

Tapa Pad

“If God became happy if we just stayed hungry, Then in this world, The starving Beggar would be the most happiest person on this earth. Upvas Shouldn't be done by Just giving up food, Upvas should be done by the mind.” - Whatsapp

Taps or austerities embody one of Jainism's central concepts, namely nonattachment, in two key ways. First, they are intended to detach the performer from some aspect of daily human life and second they are literally believed to produce internal, spiritual heat which literally burns away the particles of karma binding the soul to earthly existence. There are 12 types of taps in Jainism. They are performed at two levels. First, 6 are Bahiya tap, and the second 6 are Abhyantar tap.

Monks and gurus practice tapasya in order to reach moksha, or spiritual liberation. There are three types of tapasya: tapasya of the body, tapasya of the speech, and tapasya of the mind. Tapasya is very closely connected to yoga. Tapasya, which is derived from the Sanskrit root word 'tapa' meaning heat or energy, has roughly been translated as austerities or penances. And a tapasvi, the one who engages in tapasya, has often been called an ascetic.

Fasting is one kind of tap or austerity and it is worth emphasising that fasting within the Jain context does not necessarily involve total denial of food implied by the English gloss of the word tap. Rather Jain fasts encourage the practitioner to think about and work to decrease attachment to the material world by challenging patterns of meals and types of food, thereby focusing on the varied ways in which a human being is attached to earthly existence through food.

But, while fasting you do not drink just regular filtered water, you drink the water after boiling it. The fermenting process kills countless microorganisms. Stricter Jains look out for these tiny lifeforms by only drinking water which has been boiled to stop the microorganisms multiplying.

There are a variation of Fasts, the ayambil fasts, which omit the use of oils, spices and salts together with fruit and vegetables, enact detachment to taste. Ekasana, enjoining the practitioner to eat only once a day, separates the practitioner from the usual three meals a day plus snacks which help to structure daily life. It is only the upavas fasts which prohibit food altogether, and although there are fasts which involve performing upavas for a succession of days, there are equally fasts such as varsitap, whereby one day of upavas is alternated with one day of normal eating for the duration of year.

It is the nature of this identity that is so significant. Religious activity and belief enables people to nurture and build upon their sense of individual selfhood in that the ritualised techniques of separation together with the symbolic meanings held by the ritual objects, to direct their attention to what lies at the very heart of Jainism, namely the journey of the embodied soul or towards eventual liberation. All forms of tapasya or ascetic practice, including fasting, lead to the purity of the soul, (Shudha Atma) and self reflection within the soul (Atma Cintan).