

Lord Mahavir and Jainism

It would be a great pleasure to be celebrating 2606th birthday of our 24th Tirthankar Shri Mahavir Swamiji on April 9, 2006. When we examine Lord Mahavir's life, it is quite interesting to our great surprise, that we can see our own images in his past 27 lives from "Naysaar" to "Vardhaman-Mahavir".

Our tendency to take short cuts, portraying insignificant doubts due to lack of vision or understanding, in many instances, our anger, greed, ego, and deceit taking over the righteous conduct etc., surfaced in previous lives of Mahavir however; he learnt from his omissions and developed a master sense of equanimity towards laws of nature and especially towards laws of karma. He simply won over his inner enemies by gradual but firmest commitment to truth. He followed the path of three jewels of "Samyak Darshan, Samyak Gnaan, and Samyak Charitra", called "Ratna Trayi" to achieve his ultimate and blissful success, salvation.

Lord Mahavir born in 599 BC is recognized as a Tirthankar since like all others, he established a ford or "Tirth" of four-fold order of Sadhu, Sadhvi, Shrivak, and Shrivika. Like all his predecessors, 23 of them, Tirthankar Mahavir brought with him at the time of his birth, some extra ordinary attributes and charisma, which arouses our curiosity to look into his life from his birth to Moksha.

He was named "Vardhaman" at birth by his parents, King Siddharth and Queen Trishaladevi. Extraordinary event of transplantation of 82 days old embryo from Devananda's womb to Trishaladevi's womb marked more amazing and unexplainable feats to come during his lifetime. He was blessed with a very loving family that included wife "Yashoda", daughter "Priyadarshana", brother "Nandivardhan", sister, uncle, and others. His unmatched compassion for his parents held him from renouncement until their demise. Two years after their demise at age 30, he renounced the world in search of the eternal light.

He now was observing extraordinary tolerance for natural sufferings and/or calamities. He ate meagerly on those 349 days in 12+ hours and slept hardly any at all, maintaining total equanimity and oneness with his soul. He destroyed his utmost inner enemies, so called four "Ghati" karmas and achieved omniscience.

Being an omniscient, while practicing and maintaining great vows of Ahimsa, Satya, Acharya, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha etc., with his speech, mind, and body for his remaining last 30 years, at the age of 72, on a Diwali day, he achieved Moksha in 527 BC. The world felt a sudden loss of light, a pathfinder and a torchbearer. Mahavir left a supreme legacy of "non-violence" for a mankind to follow and practice to enjoy its unparalleled benefits physically and spiritually.

- Jai Jindera!