



BY KISHOR B SHAH

JAIN TEMPLES OF GIRNAR

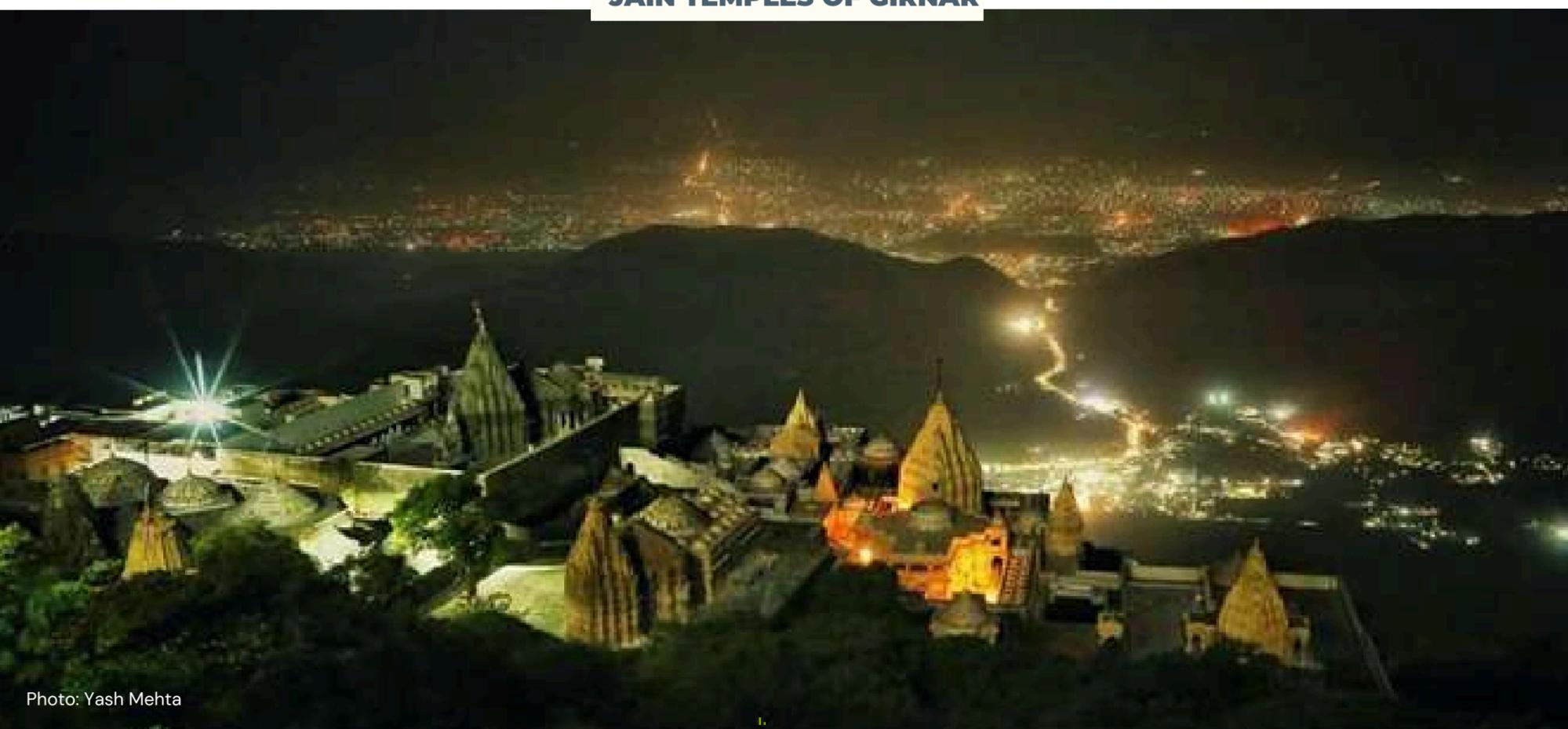
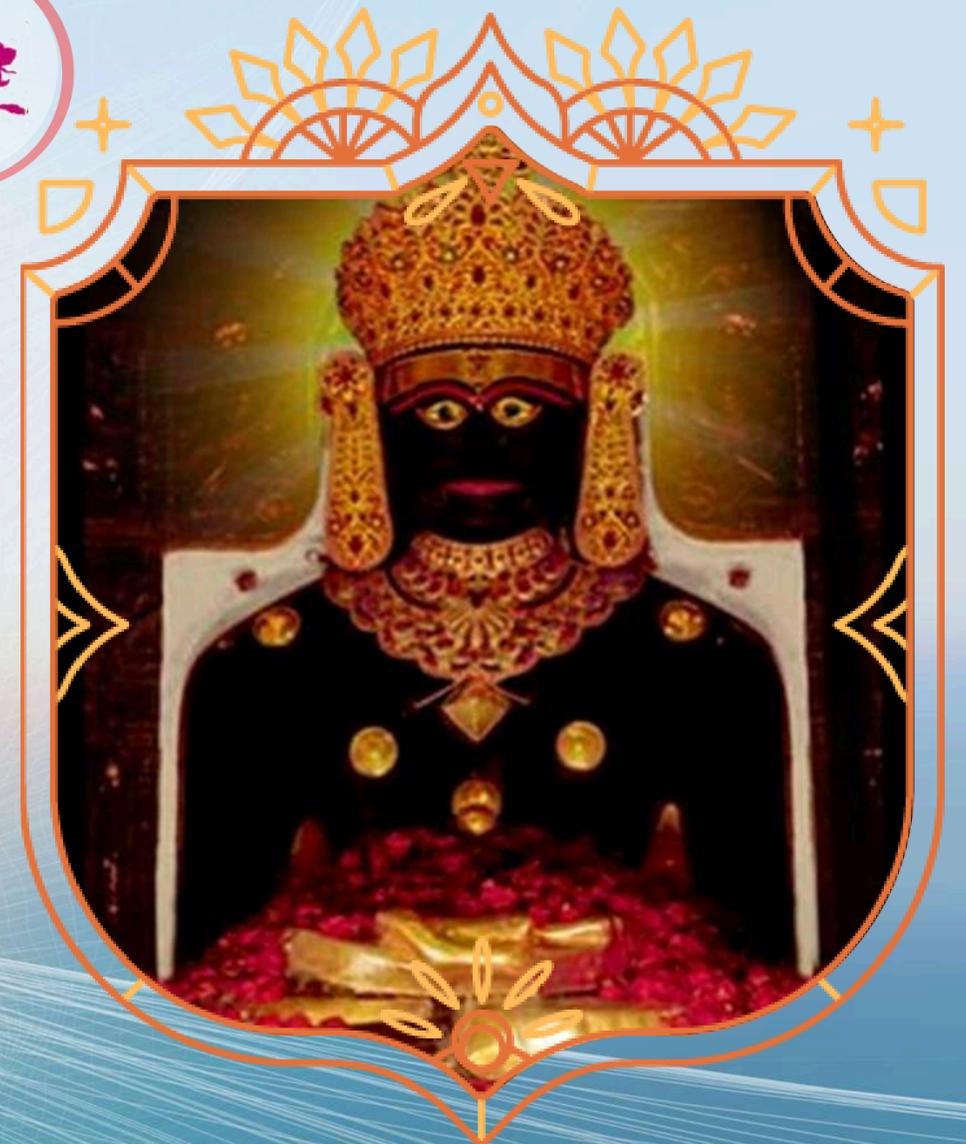


Photo: Yash Mehta



NEMINATH
Kevaljnana Kalyanak
Bhadarvo Vad Amas
On this day, Jains try & do at least one 'mala' reciting:
“Om Hrim Shri Neminath
Sarvagnay Namah”

Neminath Kevaljnana Kalyanak - Bhadarvo Vad Amas



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. Jain tradition states that after attaining Samyak Darshan, Neminath's soul took birth nine times to attain Moksha. 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.

PREVIOUS BIRTHS:

Birth 1: As Prince Dhanpati. When Prince Dhanpati was in the womb, his mother had a dream showing a mango tree planted in nine different places. When she enquired about the significance of this dream, she was told the child in her womb would take births for the next nine lives, each better than the previous one. Prince Dhanpati married Princess Dhanvati

Birth 2,4,6 & 8: As celestial beings.

Birth 3: Vidyadhar Chitragati and Princess Ratnavati

Birth 5: King Aparajit and Queen Pritimati.

Birth 7: King Shankh and Queen Yashomati. Shankh was the eldest son of King Shristen of Hastinapur, and grew up to be an accomplished diplomat and strategist. According to Jain tradition, one day, whilst out, he heard the cry of help of a young princesses abducted by a Vidyadhar(a minor God). Shankh fought and defeated the Vidyadhar and saved Princesses Yashomati. Upon seeing each other, they fell in love and got married. Shankh eventually ascended the throne to become King Shankh.

King Shankh asked a scholarly ascetic, "Why am I so deeply in love with Yashomati that all my desires to renounce come to a naught." The ascetic said, "Your marital ties are many a life-time deep. For last six lives you are being married to each other, this is the seventh birth. That is the reason for such intense and deep feeling of love for each other."



Kevaljnana Kalyanak

The event when the Tirthankara's soul totally eradicates the four defiling kinds of karma known as Ghati Karma by the practice of discipline, penance and meditation and attains Kevaljnana (omniscience/absolute knowledge).

Neminath Kevaljnana Kalyanak - Bhadarvo Vad Amas



The king asked, "When will these ties will be broken?" The ascetic replied "In your ninth incarnation you will be born as Neminath and she as Rajimati. In that birth you will be able to break this tie of love and become twenty second Tirthankar. Rajimati will also follow you on the path of renunciation and get liberated."

With this knowledge, he relinquished his kingdom and became an ascetic. Due to his penances and devotional worship as an ascetic, he acquired the Tirthankara-naam-gotra karma.

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 and most Jains will be familiar with the story of Neminath realising that on the joyous occasion of his marriage innocent animals would be sacrificed to be served as food for the wedding guests. The karuna flowing in his heart could not bear the cries of these helpless animals and he decided to call off his wedding and follow the life of an acetic - *a very striking example of live and let live.*

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.

The topic of his first sermon (deshna) was on Abhakshya (alcohol & non-vegetarian food) Tyag – (to give up). During the time of Neminath Bhagwan, due to his sermons, the idea of eating food without harming other living creatures blossomed among the Jain community i.e. the idea of vegetarianism (the term was not known then) was spread across the Jain community.

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.



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