lord Mahavir. He identified the site of

Kundgram (now Basokund) in Bihar as the birthplace of Bhagwan Mahavir, a finding later recognised by Government of India in 1956.

As a founder of multiple institutions and pathshalas, Acharya Ji championed education for young monks and children, especially in Prakrit, Jain philosophy, and classical languages. He also promoted forgiveness rituals, spiritual egalitarianism, and inter-sect harmony through active dialogue.

The inaugural event will be attended by eminent Jain Acharyas, spiritual leaders, Members of Parliament, constitutional authorities, scholars, youth representatives, and other distinguished dignitaries from across the country. The programme will feature a series of tributes and commemorative events:

Highlights of the Inaugural Ceremony:

- A specially curated exhibition titled “*Life and Legacy of Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj*”, highlighting rare archival material, photographs, milestones, and philosophical contributions
- Screening of a short documentary film chronicling his spiritual journey, societal contributions, and impact on national consciousness
- Release of a Commemorative Postage Stamp and Coin by the Ministry of Culture to mark the centenary year
- Launch of a biographical volume detailing Acharya Ji’s renunciatory path, literary works, institutional efforts, and role as a reformer
- Addresses by spiritual leaders, scholars, and public figures, reflecting on the relevance of his teachings in today’s world
- A Keynote Address by the Prime Minister of India, offering a national tribute to Acharya Ji’s legacy of ahimsa, truth, and dharma

The centenary year will include programmes across India focusing on community engagement, youth participation, interfaith dialogue, temple outreach, and Jain heritage awareness, ensuring that the timeless message of Acharya Vidyanand Ji reaches future generations.

This national observance is not just a celebration, but also a solemn call to reaffirm the timeless values of Indian civilisation—truth, compassion, discipline, and non-violence—that Acharya Shri 108 Vidyanand Ji Maharaj so powerfully embodied.

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