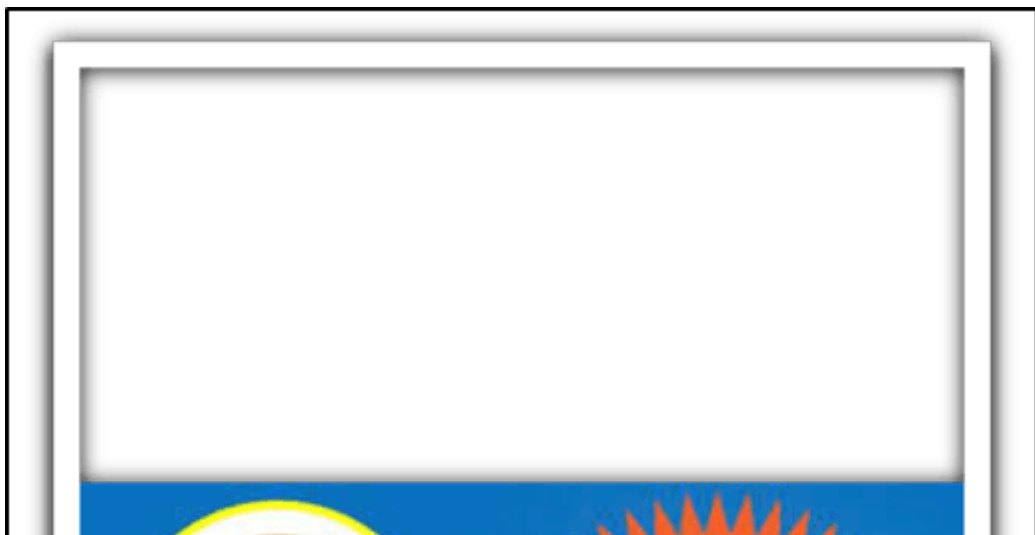


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## Indian Ethics: The Ethical Theory of Jainism, Ahimsa or Non-Violence and Tri-Ratnas

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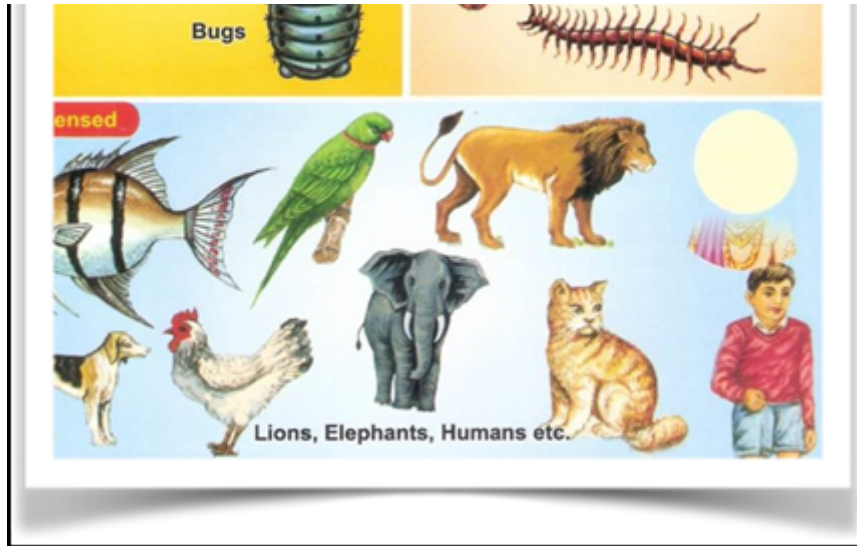
## Indian Ethics: The Ethical Theory of Jainism or Jaina's ethics (Philosophy)

### Ahimsa or Non-Violence

- The significant most part of Jaina's philosophy is their Ethics or their ethical theory.
- The heart of Jaina Ethics is the concept of Ahimsa or Non-violence.
- Mahavira avers, "There are no quality of soul more subtle than non-violence and no virtue of spirit greater than reverence for life."
- Literally, the word ahimsa means not to harm one and others. Here, it is important to note that not just humans but all the living beings, right from the largest mammal to the smallest bacteria comes within the definition of the "others" .
- Therefore, it means being completely harm-less.
- Hence, ahimsa in terms of actions, thoughts, and speech is the central idea of Jaina ethics.
- Jaina's agamas (or scriptures) quote, "Do not injure abuse, oppress, enslave, insult, torment, torture or kill any creature or living being."







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## Tri-Ratnas

- According to Jainism, the bondage of the soul occurs when it is associated with matter or pudgala.
- Or, bondage is due to the union of matter with soul.
- So, in-order to be liberated, it is important to stop the inflow of the karmic particles or karma into the soul.
- This is possible via the three jewels or the tri-ratnas of Jainism.

The three jewels are;

- Right faith
- Right Knowledge
- Right conduct.

Or, also called,

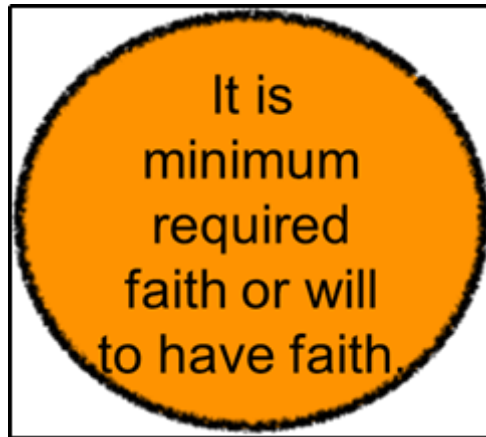
- Samyag Darsana
- Samyag Jnana
- Samyag Caritra.

The three jewels are;

Right faith:

- This is also called samyag-darsana.
- This means to have faith in the teachings of the teachers or the founders of the faith of Jainism (Tirthankaras) .
- This paves the way for right knowledge.

- According to Uma swami, “right faith means possessing the attitude of respect or sraddha towards the truth or the teachings of the founders.”
- It is believed that unless we possess respect or faith in the teachings, the knowledge cannot begin.



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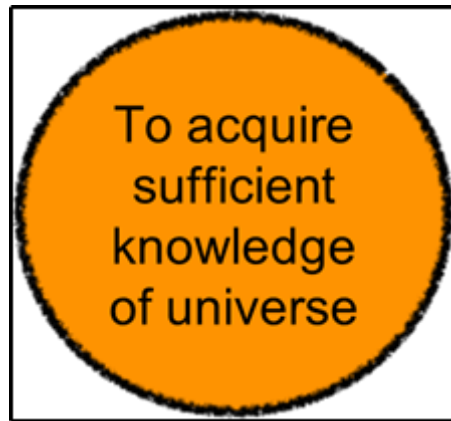
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**Right knowledge:**

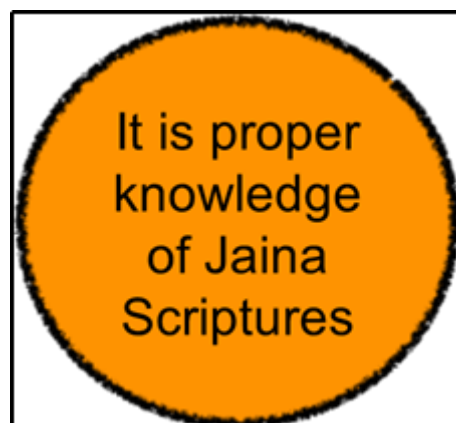
- This is also called samyag-jnana.



- This means the knowledge of reality which can only be obtained by studying carefully the teachings of the tirthankaras who have already attained liberation and are hence fit to lead others out of bondage. But, according to Jainism, knowledge alone is insufficient unless it is put into practice.
- So, we have the third jewel, called right conduct.



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### **Right conduct:**

- This is also called samyag-caritra.
- Right conduct means only the performance of those actions which are right and refraining from the wrong ones.



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## The Seven Right Actions

- The seven right actions which come under the head of, “right conduct” are;
- Take the five great vows or the “Panca-maha-Varta.” They are;
  - **Ahimsa (non-violence)** : Abstinence from injury to all life. Abstinence in the form of thought, action and speech. This is primarily based on the idea that all souls are potentially equal.
  - **Satyam (truth)** : Abstinence from falsehood. This vow deals with speaking not only what is true, but also that which is pleasant and good.
  - **Asteya (non-stealing)** : Abstinence from stealing. This vow is based on the idea of the sanctity of the property. In other words, it means never taking away something which is not given to one.
  - **Brahmaçarya (celibacy)** : Abstinence from self-indulgence. This vow not just focuses on celibacy but also on giving up the desire or the Kama of every form. Hence, one must keep oneself away from all, internal and external forms of self-indulgence.
  - **Aparigraha (non-attachment)** : Abstinence from all forms of attachment. This vow deals with abstaining from all attachment to sense-objects. It includes objects of touch, taste, smell, sight and sound.
- Practice the five Samitis or carefulness in walking, speaking, receiving alms (or eating) , placing objects and disposing. This is to be done keeping in mind that no harm should come to any form of life.

- Practice the three Guptis or controls/restraints of thought, speech and body movements.
- Practice the ten Dharmas or good acts. They are; truthfulness, forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, contentment, self-control, cleanliness, sacrifice, non-attachment, celibacy.
- Meditate on the cardinal truths taught regarding the self and the world. This is called Anuprekshas.
- Pari-samavaya or develop a patient attitude during the time of difficulties and hardships.
- Caritra or conduct oneself in accordance with the spiritual path. For example, spiritual practices, equanimity, purity, remove greed, etc.

## **The Concept of Panca-Maha-Vrata**

- The five “Great Vows,” according to Jainism are for the clergy, the monks, and monkhood.
- They are strict, very rigid, and puritanic in nature and are to be religiously followed.
- They are;
- Ahimsa (non-violence) : Abstinance from injury to all life. Abstinance in the form of thought, action and speech. This is primarily based on the idea that all souls are potentially equal.
- Satyam (truth) : Abstinance from falsehood. This vow deals with speaking not only what is true, but also that which is pleasant and good.
- Asteya (non-stealing) : Abstinance from stealing. This vow is based on the idea of the sanctity of the property. In other words, it means never taking away something which is not given to one.
- Brahmaçarya: Abstinance from self-indulgence. This vow not just focuses on celibacy but also on giving up the desire or the kama of every form. Hence, one must keep oneself away from all, internal and external forms of self-indulgence.
- Aparigraha: Abstinance from all forms of attachment. This vow deals with abstaining from all attachment to sense-objects. It includes objects of touch, taste, smell, sight and sound.

## **The Concept of Panca-Anu-Vratas**

- The five “Small Vows,” according to Jainism, are for the laity.
- So, they are accordingly modified and diluted and are not as rigid, strict as the five big vows for the clergy.

They are;

Panca-Maha-Vratas			Panca-Anu-Vratas	
1.	Ahimsa or Non-Violence	(same)		Ahimsa or Non-Violence
2.	Satyam or Truth	(same)		Satyam or Truth
3.	Asteyam or Non-stealing	(same)		Asteyam or Non-Stealing
4.	Brahmacharya or Celibacy	(change)		Brahmacharya or Chastity
5.	Aparigraha or Non-attachment	(change)		Aparigraha or Contentment

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- **Ahimsa (non-violence)** : Abstinance from injury to all life. Abstinance in the form of thought, action and speech. This is primarily based on the idea that all souls are potentially equal.
- **Satyam (truth)** : Abstinance from falsehood. This vow deals with speaking not only what is true, but also that which is pleasant and good.
- **Asteya (non-stealing)** : Abstinance from stealing. This vow is based on the idea of the sanctity of the property. In other words, it means never taking away something which is not given to one.
- **Brahmaçarya**: Practicing chastity.
- **Aparigraha**: Practicing contentment.

## The Concept of Samvara and Nirjara

- According to Jainism, the bondage of the soul occurs when it is associated with matter or pudgala.
- Or, bondage is the union of matter with soul.
- So, liberation is nothing but complete annihilation, separation or disassociation of matter from the soul.
- This is possible in two ways;
- by stopping the influx of matter into the soul, it is called Samvara,
- by complete elimination or annihilation of matter which is associated with the soul, it is called Nirjara. This state is also called, the state of wearing out karmas.
- When all the particles of matter are exhausted and when there remains no association between matter and soul, the soul shines in its intrinsic nature of “infinite faith, infinite knowledge, infinite bliss and infinite power,” (also called, ananta-catustya) .
- This state is called Moksha or liberation.
- In this state, omniscience or Kevala Jnana is attained and the soul transcends samsara or the cycle of rebirth and heads to siddha-shila, at the top of the world where liberated souls reside.
- Therefore, Jainism is a school of philosophy of ethical teaching which only aims at the perfection of the soul.

#Indian

#Ethics

#Jainism

#Panca Vratas

#Non-violence

#ahimsa

#Anu Vratas

#Samvara

#Nirjara

#liberation

-Manishika

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