

Essay for JAINA Souvenir Book 2018

Essay Topic: Samarpan - The Purpose and the Meaning of a Jain Puja (Snatra Puja)

By: Prisha Shah



Introduction

Snatra Puja is a well-known ritual performed during special and/or religious occasions. However, we need to know why we should do it and what it is before starting this puja. In this passage, I have explained its deep purpose and meaning.

Purpose

The main objective of Snatra Puja is to celebrate a Bhagwan's birth and spread the message of contentment and compassion to our Jain Sangh and the whole universe. We also conduct this puja to praise the Tirthankars and to live with the same virtues and attributes that they did. However, each step in this puja has its own purpose.

First, we offer Kusumanjali—a mixture of flowers, rice and kesar—to bring happiness to ourselves and others. We also offer it to clear our souls of sins and our life of obstacles. We then re-enact the Bhagwan's birth to fully indulge our minds into his/her meaningful way. We also perform Aarti and Mangal Devo to express our spiritual joy. After, we begin Shanti Kalash. In this process, we pour special water into a large pot. We do this for the belief of wherever the water is sprinkled, it will bring peace on Earth.

Meaning

The meaning of Snatra Puja is very simple yet important. The overall definition is a ritual done to understand the path of Bhagwan's liberation, and mainly, the birth ceremony as done by Indra Dev. Every step possesses a

meaning. The materials like Kusumanjali and the panchamrut are significant for a reason. Kusumanjali is the finest and purest thing to use, and we have panchamrut since we believe it's holy water. However, in my opinion, the most relevant step in Snatra Puja is when we act out Bhagwan's birth (Janma Mahotsav). Janma Mahotsav has a story behind it that all should know. In this, we display the 14 dreams, show the Tirthankar's birth, and learn about how Indra Maharaj celebrated this joyous event.

Conclusion

In summary, Snatra Puja is a very important ritual that is done to find our spiritual self. While knowing the meaning and purpose of this puja, we can guide ourselves to the wonderful path that our Tirthankars have taken.