

Mahavirswami Chavan Kalyanak - Ashadh Sud Chhath



Mahavirswami Bhagwan Pratima

Shikharbandhi Jinalaya Oshwal Centre



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

**“Om Hrim Shri Mahavirswami
Parmeshthine Namah”**

KNOW YOUR TIRTHANKARA

Mahavir in Sanskrit means 'great hero'.

Mahavirswami was the last and 24th Tirthankara of the Jain faith of the current time cycle. He was born some 2600 years ago (599BC) in Kuṇḍagrama, Bihar, India and gained liberation in Pavapuri. His parents, King Saddharta and Queen Trishladevi gave him the name of Vardhaman - which means 'ever increasing'. His symbol (Lanchan) is Lion and his symbolic colour is yellow.

At birth, Mahavir possessed mati-jnana (empirical knowledge), sruta-jnana (scriptural knowledge) and avadhi-jnana (clairvoyance knowledge) and during his life, he acquired the remaining two stages of samyag -jnana, namely manah prayaya jnana (mind reading knowledge) and ultimately keval-jnana (supreme wisdom) to attain the status of omniscient.

Mahavir lived a princely life, excelling in physical powers as well as intellectual acumen. Two years after the death of his parents, at the age of 30, Mahavir renounced the pleasures and luxuries of the palace, and the power and prestige of kingship and undertook a life of intense penance for twelve and half years, abandoning all concern for the body, relinquishing all passions, attachments and eradicated karmas through arduous austerities. Of the 24 Tirthankaras, it is said that Mahavir had the most adversities but nevertheless remained steadfast and eradicated each karma with equanimity .





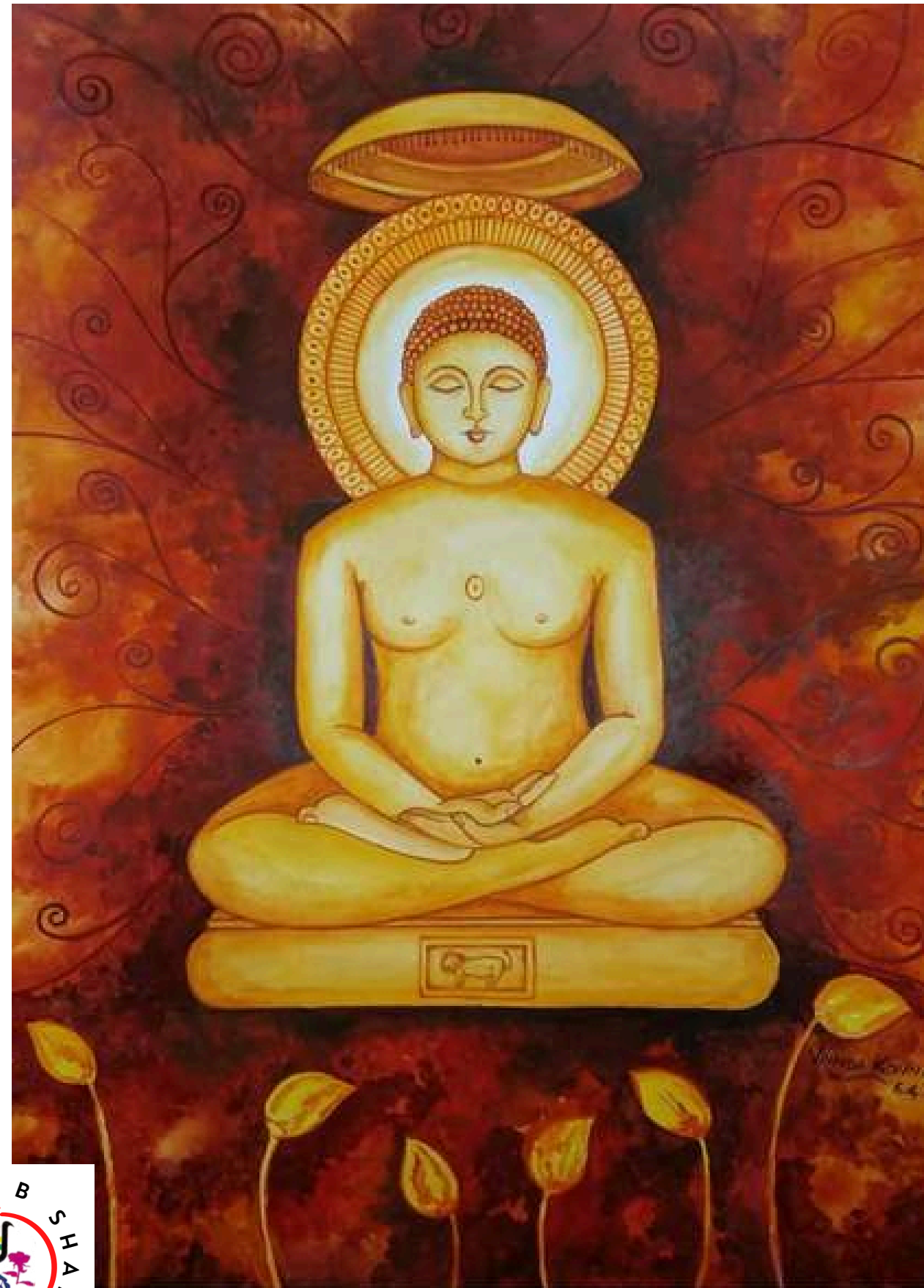
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He calmly bore not only the rigours of nature but also the torments from ignorant and mischievous among his own countrymen.

After twelve years, six months and fifteen days of observing severe asceticism, he attained omniscience – keval-jnana. He spent the next thirty years showing the path of liberation – Moksha – which consists of the three jewels of Jainism – right perception, knowledge and conduct.

In 527BC, when the 4th era of the current time cycle was about to end, and the 5th era was about to begin, Mahavir attained nirvana – moksha at the age of seventy-two.

We must bear in mind that Mahavir is not a mythological entity or a mystical almighty, but a historical figure with astonishing accomplishments. His life and his teachings are very inspirational and more relevant today than ever. We, as Jains should consider ourselves very fortunate to have the opportunity to be guided by his life and teachings.



Mahavir's philosophy comprising of the three A's of Ahimsa, Anekantavada and Aparigraha can provide solutions to many of our modern day problems.

Ahimsa

(Non - Violence)

Respect, Reverence, Compassion, forgiveness in thoughts, words and deeds towards all living beings

Anekantavada

(Multi -faceted Reality)

Respect for and seeking multiple view points. Truth has many facets. Jains encourage dialogue and harmony with other communities and faiths.

Aparigraha

(Non - Possessiveness)

Balancing our needs, desires and possessions while staying detached from these possessions.



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Marichi was the grandson of Bhagwan Rushadhdev and son of Bharat Chakravarti. He became a mendicant follower of his grandfather but strayed away from the principles and practices of Jain asceticism which he found too strenuous to bear. Instead of pulling out his hair, he shaved it; instead of walking barefoot, he wore shoes; and instead of being exposed to the sun, he used an umbrella for protection. He gave up his monkhood and wore orange clothes of a Brahmin. He nevertheless retained his faith in Bhagwan Rushadhdev and the teachings of Jainism.

On one occasion, Bharat Chakravarti asked his father about the destinies of those present in their midst. Bhagwan Rushadhdev advised him that his son, Marichi shall become the 24th and last Tirthankara of the current time cycle.

Bharat Chakravarti bowed down to his son and encircled him thrice giving 'Pardakshina', telling him that " I am not bowing down to your present state of a Varjak – one who observes only partial vows of monkhood but am bowing down to the soul who is going to become the 24th Tirthankara – Vardhaman Mahavir in your 27th bhav, Vasudev in your 18th bhav and Chakravati in your 23rd Bhav as prophesied by Bhagwan Rushadhdev."

Marichi became arrogant and proud of his family lineage – grandfather the first Tirthankara, his father the first Chakravati and himself the last and twenty-fourth Tirthankara. His ego knew no bounds. He became conceited with family pride. As a consequence of this arrogance and pride, the soul of Mahavir had to descend into the womb of Devananda – a brahmin woman.



All souls are eternal, without beginning or end. Since time immemorial, they wander from one birth to another. The soul of Mahavir was also moving in cycles of birth and deaths as it was enslaved by actions born out of illusions and ignorance. Svetambara scriptures give account of Mahavir's twenty-seven previous births.

Chavan (conception) Kalyanak is the event when a Tirthankara's soul is conceived in the mother's womb. Mahavir was actually conceived by a Brahmin couple, mother Devananda and father Rsabhadatta. Mahavir life features a unique episode that takes place before his birth and relates to his third birth as Marichi.

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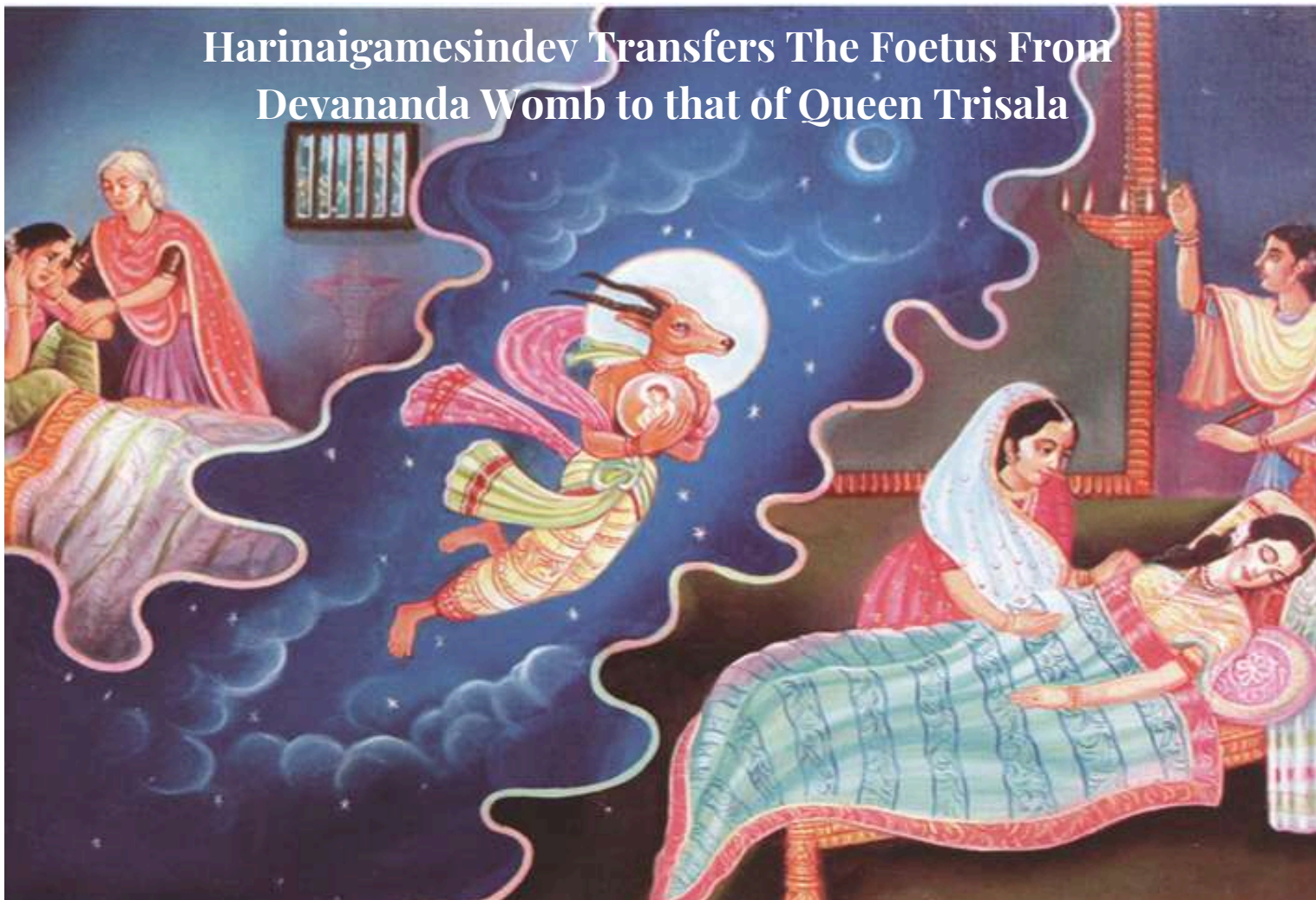
A Jina can only be born of a *kṣatriya* woman. Indra, King of Gods knew this. he called the commander of his foot-soldiers, a goat headed god called Harinaigamesindev and said to him "I have a task for you. A special soul who is destined to teach humanity the path of truth is in the womb of Devananda. Go and transfer the embryo that is to be Mahavir from the womb of Devananda and implant it in the womb of Queen Trisala."

At the behest of Indra, Lord of Gods, Harinaigamesindev with great speed, flies down to the city Brahamakunda and entering the mansion of Rsabhadatta, induced in Devananda a special type of deep sleep, called *avasupini-nidre* through his divine power. This was to ensure that the mother bearing the great soul would experience no pain whatsoever. He then removed the eighty-two days old foetus from the womb of Devananda, and then flies to the palace of King Siddhartha, and entering the bed-chamber of Queen Trisala, removes the female foetus from her womb and plants there the male foetus to be born as Bhagavan Mahavir later.

Mahavir's pride at being born into a high caste family as in his third birth, invariably resulted in being born into a much lower caste family. This event illustrates the theory of karma - of action and reaction. Lesson for us is to understand not to be arrogant or egoistic about our achievements but to be humble and take them as a blessing.



Indra's Order To Harinaigamesindev To Transplant Lord's Foetus



Harinaigamesindev Transfers The Foetus From Devananda Womb to that of Queen Trisala

