

Historical Perspective of Samvatsari Day and Jain Calendar

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Introduction

The discussion about the Samvatsari Day and Jain Calendar is always a very sensitive issue. It requires careful research and interpretation. The article presented here is not to hurt any Jain sect or its practices but to explore the subject objectively.

Almost every year when we celebrate Paryushan and Samvatsari day, there is some confusion and disagreement on what day to observe Samvatsari day and annual forgiveness Pratikraman among various Jain sects. This year (2012) non-murtipujak Jains and Anchalgadha murtipujak Jains celebrated Paryushan about one month earlier than most of the other murtipujak Jains of Digambar and Svetambar sects.

Several times in the past, the Tapa Gachchha Murtipujak Svetambar Jain community (which is about 70% Jains) was divided into two groups and celebrated Samvatsari day on two separate days in India, USA, and other places.

The past 120 years of documented history indicates that about 12 times the Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jain community was divided on the authenticity of the Samvatsari Tithi (day). This has created disappointment and concern among the youth in North America who are very sensitive to the issue of open mindedness and of Jain Unity.

In order to understand the issue better, about 25 years ago we started looking into the history of the Jain calendar and how the Tithis or Days are defined in the Jain calendar. We have discussed this topic with many Jain scholars and ascetics and researched various articles on this subject over this time period.

As we learned more about the creation of the various Jain calendars and the differences that exist among them, we realized that this knowledge should be documented such that the North American Jain community will have some understanding of the limitations that exist in and among various Jain sects and their Jain calendars and hence in determination of religious pious days.

This article summarizes our research of the history of Jain calendars, calculations of the date of various pious days (Parva Tithis), Samvatsari, Deevāli, and New Year day as defined in the present Jain calendar.

Jain Calendar

The Jain calendar (Panchāᅅg) is a “Lunisolar” calendar. It is based on the position of the Moon with respect to the Earth and it is adjusted by adding an extra month once about every three years, to coincide with the SUN to bring month in phase with the season. Its day or date which is known as Tithi, indicates the moon phase and the month indicates the approximate season of the solar year (example - Kartak month in winter and Shravan month in rainy season).

The lunisolar calendar has the following arrangement:

- A regular or normal year has 12 months; a leap year has 13 months.
- A regular or normal year has 353, 354, or 355 days; a leap year has 383, 384, or 385 days.

The average number of days in a month is 30 but the average number of days in a Lunisolar year is 354 and not 360 (12 months in a year) because it takes the Moon about 29.5 days (not 30 days) to complete the circle around the Earth. Hence one Tithi is eliminated in about duration of two months.

- The Jewish (Hebrew), Hindu lunar, Buddhist, and Tibetan calendars are all lunisolar, and so were the Japanese calendars until 1873 and the Chinese calendars until 1912.
- The Islamic calendar is a pure Lunar Calendar because its date (Tithi) indicates the moon phase but its months are not in phase with the time of the solar year or the season. It does not adjust its calendar to coincide with the SUN or the season. Hence no extra month is added every three years.
- The Gregorian calendar (English CE) is a pure Solar Calendar and its date indicates the time of the solar season but not the moon phase.

Tithi (Day or Date)

In a Lunisolar calendar the day or date is recognized as Tithi. The angular distance (measured anticlockwise) between the Sun and Moon as measured from the Earth location can vary between 0° and 360°. The 360 degree rotation indicates the Moon has completed one circle around the Earth, which is the completion of one Lunisolar month.

Normally there are 30 days in a month hence 360 degree is divided into 30 parts. Each part ends at 12°, 24° and so on. The circle ends at 360° which a month. The time spent by the Moon in each of these parts (i.e. the time taken by the Moon to travel the angular distance of 12°) is called one Tithi. This is a very simple explanation. In reality the calculation is quite complex because the Earth and the Sun have moved their position during this time and the value changes to close to 13 degree.

Each Lunisolar month has two Paksha-s or fortnights (15 Tithis or days in a fortnight). The first 15 Tithi-s constitute the bright fortnight or Shukla or **Sud** Paksha and the next 15 Tithi-s constitute the dark fortnight or Krishna or **Vad** Paksha. The Tithi-s are indicated by their Paksha and ordinal number within the Paksha.

The days are not labeled separately from number one to thirty as in the solar calendar, but the Tithi is their only label and each Tithi has a unique name. The 15th Tithi of the bright fortnight or Sud (**Full Moon Day**) is called Purnimā and the 15th Tithi of the dark fortnight or Vad (Dark Moon or **New Moon Day**) is called **Amāvasyā**.

The duration of a day (between the two consecutive Sunrises) is approximately 24 hours. However the duration of each Tithi varies between 22 hours and 26 hours because the Moon rotates around the Earth in a slightly tilted position and hence the angular velocity is not constant with respect to the particular location of the Earth (This is also a very complex calculation).

Structure of Jain Calendar as per Āgam Literature

The Jain Āgam literature (ref - Chandra Prajnapti and Surya Prajnapti) defines a five year cycle of a Jain calendar. This is known as one Yuga. In the Jain Āgamic calendar

- (1) One "Tithi" is eliminated after every 61 days
- (2) An additional month is added after every 30 months.
- (3) During a five year cycle, the month of Posha (the 3rd month of the current Jain calendar) is added after 30 months and the month of Ashādh (the 9th month) is added after 60 months.

This description indicates that none of the current Jain calendars published by various Jain sects are based on Jain Āgam literature.

Also there is a strong indication in the Āgamic Jain calendar, the Jain year ended on Ashadha Sud 15 and the New Year begins on Shravan Vad 1 as per Rajasthani calendar naming convention or Ashadha Vad 1 as per Gujarati calendar naming convention (see-the following note).

Note - Differences in Naming Convention between Rajasthani and Gujarati Calendar

In the Rajasthani calendar, the duration of the Month is the time between the two Full Moons (Purnimā). When a Full Moon occurs before sunrise, then the day that begins at Sunrise is said to be the first day of the Lunisolar month. Hence the month starts with Vad “Tithi” – declining moon phase - and ends with Sud “Tithi” – Rising Moon phase. This convention is followed not only in Rajasthan but also in a major part of India.

In the Gujarati calendar, the duration of a Month is the time between two New Moons or Dark Moons (Amavas). When a Dark Moon occurs before sunrise, then the day that begins at Sunrise is said to be the first day of the Lunisolar month in the Gujarati calendar. Hence the month starts with Sud “Tithi” – Rising Moon phase – and ends with Vad “Tithi” – declining moon phase.

During the Sud Tithi period, the names of Rajasthani and Gujarati calendar months are the same but during Vad Tithi period the names of the Rajasthani months are one month ahead of the Gujarati month.

Example – During the month of Ashādh – Sud period, both calendars will have the same name of the month. But during Vad period, the Gujarati calendar will indicate Ashādh Vad 1; the same day in Rajasthani calendar is called as Shravan Vad 1 and so on. Hence the name of the Sud months are the same in both calendars but during Vad months, the names in the Rajasthani calendar is one month ahead.

Similarly – Bhagawan Mahavir’s Nirvan Day in Gujarati calendar is Asho Vad 15 (Amas) but the same day is known as Kartak Vad 15 (Amas) in Rajsthani calendar.

Extinction of Jain Āgamic Calendar

The description of the Āgamic Jain calendar exists only in the Jain Āgam literature and Jains may have used it orally probably during the first five hundred to 1000 years after Tirthankar Bhagawān Mahāvīr’s Nirvana. Jain Āgams were written approximately 1000 years after Lord Mahāvīr’s nirvana and since then there is no record available that some one had used or printed the Jain Āgamic calendar.

The following may be the probable causes of extinction of the Jain Āgamic Calendar:

- The Āgamic Jain calendar was not in line with the popular Hindu (Laukik or Lokik) calendar because Diwāli and New Year days in the Jain calendar were different than in the Hindu calendar. Sometimes one month apart.
- The social activities like birth, marriage, and death ceremonies of the Jain community were always performed by the Hindu priests and the Jain community being in minority always celebrated the local religious holidays with Hindu community (Similar to celebration of Xmas holidays here in USA).
- The usage of the Jain Āgamic calendar was very limited to religious activities like Samvatsari (Paryushan) and so on.
- The Jain laymen may have lost the knowledge of the calculation of Tithis using the Moon and the Sun position as described in the Jain Āgams (as many famines occurred during this time).

Adoption of a Hindu (Laukik) Calendar as a Jain Calendar

Every religion needs its own calendar for the operation and celebration of its pious (religious) days as well as for the celebration of social events. In the absence of an authentic Jain calendar, the Jain Āchāryas adopted a Hindu Lunisolar calendar as a basis to create a new Jain calendar.

The Hindu Lunisolar calendar is based on the **position of the Moon (Moon phase) at the time of Sunrise**. The cities on different longitudes will have different Sunrise time and hence different Moon phases and hence different Tithi. So the Hindus do not have one unique lunisolar calendar among all Hindus through out India or through out the world but different cities have different

Hindu Lunisolar calendars. (Example – Hindu calendar in Calcutta may have Kartak Shud 2 but the same day Mumbai Hindu calendar say is Kartak Shud 3)

However, this was not practical for the minority Jains to have different Jain calendars for different cities of India. Hence, probably around 1500 years ago, the Jain Āchāryas decided to use the Hindu calendar of the city of Jodhapur; Rajasthan (India), popularly known as the Candasucand calendar as a basis to create a new Jain calendar.

To convert Jodhapur Hindu calendar into a Jain calendar for all Jains throughout India, certain changes were made to the Jodhapur Hindu calendar to distinctly identify Jain religious days and its religious needs. Presently it is done in the same way but some sects have changed the city from Jodhapur to Mumbai. These changes are defined later in this article.

Structure of Hindu Calendar

Definition of Tithi (Day) in Hindu Calendar

In the Hindu calendar, the day starts with the local sunrise and the **position of the Moon (Moon phase) at that time decides the Tithi** (known as Udaya Tithi). This Tithi is applied for the entire day even if the Moon phase may change to the next Tithi a few minutes after Sunrise. This concept of Tithi in the Hindu calendar is different from the Jain Āgamic calendar. **The Tithi is not connected with the Sunrise (Udaya Tithi) in the Jain Āgamic calendar.**

Example – At Sunrise time the Moon is at little less than 12 degree position during rising Paksha. Hence the entire day is called Shud 1 in Hindu calendar. However in reality few minutes later the Moon has passed 12 degree mark and the Moon for the entire day is in Shud 2. The Āgamic Jain calendar will call it Shud 2.

Kshaya Tithi (Lost Tithi) and Vriddhi Tithi (Extra Tithi)

Since in the Hindu calendar the Tithi is defined at the time of Sunrise, several times in a year a condition occurs that the same Tithi may exist between two consecutive Sunrises because during 24 hours the Moon phase did not change more than 12 degrees. This is called Vriddhi (extra) Tithi.

Similarly several times in a year a situation occurs that one Tithi (Moon phase) does not touch any Sunrise time at all. This is known as Kshaya (loss) Tithi.

This happens because the duration of each Tithi varies between 22 hours and 26 hours and the duration between the two consecutive Sunrises is about 24 hours.

Please note that only Kshaya Tithi occurred in the Āgamic Jain calendar but the Hindu calendar has both Kshaya (loss) and Vriddhi (extra) Tithi several times in a year. However the total number of days in a year remained the same in both Jain and Hindu Calendars.

Leap Year (13 months in a Year)

As explained before, both the Jain and Hindu calendar has an extra month added approximately once every three years which brings seasons in phase with the month duration. Even though both the Hindu and Āgamic Jain calendars are Lunisolar calendars, they used different leap year calculation methods. In the Hindu calendar, any of the 12 months can be a leap month (complex calculation) while the Āgamic Jain calendar defines a five year time cycle (known as Yuga) in which the month of Poshā (mid- year month of an ancient Jain Calendar) and Ashadhā (the last month of an ancient Jain calendar) are only two leap months.

Changes made to the Hindu Calendar for Jain Calendar:

Jain Parva Tithis (Pious Days)

Jain Āchāryas have defined Tithis; 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 15 as pious or Parva Tithis or Parva days in both the Sud and Vad part of the Moon cycles of every month. People take special vows and perform various penances (Ārādhanā) on these days. To fulfill their Ārādhanā without any interruptions of Kshaya (lost) or Vriddhi (extra or double) Tithi, the ancient Jain literature has

indicated some special rules to apply to the Hindu calendar defined in the following Gātha or Sutra:

**“Kshaye Purva Tithi Kārya, Vridhhau Karya Tathottara;
Shri Veer Jina Nirvanam, Karyma Lokanugairih:”**

If a Kshaya or Vriddhi Tithi occurs on a Parva Tithi (pious day) in the Hindu calendar, follow the following rules for the conversion to the Jain calendar:

In case of Kshaya (loss) Tithi, previous Tithi should be considered as Jain Parva Tithi

In case of Vriddhi (double) Tithi, the 2nd Tithi should be considered as Jain Parva Tithi

Do not change Mahavir Nirvana Day (Deepāvali day) as defined in the Hindu calendar.
Also this rule indirectly indicated that we cannot change the leap month of the Hindu calendar.

This is how the Jain calendar is created using above rules applying to Hindu Calendar.
Practically the following changes were made in the Jodhapur Hindu calendar.

In case of Kshaya (loss) Tithi of 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 15, Jain calendar makes Kshaya of Tithi; 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and also 13 respectively.

In case of Vriddhi (double) Tithi of 2, 5, 8, 11, 14, and 15; Jain calendar makes Vriddhi (double) of Tithi; 1, 4, 7, 10, 13, and also 13 respectively.

One can see that in case of Kshaya or Vriddhi Tithi of pious days in the Hindu calendar, the Jain calendar has simply changed the previous Tithi as a Kshaya or Vriddhi Tithi.

Also when Tithi 15 was either Kshaya or Vriddhi, the rule defined in the Gātha was applied twice and made Tithi 13 as a Kshaya or Vriddhi Tithi.

This way the printed Jain calendar will not have any Kshaya or Vriddhi pious Tithis. The common people will not have any confusion about Parva Tithis to carry out their Ārādhanā of religious vows and penances.

Also in the new Jain calendar, the last day of the year is Āso Vad 15 (Amas) as per Gujarati naming convention or Kārtik Vad 15 (Amas) as per Rajasthani naming convention. Mahāvīrswami's nirvana day remained same as it appeared in the Hindu calendar. This way the Jain community can celebrate their social and religious Parva days (which are compromised), on the same day as Hindus celebrate Deepāvali days.

Paryushan Parva and Samvatsari Day

According to Jain Āgam literature, the history of Paryushan Parva is more than 2000 years old. However there is no clear indication of the actual number of Paryushan Parva days and the exact Tithi of Samvatsari day. **According to Kalpa sutra only a day of Samvatsari (one day only) is called Paryushan.**

The Jain tradition indicates that monks can not stay at one place for more than 30 days. However in India during the four months of the rainy season, from Ashadha Sud 15 to Kārtik Sud 15, they must stay at one place to minimize violence that would occur in traveling during the rainy season.

In ancient times, the monks are required to find a suitable place to stay at one place for the rainy season by Ashādh Sud 15 which is the last day of the ancient Jain Āgamic calendar year and also before the beginning of the rainy season. **They perform annual Samvatsari Pratikraman on Ashādh Sud 15 (ref - Nishitha Bhāsyā Sutra) and start the New Year on the next day which is Shrāvan Vad 1 as per Rajasthan naming convention or Ashādh Vad 1 as per Gujarati naming convention.**

If the monks cannot find a suitable place by Ashādh Sud 15 then they may continue to travel to find a suitable place for up to 50 days (this may be called as a grace period). However they must find a place and settle during this time period and then do Samvatsari Pratikraman.

Even if they do not find a suitable place during the grace period of 50 days, they must still do the Samvatsari Pratikraman under a tree in a jungle on the 50th day but not violate the 50 day limit for Samvatsari Pratikraman (ref – Jain Āgams - Samavāyānga and Nishitha Sutras). The 50th day from Ashādh Sud 15 falls on Bhadarva Sud 5.

Since Bhādarvā Sud 5 was the last day for Samvatsari Pratikraman, it seems that to keep Jain the community united and properly organized, probably around the 7th to 10th century time Jain Āchāryas may have decided to do Samvatsari Pratikraman only on Bhadarva Sud 5 instead of earlier as indicated in the Jain Agamic literature.

Before that one may conclude from the ancient literature that the monks may be doing Samvatsari Pratikraman any time between Ashādh Sud 15 and Bhadarva Sud 5 and the common people just joined with the monks on that day for the Samvatsari Pratikraman.

Change of Samvatsari Day from Bhadarva Sud 5 to 4:

Ancient Jain literature (ref - Nishitha Bhāsyā Churni and Kalpa Sutra Tikā) indicates the following story as the primary reason for changing the Samvatsari day from Bhadarva Sud 5 to 4 by the Shvetāmbar Jain Murtipujak Tapa-gachchha sect which is about 70% of the total Jain population.

As the king of Ujjayini was the enemy of the Jain religion, Jain Āchārya Kālak had to migrate immediately from the town of Ujjayin after his arrival, to find a suitable place to stay for the rainy season. The Āchārya left the town and traveled during the beginning days of the rainy season. He may have arrived at the town of Pratisthanpur near the end of the 50 days which is close to Bhadarva Shud 5.

After reaching Pratisthanpur, he decided to do Samvatsari Pratikraman on Bhadarva Sud 5. The king Satavahan of Pratisthanpur, who was a Jain king, informed the Āchārya that the whole town would be celebrating a major social event known as Indra-Mahotsav on Bhadarva Sud 5 and therefore he may not be able to join for the Samvatsari Pratikraman. He requested the Āchārya to do Samvatsari Pratikraman on the next day which was Bhadarva Sud 6.

The Āchārya indicated that the monks must do annual Pratikraman by Bhadarva Sud 5. So to accommodate the king's request he changed the Samvatsari Pratikraman Tithi to Bhadarva Sud 4 (one day earlier) for that year and the King agreed to join on that day.

We do not have any knowledge of what happened in the following year as to whether the Jain community continued to do Samvatsari on Bhadarva Shud 4 or on 5. Some literature indicates that Āchārya Kālak may have died before the next Samvatsari day.

However, later on (I could not find any documented record) the Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jain community (Tapa-gachchha sect) started doing Samvatsari Pratikraman on Bhadarva Sud 4.

They provide one reason – **Since we have done Pratikraman one day earlier in the past, we need to continue that way and can not go back because Samvatsari Pratikraman must be done within a year but not one year + one day (I cannot find this rule in ancient Jain scripture).**

New Problem Surfaced due to the Change of Samvatsari Day

The original Samvatsari Tithi of Bhadarva Sud 5 is a Parva Tithi (pious day). Now the new Tithi – Bhadarva Sud 4 – which was not a Parva Tithi before became an additional Parva Tithi only for the month of Bhādarvā. For all other months, shud 4 remained an ordinary Tithi. Hence the following situations may occur in some future Jain calendar year.

- If in a particular year, Bhadarva Sud 5 becomes a Vriddhi (double) Tithi in the Jodhapur Hindu calendar, then in the Jain calendar Bhadarva Sud 4 can not become a Vriddhi Tithi because it is now a Parva Tithi (new Samvatsari day). We need to make Bhadarva Sud

3 as a Vriddhi Tithi (the rule defined in above Gātha is applied twice as is done in case of 15). By doing this we have delayed the Samvatsari day by one day.

- If in a particular year, Bhadarva Sud 5 becomes Kshaya (loss) Tithi, then again Bhadarva Sud 4 can not be a Kshaya Tithi but we need to make Bhadarva Sud 3 as a Kshaya Tithi. This will bring the actual Samvatsari day one day earlier.

In both the situations, we disturb the new Samvatsari day - Bhadarva Sud 4. The clear solution is not defined in the Jain literature. Also these types of the problems were not visible in old times because people at various towns may have been doing Samvatsari Pratikraman anytime between Ashādh Sud 15 and Bhadarva Sud 4 or 5 when monks decide to stay during the rainy season.

However the first time the problem surfaced was in the year 1896 (Hindu year 1952). A Kshaya Tithi of Bhadarva Sud 5 occurred in the Jodhapur Hindu calendar.

Some Swetambar Jain Āchāryas suggested that we should not disturb Bhadarva Sud 4 and solve the problem by accepting another Hindu calendar in which Kshaya of Bhadarva Sud 6 was found. Other Āchāryas did not agree with the change it is not proper to change the Jodhapur Hindu calendar every time such unique situation arises. They insisted that we should continue to use the same calendar and make Bhadarva Sud 3 as a Kshaya Tithi. Hence, for the first time, the Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jain community observed Samvatsari on two separate days in that year.

For the past 120 years, since 1896 to 2005 (Hindu year 1952 to 2061), twelve times Bhadarva Sud 5 was either Kshaya Tithi or Vriddhi Tithi in the Hindu calendar.

The following list summarizes the occurrence of the above situation.

Year CE	Hindu Year	
1896	1952	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1905	1961	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1933	1989	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1936	1992	Bhadarva Sud 5 Vriddhi
1937	1993	Bhadarva Sud 5 Vriddhi
1948	2004	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1957	2013	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1958	2014	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1972	2028	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1977	2033	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
1986	2042	Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya
2005	2061	Bhadarva Sud 5 Vriddhi

In all of the above years, the Shvetāmbar Jain Murtipujak community was divided in India and performed Samvatsari Pratikraman on two separate days. To resolve this problem, Jain Āchāryas, other learned monks and scholars had about 9 major conferences from 1920 to 1988 (Hindu year 1976 to 2044).

In the year 1958 (Hindu year 2014), the Hindu calendar had Bhadarva Sud 5 Kshaya. Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Tapa-gachchha Jain Sangh decided to let go of the Jodhapur Hindu calendar and adopted the Janma-Bhumi calendar of Mumbai as a base because it had Bhadarva Sud 6 Kshaya Tithi. Since then they have used the Janma-Bhumi calendar as their base. The other Jain sects continued to use the Jodhapur Hindu calendar as their base.

In the last conference (year 1988) a majority of the Jain Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Āchāryas agreed to do Samvatsari as follows (compromised solution by two parties):

- If Bhādarvā Sud 5 is a Kshaya Tithi then make Bhādarvā Sud 6 as a Kshaya Tithi.
- If Bhādarvā Sud 5 is a Vriddhi Tithi then make Bhādarvā Sud 3 as a Vriddhi Tithi.

The above agreement compromises the differences that existed among some Jain Āchāryas. In case of Bhādarvā Sud 5 as a Kshaya Tithi, making Bhādarvā Sud 6 as a Kshaya Tithi, the original Samvatsari day is not disturbed (Āchārya Shri Ramchandra-suri's view) but the rule defined in the Gātha is in violation.

In case of Bhādarvā Sud 5 as a Vriddhi Tithi, making Bhādarvā Sud 3 as a Vriddhi Tithi, it followed the rule defined in the Gātha as per ancient tradition (Āchārya Shri Sagarandji's view) but the original Samvatsari day is delayed by one day.

In the year (2005), the Janma-Bhumi (Mumbai) Hindu calendar had Bhādarvā Sud 5 as a Vriddhi (double) Tithi. About 80% or more of the Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jains followed the Jain calendar as per the last agreement as defined above while the remaining Jains did Pratikraman one day earlier (on Wednesday instead of Thursday)

Samvatsari Day in Sthānakavāsi, Terāpanthi, and Anchalgadh Murtipujak Jain sects:

The Sthānakavāsi Jain sect was established around the 14th century and the Terāpanthi sect was separated from the Sthānakavāsi sect around the 16th century. Both the sects probably follow the same process for their Jain calendar as used by the Shvetāmbar Murtipujaks. They have continued to use the Jodhapur Hindu calendar as their base. However with regards to Paryushan and Samvatsari day celebration, they follow the following rules. Hence they calculate their calendar as follows:

1. They decided to do Samvatsari on the 50th day from Ashadha Sud 15 as defined in the Jain Āgam literature. Hence in a year if there is no Vriddhi month of either Shrāvan or Bhādarvā then they celebrate Samvatsari on Bhādarvā Sud 5 which is one day later than the Murtipujak sect and hence they start Paryushan one day later.
2. If a particular leap year of the Hindu calendar has either a Shrāvan or Bhādarvā month as a Vriddhi month then Samvatsari is celebrated one month earlier because they decided not to violate the 50 day limit from Ashād Sud 15 as defined in the scriptures.
3. If Bhādarvā Sud 5 is a Vriddhi Tithi, then they will celebrate Samvatsari on the first Sud 5 day because it meets the 50th day limit. In the year 2005 - they did Samvatsari on the same day with the majority of the Murtipujak sect - Bhādarvā Sud 4 to meet the 50th day limit.

Kshamāvāni (Forgiveness) Day in Digambar Jain sect:

Digambar Jains celebrate Paryushan / Das Laxan Parva for 10 days starting from Bhadarva Sud 5. They celebrate one virtue on each day. The first day is dedicated to forgiveness (Kshamāvāni) and it is the most important day of their religious ceremony which is Bhadarva Sud 5.

Summary

From the Jain literature survey one can conclude that in the ancient time - Bhadarva Sud 5, the last day for Samvatsari Pratikraman for monks and nuns, was the most pious day for both Shvetāmbar and the Digambar sects. The Jains of all sects were celebrating it as a Kshamāvāni (forgiveness) day and this day was dedicated as a day of Ahimsa (Nonviolence). Later the Shvetāmbar Murtipujak (Tapa-gachchha) sect changed this day after Āchārya Kālak's time.

The various Jain sects (both Digambar and Shvetāmbar) publish their own Jain calendar converting the Jodhapur, Mumbai, or other equivalent Hindu calendar. They use the above or other equivalent guideline to convert the Hindu calendar and call it the Jain calendar of their sect.

All Jain calendar Tithis are calculated using the Hindu Lunisolar way (Position of the phase of the Moon at the time of Sunrise (Uday Tithi) of a particular location) as opposed to the Jain Lunisolar method indicated in the Jain Āgam literature. The place where we live (in North America) may

have a different Moon phase and hence the actual Tithi will be different (error rate could be up to two days or more).

Hence we can safely conclude that the Tithis defined in all Jain calendars are meant for uniform religious activities (Ārādhanā) and to create social harmony among Jains of each Jain sect located in the various cities of India and of the world. It has no other religious significance associated with it.

Recommendation

It is the desire of every Jain person to see that all Jains celebrate Samvatsari / Kshamāvāni (Forgiveness) on the same day thus avoiding confusion and projecting unity. This way we can collectively start the movement to stop slaughtering animals on Samvatsari day and other similar movements for compassion and non-violence activities.

It seems that Jain leaders in India find it very difficult to compromise on this issue. Shvetāmbar Murtipujak Jains have tried 9 times over the past 120 years period and have not been able to resolve the Tithi problem among themselves, which is not a real problem to begin with (Tithis in the present Jain calendar are derived from the Hindu calendar of the Jodhapur or Mumbai area based on the Sunrise time).

To have differences on this issue reflects rigidity our leaders' part. Every one provides their reason but forgets that the root of our Jain calendar is a Hindu calendar and not the Jain Agam. Hence any reason given by quoting the scriptures are not the valid reasons.

A very simple solution exists for Jains in India as follows:

“Shwetambar Murtipujak Tapa Gachchha Jains should change Samvatsary Day back to Bhadarva Shud 5 and start to use Chaandasu chandu Hindu calendar as a base for Jain Calendar”.

This will solve almost all the problems associated with Samvatsari Day. Every Jain including one tithi and two tithi sects will do Samvatsari Pratikraman on the same day. All differences in various calendars will disappear.

North American Jains

North American Jains have created an environment conducive to unite all Jain sects. The following is the summary of their accomplishments in this area:

- Almost all Jain centers in North America are nonsectarian centers
- Almost all Jain temples have both Shvetāmbar and Digambar Murtis and Sthānaka for Sthānakavāsi / Terāpanthi and other sects
- Federation of Jaina is a unique organization in the Jain world which has the membership of 67 Jain centers. It has elected its presidents from various sects of Jainism.
- Jain Digest, the quarterly magazine, publishes the news from all the sects
- JAINA convention is a very unique Jain convention in the world and leaders from all sects are invited and get together on one stage.
- Jaina Education material is non sectarian and represents the uniqueness of each sect.

Now is the proper time for all Jain centers of North America and JAINA to look ahead and eliminate confusion for our youths; come together and celebrate Samvatsari / Kshamāvāni (Forgiveness) in a united way across North America. We, the believers of the Anekāntavāda can certainly work together on this issue.

Since all Jain centers are non-sectarian centers in North America and we do not have Jain monks or nuns in America who can provide the guidance to all Jain Sanghs. It is the responsibility of the

leaders of every center to work together to come to one conclusion based on time, place, and culture of our community in this country.

We recognize that ideally we should refrain from work and school activities during Paryushan to devote time for self reflection. But this is not practical and does not happen in real life. Better yet, why not be practical and celebrate Samvatsari on the 1st Saturday of September of every year (we do not have a rainy season that begins on Ashādh Sud 15 and we do not have Monks who are searching for a suitable place to stay during the rainy season).

Here are the benefits:

1. The first day of the Paryushan will be the last Saturday of August and hence all children, youths, and adults can do various penances, puja at the temple, listen to discourses, and do Pratikraman in the evening. Generally the schools in America have summer holidays upto labor-day weekend.
2. The 2nd day will be Sunday – the Mahāvīr Jayanti (Janma Vāchan) and Swapna ceremony can be celebrated by all children, youths, and adults on this Sunday.
3. The following Saturday (1st Saturday of September) will be the Samvatsari day which is the last day of Paryushan for all Shvetāmbar sects and is the Kshamāvāni (Forgiveness) day – the 1st day of Paryushan / Das Laxan of all Digambar sects. Hence the entire Jain community can do Pratikraman and Kshamāvāni (Forgiveness) Ārāhanā together. Digambars will continue Das Laxan for the next nine days as per their tradition.
4. The next day will be a Sunday and it is very convenient for Pāranā for all Tapasvis and may be Bhāvanā in the evening.

This way we will create a perfect environment for our children, youths and working adults to actively participate in the Paryushan and Das Laxan celebration without disturbing their school or work schedules in North America.

The Jain Study Center of North Carolina is one center in North America celebrating Paryushan Parva from Saturday to Saturday since 1988. Twenty four years ago after understanding the history of the Jain calendar, all the members decided unanimously to celebrate Paryushan Parva in such a way that the school and work schedules of the children, youths and adults are not disturbed.

The society has achieved great results. All children, youths and adults do penance and puja on the first and last day (Saturday) and Samvatsari Pratikraman on a Saturday for the past 24 years (some adults have continued to do Samvatsari Pratikraman on the traditional day at their residences but bring their school age children on Saturday for Puja and Samvatsari Pratikraman).

The suggested recommendation is my personal view and not of JAINA or the Jaina Education committee. This was just one recommendation. If we need to come to an agreement for any other day collectively we will provide full support for that day. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

Please pardon me if I have directly or indirectly hurt any one's feelings by publishing this article. My only intention is to unite the entire Jain community.

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September 4, 2012

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