

# PARYUSHAN Parva

“This special eight day festival is for introspection, it is a time to scrutinize our within”

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## WHAT IS PARYUSHAN?

*Paryushan means it is a time for opening the lock of the heart and cleaning of the dirt (karma) which is collected on the soul. - Namra Muni*

Paryushan - the celebration of spiritual awareness - is the most important annual festival of Jain religion. Pari + upshamana + upshamana means to suppress, to suppress our passions (kashayas—anger, ego, deceit and greed) from all directions. The festival lasts eight days. It is stated in Jain scriptures that the start of Paryushan should not be less than one month and twenty days after the start of the rainy season. Every year Paryushan starts on about the Shravan Vad 12th or 13th and ends on Bhadarva sud 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> (late August -- September). During these eight days, all Jains Endeavour to exercise self-discipline and do penance to purify their souls to the best of their individual capacities.

## THE ORGINS OF PARYUSHAN

The origins of the Paryushan Parva are rooted in the agricultural lifestyles of India of centuries ago, when people lived in small, dispersed villages. After the monsoon rains and harvests, people had a break from the agricultural work. Roads would become difficult to travel, and the increase in insects would make it difficult to travel without killing them. Therefore, the people and the Sadhus/Sadhvis would avoid any travel. This gave them the chance to spend these days to focus on purifying themselves, advancing their knowledge and so on.

## WHY IS PARYUSHAN CELEBRATED?

Paryushan is a time for self-analysis and soul searching. Paryushan provides a break from routine life and allows us to reflect and contemplate on our past conduct, in the light of the teachings of Jainism and make a determination to lead a spiritually cleaner life in the future. Paryushan also reminds us that life’s ultimate and highest aim is not the pursuit of materialism but the attainment of Nirvana. Paryushan also provides us with an opportunity to practice nonviolence (Ahimsa) to a greater extent than during the past year, by engaging in self-discipline (Sanyam) and by performing penance (Tapah) such as study of scriptures (Swadhyaya), partial or complete fasting, introspection (Pratikraman) and introspection (Pratikraman) and repentance (Prayaschitta). We think of Parasparopagraho Jivanam - all life is bound together by mutual support and inter dependence. Community spirit grows amongst all, and we should all be united.

## HOW IS PARYUSHAN CELEBRATED?

During Paryushan, Jains are expected to study the scriptures and religious books, reflect on basic principles of Jainism and purify our conduct. We also try and observe the vows of nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, purity of mind and body and no possessiveness to a greater extend and resolve for greater effort for spiritual progress in the coming year. Pratikraman is performed by many during the Paryushan. Pratikraman literally means reflection - looking back over the events and actions of the past.

During the Paryushan days we should try and observe the following five essentials:-

- 1. SADHARMIK VATSALYA:** (Welfare of fellow Jains). To feel heart felt affection for not only fellow Jains, but also other people and all living creatures. One should also extend help and care to those who are on the same path, and do our utmost to remove the causes of unhappiness for fellow Jains.
- 2. AMARI PRAVARTAN:** (Ahimsa or non-violence). Try and be non-violent in thought, words, and deeds and to bestow fearlessness in every life form.
- 3. ATTHAMA TAPA:** (Fasting for three days). The austerity of fasting for three consecutive days to purify one's body. It is said that the three days represent the three jewels of Jainism – Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. If one cannot fast for three consecutive days, one should try and fast on three separate days, and if this is not possible, then try and do six Ayambils (one meal only of tasteless food, during the whole day) or 12 ekaashan ( eating once a day), or 24 besan (eating twice a day) or 60 rosary mala of Navkar Mantra.
- 4. CHAITYA PARIPATI:** (Temple Yatra). Pilgrimage to holy places, showing respect and devotion to the Lord through worship, prayers and meditation.
- 5. KSHAMAPANA:** (Forgiveness). To ask for forgiveness from all beings who in the past or present life may have suffered because of us. To forgive those who have hurt us and forgive their shortcomings and weaknesses.

#### **WHY DO PEOPLE FAST DURING THE PARYUSHAN?**

Fasting is a good way of developing self-control. Health permitting, everyone should try and fast occasionally. During Paryushan, Some Jains observe eight day fast (Athaai), drinking only boiled water, whilst others fast for a day (Anashan), or a partial fast (Ekaashan – eating once a day or Besan – eating twice a day). We should bear in mind that these fasts are only meaningful only if one's thoughts and feelings are pure and free from passions such as pride, greed, anger etc.

#### **WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SAMVATSARI**

The last day of Paryushan is the Samvatsari, and is the most important of all. On this day, most Jains try to observe a fast and collectively perform the Samvatsari Pratikraman. This is also the day of 'Forgive and Forget' - Tass Michami Dukkaram. We ask for forgiveness from family and friends for any hurts which we may have committed towards them in the previous year. It is regarded as a definite stage in the spiritual life not to harbor any ill feelings beyond the space of one year, so annual occasion of repentance and forgiveness is important.

#### **What Is Pratikraman**

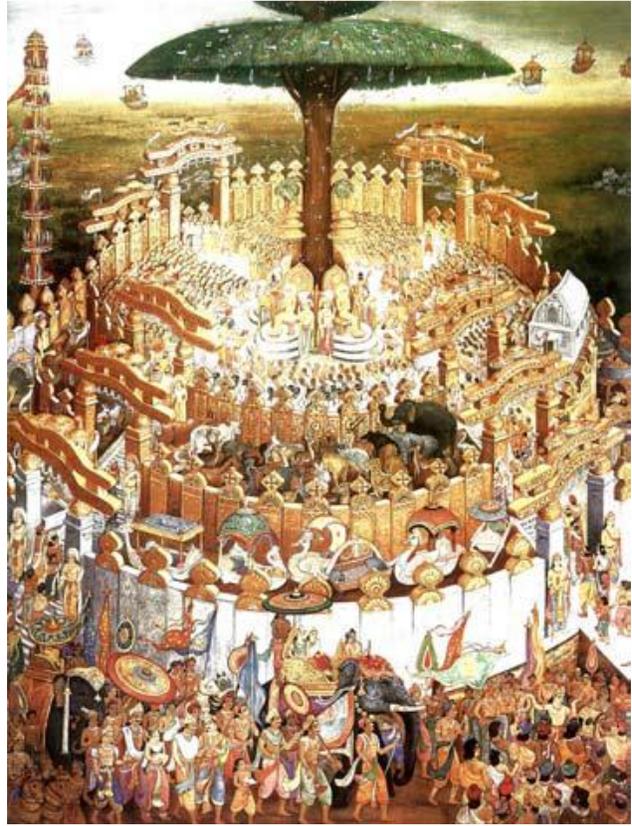
Pratikraman is for making atonement (prayaschitta), repenting our sinful conduct and bringing back the soul which has lost its way. Pratikraman is the combination of two words – Pra meaning return and atikraman meaning violation. Literally, it means returning from violation, turning back to the self. Pratikraman is the process of clearing one's conscience by soliciting pardon from all other living beings for personal actions committed in deeds, words and thoughts. It entails going back to the path of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, self-control and nonattachment. Pratikraman involves self-analysis, self-improvement, self-realization and introspection, resulting in repentance for transgressions, renunciation of bad thoughts and actions and a resolve to gain strength to prevent such offences in the future. The ultimate aim of pratikraman is to minimize the impact of our mistakes on our lives and to ensure that such mistakes are not repeated. Thus pratikraman is not only a religious ritual but it serves to exercise control over one's mind by

prodding it to overcome its weakness and encouraging it to strive for humility, extending friendship, forgiving the faults of others and for asking forgiveness with an open heart. Pratikraman is like a mirror. We see ourselves, externally, in the mirror the way it is. During Pratikraman, we see ourselves, internally, the way we really are.

#### TYPES OF PRATIKRAMAN:

There are five types of Pratikraman as follows:-

- **Devsī Pratikraman:** which is performed in the evening to reflect on the transgression of vows (wrongdoing) done during the day.
- **Raishī Pratikraman:** which is performed in the morning to reflect the mistakes and transgressions of vows done at night.
- **Pakkhī Pratikraman:** Which is performed on the 14th day of every fortnight while Chaumasi Pratikraman is performed once every four months.
- **Samvatsari Pratikraman:** This is performed once a year at the end of the Paryushan Days and is considered a must for every Jain. We must remember that Samvatsari Pratikraman is not for cleansing all the sins conducted in a year. If it were so, then there would be no reason for all other Pratikramans. Samvatsari Pratikraman exclusively covers certain sins and is for bringing back the soul from the company of anger, pride, deceit, lust and hate. Samvatsari Pratikraman is considered a must for every Jain, because it is believed that if we do not repent for our bad deeds at least once a year, then the bondage of karmas to the soul become severe and even harder to shed off.



How to maintain the spiritual momentum gained during the Paryushan Parva after words?

Allocate some time every day for your spiritual self:

#### Daily Introspection:

Pratikraman ritual to be performed on a regular basis. However, we can still undertake a daily introspection as follows:-

Every night prior to going to bed, reflect on the day's activities. Understand how you reacted, what thoughts came to your mind. Simply focus on how you reacted and not the reason why you reacted in that manner. Once you start picturing your reaction in detail, you will also realize the negative emotions within you that manifested that reaction. It is very important to not only study your reaction and not the action of other party or surrounding situation that possibly forced you to react in that manner. Soon you will be able to see the emotion that drove your particular reaction; was it anger, greed, deceit, ego, fear, attachment, hatred or dislike, or simply the inability to withstand certain pain. When this introspection is performed regularly, one would start seeing oneself from inside instead of from outside - the way people usually do.

## **Meditation**

Make time for meditation every day. Shree Chitrabhanuji has suggested each day allow yourself 24 minutes of peace, one minute for each hour of the day. Meditation is the gathering of self-knowledge and the dispelling of ignorance; the pathway back to inner peace; the restoration of love for self; the act of creating quality thoughts and feelings; reaching to the highest level of conscious awareness; the best way for busy people to stay cool, calm and focused.

## **Self-Education and Study**

Swadhyaya is derived from the roots sva, or self, and adhyaya, or inquiry. Swadhyaya is the physical act of reading, studying, and contemplating. Knowledge has been given great importance in Jain Philosophy. Self-study helps us to understand different aspects and approaches to purity as suggested in scriptures. Swadhyaya can mean reading a book on Jainism or joining a study group.

## **The Service To Others- SEVA**

Give some time to a wider circle in the form of service. A life without some kind of service is a narrow, perhaps selfish, life in which satisfaction and contentment will be difficult and sustained happiness impossible. Finding an appropriate way to use your now growing spiritual power and understanding for the benefit of others is also a method of sustaining your personal growth.

## **Jain Way of Life**

Jain Way of Life is life full of happiness, challenge, discovery and spiritual growth. JWOL is living a life grounded in thoughts, words, and actions of Jain core principles of Non- Violence, Non-Possessiveness and Non-Absolutism. Periodically determine your JWOL state of mind and practice. Walk the Talk,  
Live the Jain Way of Life.

## **Relevance of the Paryushan in Modern Times:**

Open your eyes - expand your mind - question your comfort - challenge your conditioning - inspect your habits – examine your beliefs - scrutinize your reasoning - analyze your motives - interrogate your “SELF”

The Paryushan Days every year gives us an opportunity to step back from our daily lives and go on a personal ‘retreat’ for eight days. Going on a ‘retreat’ is not running away from life - the opposite is true. It is a time to turn our attention to focus inwards, become re-acquainted with our selves. The most effective way to do this is through introspection/ self-observation. Self-knowledge is seeing how we see our self, influence the way we see the world. Going on ‘personal retreat’ allows us a brief respite, allowing us to return to the reality of our inner peace, our inner joy and inner love. These are the spiritual qualities eternally at the heart of our personality. In our daily lives, we can draw on these qualities which we have strengthened during our journey into inner space. The eight days of Paryushan provide us with an opportunity not only to cleanse our minds and bodies but also to cleanse our souls and rid ourselves of all the unholy baggage that we may have. Let us welcome Paryushan by change our self-first, before try to change others, Be yourself without depending on others Try to become flowers instead of being a thorn, Help others instead of getting help from others”