

10.12 THE KING OF ALL THE FESTIVALS - PARYUSHANA MAHA PARVA

Jain holidays and festivals are unique. These festivals are not meant for any worldly pleasures, prosperity or enjoyment. Besides, those festivals are not originated from fear, temptation or awe. The purpose of Jain holidays or festivals is related to some blessed deeds of Tirthankaras or something like it.

Paryushana is the supreme of all Jain festivals. Paryushana is for totally eight days. During these days, people pay less attention to their professional activities and constantly engage there selves on religious activities, austerity, spiritual advancements etc. The whole Jain community is engrossed in various religious activities, the whole atmosphere is Paryushana - embodied. Jains volunterilly control over their food and other worldly enjoyment, regularly attend the religious discouse and listen to scriptures, so that they can have interface with Jin-vani (words of Lord). They forgot enemities and cultivate a genuine spirit of friendship and forgiveness.

During Paryushana, there is an environment of worship, devotion, penance. People in large number visit temples and worship God. All the Jain temples are well decorated. Jains listen to the religious discourse in which they listen to what are their duties, what they should do. They also listen to the life-stories of Lord Mahavir and other Tirthankaras. Jains especially celebrate a day on which Lord Mahavirs birth is narrated. And lastly, the last day of Paryushan is known as "Samvatsari" Samvatsari, Pratikramam is performed, in which the repentance/confessions is done for the sins and misdeeds done during the whole year. Jains on that day ask for pardon from each other for any misdeed by "Michhami Dukkadam". This "Michhami Dukkadam" is the true essence of Jainism, where people express broad-heartedness even to the enemy. "Mitti ne Savva Bhuesu" (I am friend of all living being) is the underlined message of Jainism, reflected in expression on the day of Samvatsari.