

8.12 Jain Symbols

Tilak on forehead :

Symbol is a visible expression of one's religious conviction with the help of external signs. The first symbol is carried on a forehead, placed in the center between two eye brows in the shape of heart or that of an Armond or sometimes even a small bindi. The semi liquid paste of sandal mixed with saffron is used is as a token of one's accepting the obedience of the religion. Usually, such paste made of Sandal and Saffron is kept ready at each Jain Temple from morning till noon.

Rosary – Navkarwali (Malā)

Jains use Rosary of 108 pearls to utter *Navkar Mantrā* or any other religious utterance. The having 108 pears made of cotton-threads, Wood, sandal wood, silver, or gold-plated silver or precious stones. Plastic pears are not advised the 108 is string. The number 108 pearls are tied in a cotton string. The number 108 is symbolic they signify the 108 characteristics of '*Panch parmesti*'

- 12 Characteristics of *Arihant*
- 8 Characteristics of *Siddhas*
- 36 Characteristics of *Acharyas*
- 25 Characteristics of *Upadyays*
- 27 Characteristics of *Sadhus*.
- 108 Total

Swastik

Swastik is a most significant symbol while offering prayers and devotion in Jain Temple, as a part of *Dravya pooja*, this *swastik* made of rice is inevitable.

The *swastik* below has four sides and corners. It symbolised four stages of existence for soul to be born viz. God, Man, Animal and Hellish beings. Above it are 3 small rounds representing there jawels i.e. right knowledge, right conduct, right faith. Abouve all the crescent moon sign represent *Siddha sheela* – a place where the liberates souls dwell. This symbol is very extensively used almost by all the worshipers. *Nandavrat* is a more subtle form of *Swastik* with intricate and complicated design.

Eight auspicious things – Astamangal

The *Swastik* and *Nandavart* as described above are two of the *Astamangal*. The remaining six are

Shrivasta – Usually a symbol on the breast of the idols of Lord Tirthankaras.

Vardhman – An auspicious box.

Kalash – A water pot

Darpan – A mirror

Matsya Yugan – two fish entangled led with each other.

Siddha Chakra

This wheel of *Shiddhas* is always found in all Jain temples. In the middle is a shape of Lotus with eight leaves surrounding. The central leaf symbolises.

1. *Arihant* - the god
and on its four sides are
2. *Siddha* - the liberated soul.
3. *Acharya* - the head of order.
4. *Upadhyay* - the teacher of scriptures.
5. *Sadhu* - the monk,
Now on the remaining four corner are
6. The right knowledge.
7. The right belief
8. The right Conduct.
9. The right Asceticism

The *Siddha Chakra* is usually illustrated on a copper plate. Twice a year in the month of *Chaitra* and *Ashvin*, nine days' penance of *Ayambil* is arranged and *Siddh Chakra* is worshiped especially on those two month's nine days each. Each of the Nine Days are devoted to the above mentioned nine elements.

Ohm and Rhrim

These two are holy sounds and they are part and parcel of any holy *Mantra* (Hymns). They are presented in symbolic forms also.

The syllable '*Ohm*' consists of a thick line of black stone which is bent and runs pointedly towards upwards and downwards and lying horizontally over each other. A sitting saint is depicted respectively. On the point, the half moon and the three lines.

The sound '*Hrim*' is illustrated by a conventional symbol which consists of several multi-coloured horizontal and vertical lines which are arranged in a definite form. There is a white half moon and a black circle over the figure. The images of the Tirthankaras are filled in the individual parts of the figures at appropriate place and on appropriate colours.