

Celebration of the Soul
Paryushan Parv and Das Lakshan

Paryushan is an eternal festival relating neither to people nor to any historical event. It is a time to celebrate the natural qualities of the Soul. Just as the Soul does not have a beginning or an end, Paryushan does not have a beginning or an end. It falls three times a year but is only celebrated once, around August/September because at this time, business is slow (in India), businessmen can take time off for spiritual pursuit. Also, it is the time of the monsoon retreat for monks and nuns in India. During this time when insects flourish, the monks and nuns reside in one city or community to avoid long distance travel so as to minimize trampling or harming living beings.

Eating, drinking and being merry are normally associated with festivals, but Paryushan is the festival for spiritual upliftment. During Paryushan, Jains practice penances, vows, fasts, scriptural studies, and Pratikraman. If not fasting, they refrain from eating green vegetables. The reason for these practices is to have the mind and body focus more on the inner qualities and virtues of the Soul and cleanse the body.

In North America, there are 18 days of celebration, in which the first 8 days are Paruyshan Parv celebration and the next 10 days are Das Lakshan (Festival of the Ten Virtues) celebration. After the celebration, Jains ask for forgiveness from each other, their friends, co-workers, and most importantly, their enemies. This asking for forgiveness is made easier after the 8/10/18 days of cleansing of our Mind and Soul such that our hearts become "soft" and we become mentally strong to ask for forgiveness. First we forgive others, and then we ask for forgiveness.

Ten Supreme Dharmas (Das Lakshan)

The ten Dharmas, as also described in Tattvarth Sutra, are better understood in context of two common viewpoints found in the scriptures.

Vyavahar (External) view This view helps us live more easily and peacefully with the outside world. It also builds up a reserve of good deeds (punya Karmas). In Jainism, the Vyavahar view is considered a temporary view and a path towards Nischay view.

Nischay (Internal) view This view helps to enhance and blossom the Soul's natural qualities. The Nischay view is considered to be the most important as it leads to contemplation and understanding of the true nature of the Soul with the aim of its purification, the ultimate goal of practicing Paryushan.

Each of the ten Dharmas are all prefixed by the word 'Uttam' (Supreme) to signify that they are practiced at the highest level

by the Jain monks. The householder practices them to a lesser extent. It lasts over a period of ten days, each day being dedicated to one of the ten Dharmas. These Dharmas are outlined below from both External View (Vyavahar View) and Internal View (Nischay) View.

1) Forgiveness – UTTAM KSHAMA

External View: We forgive those who have wronged us and seek forgiveness from them. Forgiveness is sought not just from human colleagues, but from all living beings ranging from one sense to five senses. If we do not forgive or seek forgiveness but instead harbor resentment, we bring misery and unhappiness on ourselves and in the process shatter our peace of mind and make enemies. Forgiving and seeking forgiveness oils the wheel of life, allowing us to live in harmony with our fellow beings.

Internal View: Forgiveness here is directed toward oneself. The Soul, in a state of mistaken identity or false belief, assumes that it consists of the body, the Karmas and the emotions, likes, dislikes, anger, pride, etc. As a result of this incorrect belief, it inflicts pain upon itself and is thus the cause of its own misery. Nischay Kshamä (forgiveness) Dharma teaches the Soul to correctly identify itself by encouraging it to contemplate its true nature and hence achieve the state of right belief or Samyak Darshan. It is only by achieving Samyak Darshan that the Soul ceases to inflict pain on itself and attains supreme happiness.

2) Modesty/Humility – UTTAM MARDAV

External View: Wealth, good looks, reputable family or intelligence often lead to pride. Pride means to believe one to be superior to others and to look down on others. By being proud you are measuring your worth by temporary material objects. These objects will either leave you or you will be forced to leave them when you die. These eventualities will cause you unhappiness as a result of the 'dent' caused to your self-worth. Being humble will prevent this.

Internal View: All souls are equal, none being superior or inferior to another. In the words of Srimad Rajchandra: "Sarva Jeev Che Sidh Sum, Je Samje Te Thai – All souls are akin to the Siddha (liberated souls); those who understand this principle will achieve that state." This view encourages you to understand your true nature. All souls have the potential to be liberated souls. The only difference between the liberated souls and those in bondage is that the former have attained liberation as a result of their "effort." With effort, even the latter can achieve liberation.

3) Straightforwardness – UTTAM AARJAV

External View: The action of a deceitful person is to think one thing, speak something else and do something entirely different. There is no harmony in his thought, speech and actions. Such a person loses credibility very quickly and lives in constant anxiety and fear of his deception being exposed. Being straight forward or honest oils the wheel of life. You will be seen to be reliable and trustworthy.

Internal View: Delusion about one's identity is the root cause of unhappiness. Be straightforward to yourself and recognize your true nature. The Soul is made up of countless qualities like knowledge, happiness, effort, faith, and conduct. It has the potential to achieve omniscience (Keval Jnän) and reach a state of supreme bliss. Again, the body, the Karmas, the thoughts and all the emotions are separate from the true nature of the Soul. Only by practicing Nischay Aarjav Dharma will one taste the true happiness that comes from within.

4) Contentment – UTTAM SHAUCH

External View: Be content with the material gains that you have accomplished thus far. Contrary to popular belief, striving for greater material wealth and pleasure will not lead to happiness. Desire for more is a sign that we do not have all that

we want. Reducing this desire and being content with what we have leads to satisfaction. Accumulating material objects merely fuels the fire of desire.

Internal View: Contentment or happiness, derived from material objects, is only perceived to be so by a Soul in a state of false belief. The fact is that material objects do not have a quality of happiness and therefore happiness cannot be obtained from them. The perception of "enjoying" material objects is only a temporary perception. This perception rewards the Soul with only misery and nothing else. Real happiness comes from within, as it is the Soul that possesses the quality of happiness.

5) Truth – UTTAM SATYA

External View: If talking is not required, then do not talk. If it is required then only use the minimum number of words, and all must be absolutely true. Talking disturbs the stillness of the mind. Consider the person who lies and lives in fear of being exposed. To support one lie he has to utter a hundred more. He becomes caught up in a tangled web of lies and is seen as untrustworthy and unreliable.

Internal View: Satya comes from the word Sat, which means existence. Existence is a quality of the Soul. Recognizing the Soul's true nature as it really exists and taking shelter in the Soul is practising Nischay Satya Dharma.

6) Self-Restraint – UTTAM SANYAM

External View: Restraining from injury to life. Jains go to great lengths, compared to other world religions, to protect life. This encompasses all living beings, from one-sensed onward. The purpose of not eating root vegetables is that they contain countless one-sensed beings termed "nigod." During Paryushan the Jains also do not eat green vegetables to reduce harm to the lower sensed beings. Also, self-restraint from desires or passions which can lead to pain, and therefore should be avoided.

Internal View:

i) Restraining injury to the self. This has been elaborated upon in Forgiveness (Kshamä) Dharma.

ii) Self restraint from desires or passions. Emotions, e.g. likes, dislikes or anger, lead to misery and need to be eradicated. They are not part of the true nature of the Soul and only arise when the Soul is in a state of false belief. The only method to free oneself from these is to contemplate on the true nature of the Soul and in the process commence the journey to liberation or moksha.

7) Penance – UTTAM TAP

External View: This does not only mean fasting but also includes a reduced diet, restriction of certain types of foods, avoiding tasty foods, etc. The purpose of penance is to keep desires and passions in control. Over-indulgence inevitably leads to misery. Penance leads to an influx of positive Karmas.

Internal View: Meditation prevents the rise of desires and passions in the Soul. In a deep state of meditation the desire to intake food does not arise. The first Tirthankar, Adinath Bhagwan was in such a meditative state for six months, during which he observed Nischay Uttam Tap. Only from the meditative energy from within, he went on for six months with no food.

8) Renunciation – UTTAM TYÄG

External View: Contrary to popular belief, renouncing worldly possessions leads to a life of contentment and assists in keeping desires in check. Renunciation is done at the highest level by monks who renounce not only the household but also their clothes. A person's strength is measured not by the amount of wealth he accumulates but by the amount of wealth he renounces. By this measure the monks and laypeople living balanced, Non-Possessive lives are the richest.

Internal View: Renouncing the emotions, the root cause of misery, is Nischay Uttam Tyag, which is only possible by contemplating on the true nature of the Soul.

9) Non-attachment – UTTAM ÄKINCHANYA

External View: This assists us in detaching from external possessions. Historically, ten possessions are listed in scriptures: land, house, silver, gold, wealth, grain, female servants, male servants, garments and utensils. Of course in today's world, money, investments, car, and clothes are part of our possessions as well. Remaining unattached from these helps control our desires and leads to an influx of punya Karmas.

Internal View: This assists us in being unattached from our internal attachments: false belief, anger, pride, deceit, greed, laughter, liking, disliking, lamentation, fear, disgust, and sexual desire.

10) Supreme Celibacy – UTTAM BRAHMCHARYA

External View: This means not only refraining from sexual intercourse but also includes all pleasures associated with the sense of touch, e.g. desiring for a cool breeze on a hot summer's day or using a cushion for a hard surface. Again this dharma is practiced to keep our desires in check. The monks practice this to the highest degree with all their body, speech and mind. The householder refrains from sexual intercourse with anyone except his or her spouse.

Internal View: Brahmacharya is derived from the words Brahma (Soul) and charya (to dwell). Nischay Brahmacharya means to dwell in your Soul. Only by residing in the Soul you are the master of the Universe. Residing outside your Soul makes you a slave to desires.

Kshamä Väni Parva

This is celebrated two days after the end of the Das Lakshan Parva. With mindful and genuine practice over these 8/10/18 days, our mind, heart, and intellect are strengthened and ready to ask for forgiveness.

On this day we have the courage to meet our friends and relatives (or call them), especially people you have had disagreements, fights, and miscommunication with and ask for forgiveness.

On this day we have the courage to say:

Please forgive me if I have hurt you or have done wrong toward you intentionally or unintentionally (Micchami Dukkadam)

with elders: touch their feet and ask for forgiveness

with youngsters: embrace them and ask for forgiveness

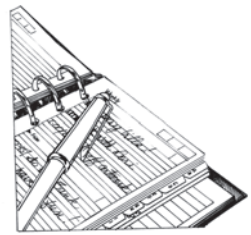
with friends: embrace them and ask for forgiveness

with enemies: meet them or call them and ask for forgiveness

with all living beings and our planet: mentally ask for forgiveness as you may have hurt them in the process of living a Jain Way of Life.

"Conquer anger by forgiveness, pride by humility and deceit by straight-forwardness and greed by contentment." — Mahävir

Source: Shitul Shah (based in London) – Young Jains newsletter, October 2000



8–10 Days of Living a Jain Way of Life

During Paryushan Parv/Das Lakshan

Paryushan Parv/Das Lakshan are festivals for celebrating the qualities and essence of the Soul. These auspicious 8 or 10 days offer us an opportunity to focus on our spirituality with the hope that we will live a Jain Way of Life for the rest of the year.

Disciplining oneself for these practices is a difficult task. The following activity recommendations are for people of all ages along with point incentives. A family can print this page and give one copy to each member of the family to fill out and add up the points at the end of the festival. A gift can be offered for achieving a certain point target. Each family member should encourage and help others to achieve their best.

Family Member Name: _____ **Date:** _____

(print this and post it in a room where everyone can see it)

Activity	Points per day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Total
Recite three Namokar Mantra in the morning and evening with devotion	5											
5 minutes Prayer/Stuti/ meditation after shower	10											
10 minutes of spiritual reading (or go on net and listen to lectures)	10											
Eat at home before dark	5											
Do not eat food with eggs, honey, lard, gelatin	10											

Activity	Points per day	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10	Total
Do not eat underground vegetables or food (potato, carrot, etc.)	10											
Go through your clothes and other belongings and donate; donate 0.5% of your earnings	10											
Eat twice in a day Eat once per day Fast (take water)	5 10 20											
Go to temple or gathering to celebrate, listen to discourse	10											
No TV, video/computer games	10											
No feelings of negative passions (anger, deceit, greed, pride)	20											
Total	100+											

Gift Ideas: 100/120 Maximum Possible Points in a Day

Average pts.	Children	Teenagers	Adults
80+/100	Higher value gift card	Non-Violent game for their game machine. Going out for the weekend	Book: massage, relaxation, etc. Meditation classes
50+/100	Gift card to an educational toy store	Celebration at a vegetarian restaurant	Book: kids cooking for their parents

"A person performing penance with a desire of fame or worship does not achieve a genuine penance; so penance should be observed without pomp and show, and one should not flaunt or praise it."— Saman Suttam

Source: Jain Center of Greater Boston Pathshala.



The Practices of Equanimity and Pratikraman

Pratikraman is a practice of confession and repentance and can be done in many different ways. It can be performed at any time but is specifically done on the last day of Paryushan Parv celebration. It includes the following six essentials:

1. Sämäyik (Equanimity)

- The essence of Tirthankar's teachings
- To remain calm and undisturbed
- To discard all sinful activities for a minimum of 48 minutes
- To engage in spiritual activities
- To be free of passions
- To treat all living beings equally
- Perfect Sämäyika is ideal conduct.

Benefits

- Helps calm our mind and temperament
- Enhances equanimity and Soul experience
- Emulating monks/ sädhu's kriya (practices) for a short period of time

2. Chauvisattho – Worshipping Tirthankars

Benefits

- Helps control our passions.
- Purify our beliefs and attain Right Perception.

Praying and appreciating the attributes of the 24 Tirthankars. In Logassa Sutra we offer obeisance to the 24 Tirthankars.

Guru Vandan – Offering Obeisance to Gurus

Respecting and saluting our true spiritual teachers (Ächäryas, Upädhyäys, and Sädhus).

Pratikraman – Turning Back from Transgression

Benefits

- Subdue our ego
- Control our passions
- Develop humility (Vinay)
- Advance spiritually

- "Prati" means "back" and "Kraman" means "to go."
- To go back, review, confess, and repent for bad thoughts and actions in our daily activities.
- Asking forgiveness for our wrongful acts without reservation.
- Vowing to minimize these acts, forgiving others for their faults, and extending friendship.
- To get away from the tendency of finding fault in others,

criticizing others and to develop the habit of self-analysis, self-improvement, and introspection.

- Repentance/atonement.

Käyotsarg-Meditation

Benefits
- Stop the influx of Karma that obscures the true nature of the Soul.
- Detaches us from the external world.
- Helps us to introspect.

- Becoming detached from the body and tuning with oneself.
- Making the body and mind as steady as possible.
- Concentrating on the feeling that our Soul is separate from our body.

Religious Vows-Pratyäkhyna Pachchakhan

Benefits
- Experience the self and not our body.
- Reduce attachment.

- Renouncing certain activities for a predetermined period of time to discipline ourselves.
- Abandonment of things harmful to the Soul.
- Acceptance of things beneficial to the Soul.
- Taking vows, disengaging from worldly objects according to our capabilities.
- Engaging in the process of purification.

MICHHAMI DUKKADAM (I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS - MAY MY FAULTS BE DISSOLVED)

At the end of the Pratikraman, we become so soft hearted that we are ready to ask for forgiveness.

The following are the items used in Sämäyik and Pratikraman and their spiritual significance:

Charavalo

- Used for observation of Non-Violence and symbolizes the importance of cleansing our Soul.

Muhapatti (Covering of the mouth)

- Reminder of restraining our speech, to speak only when necessary, and to be humble and courteous.
- Repetition of sutras several times
- Detailed description of code of conduct-activities have changed, motives have not.
- Effective way to purify oneself.
- Religious principles are weaved into daily life. Religion is not just an abstraction.
- Jain prayers are not for obtaining wealth, power, fame or other worldly things.
- Emphasis on humility, introspection, and forgiveness and other divine qualities.

First is knowledge, then comes conduct.
— Dashavaikalik-sutra, verse 10 Ch. 4

Sources: The Jain Society of Metropolitan Chicago, Jain Pāthashālā Anop Vora – English Pratikraman