

Sumatinath Bhagwan

Janma Kalyanak - Vaishakh Sud Aatham

Diksha Kalyanak - Vaishakh Sud Nom



On this day, Jains try and do at least one 'mala' reciting:

Janma Kalyanak

“Om Hrim Shri Sumatinath Arhate Namah”

Diksha Kalyanak

“Om Hrim Shri Sumatinath Nathay Namah”

Ekatva Bhavna - solitude of the soul

What I call mine in the correct sense of the term is only the Soul - it has come alone and it will alone leave the body at death; it will be alone to enjoy or suffer from the fruits of one's good or bad actions. Contemplating on such true nature of the world is called Ekatva Bhavna

Soul is eternal - everything else is temporary

Sumatinath Bhagwan is the fifth Tirthankara in the current time cycle. His parents were King Megh and Queen Mangaldevi and born in the city of Ayodhya. His symbol (lanchan) is Goose.

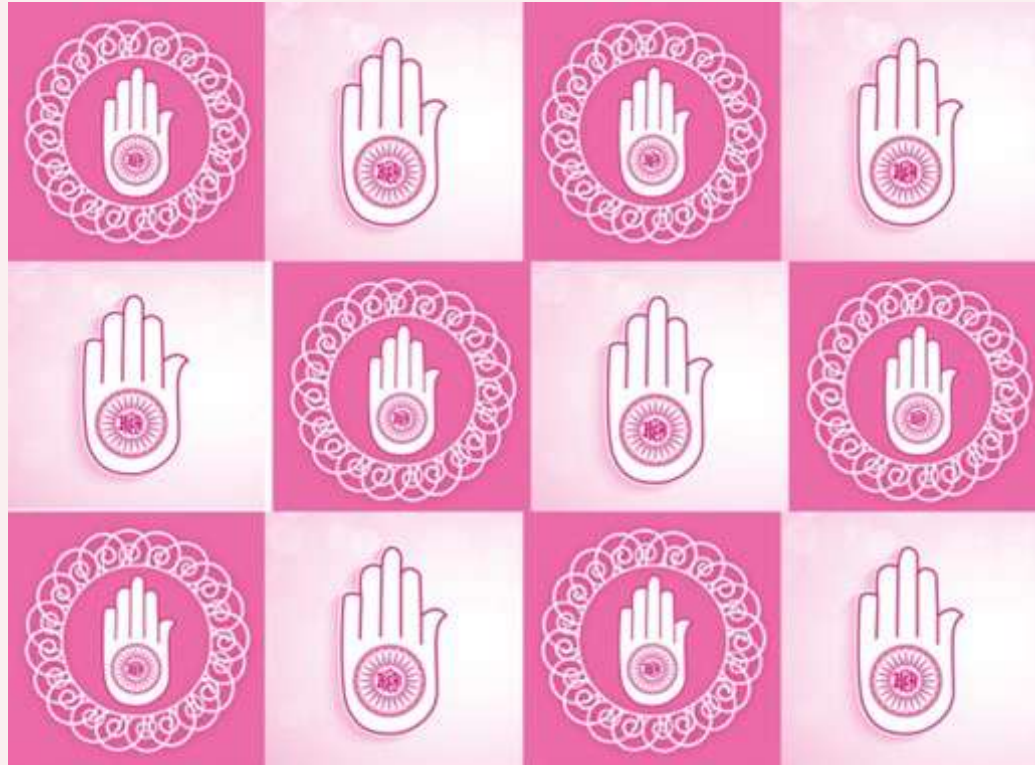
After attaining Samyak Darshan, Sumatinath took three bhavs to attain Moksha. His third last birth was as King Purushasimha, then as a celestial being before lastly being born as a Tirthankara.

The following story is associated with why the child born to Queen Mangaldevi was named as Sumatinath – *Sumati* means intelligence. A trader unexpectedly died, leaving two wives. Both women claimed the only son as theirs and the dispute was taken to King Megh to resolve. Unfortunately, neither the King or his courtiers could decide upon who the real mother was. The King discussed this with the Queen, who said that she would resolve the dispute, and came to the conclusion to defer decision until her son – an extra ordinary virtuous soul was born and grown up. In the meantime, the baby and all assets of the deceased trader would remain in the custody of the King. After listening to this, the real mother immediately reacted and requested for a faster judgement as she was not prepared to be away from her baby, even for a moment. The Queen immediately realised who the real mother as the other wife was silent. She informed the King and justice was done to the real mother.

Twenty years after taking diksha, Sumatinath attained Kevaljnana and his first sermon (deshna) was on the Ekatva Bhavna. He eventually achieved Moksha in Sammet Shikhar.



BEING JAIN – A PRACTICE OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND SELF-MASTERY



By Sudhir Shah, USA



Today, being Jain may mean different things to different people. Historically too, Jain way of life has encompassed many things and has been practiced many ways, but at the core, it is a spiritual practice of introspection and self-discovery that can ultimately lead to self-mastery. Self-Mastery is the ability to recognize, understand, practice, and make the most out of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual self while maintaining equanimity

My own study of our philosophical traditions, how human brain functions and experiences of personal and interpersonal relationships, also influenced my journey towards introspection and self-discovery. I realized that I had a lot of work to do towards self-mastery. The biggest challenge was to get past my own preconceived world view, and my desire to jump to conclusion. When one concludes, learning stops. My guiding context in the journey of self-discovery and self-mastery came from Pierre Chardin, a French philosopher who said. “we are not human beings seeking spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings undergoing human experience”

Here are some steps that guided me through my journey.

STEPS TO SELF-DISCOVERY

Be an observer and not a judge – Many of us have a tendency to judge quickly, many a time before we know

all the facts. Listening and learning without judgement was a very important trait I needed to develop in exploring new ideas and respecting views of the other. I found this to be a necessary step to make any progress in collaborative efforts.

Be alone, solitude – I found it helpful spending time alone processing what I had just read or learned, examining my thoughts, my triggers and designing methodology to interrupt my knee jerk reactions. This was also necessary to transcend distractions that life constantly throws at you.

Be vulnerable – Although it is seen as a sign of weakness, it shows ultimate courage to be vulnerable. It is a cornerstone to the path of being transparent. Fear and shame are in our way of being totally transparent. Being vulnerable lets you transcend fear and shame and helps to strengthen your relationships not only with others but also with yourself. It creates an opening for you to see yourself, as you are, without any filters

Be forgiving – to yourself and others. I find forgiveness much easier when I see myself and others as “just going through human experience”. In this imperfect human form, we all do things that are hurtful to ourselves and others. Forgiveness recognizes our human frailties without diminishing the value of our spiritual self and thus charts the path forward.



STEPS TO SELF-MASTERY

Being Aware – who am I? (ex. spiritual being undergoing human experience) Affirm who you are daily (I am love, I am grateful, I am connection, I am contribution, I am joy, I am peace etc..) and let that be the guide to all your actions and your experiences all day.

Make peace with the past – Our past may significantly affect our present and our future because we tend to file our past into our future as a useful learning experience that we can draw upon someday. Unfortunately, our life is full of past experiences (mostly negative), we continue holding on to it as if our life depends on it. This does not provide us any room to create something new. Our future continues to look like our past. Bringing closure to our past releases its insidious grip on us and provides us freedom to create new possibilities. Imagine if you can see your spouse every day as a new person you met for the first time? You would create endless possibilities with them don't you think? This applies to all our relations, our actions, and interactions.

Check your Ego – Most of our thoughts, words and actions stem from our need to look good/not look bad or our need to be right/making others wrong or our need to dominate/avoid domination. Remember when you had your last argument and at the end you even forgot what



you were arguing about but all you knew that you had to win? All our hurts and emotional trauma are rooted in our ego. It robs us of connection, love, joy and peace. Jain greeting “Jai Jinendra” is a great antidote to check our ego. If we see the other person (and ourselves) as an image of Jina our attitude and our behaviour will automatically shift don't you think? Seeing ourselves and others as spiritual beings undergoing human experience also helps with this.

Create Empowering Context – Human beings love stories. Life is very little about what happens, it is all about the story we tell ourselves on what happened. As soon as we create the story (our narrative) we forget that it is a story and start believing that it is a reality. It becomes our “truth”. Most of these stories are disempowering and severely hinder our spiritual progress. Since they are all stories, and we are the ones who created them, why not create stories that empower us. For example, someone in your family/friend says something to you and you feel hurt. Instead of your story being he/she hurts me and is scornful, consider he/she is your teacher, they revealed your “button” to you and now you have an opportunity to neutralize it.

Physical Activity/Exercise – While we are undergoing human experience, we have a human body. Like any machine, it needs to be energized and maintained to function effectively. Regular physical activity, yoga, etc. not only keeps the machinery fit, it also helps keep your mind and your spirit vigilant. It is the water for your soul and your spirit.

PRACTICE...PRACTICE.... PRACTICE.

