

Sri Mahavirji

Lord Mahavir was the twenty-fourth and the last Tirthankara of the Jain religion. According to Jain philosophy, all Tirthankaras were born as human beings but they have attained a state of perfection or enlightenment through meditation and self realization. They are the Gods of Jains. Tirthankaras are also known as Arihants or Jinas. Lord Mahavir was born in 599 B.C. as a prince in Bihar, India. At the age of 30, he left his family and royal household, gave up his worldly possessions, including clothing and become a monk. He spent the next twelve years in deep silence and meditation to conquer his desires and feelings. He went without food for long periods. He carefully avoided harming or annoying other living beings including animals, birds, and plants. His spiritual pursuit lasted for twelve years. At the end he realized perfect perception, knowledge, power, and bliss. This realization is known as keval-jnana.



He spent the next thirty years travelling on bare feet around India preaching to the people the eternal truth he realized. He attracted people from all walks of life, rich and poor, kings and commoners, men and women, princes and priests, touchables and untouchables. The ultimate objective of his teaching is how one can attain the total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, and death, and achieve the permanent blissful state of one's self. This is

also known as liberation, nirvana, absolute freedom, or Moksha. He explained that from eternity, every living being (soul) is in bondage of karmic atoms, that are accumulated by its own good or bad deeds. Under the influence of karma, the soul is habituated to seek pleasures in materialistic belongings and possessions. Which are the deep rooted causes of self-centered violent thoughts, deeds, anger, hatred, greed, and such other vices. These result in accumulating more karma.

He preached that right faith (samyak-darshana), right knowledge (samyak-jnana), and right conduct (samyak-charitra) together will help attain the liberation of one's self.

At the heart of right conduct for Jains lie the five great vows:

- * Nonviolence (Ahimsa)
- * Truthfulness (Satya)
- * Non-stealing (Asteya)
- * Chastity (Brahmacharya)
- * Non-possession/Non-attachment (Aparigraha)

At the age of 72 (527 B.C.), Lord Mahavir died and his purified soul left the body and achieved complete liberation. He became a Siddha, a pure consciousness, a liberated soul, living for ever in a state of complete bliss. On the night of his salvation, people celebrated the Festival of Lights (Dipavali) in his honor.

Prayer of Jain religion: Every day Jains bow their heads and say their universal prayer, the Navkar-mantra. All good work and events start with this prayer of salutation and worship.

Namo Arihantanam: - I bow to the enlightened souls

Namo Siddhanam: - I bow to the liberated souls

Namo Ayariyanam: - I bow to religious leaders

Namo Uvajjayanam: - I bow to religious teachers

Namo Loe Savva Sahunam: - I bow to all monks of the world

Eso Panch Namukkaro: - These five salutations are capable of

Savva Pava Panasano: - Destroying all the sins and this is

Mangalancha Savvesin - The first happiness among all forms

Padhamam Havai Mangalam: - Of happiness.