

## LESSON 08

## JAIN GODS (TIRTHANKARAS)

Arihanta Bhagwan, Tirthankara, Jina, Kevali are called Jain Gods. Arihanta means those who have destroyed inner enemies like anger, ego, deception and greed. Tirthankara means those who have reestablished Jain congregation as per the need of that time to cross the ocean of the world. Jina means those who have conquered over desires. Kevali means who knows everything. They are not any special people but rose to this state from one of us. Jains do not believe God as creator or destroyer of universe. Jains believe universe was there and will be there forever. Jain Gods are pure souls who have no desires of any kind. There are twenty-four Tirthankaras during every half time cycle. Jains describe that time rolls along from eternal time and will go on forever.

Jains celebrate five major events in the life of a Tirthankara. They are called Kalyanak (auspicious events). They are:

**1) Conception auspicious event (Chyavana Kalyanak)**

This is the event when the Tirthankara's soul departs from its last life, and is conceived in the mother's womb.

**2) Birth auspicious event (Janma Kalyanak)**

This is the event when the Tirthankara's soul is born.

**3) Renunciation auspicious event (Diksha Kalyanak)**

This is the event when the Tirthankara's soul gives up worldly possessions and becomes a monk/nun. \*

**4) Perfect Knowledge acquiring auspicious event (Kevaljnana Kalyanak)**

This is event when Tirthankara's soul destroys the four ghati karmas completely and attains the Kevaljnana (absolute or total or perfect knowledge). Celestial angels set Samavsaran (Special Stage) for Tirthankaras from where they deliver their first sermon. This is the most important event for the entire Jain order as the Tirthankara reinstates Jain Sangh and preaches the Jain path of purification and liberation.

**5) Liberation auspicious event (Nirvana Kalyanak)**

This event is when a Tirthankaras destroy the remaining four aghati karmas and their life end and the soul instead of being reborn it is liberated from this worldly physical existence and their souls go to Siddhashilla at the upper most part of the universe forever and becomes a Siddha. This is the state of eternal bliss and also called attained salvation.

There are other significant events also in the final life of a Tirthankaras. When a Tirthankara's soul is conceived, his/her mother has fourteen dreams.\*\* A Tirthankara's soul, while even in mother's womb, has three types of knowledge, namely Matijnan, Shrutjnana, and Avadhijnana. One year before the time of renunciation, a group of celestial angels come to pay homage to the future Tirthankara to remind him/her that the time to renounce the world is arriving. As soon as Tirthankara-to-be renounces the worldly life, he/she attains Manahparjvjan, the fourth type of the knowledge, which enables him/her to know peoples thoughts.

\*Digambara sect does not believe that woman can be Tirthankara.

\*\* Digambara tradition believes that mother gets sixteen dreams.

### TWENTY-FOUR TIRTHANKARS

	Name	Father	Mother	Birth Place	Nirvana Place	Symbol
1	Rushabhdev	Nabhi	Marudevi	Vinita	Ashtapad Mount	Bull
2	Ajitnath	Jitshatru	Vijaya	Vinita	Sammetsikhkar	Elephant
3	Sambhavnath	Jitari	Sena	Savathi	Sammetsikhkar	Horse
4	Abhinandan	Samvar	Siddhartha	Vinita	Sammetsikhkar	Monkey
5	Sumatinath	Meghrath	Sumangala	Vinita	Sammetsikhkar	Kraunch-bird
6	Padmaprabh	Shridhar	Susima	Kaushambi	Sammetsikhkar	Lotus
7	Suparshvanath	Pratishtha	Prithvi	Varanasi	Sammetsikhkar	Swastika
8	Chandraprabh	Mahsen	Laxmana	Chandrapuri	Sammetsikhkar	The moon
9	Suvidhinath	Sugriv	Rama	Kakandi	Sammetsikhkar	Crocodile
10	Sheetalnath	Dridhrath	Nanda	Bhaddilpur	Sammetsikhkar	Shrivatsa
11	Shreyansanath	Vishnu	Vishnu	Simhapuri	Sammetsikhkar	Rhinoceros
12	Vasupujya	Vasupujya	Jaya	Champapuri	Champapuri	Buffalo
13	Vimalnath	Kritvarm	Syama	Kampilpur	Sammetsikhkar	Boar
14	Anantnath	Kritvarm	Syama	Vinita	Sammetsikhkar	Falcon
15	Dharmnath	Bhanu	Suvrata	Ratnapuri	Sammetsikhkar	Vajra
16	Shantinath	Vishvasen	Achira	Hastinapur	Sammetsikhkar	Deer
17	Kunthunath	Sur	Shri	Hastinapur	Sammetsikhkar	Goat
18	Arnath	Sudarshan	Devi	Hastinapur	Sammetsikhkar	Nandavrt
19	Mallinath	Kumbh	Prabhavati	Mithila	Sammetsikhkar	Urn
20	Munisuvrat	Sumitra	Padmavati	Rajgriha	Sammetsikhkar	Turtle
21	Naminath	Vijay	Vapra	Mathura	Sammetsikhkar	Blue Lotus
22	Arishtanemi	Samudravijay	Shivadevi	sauripur	Girnar	Conch-Shell
23	Parshvanath	Ashvasen	Vamdevi	Varanasi	Sammetsikhkar	Snake
24	Mahavir	Siddharth	Trishala	Kshatiyakund	Pavapuri	Lion