

NEMINATH BHAGWAN - KNOW YOUR TIRTHANKARA

Neminath Bhagwan is the twenty-second Tirthankara of the present time cycle. His parents were King Samudravijay and Queen Shivadevi of the Yadav clan, unlike Adinath Bhagwan and twenty-one other Tirthankaras born in the Ikshvaku clan. The twentieth Tirthankara – Munisuvrat was born in the Harivamah clan. Neminath was born in the city of Sauripur. King Samudravijay was the eldest brother of all 10 brothers. His youngest brother was Vasudev, the father of Lord Krishna. Thus, both Lord Krishna and Neminath Bhagwan were first cousins.

Whilst pregnant, Queen Shivadevi had seen 'ristanemi' – 'part of gemstone (rista) wheel'. After his birth, his parents named him as Arishtnem – 'A' was added to avoid any ill-effects. He was also known as Nemi Kumar.

Neminath's symbol (Lanchan) is conch (shankh) and his symbolic colour is said to be blue or black. Jain tradition states that after attaining Samyak Darshan, Neminath's soul took birth nine times to attain Moksha.

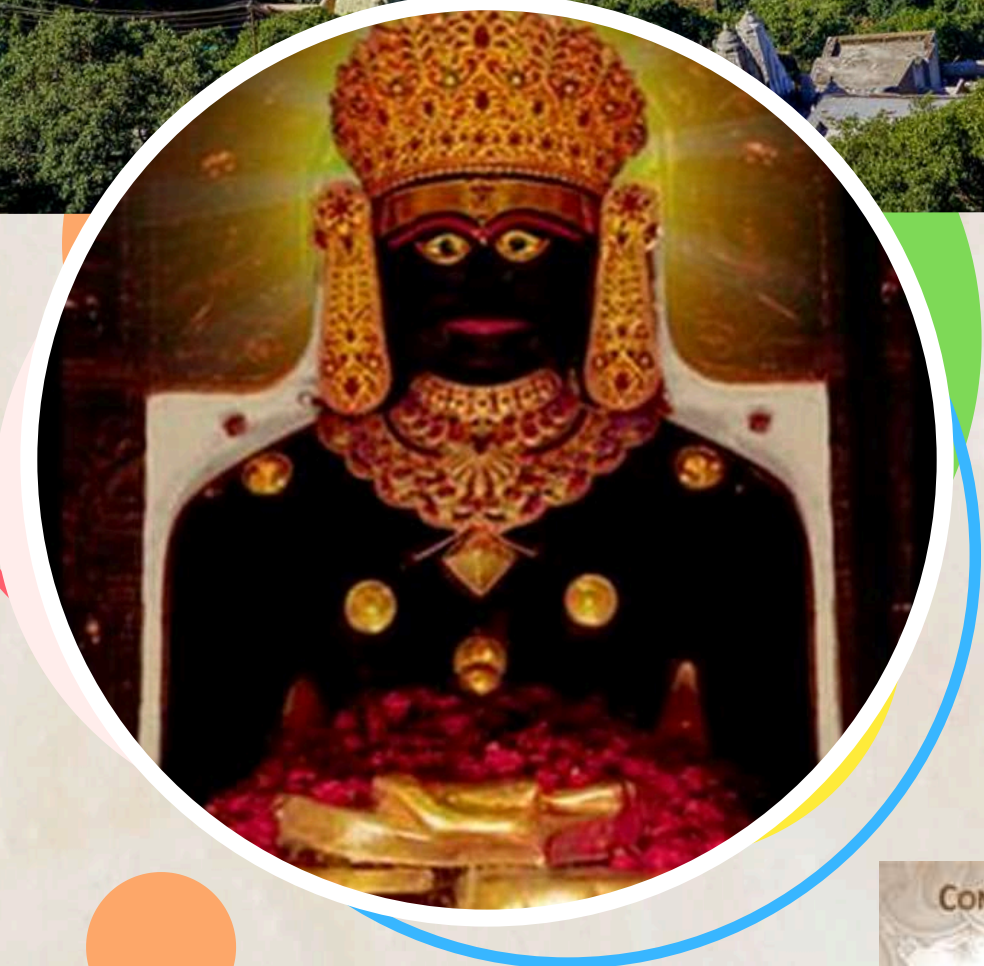
As a young man, after much persuasion, he agreed to be married to Princess Rajimati. Most Jains will be familiar with the story of his wedding procession during which he hears the shrieks of animals penned up, ready to be slaughtered to feed the wedding guests. Shocked and repulsed by this, he feels deep compassion for the lives of the animals and orders them to be released immediately. He states *"as these animals were prisoners in the cages, we all are prisoners in cages of karma which are much stronger than these fences. See the feeling of joy evident in the animals freed. Know that happiness is in freedom, not in bondage. I want to tread the path of breaking this bondage of karma – of birth and death and embrace eternal bliss."* Neminath called off the wedding, sacrificed the pleasures of married life and material life and renounced the world and become a Jain ascetic. So this was compassion, but compassion with personal sacrifice.

This event in the life of Neminath Bhagwan teaches us to do our utmost to avoid harming any living being. From our Pratikraman ritual, we will be familiar that first amongst the 18 sinful acts is the vow of Pranatipat – the killing of any living being. Similarly, the importance of compassion – Karuna Bhav in Jainism is highlighted as a means of salvation from the cycle of birth and death.

After taking diksha, he spend 54 days in deep spiritual meditation, eradicated all his Ghati karmas and attained kevaljnana at Mount Girnar. He had 11 Gandharas, three of which were in his past nine lives, either as friends, brothers or ministers.

He is said to have lived for 1000 years. Took diksha at the age of 300 and therefore spent 70% of his for the salvation of the world. He attained moksha on Mount Girnar.

JAIN TEMPLES OF GIRNAR



Neminath Nirvan Kalyanak

Ashadh Sud Aatham

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

"Om Hrim Shri Neminath Parangatay Namah"

