

Namokkar Mantra

- Most revered prayer
- Rosary has 108 beads representing 108 qualities of these 5 supreme beings



Question-1: What do we mean by the words, "Jina", "Jain" and "Jainism"?

Answer-1 : Jain word is derived from Jina, which literally means "the Victor" or "the Liberator". One who has freed himself/herself from the bondage of Karma by conquering *rāga* (attachment - deceit and greed) & *dvesha* (aversion - anger and ego). People who follow the teachings of Jina are called Jains. Jains are also called *shramanas* (who treat everything with equanimity) or *nirganthas* (who does not have desires and passions). The teachings of Jina is called Jainism. Lord Mahavira was the last reformer of Jainism.

Question-2: What is the goal of Jainism?

Answer-2 : There is only one goal of the Jainism. To attain the everlasting happiness (Mokha, to become omniscient, to realize the purest form of the soul - these all mean the same) is the only goal of Jainism.

Question-3: What is "Moksha" ?

Answer-3 : *Moksha* = *moha* + *kshaya*; *moha* means delusion and *kshaya* means eradication - this makes *Moksha* as the state where there is no delusion and all karma are eradicated. There are three jewels, *samyak-darsana* or right perception (inclination or belief), *samyak-jnana* or right knowledge (cognition), *samyak-charitra* or right conduct - these three combined are the means of *Moksha*.

Question-4: What is "Tirthankar"?

Answer-4 : The word *tirth* means ford (passage) and, therefore, *tirthankar* means builders of ford which leads us across the ocean of suffering and to the bank of everlasting happiness, "*Moksha*". In this half time cycle we had 24 *tirthankars*, first one was Rushabhdev and the last one was Mahavir Swami. *Tirthankar* has revealed the truth of the universe to us. Once a soul has shed all of its four defiling (*ghati*) karma namely *Jnanavarniya* (Knowledge obscuring) *Karma*, *Darshanavarniya* (Perception obscuring) *karma*, *Mohniya* (Deluding) *Karma* and *Antaraya* (Obstructive) *Karma*, and who had earned *Tirthankar Nam Karma* in his/her previous third life becomes a *Tirthankar*. These *Tirthankars* reinstate the Jain Sangh (four-fold Jain Order) consisting of *Sadhhus* (monks), *Sadhvis* (nuns), *Shravaks* (male householders), and *Shravikas* (female householders).

Question-5: What is the meaning of the term "*Arihant*"?

Answer-5 : Essentially, the meaning of *Arihant*, *Jina* and *Thirthankar* is the same. They are also called *Arhat* meaning "worthy of worship". They have attained perfect knowledge (*KevalJnän*), perfect perception (*KevalDarshan*), and perfect conduct (*kevalChäritra*) and infinite energy (*Ananta Virya*) and they are totally detached (*viträgi*). *Arihantas* offer us spiritual guidance during their lifetime and expounds the path of purification, *Moksha*. In order to show our special reverence for their teachings, we bow to them first, hence the first line of the *Namokär Mahä Mantra* states "*Namo Arihantänam*".

Question-6: What is the meaning of the term "*Siddha*"?

Answer-6 : Essentially *Siddhäs* are liberated souls. They have reached the highest state, salvation, and have attained *Moksha*. They have eradicated all their karma, and therefore do not accumulate any more new *karma*, thus freeing themselves forever from the cycle of birth and death (*Akshaya Sthiti*). They are experiencing ultimate, unobstructed bliss (*Abädhya Sukh*) and are not subjected to any kind of suffering. They possess perfect and total knowledge (*Anatjnäna, Kevaljnäna, omniscience*) and perception (*Anat Darshan, Kevaldarshana, omni-perception*), that means they know and perceive everything in total that is happening now, that has happened in the past, and that will happen in the future all at the same time, and they also possess infinite vigor (*Anant-Virya*). They have no desires and are completely detached thus making them immune from any sense of craving or aversion (*Anant Chäritra, Viträgatva*). Despite the fact that all *Siddhäs* retain a unique identity, they are equal (*Aguru-laghutva*) and formless (*Arupitva*).

Question-7: What is the importance of *Āchārya*?

Answer-7 : The message of Jina, Lord Mahavir, the last *Tirthankar*, is carried by the *Āchāryas*, the spiritual leaders. The responsibility of the spiritual well being of the entire Jain Sangh rests on the shoulders of the *Āchāryas*. Before reaching that state, one has to do an in-depth study and gain mastery over the *Āgams*. In addition to acquiring a high level of spiritual excellence, they also have the ability to lead the monastic communion. They should also know various languages of the country and have a sound knowledge of other philosophies, ideologies, and religions of the region and of the world.

Question-8: Who gets the title of *Upādhyāya* ?

Answer-8 : The title of *Upādhyāya* is given to those *Sādhus* who have acquired a special knowledge of the *Āgams* (Jain scriptures) and philosophical systems. They teach Jain scriptures to deserving aspirants, including *Sādhus* and *sādhvis*.

Question-9: Who are *Sādhu* & *Sadhvis*?

Answer-9 : *Sādhu* (Jain monk) or *Sādhvi* (Jain nun) is who practices five *mahāvratas* (great vows), five *samitis* (carefulness) and three *Guptis* (restraints); has taken *Dikshā* (initiation) per either *Digambar* or *Svetāmbar* tradition, 2. who practices *Samatā* (equanimity; treats the favorable and non-favorable situations indifferently.), 3. who follows and preaches the major path of liberation expounded by our *Tirthankars*, 4. emphasizes on the self-efforts and self-initiatives, 5. who firmly believes in and practices the *anekāntvād*, and 6. has given up pleasures of five senses, has no worldly attachments like assets, family, bank balance, house, car and similar things and has won over internal enemies like anger, ego, deceit and greed. Their only goal is to attain "*Mokshā*".

Question-10: Who are *Shrāvaka* & *Shrāvikäs* ?

Answer-10 : *Shrāvaka* is the person who is living in a house and practices the partial vows (*anuvrata*). The *shrāvaka* word is derived from the word "shru" meaning to listen. *Shrāvaka* listens to the preaching of the *tirthankar* or the right *guru* or reads the Jain canonical books. *Shrāvaka* has faith in the path of liberation expounded by the *tirthankars*, who avoids the non-essential activities of sins, who has the right belief, and who has suppressed *anantānubandhi* (life-long-lasting) *kashāyas* (passions). He/she feels that this material world (*samsār*) is a prison and wants to be freed from it. The word *Shrāvaka* is used for a male and *Shrāvikā* is used for a female.