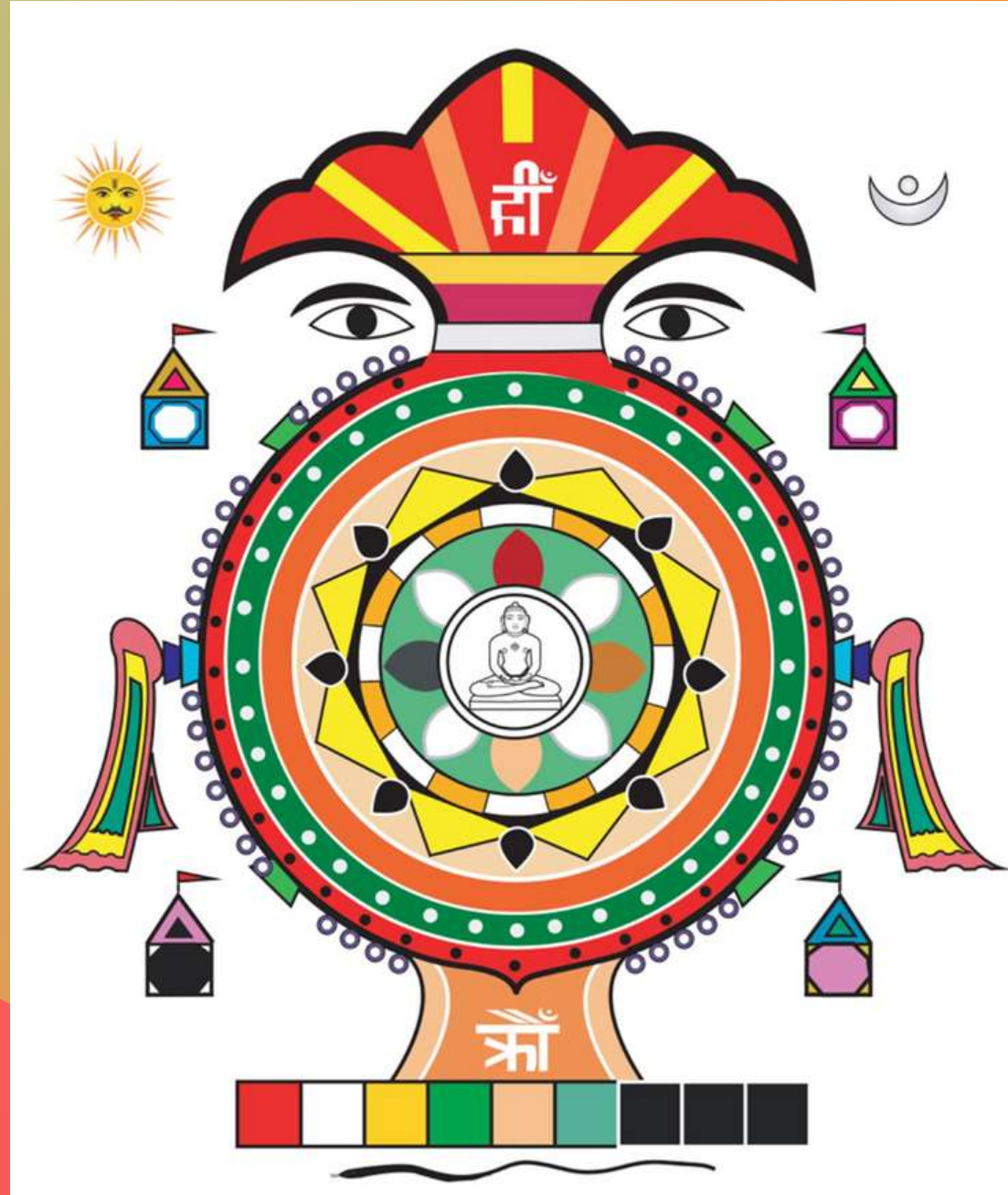


# Ayambil Oli - Overview



## OVERVIEW INCLUDES:

- Ayambil Food
- Health Benefits of Ayambil
- Spiritual Benefits of Ayambil
- Ayambil – Relevance Today
- King Shripal & Mayana-Sundari
- Daily Pad Summary
- Siddhachakra Yantra - Navapad



By Kishor Bhimji Shah



# Ayambil Overview

Ayambil Oli is considered very auspicious, efficacious and as one of the most important festivals in Jainism. The festival is also considered to be 'shashwathi' - meaning the festival is eternal, existing in all time cycles of past, present & future. Ayambil is one of the external or Bahya Tap falling within Rasparityag - giving up attachment for taste. Jains consider the austerity of Ayambil as a way to purify the body and mind, encourage spiritual growth and practice self-restraint. By observing Ayambil, one can experience various health benefits and live in harmony with the environment.

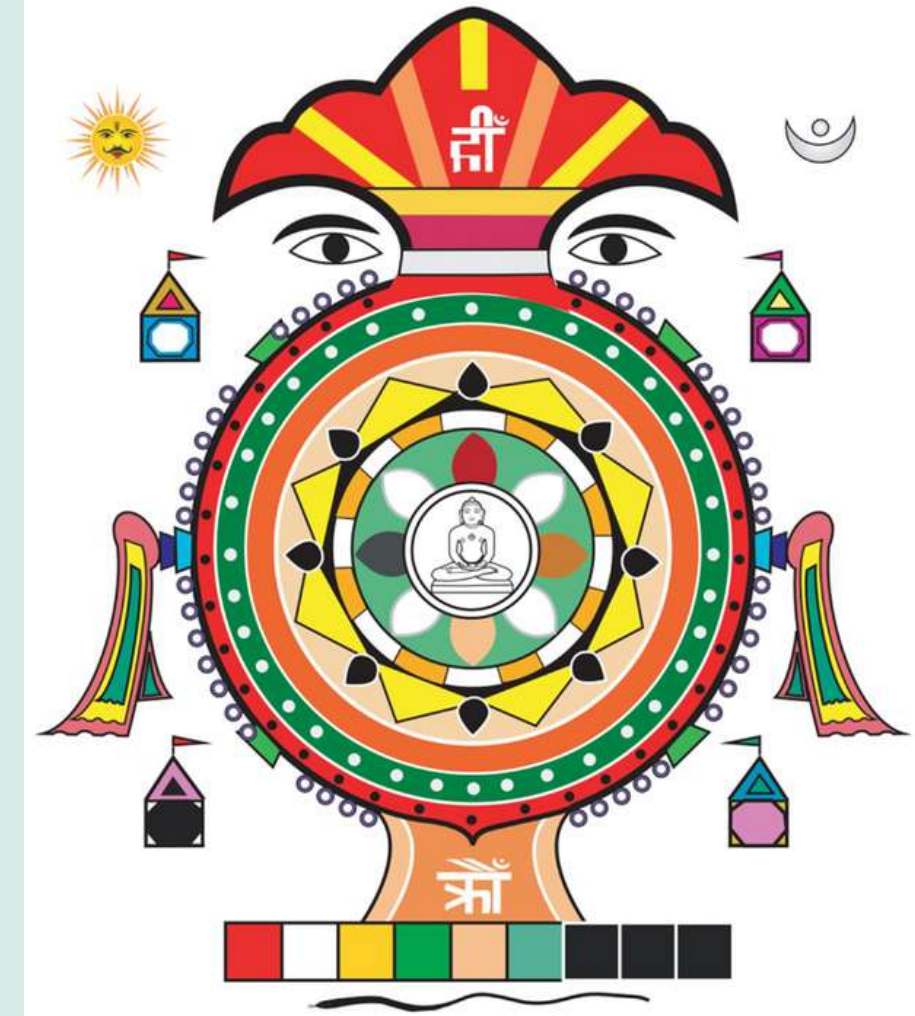
The Festival of Ayambil, which last for nine days, is observed by many Jains twice a year. The first one falls in the bright fortnight of Chaitra month (March/ April) and the second during the bright fortnight of Asso month (September/ October). During the nine days of Ayambil, puja, holy recitation, mediation and other rituals in honour of Navapad take place. 'Nava' means nine in Sanskrit and Prakrit languages and 'Pada' means post. Hence, the word Navapada means nine supreme posts of the Universe - which are **Arihant**, **Siddha**, **Acharya**, **Upadhyaya**, **Sadhus** (Panch Paramesthi), **Darshan** (faith), **Gnan** (knowledge), **Chaitra** (conduct) and **Tap** (penance).

Ayambil are of three types, each primarily different in terms of number of days the austerity is undertaken.

- A single Ayambil fast.
- Ayambil Oli - 'Oli' means 'a line' and Ayambil Oli indicates a line of nine days of Ayambil fasts, undertaken consecutively during the Ayambil Oli festival. The end of the festival is celebrated on the 10th day when Parna is held.
- Navapad Oli - If Ayambil is observed every year twice - nine days each time for four and half years (in total eighty one days), then it is said that one has completed Navapad Oli.

The word Ayambil actually is a colloquial word with its roots in the Sanskrit word - ACHAMALA - 'Acham' - soup + 'amla' - sour, that is giving up of tangy sour taste is doing Ayambil.

Ayambil is observed by having only one meal a day of plain food which is devoid of any special taste and spices, which is boiled or cooked without oil/ghee and also milk, curd, green , raw vegetables and fruits are not consumed.





## AYAMBIL OVERVIEW

Ayambil is part of Rasparityag – one of the external tap. Rasparityag means giving up attachment for tastes. The tongue is an organ that looks for tastes. Our attention generally stays drawn towards the tasty foods and drinks. This happens to be a more or less insatiable craze. The hankering for tastes does not allow a person to keep the peace of mind. Some restraint must be applied to it. Ayambil austerity is observed with that end in view.

In the ayambil penance, an important principle is conveyed in the message – “life is not eating, but food is taken to maintain the life.” The festival is observed in an endeavour to achieve victory over taste, to attain spiritual upliftment and shed karma bondage.

## AYAMBIL FOOD

Jainism, like in Ayurveda, recognises six tastes – sweet, sour, salty, bitter, pungent and astringent – each of which has an essential role to play in our physiology, health and well-being, including our overall state of mind and consciousness.

Jains have identified certain foods that give rise to the four passions or kashays – anger, greed, pride(ego) and deceit by changing the natural inherent qualities of the mind, body and soul and pervert them are called Vigai. Vigai are classified as:-

- **Laghu Vigai** – Consisting of Six Types – Sugar(jiggery), milk(dudh), clarified butter(ghee), curds(dahi), oil (tel) and fried items(pakwans).
- **Maha Vigai** – Consisting of Four types – butter (makhan); honey(madh); eggs/meat/fish (maans) and alcohol(madra). Jains are advised to refrain from consuming these at all times.



## LAGHU VIGAIS



MILK



Ghee



Curds -Yogurt



Sugar



Frying Oil



Fried Food



Vegetables/fruits



Spices



Ordinary Salt

Pulses | Lentils



Food Not Allowed

Food Allowed

## AYAMBIL FOOD

Ayambil food has to be made fresh in the morning- that is food can be boiled, soaked or precooked - on the day of Ayambil only. Precooked items from the previous day are not permitted.

Ayambil food is devoid of the six Vigais - sugar, milk, ghee, oil, curds (yogurt) and fried items. The food is prepared without the use of any spices except dried ginger (soonth), pepper, asafetida (hing), pipramul or ganthoda and roasted salt - salt that is roasted in the oven till it is red hot.

Ordinary salt, spices like chilli powder, haldi powder, dry dhaniya or coriander, jeera, as well as vegetables and fruits are not permitted during Ayambil.

Permitted food during Ayambil includes cereals like wheat, rice, chapatis made from bajri flour, boiled pulses like moong dal, chana, rajma etc. Ayambil food is cooked in water which helps the body in absorbing food nutrients which helps in instant energy.

The prepared food is consumed once a day in one sitting, preferably whilst sitting on the floor. Boiled water can be consumed only after sunrise and before sunset.

The overall aim is to eat enough food for the sustenance of the body to survive.

The desire to eat and procreate are thought to be two of the most primal ones. Jainism has asserted that the control of the organ of taste is the most difficult to control, even more than the urge to procreate as we start eating from birth till death, whereas we only indulge in sexual pleasures for a limited period during our lifetime. Control of the tongue leads to control of all the senses.

Eating Ayambil food is the first step in controlling the senses.

**UPVAS (FASTING) = SUPPRESSION OF THE MIND**

**AYAMBIL = CONQUERING THE MIND**



# HEALTH BENEFITS OF AYAMBIL

Ayambil is scientifically structured to provide benefits to body, mind, and soul.

The Ayambil diet consists of avoiding tasty, rich food devoid of spices, vegetables, and fruits, has many health benefits including: -

- Helps to detox and cleanse the body.
- During the month of March – April and Sept – Oct, the weather changes due to which it causes imbalance of 3 forces of the body such as Vata (Gas), Pitta (Acidity), Kafa (Cough). Ayambil diet helps to balance and neutralise the digestive system and body.
- Elimination of sugar helps in keeping triglycerides proper. Triglycerides are a type of fat, called lipid, that circulate in our blood. They are the most common type of fat in our body.
- Elimination of sugar aid in the control of diabetes.
- Avoiding use of ghee and oil improves cholesterol related ailments – heart and cardiac.
- Most people are aware that excessive use of ordinary salt leads to rise in blood pressure, which in turn can cause kidney, cerebrovascular and cardiovascular diseases. Avoiding ordinary salt during Ayambil and using roasted salt sparingly aids in lowering blood pressure.
- No dairy products improve sinusitis and respiratory diseases.
- Ayambil diet has been known to improve skin health and cure skin ailments such as vitiligo.

(Various Sources including information from videos on health benefits of Ayambil by medical practitioners)



## SPIRITUAL BENEFITS OF AYAMBIL.

By restraining the senses - in case of Ayambil our sense of taste - helps one control the mind, specifically negative emotions, and behaviours. In Jainism, it is said that control of the senses means control of the mind, which ultimately leads to attainment of infinite bliss and eternal life.

From a Jain philosophy point of view, the main aim of Ayambil is to partially eliminate Karma - by the process of Nirjara. Jainism suggests that birth as human being is the only route to attain liberation -moksha. Make best of it with continuous process of Karma Nirjara.

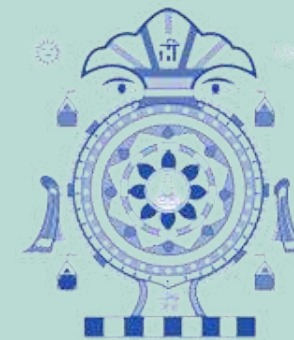
## AYAMBIL – RELEVANCE TODAY

In our daily life, we tend to focus on materialistic concerns regarding work, money, food, home etc which can lead to neglecting the needs of the soul and heart. Jain festivals, like Ayambil & Paryushan, give us an opportunity to step back and refocus on the soul.

Ayambil give us an opportunity not only to practice Jain conduct to a greater degree than normal but also to revitalize and strengthen our faith in Jain Religion.

**Ayambil Oli is still relevant in modern times as it helps one to:-**

- Develop inner strength and self - discipline and spiritual awareness.
- Increase self-control/restraint and mindfulness. By controlling our desires and impulses, aids us to overcome our egos and connect with our inner selves. Practicing self-control is difficult but is necessary for achieving true happiness and inner peace.
- Gain insight into one's true nature.
- Improve patience. Empathise with those in many parts of the world who are living in hunger and poverty.
- The Ayambil diet is like a detoxification. The diet eaten during Ayambil is beneficial for our health and also helps reduce our own carbon and himsa footprint.
- Provides an opportunity to review our eating habits and the food we eat and buy.
- Learn about the Jain faith as The Navpad is the essence of the Jain Philosophy.



During Ayambil, the story of King Shripal and Mayanasundari is recited. The story describes Mayanasundari understanding and faith on the Jain philosophy of Karma and her total devotion to Navapad.



Most Jains will be familiar with the story. The story occurred at the time of Bhagwan Munisuvarat Swami (The 20th Tirthankara), about a million years ago.

Prince Shripal was the son of King Singhrath & Queen Kamal-prabha. The King died when the Prince was five years old. Ajitsen, brother of King Singhrath seized the throne and planned to get rid of Shripal to make his position as King secure. When Kamal-prabhā became aware of Ajitsen's vicious plan, she fled from Champā-nagar along with her son, pursued by Ajitsen's soldiers. As the soldiers got close, she did not know how to save her son. She saw a group of lepers. In desperation, she asked them to take her son into their custody. They warned her about the risk of her son contracting the disease of leprosy from them. However, she had no choice if she wanted to save her son, so she entrusted her son to them. In due course, Shripal contracted leprosy.

The leper colony, nearly 700 strong, were very fond of Shripal and made him their leader and named him Umar Rana. Under his leadership, the group traveled from place to place and one day arrived at Ujjayini city, ruled by King Prajapal, who had two daughters named Sursundari and Mayana-sundari.

Both daughters were beautiful and intelligent. Once the King decided to test their knowledge and both passed with flying colours. On asking both, by whose favour did they get their knowledge, amenities, and luxuries, Sursundari humbly replied that she gained all that by the King's favour.

Mayana, who had total faith in the religious philosophy she had studied at length, replied: "O father! The great king! With due respect to you, all the comfort that you provide me are only because of my meritorious (Punya) Karma. Every one gets whatever is written in his or her destiny due to his or her Karma. You yourself cannot give or take away anything."

The King was greatly displeased with her reply and his ego deeply dented. The king was enraged and wanted to teach Mayana a lesson. He got his chance when the lepers and Shripal arrived in the court. The Lepers demanded a bride for their king. The King married off Mayana-sundari to Shripal despite protests by Mayana's mother.

Mayana accepted Shripal in the guise of Umar as her husband and took care of him.





Mayana had great faith in Jain Dharma. She took her husband along with the lepers, to see Jain Acharya Munichandra - a well-known scholar of the time for the cure. He suggested them to perform the Siddhachakra Mahapuja which included a particular type of fasting known as Navpad Ayambil Oli for a period of nine days. They had to do this for four and half years which results in Nine Āyambil - Oli (one every six months). Eventually, all of them including Shripal got cured due to the power of Ayambil.

Shripal, looked like the handsome Prince that he had been. Mayana was very happy and blessed her Karma for that change too. Since the change was apparently brought about by devotion to Navapad and practicing the penance, both of them continued to observe it even after that.

Mayana-sundari story showed the world that the soul alone is responsible for its happiness and sorrows and must bear its own fruits. It teaches us that our actions and beliefs shape our destiny, and that true happiness and contentment can be attained regardless of our circumstances. Happiness or misery is a state of mind regardless of the situation one is in. If you think you are miserable, then you will be miserable. Full faith in the theory of Karma is essential to be content and happy.

The story reminds us to remain steadfast in our faith, strive for righteousness, and trust in the intricate workings of karma and clearly illuminates the importance of effort and determination to change one's fate.



**Successful sportsman and artists, any successful person achieve their success by determination, continual effort and perseverance.**

**A hero of mine, the Late Bruce Lee's, martial art expertise, immortalised in many movies was simply the result of determination and perseverance. He knew that a focused mind, daily training and discipline would bring him results.**

**"Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves.**

**Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. If you put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle and it becomes the bottle. You put it in a teapot, it becomes the teapot.**

**Now, water can flow or it can crash. Be water, my friend."**

**Bruce Lee**





# JAIN FESTIVAL AYAMBIL OLI



Dev  
(God)

Day 1 - Arihant Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Arihantanam

Day 2- Siddha Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Siddhaanam

Guru  
(Teacher)

Day 3 - Archarya Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Aayariyaanam

Day 4 - Upadhyay Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Uvajzaayaanam

Day 5 - Sadhu/Sadhvi Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Loe Savva Saahuman

Dharma  
(Religion)

Day 6 - Samyag Darshan Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Dansanassa

Day 7- Samyag Gyan Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Naanassa

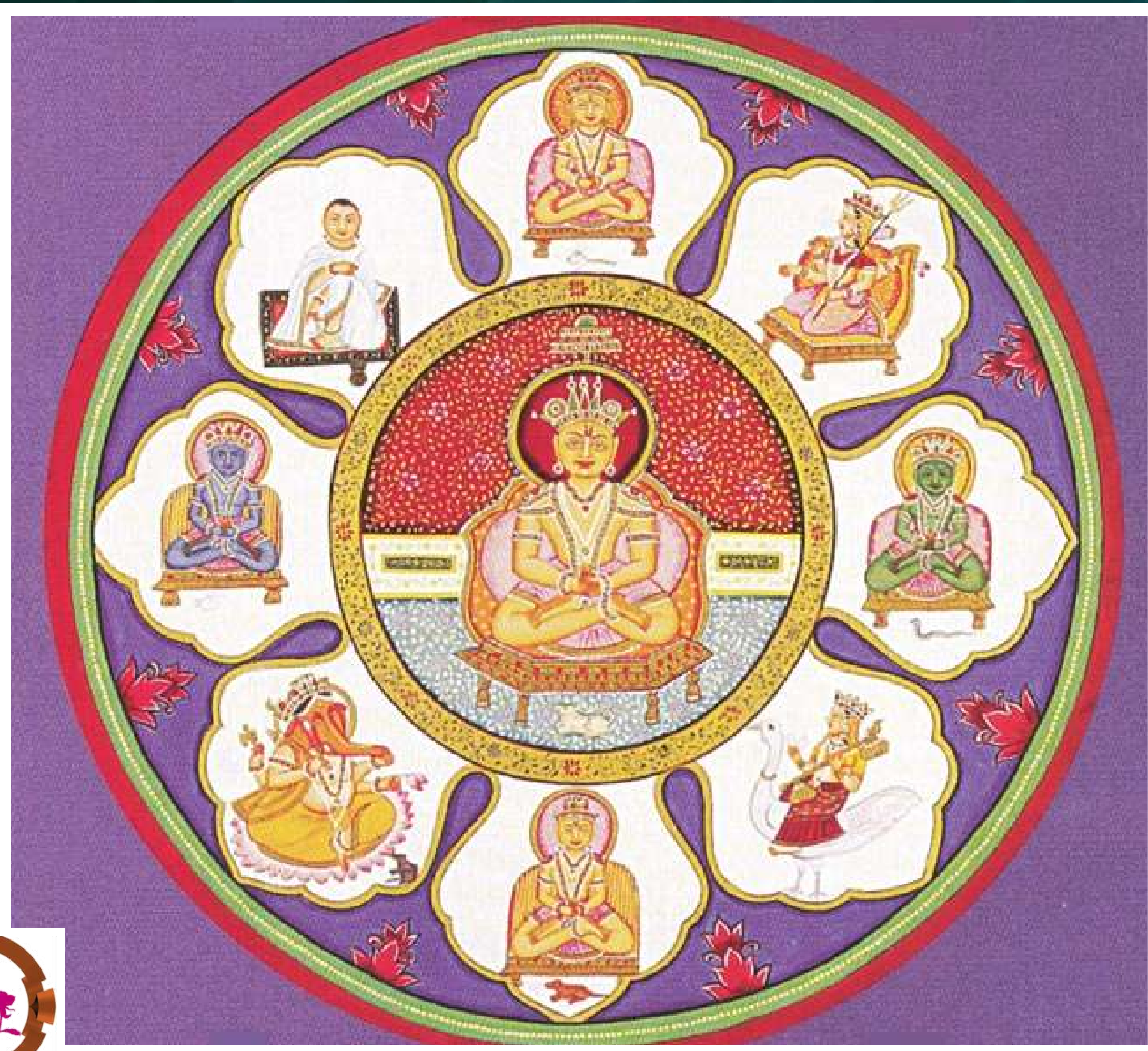
Day 8- Samyag Charita Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Charitassa

Day 9 - Samyag Tap Pad  
Ohm Hrim Namō Tavassa



જાન્યારી



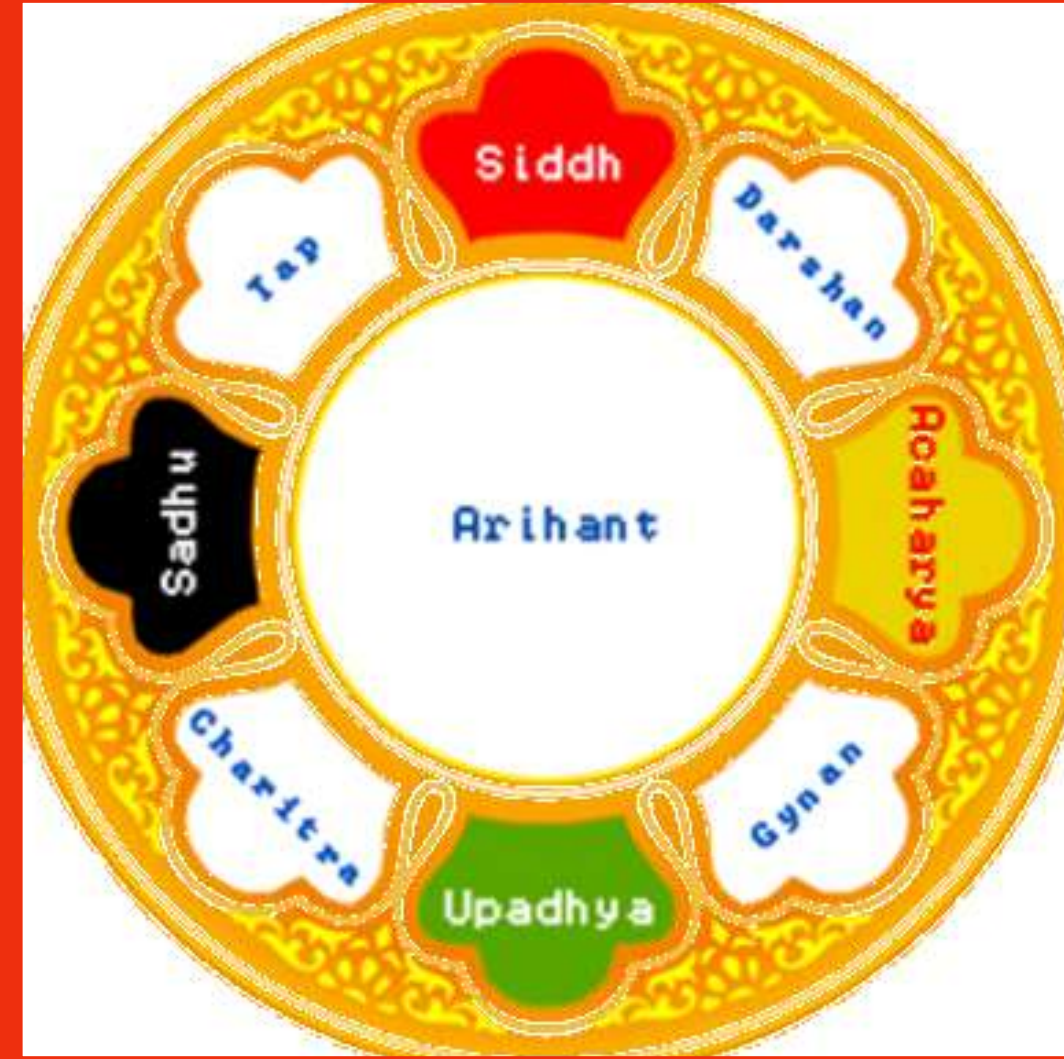


The Siddhachakra depicts the Navapads - Arihant (centre), Siddha, Acharya, Upadhyaya, Sadhu, Gnan, Darshan, Charitra and Tap. The Ayambil Oli is dedicated to the worship of these Navapads

In the 'Shreepal Raja no Ras' (The Legend of King Shreepal) , Yashovijayji Maharaj Saheb says that "The Jinas have shown us countless techniques to manifest the God within us, but verily out of all those the worship of the Navapads is considered to be the highest”

Ayambil is observed to achieve victory over taste – "Life is not for eating, but food is taken to maintain the life.”

The food eaten during Ayambil is like a detoxification & beneficial for one’s health. It also helps reduce one’s carbon & himsa footprint



## THE SIDDHACHAKRA YANTRA (Also known as Navapad)

'Siddha' – Liberated Soul

'Chakra' – Freedom from karmic bondage

'Yantra' – Mystical diagram

When one worships the Siddhachakra Yantra, one's soul becomes liberated from karmic bondages.

- In the centre is the Arihant - the embodied liberated soul
- On the top of the Arihant is Siddha - the perfect supreme soul
- On the right side of the Arihant is Acharya - example of teaching and practice
- Below Arihant is Upadhyaya - a Jain religious teacher
- On the left of the Arihant is the Sadhu - living simplicity
- Between the Siddha and Acharya represents faith (Darshan)
- Between the Acharya and Upadhyaya represents knowledge (Gyan)
- Between the Upadhyaya and Sadhu represents conduct (Charita)
- Between the Sadhu and siddha represents penance & forbearance (Tapa)



BY KISHOR B SHAH

# NAVAPAD

Bhagwan Mahavir, when explaining the greatness of Navapad to King Srenik, from the **Niscaya Naya** – absolute point of view, stated: –

“In Navpad, it is our ‘atma tattva’ – the real state of one’s self, which is shown through the mediums of Arihant, Siddha, Acaraya, Upadhyaya, Sadhu, Darshan, Gyan, Charita and Tapa because Navpad is not based on substances but is based on qualities. This means that in Navpad, it is not the worship or veneration of any specified personality from amongst the nine Pads mentioned earlier, but it is the worship of their Virtues. Each and every virtue attributed to each of the ‘Nine Pads’ is in fact the virtues of our soul from the absolute point of view.”

1 – **Arihant’s** main attribute is that of ‘omniscience’, which is nothing but our soul’s virtue of complete knowledge.

2 – **Siddha’s** ananta gyan (infinite cognition), ananta darshan (infinite perception), ananta caritra (infinite conduct) and ananta virya (infinite energy) as also his liberated state are in reality a state of our own soul, because there is an eternal rule, no matter how much a soul may be obscured by excessive karmas, yet his central eight space points – *rucaka pradesa* – located near the naval, are forever and at all times free of karmas, like those of a Siddha. Therefore, even today, when our inner, partially liberated state completely reveals itself outwards, then that itself is the state of a liberated soul.

3 to 9 – Likewise, 3 – **Acarya’s**, 4 – **Upadhyaya’s**, 5 – **Sadhu’s** virtues like self-restraint, knowledge, vigilance along with 6 – **right perception**, 7 – **right knowledge**, 8 – **right conduct** and 9 – **austerities** are all in our pure inherent nature, virtues of our own pure soul.

**Contemplation on Navapad is contemplation on the soul’s intrinsic nature and virtues.**

(Above extracted and adapted from Sripal Ras by P & S P Kapadia)

