



PAUSHADH

On the third day of Paryushan, discussions are usually held in respect of a restraint / Jain practice known as Paushadh.

Samayika enables one to experience the life of a Jain ascetic for 48 minutes, whereas Paushadh extends that time to a day or more. The entire life of Jain ascetics is dedicated to spiritual welfare of their souls; all their objectives, and all their activities are directed towards elevating their souls to the Paramatma-dasha, the state of the Supreme Soul.

We tend to appreciate better another way of living if we experience it ourselves, even if it is only a small percentage. Paushadh gives us a glimpse of how self-disciplined, spiritual and eco-friendly is the life of a Jain ascetic.

Paushadh is a discipline for practicing the monastic life for a specific period. The intention is to get training so as to adopt that life when possible.

Paushadh, also popularly known as Posah, is derived from the Sanskrit verb 'Push' meaning nourish or support. Paushadh is what nourishes the spiritual life and is observed by refraining from any activities that are not conducive to spiritual pursuit.



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Our scriptures mention four types of Paushadh.

Ahar Paushadh – refraining from food, completely or partially.

Sharir Satkär Paushadh – refraining from physical comforts in order to reduce one's attachment to the body and get closer to the soul. This entails no cosmetics, ointments, perfumes, and it is suggested to avoid bathing on the day prior to commencing Paushadh.

Brahmacharya Paushadh – refraining from sensual pleasures.

Avyäpär Paushadh – refraining from routine worldly activities.

Paushadh can last from one sunrise to the next, or from the same day sunrise to sunset on the same day, or from sunset to next day's sunrise (i.e nighttime).

Jain acharyas have stated a person unable to do upvass (fast) can still undertake Paushadh by doing an Ayambil, Nivi or Ekasana as per one's capacity and health requirements.

Compiled from Various Sources inc Spiritual Code and Restraints By M Doshi

Our scriptures & literature state in great details the formalities for undertaking Paushadh. Very briefly this entail using minimum number of clothing articles including items used in Samayik & Pratikraman. During Paushadh much emphasis is laid on the ritual known as Pratilekhan, which one is supposed to perform three times a day. This involves the carefully examining the clothes and other articles that are used during Paushadh. The purpose is to remove the insects and other bugs that might have crept in and to put them in a safe place. This must be done without causing any violence and in a way that does not hurt even the minute insects.

I am not aware, if we as an Association have ever organised Paushadh. Whilst researching this article, I note Jain centres in USA, who have organised Paushadh on the rare occasions tend to relax some of the requirements like lights turned on if required, use of bathroom facility permitted, time reduced from 24 hours to 15.

Whether we ever experience Paushadh, during Parysuhan, let us reflect on the lifestyle of our Jain ascetics – often termed as the eight wonder of the world – and try and incorporate a little of their self-discipline, self-control, speech restraint, maun, spiritual study and eco-friendly habits into our lives.



