



NEMINATH BHAGWAN



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

Janma Kalyanak
Shravan Sud Pancham

**"Om Hrim Shri Neminath
Arhate Namah"**

Diksha Kalyanak
Shravan Sud Chhath

**"Om Hrim Shri Neminath
Nathay Namah"**



KNOW YOUR TIRTHANKARA

Neminath Bhagwan is the **twenty-second** Tirthankara of the present time cycle. Neminath's symbol (Lanchan) is conch (shankh) and his symbolic colour is said to be blue or black. Ambika Devi is said to be the dedicated deity (Shasan Devi) of Neminath Bhagwan.

Jain tradition states that after attaining Samyak Darshan, Neminath's soul took birth nine times to attain Moksha. Of these nine births, five were as a human being and four were that of a celestial being. In each of these nine lives, there is an incredible underlying story of the deep affection and love of Rajimati (also known as Rajul, Rajulakumari, Rajamati) for Neminath Bhagwan.

Birth 9: as Neminath Bhagwan, born in the city of Sauripur, Gujarat.
Parents: King Samudravijay and Queen Shivadevi of the Yadav clan. 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 Lord 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 Arishtnemi – 'A' was added to avoid any ill-effects. He was also known as Nemi Kumar.

Neminath, growing up, was completely dispassionate about worldly relations and pleasures.

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

Neminath Diksha Kalyanak Shravan Sud Chhath



ready to be slaughtered to feed the wedding guests. Neminath who was an embodiment of compassion and an ocean of kindness, was shocked and repulsed by this. He ordered for all the animals to be freed 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.

As per Jain Tirthankara tradition, Neminath distributed alms to needy and poor people for an entire year as required to fulfil the responsibility of Samvatsarik Daan. On completion of one year, Neminath seated in a special palanquin, travelled through the main roads of Dwarka and reached Sahasamra forest on the Girnar Mountain. 300 hundred years after his birth, after fasting for two consecutive days (called Choviyaar Chatth), Neminath plucked hair from his head in five rounds using his own fists (known as Panch-mushti Loch) and undertook the sacred vow of Diksha along with a thousand other men. At the very moment he formally became an ascetic, he acquired the fourth type of knowledge manah paryav Jnana (telepathy).

After taking diksha, Neminath lived an ascetic life, strictly observing the five rules of conducts (Samitis) and three rules of avoidance of misconduct (Guptis). He spent 54 days as Chadmashth (i.e. before he got enlightened i.e. attained Keval Gyan) wandering from place to place. Finally, having undertaken a vow of 3 consecutive fasts – Attham tap – standing in kayotsarg dhyana, under the Vaitas tree in the Sahasamra forest, Girnar, he , eradicated all his Ghati karmas and attained kevaljnana.

The topic of his first sermon (deshna) was on Abhakshya (alcohol & non-vegetarian food) Tyag – (to give up). He had 11 Gandharas, three of which were in his past nine lives, either as friends, brothers or ministers.

Princess Rajimati also took diksha and became a Sadhvi, and is said to have attained moksha even before Neminath Bhagwan.

Neminath Bhagwan 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.

The life of Neminath Bhagwan teaches us to do our utmost to avoid harming any living being. Similarly, the importance of compassion – Karuna Bhav is highlighted as a means of salvation from the cycle of birth and death.