



LORD MAHAVIRA

Lord Mahavira (599 BC) is the most recent in the lineage of the 24 Tirthankaras of the present time whose teachings continue to inspire people today. He renounced His royal family life and spent twelve and half years in deep silence and meditation at the end of which, He attained complete enlightenment i.e. Omniscience. For the next thirty years Lord Mahavira preached the eternal truth. The ultimate objective of His teachings was how to attain total freedom from the cycle of birth and death; and achieve the state of eternal bliss - known as Moksh. A contemporary of Gautama Buddha, Lord Mahavira epitomised the highest form of virtue and human perfection.

RELEVANCE IN MODERN TIMES

In this day and age, where suspicion and distrust are vitiating the atmosphere of international peace and brotherhood, where the world is filled with fear and hatred, the tenets of Jainism are like the oasis in the desert, an answer to a desperate need. It is a perfect blend of philosophy and practicality, an ethical system par excellence. Jainism is a way of life, proficient enough to elevate an ordinary individual to the greatest height of spiritual realisation. It bears the message of love and respect, non-violence and peace – both internal and external, personal and universal.



LANDMARK CHARITY WALK

Inspired by the foundation, insight and postulates of Jainism, the LOVE OF FAITH Charity Walk is based on the timeless teachings of Lord Mahavira and comes with the potent and transformative message of non-violence, peace, tolerance and love.

Encompassing visits to places of worship of some of the world's great faiths and culminating at Westminster Abbey in Central London, this landmark Charity Walk highlights the Jain community's commitment to developing good inter faith relations, spreading the universal message of harmony while raising funds to help those in need and to service.

An initiative of Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) and supported by a number of Jain organisations, the LOVE OF FAITH Charity Walk will be the largest offering by the UK Jain community to 'A Year of Service' to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen.



Shrimad Rajchandra Mission
Dharampur (UK)

www.loveoffaith.org
www.shrimadrajchandramission.org



JAINISM

Jainism is a living faith, a dynamic religion which exemplifies the highest and noblest values, moral upliftment and spiritual elevation, leading to eternal peace and infinite bliss.

Jainism is a significant and prominent religion of India, as Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism. Despite the comparatively small number of its declared adherents, Jainism has creditably retained this important position. It has been doubtlessly established that Jainism is a distinct religion, not an offshoot of Hinduism or Buddhism. No account of important religions of the world or a comparative study of religions is complete without the mention of Jainism.

One of the oldest and greatest religions of the world, Jainism has been in existence since time immemorial. Ample literary and archaeological evidence shoulders the historical authenticity of Jainism. Its independent existence and greater antiquity, not only in relation to Buddhism, but even Brahmanism, have become admitted facts.



FUNDAMENTAL TENETS

Ahimsa (Non-violence): The principle of Ahimsa is the backbone and focal point of Jainism, which aims at the welfare of all living beings, not only humans. Thus, Jainism is a religion of compassion, universal love and amity.

Anekantvada (Non-absolutism): Anekantvada teaches the realisation of truth in its varied aspects, inducing one to respect and accept a wide range of viewpoints in a spirit of cooperation. The principle of non-absolutism is, thus, a valuable contribution of Jainism to the world of philosophy.

Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness): The attitude of Aparigraha begets equanimity, whereas attachment to worldly objects results in bondage. Therefore, one desirous of spiritual liberation should withdraw from all attachments to material things and practise non-possessiveness.

If one observes these three tenets in their true spirit, peace and harmony can be attained not only within, but also without – in the world.



THE PATH OF LIBERATION

Jainism believes the soul to be an independent, powerful substance that can liberate itself from the fetters of karma.

This goal can be attained by adopting the right path of moksh (liberation), connoted by the cultivation, development and unification of the three spiritual jewels, namely:

Samyak Darshan (Right Faith): It is the faith in the true nature of the substances as they are. Having right belief of God, Guru and Religion is samyak darshan.

Samyak Jnan (Right Knowledge): It is that knowledge which reveals the nature of things neither insufficiently, nor with exaggeration, nor falsely; but exactly as they are and with certainty.

Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct): It is to free oneself from raag (attachment), and dwesh (aversion), from all the impure activities of thoughts, words and deeds and attain vitragta (the state of perfect equanimity).



FIVE GREAT VOWS

At the heart of right-conduct, lie the five great vows:

Ahimsa (Non-violence): To abstain from causing harm to any living being.

Satya (Truthfulness): To speak only the innocuous truth.

Achaurya (Non-stealing): To refrain from taking anything without the permission of its owner.

Brahmacharya (Celibacy): Abstinance from sexual indulgence.

Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness): To abstain from having possessions and possessiveness towards anything.

These five vows must be strictly observed by Jain monks and nuns in their entirety. However, partial observance of these vows has also been formally laid down for householders, with seven additional vows. These enable the gradual and smooth progress of the soul on the path of liberation leading to moksh.