

Bhavana: (Contemplations / Reflection)

The Jain way of life emphasizes the thinking of a person, subject matters of one's thoughts, what a person thinks, and how he thinks. This is called Bhavana, yearnings, thought, aspirations, or reflections. The Bhavana describes the subject matters of one's contemplation, and how to occupy one's mind with useful, religious, beneficial, peaceful, harmless, spiritually advancing, karma preventing thoughts. The Bhavanas, also called Anuprekshaas, help one to remain on the right course in the life, and not to stray away. The person's behavior, practical life, or action is the resultant of his internal thoughts, day in and day out. The Bhavanas are twelve in number.

(1) Anitya bhavana: (The Impermanence of the sansaar or world)

Nothing in the Universe has permanence, even though the whole Universe is constant. Spiritual values are therefore worth striving for as they alone offer the soul, its ultimate freedom and stability.

(2) Asharana bhavana: (The refuge to the sansaar, i.e. world of becoming, is misleading).

The soul is own refuge, and to achieve total freedom and enlightenment to the true path one takes refuge to five best personalities, namely Arihanta, Siddha, Aachaarya, Upaadhyaya and Sadhus. The refuge to things other than above due to delusion, is misfortune, and must be avoided.

(3) Ekatva bhavana: (The aloneness of the Soul)

The soul is solitaire, and lonely in existence. The Soul assumes birth alone, and departs alone from the life form. The Soul will be responsible for its own actions, and karmas. The Soul will enjoy the fruit, and suffer bad consequences of its own action alone.

(4) Anyatva bhavana: (The Self-dependence, separateness)

In this world nobody is for somebody, and somebody is for nobody. The soul therefore should not develop attachment for worldly objects and beings.

(5) Sansaara bhavana: (The Worldly existence)

The soul transmigrates from one life to the other and in four gatis, human, animal, hellish, heavenly, and is full of pain and miseries. The Soul must achieve ultimate freedom from it, which is moksha.

(6) Ashuchi bhavana: (The impureness of the body):

The composition of the body will reveal all the things we loathe, such as excrement, urine, blood, meat, bones, sweat, and so on, and therefore is impure. The Soul, within the body but unattached to the body, alone is pure. The body ultimately becomes non-existent, but the Soul continues on, is eternal. The emotional attachments to the body is useless.

(7) Aashrava bhavana: (Influx of Karma contemplations)

Raag, Dwesh, and ignorance attract new karmas. Deluded state and how to be free from delusion is the

subject matter of this thought activity.

(8) Samvar bhavana: (Stoppage of influx of Karma)

To get absorbed in achieving spiritual knowledge, meditation, etc. prevents the influx of karmas.

(9) Nirjaraa bhaavana: (Karma Shedding)

The efficacy of discipline and penance for freeing oneself from the bondage of the karma.

(10) Loka bhavana: (Universe)

To think of the nature and structure of the universe. The Universe consists of six substances, Soul, Pudgal, Dharma, Adharma, Kaala, Space. The Universe is grouped into three divisions

- Urdhvaloka, or heavenly areas above us where among

other heavenly objects, super-life called Gods live

- Madhyaloka; or central area where humans and animals live.

- Adholoka, which is located in the lower regions of the

Universe, where hellish beings, live.

On the top of the Universe is Siddha-shila where liberated souls, or Siddhas live. Apparently, Siddha-shila at one end of the Universe creates the reference as the highest position in the universe, earth in the central region, and other referenced high, or low from the earth.

(11) Bodhidurlabha bhavana: (Unobtainability of true talent)

It is very difficult for the transmigrating soul in this sansaar (world) to be close to, or be opportune to be accomplishing right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct, etc. So when you have the opportunity to be a Jain, take advantage of it to develop right religious talent.

(12) Dharmadurlabha bhavana: (Unobtainability of true preceptor, scripture and religion).

To be able to distinguish right religion, scripture, preceptor etc. from the wrong, and to follow the right, requires good judgement. The Dharma is characterized by:

Uttama Kshamaa (Forbearance, Forgiveness),

Uttama Maardava (Modesty, Humility)

Uttama Aarjava (Straightforwardness)

Uttama Saucha Purity),

Uttama Satya (Truth),

Uttama Samyama (Self-restraint, Control of Senses) ,

Uttama Tapa (Austerity, Penance),

Uttama Tyaaga (Renunciation),

Uttama Akinchanya (Non attachment),

Uttama Brahmacharya (Celibacy , Chastity).

The word Uttama is indicative of the power and authority of Samyag darshan, or right perception.