

PARSHVANATH BHAGWAN



On this day, Jains try and do at least one 'mala' reciting:

Magsar Vad Dasam

Janma Kalyanak
"Om Hrim
Shri Parshvanath
Arhate Namah"

Diksha Kalyanak

The event when the Tirthankara gives up all his/her worldly possessions and family relationships and becomes an ascetic. One year before the time of renunciation, a group of celestial angels comes to pay homage to the future Tirthankara. They request him/her to renounce the world and re-establish religious order for the benefit of all living beings. When a Tirthankara renounces the worldly life, he attains the fourth type of the knowledge – Manah paryav Jnana (telepathy).

JANMA KALYANAK

This is the event when the Tirthankara is born. When a Tirthankar is born, Indra Dev (king of Heaven) and other heavenly gods celebrate the birth of a Tirthankara by descending to earth and take the newly born Tirthankara to the summit of Mt. Meru for anointing and bathing ceremony.

Magsar Vad Agiyaras

Diksha Kalyanak
"Om Hrim
Shri Parshvanath
Nathay Namah"



BY KISHOR B SHAH

Parshvanath Bhagwan Pratima
Shikharbandhi Jinalaya
Oshwal Centre

Parshvanath Pratima
at our Ghar Derasar





Parshvanath Bhagwan

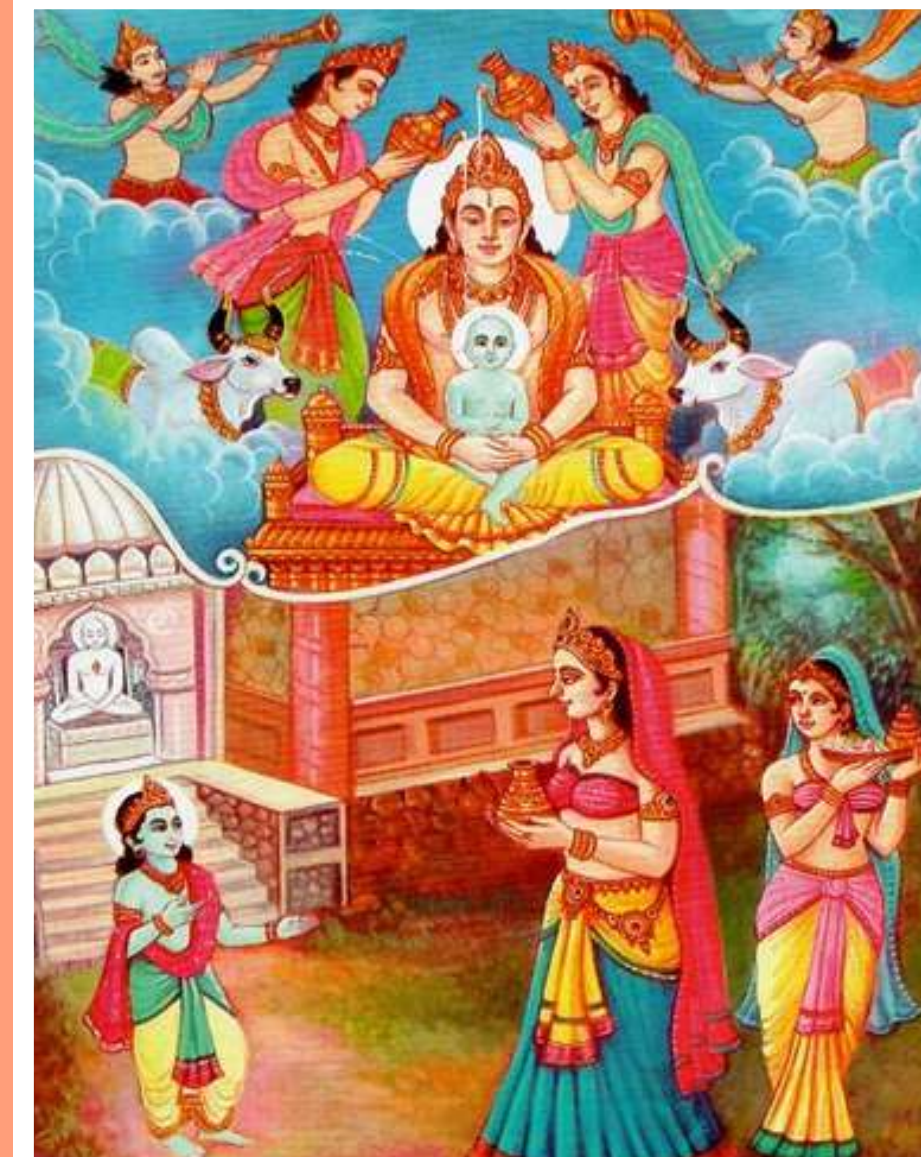
Parshvanath Bhagwan (also known as Parswanath, Parshvantha, Parsava) is the twenty third Tirthankara of the present cycle. Scholars acknowledge that there is some historical evidence of the existence of Parshvanath, mainly in Buddhist literature.

The soul of Parshvanath achieved moksha in only his tenth birth (bhav). Today, amongst Jains, Parshvanath Bhagwan is one of most revered Tirthankaras and has the maximum number of pratimas (idols) and temples constructed, in devotion to him. These temples are located in India and abroad, wherever Jains have settled. One of the reasons for this reverence is due to in one of his

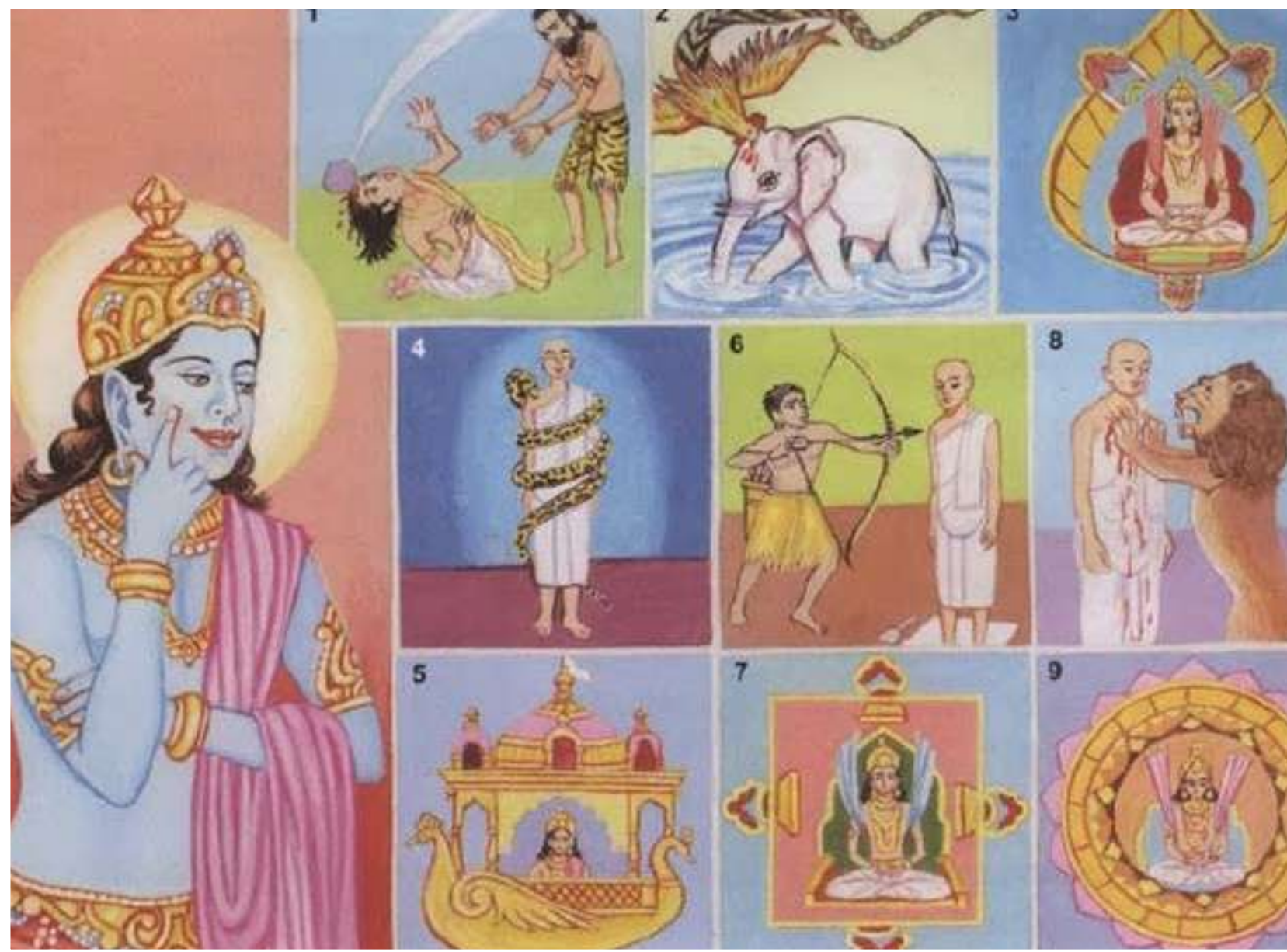
previous births, in tenth devlok (heaven) he attended 500 auspicious occasions of other Tirthankaras and also, visited his mother -Vamadevi - in his last birth. The Acharanga Sutra states parents of Mahavirswami were followers of Parshvanath Bhagwan along with many other people and was popularly known as “purisadaniya” – “beloved of men” – indicating a genial personality.

Jain scriptures start Parshvanath Bhagwan life story from his first birth – in Potanpur, lived two Brahmin brothers from a very knowledgeable and respected family - Marubhuti and Kamath, who were destined to be together as rivals in all their births until the soul that was Marubhuti, eventually achieved Moksha in his tenth birth as Parshvanath Bhagwan. Although, Kamath, in every incarnation continued to harm him, Parshvanath continued to forgive and forget. The one who forgives is truly great. Forgiveness helps the forgiver more than the forgiven, as it makes one pure and pious.

We see the actions of the soul, who eventually becomes a Tirthankara are so pure, good to enable it to keep on progressing towards the path of liberation. Conversely, we see how Kamath’s soul became entangled with anger and hatred and kept on bearing fruits of bad karma.



Previous Births of Bhagwan Parshvanath



SUMMARY OF THE PREVIOUS BIRTHS OF BHAGWAN PARSHVANATH & HIS ADVERSARY

- Birth 1 – Marubhuti | Kamath
- Birth 2 – King Elephant | Kurkut Snake
- Birth 3 – Celestial being in Sahasrar Devlok -Eighth Devlok | Fifth Narak (Hell)
- Birth 4 – Prince Kiranveg | Snake
- Birth 5 – Celestial being in Achyuta heaven – Twelfth Devlok | Sixth Narak
- Birth 6 – King Vajranabh | Bhil named Kurangak
- Birth 7 – Celestial being in Madhyam Graiveyak Devlok | Seventh Narak
- Birth 8 – Chakravarti Suvarnabahu | Lion
- Birth 9 – Celestial being in 10th Devlok | Fourth Narak
- Birth 10 – Bhagwan Parshvanath | Meghmali

BIRTH 1: BROTHERS MARUBHUTI & KAMATH

The soul destined to be Parshvanath Bhagwan was born as a Brahmin named Marubhuti in the city of Potanapur during the reign of the righteous King Aravinda. He had a wise *Rajpurohita* – like our present-day Archbishop responsible for ritual ceremonies for King and state – named Visvabhuti, whose wife Anuddhara bore him two sons Kamath and Marubhuti. In due course, both got married – Kamath's wife was Varuna and Marubhuti's wife was Vasumdhara.

Kamath was the elder brother and evil incarnate, cruel, conceited, indiscipline, irresponsible and a debauch, full of jealousy and hatred for the younger brother. Despite being the younger brother, Marubhuti succeeded his father as the *Rajpurohita*.

Every Tirthankara's life story starts with the birth in which they attained Samyak Darshan –the ability to perceive the truth. It is a journey from ignorance to awakening and ends with enlightenment or self-realisation.



Previous Births of Bhagwan Parshvanath

Kamath was attracted to Vasumdhara, Marubhuti's wife and had an illicit affair with her. When Kamath's wife became aware of the affair, she tried to dissuade him in vain and then informed Marubhuti, who went to a distant village but returned in the guise of a holy beggar (Karpatika) and asked Kamath for shelter. Kamath allocated him a corner of his house, where pretending to sleep, Marubhuti witnessed his brother's misconduct with his own wife.

Marubhuti informed King Aravinda of this illicit affair, who then banishes Kamath, forcibly parading him mockingly through the city riding an ass.

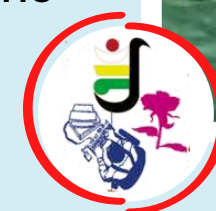
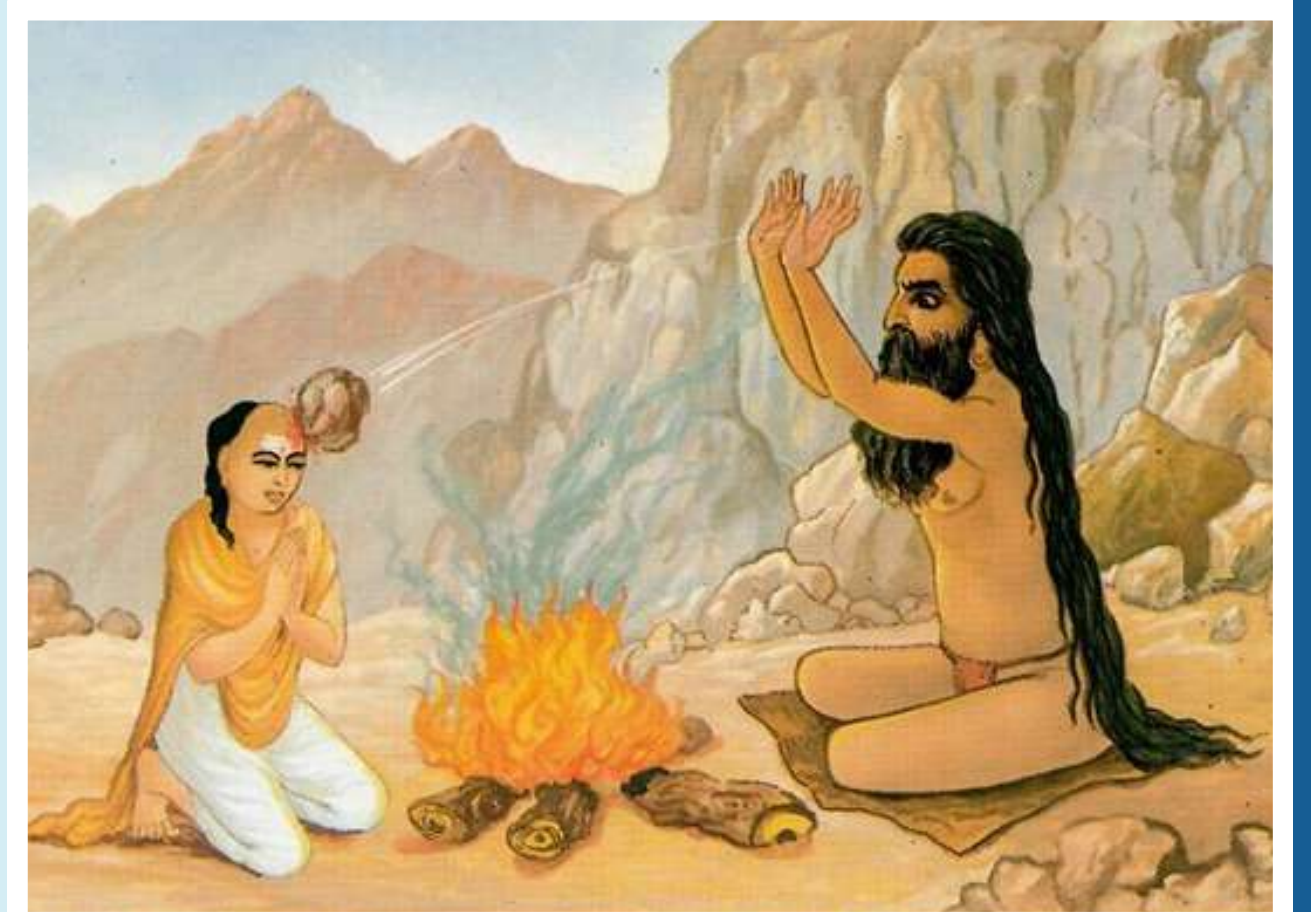
Deprived of honour, wealth and humiliated, Kamath, engaged himself in austere practices in the forest, not in the humble spirit of renunciation, but to acquire demonic powers to enable him take revenge on his brother.

Even though restrained by the King, Marubhuti went to the forest to conciliate Kamath and seek forgiveness for the pain he had caused him. Marubhuti, when bowing in front of his brother, asking for forgiveness, Kamath still very angry over the embarrassment his brother has caused him, hurls a large rock at Marubhuti's head, killing him.

BIRTH 2: KING ELEPHANT | KURKUT SNAKE

Due to the karma occurring from his distressing thoughts – aartdhyan – at the time of his violent death, Marubhuti's soul was reborn as an Elephant King in the forests of Vindhyachal. Kamath, filled with anger, violence, hatred and vengeance was reborn as a venomous snake – Kurkut in the same forest.

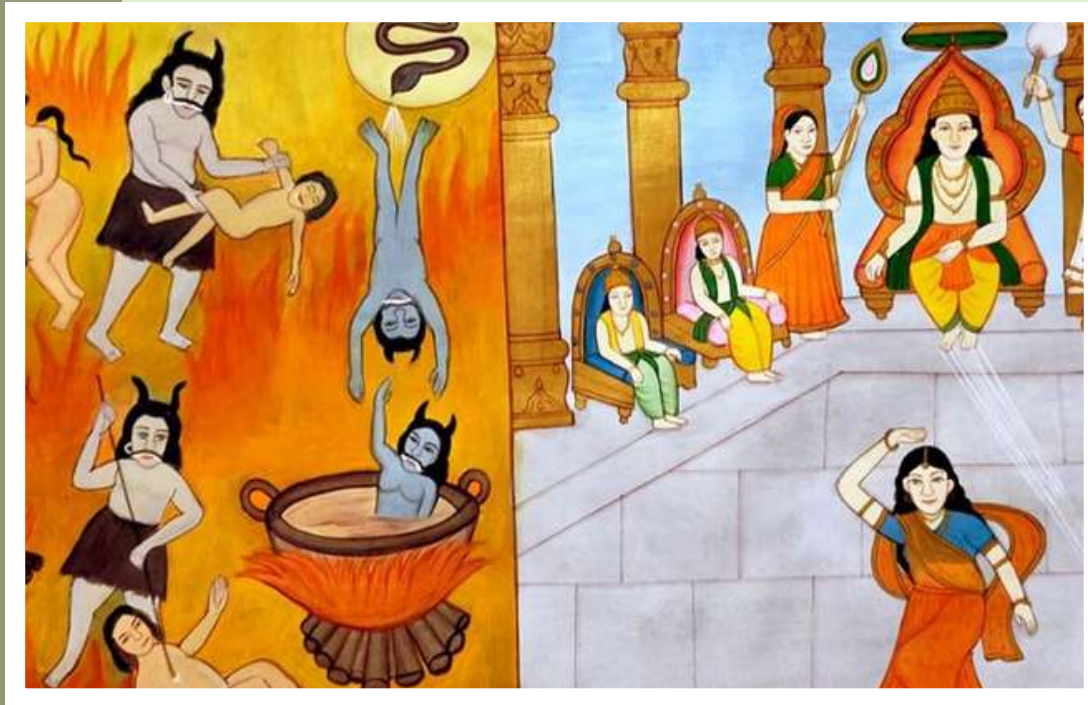
King Aravinda took diksha and became Aravinda Muni, who embarked on a journey in search of the eternal Soul, his real self. On his way to Ashtapad Mountains, with his fellow Munis, stopped in the same forest where the Elephant King resided with his herd. Aravinda Muni, by his knowledge of clairvoyance, realised that the Elephant King was Marubhuti's reincarnation.



Previous Births of Bhagwan Parshvanath

Aravinda Muni connected with the pure soul of the elephant and inspired him to abandon his beastly acts and practice non-violence in thoughts, words and deeds to progress on his spiritual journey. The Elephant King gratefully bowed to Aravinda Muni and resolved to spend the rest of his life practicing non-violence.

One day, desirous of water from a pond, the elephant got stuck in the mud, struggling to come out. Kurkut snake was nearby and remembering the hatred and vengeance he had in his previous birth towards his younger brother bit the elephant many times, injecting all its deadly venom. The elephant remained in equanimity, tolerating the agony with no ill feelings towards the snake, died peacefully and attained Samadhi Maran.



BIRTH 3: CELESTIAL BEING IN SAHASRAR DEVLOK - EIGHTH DEVLOK | FIFTH NARAK (HELL)

Third birth is as a celestial being in the eighth devlok known as Sahasrar Devlok. Although surrounded by abundant pleasures, he continues to practice his spiritual meditations – both dharmadhyana (religious meditation) and shukladhyana (meditation of the pure soul). He acknowledges that his present happiness and comforts are as a result of past punya karma acquired by following the principle of non-violence in his previous birth as the Elephant King.

Kurkut, the venomous snake, who killed many was born next in the fifth narak (hell), where he suffered many hardships and pain.

BIRTH 4: PRINCE KIRANVEG | SNAKE

Fourth birth, after completing a long celestial lifespan, was as Prince Kiranveg in Tilka, a city in Pragvideh located in the East Videh Kshetra of Jambudwip. His parents were King Vidyutgati, the kingdom's ruler and his Queen Kanaktilka.

Kiranveg once attended the discourse of an Acharya Muni, who explained about the impermanence of worldly things and the permanence of the soul and posed the question "You have been born as a human being due to noble virtuous deeds in past births. If you do not use this birth wisely, where will you be in your next birth?". So moved was he by this sermon, that he decided to renounce the world and took diksha.



Previous Births of Bhagwan Parshvanath



The soul of Kamath was reborn again as a snake – though this time as a giant python.

Once Muni Kiranveg was deeply engrossed in his meditation. The python saw him and due to his enmity carried over multiple past births, he became angry and swallowed Muni Kiranveg. Although in terrible pain, he continued with his mediation and died in a state of equanimity. The python was burnt in a forest fire.

K

BIRTH 5: CELESTIAL BEING IN ACHYUTA HEAVEN – TWELFTH DEVLOK | SIXTH NARAK

The soul of Kiranveg was next born as a celestial being in the twelfth devlok known as Achyuta Devlok, where he lived a judicious and religious life amidst the divine glamour of this devlok.

The soul of the python was reborn in the sixth narak (hell) known as Tamaprabha, where he experienced unimaginable sufferings for millions of years without any peace or comfort.

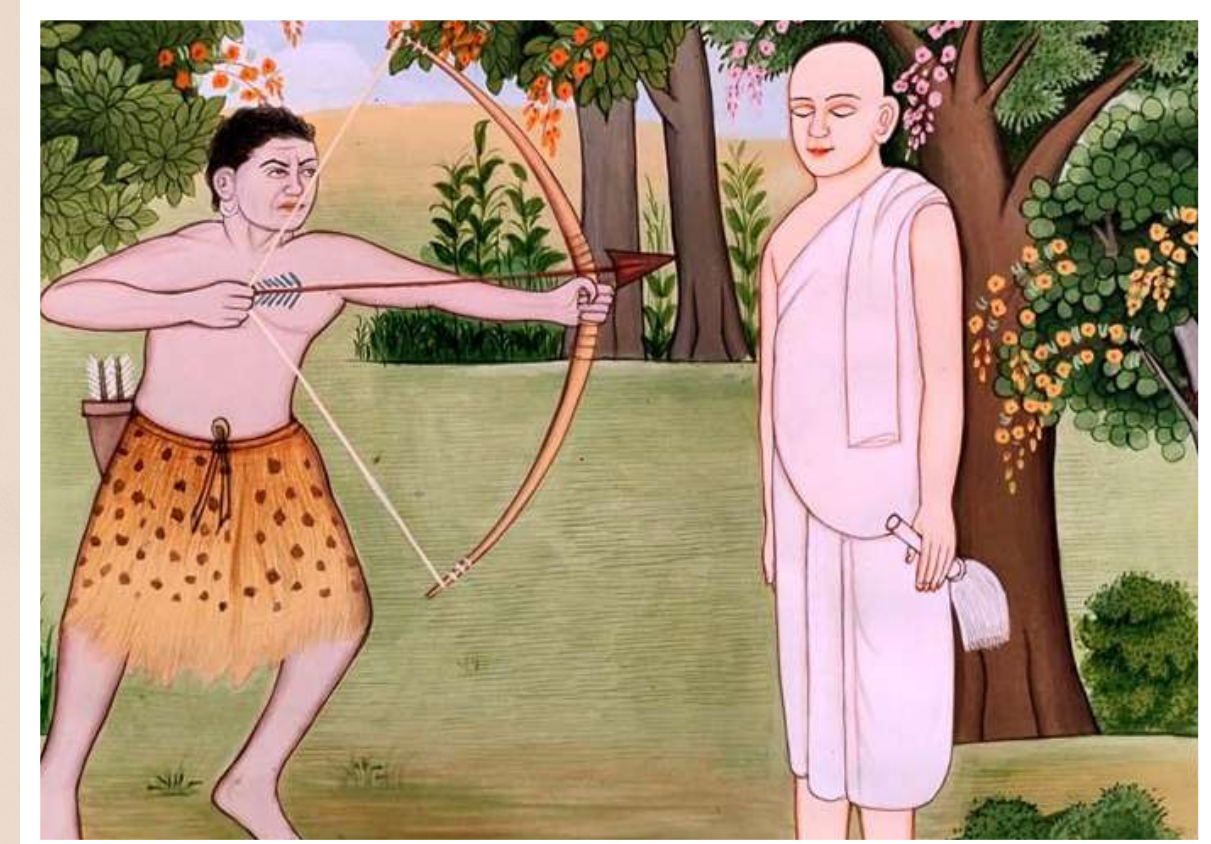
BIRTH 6: KING VAJIRANABH | BHIL NAMED KURANGAK

As Vajranabh, the son of King Vajravirya of Shubhankara city in Mahavideh area. Vajranabh in due course succeeds his father and becomes King. One day after listening to the discourse of the then present Tirthankara Kshemankar, he rejects worldly pleasures and takes up the life of asceticism, observing rigorous penance for many years.

Kamath's soul, after spending an eternity in the sixth narak was reborn as a bhil – a tribal person named Kurangak, who lived in the forest and survived by hunting and killing animals.

One day, Kurangak stumbles upon Muni Vajranabh in deep meditation and recalls his malicious feelings from previous births, shoots Vajranabh, killing him with a single arrow.

Muni Vajranabh remained calm equanimous and forgiving once again at time of death. Kurangak, on the other hand, took pride in his skill as a bowman and in the heinous act of killing the Muni.



BIRTH 7: CELESTIAL BEING IN MADHYAM GRAIVEYAK DEVLOK | SEVENTH NARAK

Seventh birth is a celestial being in the Madhyam Graiveyak Devlok, whilst the Bhil was reborn in the seventh narak(hell).



Previous Births of Bhagwan Parshvanath



BIRTH 8: CHAKRAVARTI SUVARNABAHU | LION

As Suvarnabahu, son of King Kulisabahu and Queen Sudarsana of Puranapura city of East Mahavideh. Suvarnabahu became a Chakravarti ruler after conquering the six continents.

Kamath's soul was reborn as a ferocious lion.

One day when Chakravarti Suvarnabahu went to a Tirthankara's Samavasaran, he remembered all his past lives. He realized that whatever he got was the results of his past noble deeds and if he does not do noble deeds and use this birth wisely, he will have to wander again in the four gatis. So, he would strive for liberation. He took diksha and dedicated his life to doing sadhana.

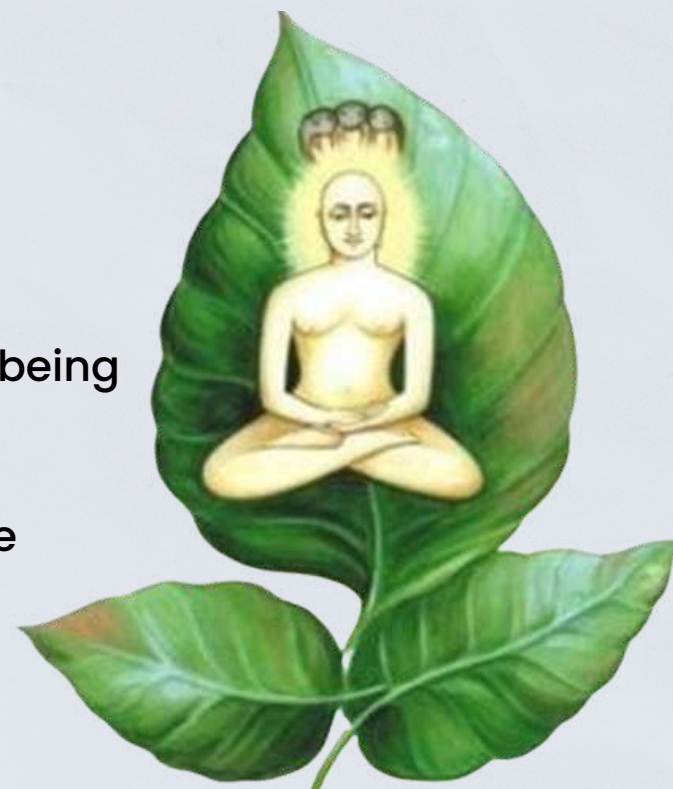
He acquired the Tirthankara nama karma gotra karma by performing 'Vis Sthanak tap (Twenty Sthinks)' and devoting himself to the Arhats.

Kamath's soul reborn as a ferocious lion once saw Suvarnabhanu in deep meditation in the forest. Once again, the anger and disgrace carried forward birth after birth exploded within him. He pounced on Suvarnabhanu and fatally mauled him. Suvarnabhanu tolerated the pain, remained equanimous, had no adverse thoughts for the lion, remained in meditation until his death.

BIRTH 9: CELESTIAL BEING IN 10TH DEVLOK | FOURTH NARAK

Due to his unwavering equanimity during times of affliction, Suvarnabhanu soul was born as a celestial being in the tenth devlok known as Mahaprabha.

The lion – Kamath Soul was again born as a lion in the fourth narak(hell).



Lessons from Past Lives of Bhagwan Parshvanath

- We see that the soul of Bhagwan Parshvanath, was forgiving in every birth, he was peaceful, calm, and progressed towards purity and spiritually in every birth, whereas the soul of Kamath was filled with hatred, anger and revenge and caught up in a sad and vicious cycle.
- In each birth, Kamath projects the ego not to transcend but to guarantee the rigorous practice of revengeful action.
- The one who forgives is truly great and that forgiveness helps the forgiver more than the forgiven, as it makes one pure and pious.
- Our thoughts and actions determine our karmas and gati (journey of soul through the four gati's – Heaven, Human, Animal and Hell). We see the actions of the soul, who eventually becomes a Tirthankara are so pure, good to enable it to keep on progressing towards the path of liberation. Conversely, we see how Kamath's soul became entangled with anger and hatred and kept on bearing fruits of bad karma.
- Never carry forward ill-feeling towards others – always try to nip it at the bud. Enmity etched in the mind harms the individual subsequently for many births.



- Anger and hatred can lead us to more anger and hatred and forgiveness can lead us to peace and glad acceptance.
- In Jainism, anger is linked to karmic bondage – higher the intensity of anger, the stronger the karmic bondage and the more severe consequences on one's future destiny.
- Anger invokes other destructive emotions such as hate, revenge, resentment, and the desire to inflict violence. Anger and other such negativities, continue over lifetimes if they are not ended.
- Hatred and anger span over births unless they are replaced by love, compassion, and forgiveness.
- We must remain equanimous, calm and composed in all situations.
- Despite enormous wealth and power Chakravarti Suvarnabahu realised that noble deeds are a must to attain Moksh.
- Taking diksha is a requisite to achieve liberation.
- Cultivate the habit of forgiving and forgetting – they help us not to build new karmas.
- Never betray or hurt anyone – especially your near and dear ones.





Parshvanath Bhagwan

BIRTH 10 – AS BHAGWAN PARSHVANATH BORN IN THE CITY OF VARANASI, ALSO KNOWN AS BANARAS

Parents – King Ashvasen & Queen Vamadevi. Whilst pregnant, Vamadevi observed a snake -cobra slithering pass her side. As such, the boy, when born was named Parshva, which in Sanskrit means beside. Parshvanath belonged to Nagvansh i.e the Mongoloid people.

Parshvanath symbolic colour is green and his lanchan (symbol) is a snake. Parshvanath Bhagwan is usually shown with a canopy of snake hoods over his head, which highlights his close association with snakes – nāgas and is also easily identified in temples.

Prince Parshva was a bright, well-informed, with a mind of his own and the ability to think for himself. He was well educated and excelled at all subjects. He grew up to be a very handsome man known for his courtesy, bravery, intelligence, and valour. At a very young age, Parshva was a fervent advocate of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, and non-possession. Ahimsa or non-violence was his whole existence.

Many kings were eager to have their daughters marry him, and eventually Prince Parshva was married to Prabhavati, a princess from a neighbouring kingdom. The wedding ceremony was performed with much splendour and Parshva enjoyed a blissful married life with Prabhāvati



Lessons from Parshvanath Bhagwan's Life

The soul of Kamath, after completing his life span in the fourth narak was born as Kamath, the son of a Brahmin named Rora. During his childhood he had lost his parents and was raised as an orphan, living a miserable life. One day observing some rich men, resplendent in their finery, he became disgusted with life. Concluding that the rich owed their opulence to their penances in some previous births, he decided to follow their example, became a mendicant performing various penances and performed rituals called Panchagni (five fires). As a mendicant, he had no material possessions and lived on the charity of others. Many people were impressed by his penance and therefore worshipped him.

Lesson: Happiness comes to those who make others happy. Peace and well-being come to those who contribute to the peace and wellbeing of others. What you sow is what you reap. You will keep on undergoing a miserable life till you change your attitude and replace your hatred by love and forgiveness.

One day prince Parshva was enjoying a view of the town from the balcony of his palace and noticed many people going to the outskirts of the town. On enquiry, his attendants informed him that a mendicant named Kamath was doing a ritual called Panchagni Tap – five fire penance. He immediately realised the violence of living beings involved in the fire.

Lesson: “Ahimsa Paramo Dharma” Parsva concern and care for all lives, even those of animals that might otherwise pose a threat to his own safety, was indicative of his spiritual progress.

Miniature Painting of Parshvanath Kalpasutra Manuscript



Pratima of Shri Parshvanath Bhagwan which is one of the most ancient Jain pratimas in Varanasi installed at Bhelupur Tirth



Lessons from Parshvanath Bhagwan's Life

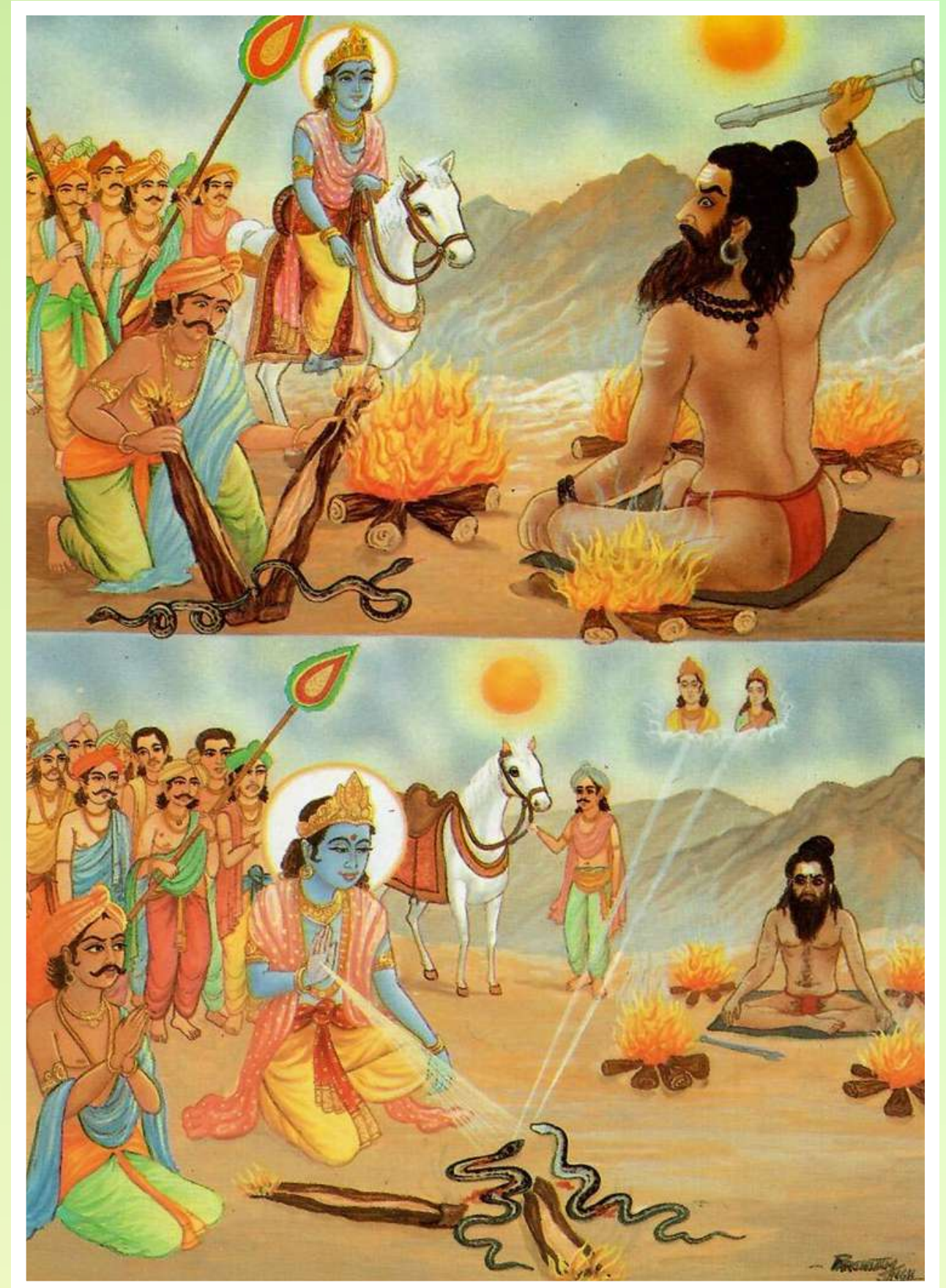
On reaching Kamath, with his avdhi jnana, he could see inside one of the logs were a pair of serpents, writhing in pain due to the intense heat of the burning flames. He asked Kamath to stop the fire, as there were 2 five sense beings being burnt. Kamath was irritated and told the prince that he is young and did not know anything.

Lesson. When someone points out your mistake or disagrees with your opinion, take a moment to find out if they might be right. If you find out, you are wrong simply ask for forgiveness. Arguments will take you nowhere.

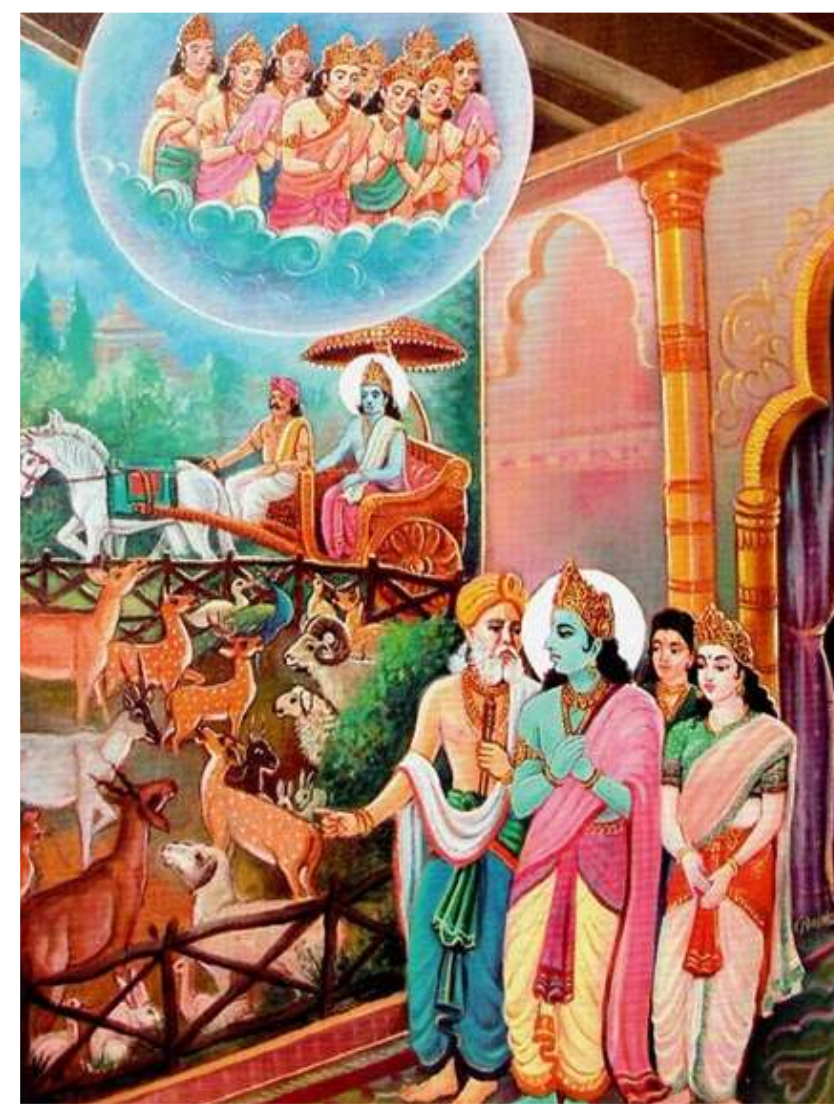
He asked his attendants to remove the specific log and split it. On splitting the log, a pair of serpents, partially scorched, fell on the ground writhing in pain.

Realizing that they were about to die, prince Parshva said to them that they should not be annoyed with the ignorant mendicant and should remain equanimous during the last moments of their lives. He also recited the Namokar Mantra. As a result of equanimous thoughts and hearing the Namokar Mantra, after death the pair were born as the king and queen of the gods of the Nag Kumar clan (Dharanendra and Padmavati)

At this event, instead of feeling remorse or pity for the snake, Kamath was very annoyed by the interference of Parshva. Since he was powerless at that time, Kamath resolved to seek revenge. He began observing an even more severe penance and, at the end of his life, he was reborn in heaven as Meghamali, the god of rain.



Parshvanath Diksha Kalyanak



One day in the spring season, Parshva saw a picture of Neminath – the twenty second Tirthankara – painted on a wall in his palace and was inspired to follow his example and renounce the world, which he did when he was thirty years old.

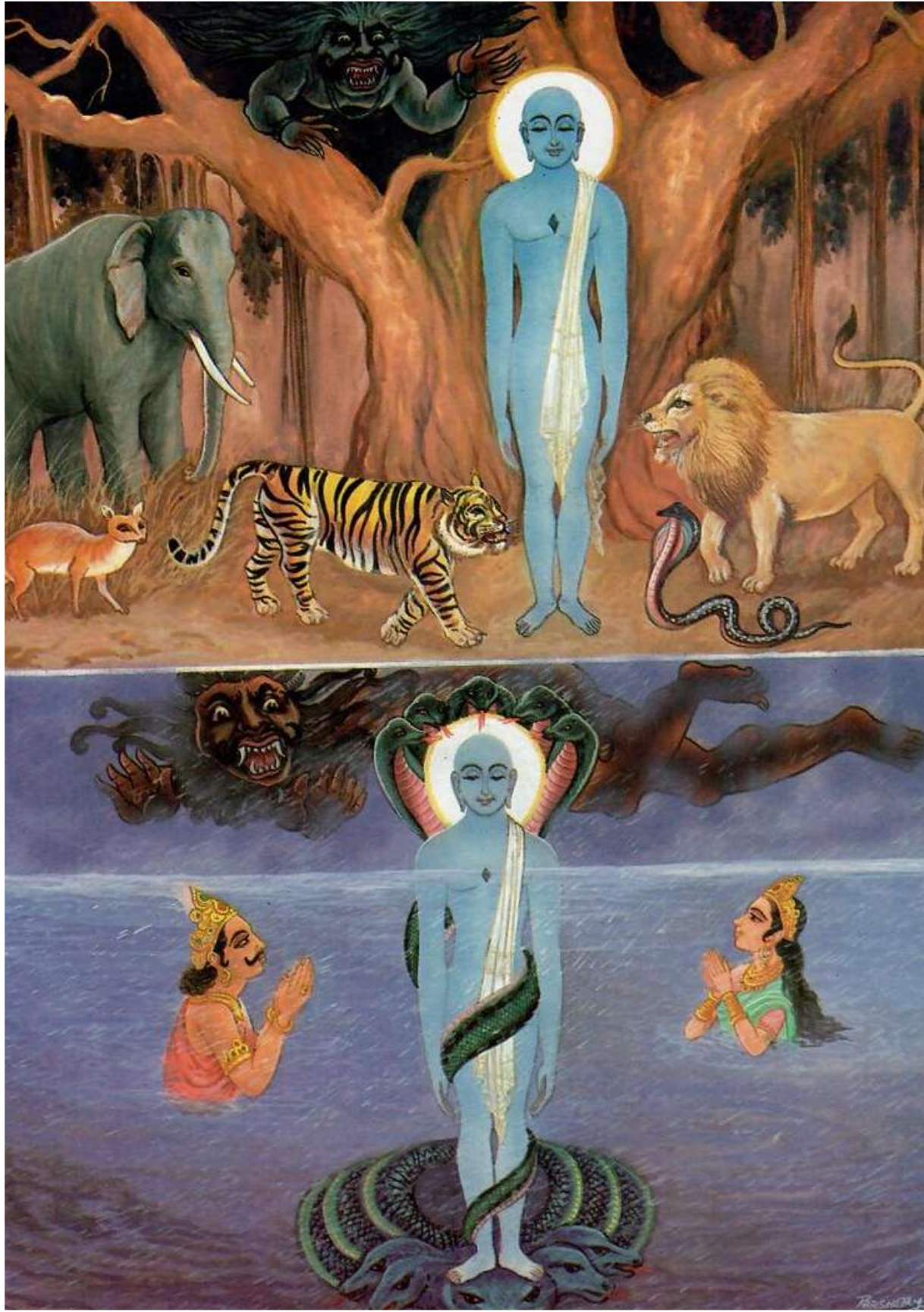
As per Jain scriptures, it is said that for one year, he performed Varshidan – donating 10 million 800 thousand gold coins every day. At the age of 30, after doing attham tap (3 day fast), his procession passing through the city of Varanasi, he reached the garden named Ashrampad and became an ascetic under an Ashoka tree along with three hundred other Kings.

Next day, to break his fast, in a place called Kopakata, a devout shravak named Dhanya offered kheer to Parshvanath. Dev's hailed Dhanya from the sky, saying "aho danam" as per our scriptures.

Lesson. When we offer ascetics something, it might seem as if we are giving something, but actually it is us who is receiving much more in the form of great blessings.

As a ascetic, Parshvanath observed severe penances, including fasting and spent most of his time meditating in search of the ultimate truth.





Final Encounter with Kamath – As Meghamali

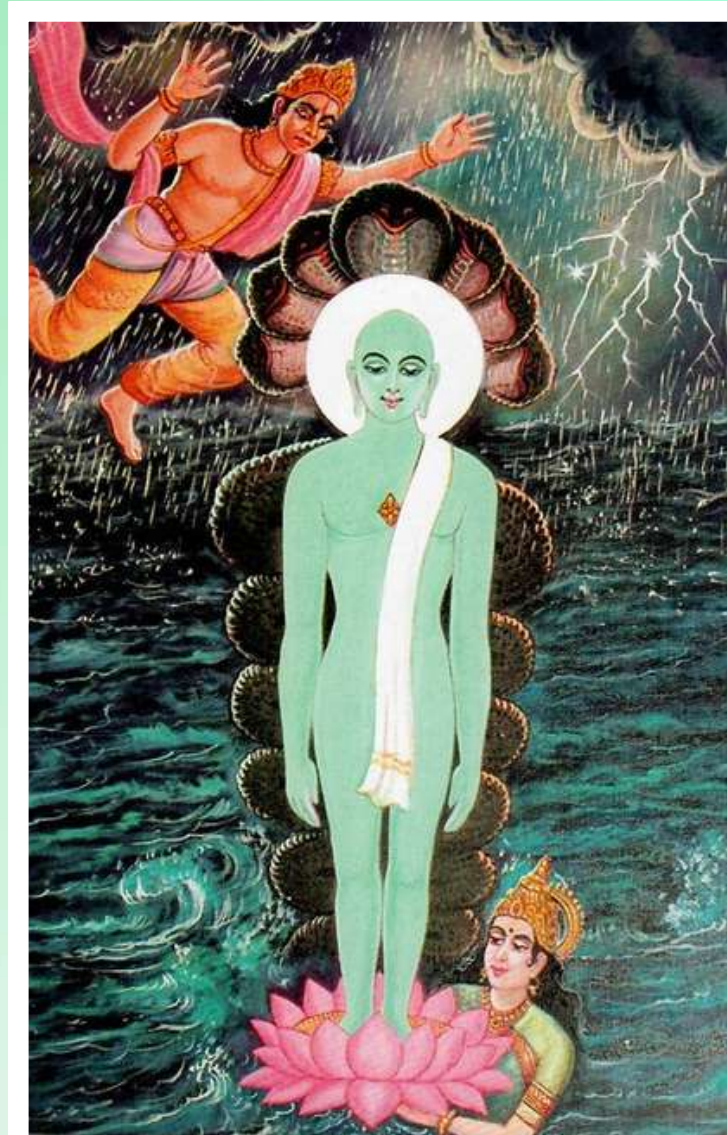
Once Meghamali saw Parshvanath standing in meditation. He came and started upsaarg on Parshvanath as way of revenge for interfering in his fire ritual in his previous life. Using his powers, he summoned fierce animals such as elephants, lions, tigers and snakes to attack Parshvanath, who remained undisturbed and continued with his meditation. Meghamali then started pouring heavy rains and creating thunder, but still Parshvanath remained unperturbed in meditation.

Dharanendra and Padmavati – heavenly God and Goddess realized their benefactor from their previous life was in danger of drowning. They descended and placed a quick growing lotus flower below Parshvanath's feet to make him float and Dharanendra spread his fangs over the head and sides to protect Parshvanath from the pouring rain.

Throughout this incident, Parshvanath remained in deep meditation, developing perfect equanimity. He neither had any animosity or hatred towards Meghmali nor any special affection for Dharanendra and Padmavati for the protection they had extended.

Dharanendra admonished Meghmali, who finally realizing his mistakes, fell at the feet of Parshvanath, sincerely begging for forgiveness for all his evil acts.

Lesson: Parshvanath showed us that one should be detached and impartial regardless of whether a person is our supporter, friend, or enemy. We may not always know and understand the reason why a person behaves in a unexpected way towards us; it may be because of karma from a past life. **Important to remember - How people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours.**



Parshvanath Bhagwan



Lord Parshvanatha
23rd Tirthankara of Jainism

Parshvanath Bhagwan attained Moksha at Samet Shikhar at the age of 100 years and 83750 years after his predecessor, Neminatha Bhagwan.

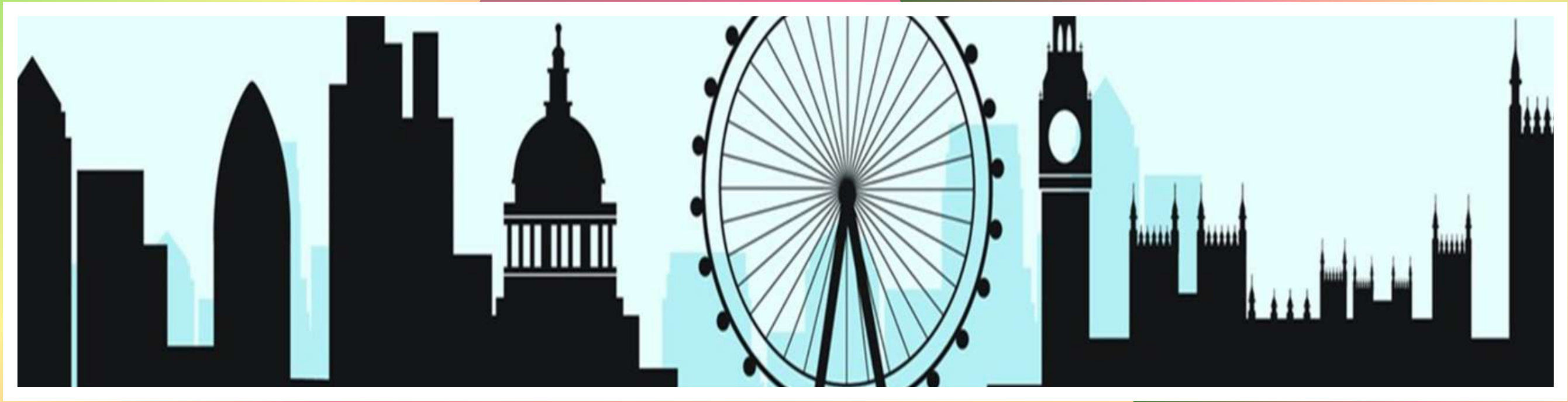
According to the Kalpa Sutra, at the time of his death, Parshvanath Bhagwan had established the Chaturvidh Sangh comprising of 16000 Sadhus, 38000 Sadhvis, 164000 Shravaks and 327000 Shravikas.

According to scholars, Parshvanath established a code of conduct to be followed by those having renounced the world – ascetics – and also by the house-holders – laypeople. He emphasised that penances without any inner development was meaningless. He prescribed the four ways of conduct known as Caturyama comprising of Ahimsa (non-violence), Satya (truth), Asteya (non-stealing) and Aparigraha (non-possession). These four principles together with the addition of the fifth of Brahmacharya by Mahavir Bhagwan have formed the five basic principles of Jainism. From a very young age, Parshvanath was a fervent advocate of these principles, long before he renounced the world.

A K Chatterjee – Jain Scholar has stated that Parshvanath was the “first historical prophet of ancient India to clearly understand the significance of Ahimsa. The concept of non-violence, no doubt to be found in the earlier Upanisadic works and also in Mahabharata, but to Parshvanath, ahimsa meant something more concrete. It was his whole existence. His other teachings – not to like, not to steal and non-possession are course to be found in all schools of thought.”

Parshvanath dispelled ignorance, resisted priest aristocracy, permitted women to take diksha and was opposed to ritual violence. The Aryans as well as the tribal people acclaimed Parshvanath as their spiritual master according to many scholars. Mahavir and Buddha were both heirs to Parshvanath’s legacy, which is still relevant today. During the time of Mahavir and Buddha, there were many sramana ascetics who belonged to sangha established by Parshvanath Bhagwan. They eventually joined sangha established by Mahavir, Buddha or other sramana proponents.





Written, Compiled, Produced, Designed, Graphics
by Kishor Bhimji Shah
Text & Images - Various Sources

If anything is written against the jinajna, or any unforeseen errors, then
by three ways (trividha-trividha) I ask Miccham Dukkadam

