

WORSHIP

Temple worship:-

The Jains are most courteous in permitting outsiders to witness the ritual of their temples. In the Digambara temples the idols are nude, and the eyes are cast down as a sign that the saint represented is lost to all worldly thought. The Svetambara, like the Digambara, have images of the Tirthankara sitting in meditation in the Kausagga position with legs crossed and hands in the lap, but unlike the Digambara their idols are given loin-cloths, have staring glass eyes looking straight in front of them, and are adorned with necklaces, girdles and bracelets of gold.

Digambara worship:-

The pujari (the performer of worship) in a Digambara temple must himself be a Jaina (though this is not the rule among the Svetambara), and he will never eat any of the offering made to the idol. In the course of the morning worship he washes the idol (Jala puja) and dries it, being most careful that no drop of water falls to the ground, marks it with three auspicious marks of yellow powder (Chandana puja), and offers rice (Aksata puja) and dried (not fresh) fruit (Naivedya puja).

In the evening the worship consists of Arati puja, when a five-fold lamp is solemnly waved from left to right for a few minutes in front of the idol.

Svetambara worship:-

The pujari in Svetambara temple is not necessarily Jaina and can be any one like Brahmans, gardeners, or farmers performing the ritual.

A devout Jaina will, after bathing and changing his clothes to the two pieces of cloth he keeps for the purpose in the little dressing-room outside the temple. He will perform the Jala puja, where he will carefully wash the idol with water, then with milk, and then again with water. The same worshipper might also perform Angalunchana puja and dry the idol with five or ten separate cloths, which are kept in the temple. A worshipper may do the Chandana puja and mark the idol with fourteen auspicious marks. The Anga puja is usually performed by pujari. Then flowers and garlands (Pushpa puja) are offered, and this completes that part of the ritual for which special dress must be worn, and the performance of **which is restricted to men.**

The Dhupa puja, the waving of stick of incense before the shrine; Deep puja, the waving of a lamp; Aksata puja, the offering of rice; Naivedya puja, the giving of sweetmeats; and Phala puja, the offering of fruit can be done by women, or by men in their ordinary dress, since the inner shrine need not be entered. The rice in the Aksata puja; it is usually placed in following manner: The Swastika sign is intended to represent the four Gatis or state in which a jiva may be born in hell, or heaven, or as a man, or an animal (include bug, insect or plant). The three little heaps symbolize the Three Jewels of right knowledge, right faith, and right conduct, which enable a man to reach Moksa, represented by the arc.

When fruit is offered the Svetambara worshiper will include even fresh fruit, while the Digambaras will not allow offer fresh fruits but will offer only dry fruits. The evening temple worship of the Svetambara, as of the Digambara, practically consists in Arati puja - waving a lamp before the shrine.

The Sthanakvasi and Terapanthi Jaina do not worship idol and have no temple. They have sthanak like a hall where they can do meditation, read religious books, recite with rosary, , consisting of 108 beads, recite the Navkara mantra, saluting Arihanta, Siddha, Acharya, Upadhyaya and Sadhu, and also Knowledge, Faith, Character and Austerity, sings praises (Sajhaya or sazay Stavana), and perform Pratikraman, etc.

PRAYER

Since Jainism firmly believes in the doctrine of karma and puts sole reliance on the development of the spiritual force by one's own personal efforts, and further exhorts its followers to develop Asarana-bhavana (none other can refuge or save us), the question that naturally arises is, what is the place of prayers in Jainism? Since the Jains do not believe in God or in the existence of any outside Divinity controlling our fate, any idea of prayer would be irrelevant to them for two main reasons.

- 1) The soul which has been emancipated and became Siddha has no desires or motivations left. Its character is purely that of a knower and a seer. If, prayers could please Siddha then some prayers could also displease Siddha. In the same sense if Siddha could bestow favors or frowns then attributing such human frailties to a Siddha (liberated soul) is to deny soul's liberation.
- 2) Once we accept the doctrine of karma, all results must be sought in that doctrine and therefore unless the prayers are adjusted in the karma doctrine, they remain totally non-productive.

However, it would be totally wrong to say that prayers have no place in Jain philosophy. Jains do not consider prayers as a means of seeking favors from Siddha or even Arihants. True Jain prayers are nothing but the appreciation and adoration of the virtues possessed by the liberated or Arihants and the expression of ardent desire to achieve these virtues in one's own actual life. It is for this reason that Jain scriptures have actually enumerated the virtues of different categories of souls such as Arihanta, Siddha, Acharya, Upadhyaya and Sadhu.

It is basic to the Jain belief that the Tirthankaras (prophets) and their teachings are only to point out to us the way to achieve liberation. But how to acquire liberation and how to put these teachings into the practice, is entirely left to us. We achieve only to the extent to which we exert. However, the path shown by those who have achieved liberation must be studied with utmost respect and sincerity, because it is the proven path, which they have actually taken during their lives and have obtained the results. We feel very thankful to these great souls for providing us such useful guidance. Therefore, in prayer we express

our gratitude, extol and enumerate their virtues and wish that such virtues might also develop in our life. Such prayers constantly remind us what made them great and in turn help us to develop such virtues in us. In Jain philosophy, this is the process of prayers.

It is interesting to note that the most outstanding Jain prayer, known as Navkara Mantra, is not referred to any individual personal or sect and asks for nothing in return. It does nothing more than offering sincere veneration to those souls, which are already liberated or are on the path of liberation.

Namo Arihantanam -- I bow down to all Arihantas.

Namo Siddhanam -- I bow down to all Siddhas.

Namo Ayariyanam -- I bow down to all Acharyas.

Namo Uvajjhayanam -- I bow down to Upadhyayas.

Namo Loe Savva Sahunam -- I bow down to all the Sadhus and Sadhvis.

Arihantas are those blessed souls who have successfully shed off all the ghati karmas, which blur the potency of the soul. Siddhas are those souls who have achieved the final liberation and have attained a bodiless state of pure bliss. Acharyas are those merciful souls who teach us about the path to salvation and Upadhyayas and Sadhus and Sadhvis are those saints who are themselves on the path to salvation and are striving for the liberation.

These five are called Pancha-paramesthi, five types of great souls, those who have been liberated and those who are on the path of liberation. A Jain bows down to them all, not necessarily because they have followed or are following a particular type of religion but because they have already attained what was worth attaining or because they are striving to attain what is worth attaining.

While visiting non-Jain temple, Acharya Hemchandra puts it :

"Bhava bijankura-janana ragadyah ksayamupagata yasya,
Brahma va Visnurva Haro Jino va namastasmai."

Meaning, "I bow down to him whose all passions like attachment and malice, which sow the seeds of birth and rebirth, have been destroyed. It doesn't matter whether he is Brahma, Vishnu, Shankar or Jina."

The Jains have built big and beautiful temples and are adoring, elegant and serene marble idols of Tirthankaras. Idol-worship has its own rights and Jains seem to have adopted the same at a subsequent stage because Jain scriptures have not recorded that Lord Mahavira at any time worshipped an Idol. (Some sects of Jain do not believe in Idol-worship.) In fact the whole emphasis of Jain doctrines is on the Atma (soul) which has no form. It would, however, undoubtedly follow that adoring the idols by jewelry and other ornaments and taking out processions of idols etc., have no philosophical background or justification - except perhaps expressing devotion. Attribution of ornamental glitter to one who is a Vitragi is not practiced by Digambara sects.

Thus, prayers are differently perceived by the Jains but they do occupy a prominent place in Jain thinking.