

PARVADHIRAJ PARYUSHAN & DAS LAKSHANA

Paryushan/ Das Lakshana means, literally, "abiding" or "coming together". It is also a time when the laity take on vows of study and fasting with a spiritual intensity similar to temporary monasticism. Paryushan/ Das Lakshana concludes with a time of confession and forgiveness for the transgressions of the previous year.

The reason behind this festival being called Parvadhiraaj Paryushan/ Das Lakshana is that amongst all Jain festivals, Paryushan/ Das Lakshana Parva is the king of all festivals. This is one festival which takes our soul to higher levels and shows us the path of salvation. When we say festival, we usually coincide with pomp, making merry, and eating, but here this festival is one which is completely a journey of one's soul to its final goal of Moksh. Paryushan/ Das Lakshana is a time of reflection on our actions of the past year. It is marked by strict observance of the ten cardinal virtues: Forgiveness, Charity, Simplicity, Contentment, Truthfulness, Self-restraint, Fasting, Detachment, Humility and Continence.

Paryushan/ Das Lakshana Parva can be compared to that of cleaning one's dirt of karmas by various ways like fasting, Penance, friendship and cleaning of one's own heart. The biggest motto of Paryushan/ Das Lakshana can be summed up in one word FRIENDSHIP. The souls which are already aware about the merits and sins, can do their duties, but those people who are still passionate towards worldly pleasures become aware of new motivation.

The word "Paryushan" has several different meanings:

1. Pari + ushan = all kinds + to burn = to burn (shed) our all types of karmas. To shed our karmas, we do twelve different types of austerities including fasting.
2. Another meaning of "ushan" is to stay closer. To stay closer to our own soul from all directions and to stay absorbed in our own-self (soul), we do Svadhyaya⁵ (self-study), meditation, austerities, etc.
3. Pari + upshamana = upshamana means to suppress, to suppress our passions (kashayas - anger, ego, deceit and greed) from all directions. Read more

Therefore, the real purpose of the Paryushan/ Das Lakshana is to purify our soul by staying closer to our own soul, to look at our own faults, to ask for forgiveness for the mistakes we have committed, and take vows to minimize our faults. We try to forget about the needs of our body (like food) and our business so that we can concentrate on our-self. Paryushan/ Das Lakshana means, literally, "abiding" or "coming together". It is also a time when the laity take on vows of study and fasting with a spiritual intensity similar to temporary monasticism. Paryushan/ Das Lakshana concludes with a time of confession and forgiveness for the transgressions of the previous year.

The final day of Paryushan/ Das Lakshana is Samvatsari Pratikraman, the annual confession. The ritual of asking forgiveness from the teacher is widened in scope to include family and friends and, finally, all living beings. The culmination of confession is receiving forgiveness from all living beings and also granting forgiveness to all. This ritual of forgiveness is sometimes called the rite of "universal friendship". The spirit of the day is contained in this verse: "I grant forgiveness to all living beings, May all living beings grant me forgiveness; my friendship is with all living beings, my enmity is totally non-existent. Let there be peace, harmony and prosperity for all." Let all of us celebrate this festival with great pomp of self-destruction of our bad qualities, dance in the tune of Bhakti, if possible do fasting or else restrict our food intakes and celebrate the festival in its true spirit.