

Ashta-prakāri Puja

Jain Puja symbolizes various aspects of our religion. One should reflect on such aspect while performing the puja rituals. There are different types of puja being performed for various religious and social ceremonies. The following eight types of materials is generally used for puja.

1. Jala Puja: (Water)

Jan klz -rI Aatma, smta rs -rpUr.

il ijnne nvravta<, kmR haeye ckcUr. 1

jl pUja jugte krae, mel Anaid ivnaz.

jl pUja)l muj haejae, magae @m à-u pas. 1

meé izor nvrave hae surpit, meé izor nvrave;

jNm kal ijnvrijl kae ja[l, p<c£êp krl Aave.. hae. 1

My soul, a kalash made of knowledge,
I fill, with the water of equanimity.
And as I bathe the Arihant,
My karmās are washed away.

Water symbolizes the ocean. Every living being continuously travels through Life Ocean of birth, life, death, and misery. This puja reminds that one should live the life with honesty, truthfulness, love and compassion towards all living beings. This way one will be able to cross the Life Ocean and attain Moksha or liberation. The path of liberation is Samyak Darshan, Samyak Jnan and Samyak Charitra in Jain religion.

2. Chandan Puja: (Sandal-wood)

ztl gu[jehma< ryaē, ztl à-u muo r<g.

AaTm ztl krva -[l, pUjae Airha A<g. 1

He whose face beams of the tranquility within
The one whose very nature is tranquil
To that Arihant I worship
My soul, to make tranquil

Chandan symbolizes Knowledge (Jnan). During this puja one should reflect on Right Knowledge. Right knowledge means proper understanding of reality which includes Soul, Karma, and their relationship. Jainism believes that the Path of Knowledge is the main path to attain liberation. Bhakti or Devotion helps in the early stages of one's effort for liberation.

3. Pushpa Puja: (Flower)

suri- Ao<f k...sum øhl, pUjae gt s<tap.

sumj<tu -Vy j pre, krlye smikt Dap. 1

Perfumed, a flower in full bloom I hold;
For this puja, which destroys the misery of birth.
Just as a bee hovers around the flower;

To be around you always,
I ask that samkit* be imprinted upon me.

*Samkit = Right faith

Flower symbolizes conduct. Our conduct should be like a flower, which provides fragrance and beauty to all living beings without discrimination. We should live our life like flowers with full of love and compassion towards all living beings.

4. Dhup Puja: (Incense)

Xyan "qa àgqavlye, vam nyn ijn xUp.
imCDt ÊgRNx Êr qle, àgqe AaTm Svép. 1

Ame xUpnl pUja krl@ re, Aae mn£maNya maehnjI;
Ame xUp£"qa Anusrl@ re, Aae mn£maNya maehnjI;
nhI— kae# tmarl taele re, Aae mn£maNya maehnjI;
à-u A<te De zr[tmaé< re, Aae mn£maNya maehnjI. 1

Meditation illuminates the dense darkness,
Just as I offer the incense before the beautiful eyes of the Jina;
Driving away the bad smell of wrong faith,
The innate nature of the soul emerges.

Dhup symbolizes ascetic life. While burning itself, Dhup provides fragrance to others. Similarly true monks and nuns spend their entire life selflessly for the benefit of all living beings. This puja reminds that one should thrive for a ascetic life which ultimately leads to liberation.

5. Deepak Puja: (Candle)

ÔVy£dlp su£ivvekwI, krta< Ê>o haey)aek.
-av àdlp àgq ÷@, -aist laeka£laek. 1

Like a lamp, help us distinguish between good and bad
To avoid sorrow in this world
And one day, my internal lamp of knowledge will
Illuminate the entire universe.

The flame of Deepak represents a Pure Consciousness or a Soul without any bondage or a Liberated Soul. In Jainism such a Soul is called Siddha or God. The ultimate goal of every living being is to become liberated from karma. By doing this puja one should thrive to follow Five great Vows: Non-violence, Truthfulness, Non-stealing, Chastity and Non-possession. Ultimately these proper conducts coupled with right faith and knowledge will lead to liberation.

6. Akshat Puja: (Rice)

zuÍ Ao<f A]t çhl, nNdavtR ivzal.
pUrl à-u sNmuo rhae, qall skl j<jal. 1

Pure unbroken akshat I hold
And draw this large Nandyāvart

In the presence of my lord,
I wish all my worldliness
Will postpone indefinitely

The household rice is the kind of grain seeds, which are non-fertile. One cannot grow rice plants by seeding the household rice. Symbolically it means that rice is the last birth. By doing this puja one should strive to put all the efforts in the life in such a way that this life becomes one's last life and after the end of this life one will be liberated and will not be reborn again.

7. Naivedya Puja: (Tasty Food)

A[aharl pd me< kya; i, vGgh g#y AnNt.
Ēr krl te dlijye, A[aharl izv sNt. 1

Many a times I have gone hungry
And traveled through many lives
O Pure One! Without a trace of desire,
Do satiate me eternally

Naivedya symbolizes a tasty food. By doing this puja, one should strive to reduce or eliminate the attachment to tasty food. Healthy food is essential for survival, however one should not live for to eat a tasty food. Ultimate aim in one's life is to attain a life where no food is essential for our existence and that is the life of a liberated Soul, who lives in Moksha forever in ultimate bliss.

8. Fal Puja: (Fruit)

#NÔaidk pUja -[l,)l lave xrl rag.
pué;aeÅm pUjl krl, mage izv£)l Tyag. 1

Just as Indra and other devs
Out of their extreme love for you,
I bring along 'fruits' to worship.
Upon meeting you, O Supreme soul,
I renounce worldly aspirations
And desire only Moksha
As the fruit of all my actions

Fruit symbolizes Moksha or Liberation. If we live our life without any attachment to worldly affair, continue to perform our duty without any expectation and reward, be witnessed to all the incidents that occurred surrounding to and within us, truly follow ascetic life, and have a love and compassion to all living beings, we will attain the fruit of Moksha or liberation. This is the last Puja symbolizing the ultimate achievement of our life.