

# About Jainism

Jainism is an ancient Indian tradition that believes in non-violence as the highest duty of every individual.

Jain mythology postulates that their way of life has existed since the beginning of mankind and that Mahavira was the last of a line of enlightened teachers called *tirthankaras* who appear in this world from time to time to guide people. According to Jain cosmology there is no creator-god, but each living being has a potentially divine soul.

Historically one of the oldest ascetic traditions in the world, Jainism formally describes an ideal of navigating through life guided by the right vision, the right knowledge and the right conduct.

Jainism has elaborate discourse, from an atomic theory for the universe, to concepts of space, time and motion. Ethics are formalized in different degrees, including the rules of conduct, consumption, food and wealth to the reduction and management of waste. The classifications of knowledge and theories are detailed, and they accommodate multiple perspectives, including a seven-fold gradation of the degree of truth. To address the complex nature of reality, Jainism advocates *anekantavada* or 'the doctrine of non-singularness'.

Many political leaders, from ancient kings to Mahatma Gandhi, have been influenced by the Jain thinkers.

Today one of the richest and most educated religious minorities in India, throughout history Jains have made innumerable contributions to culture, business, art and literature and many other areas of society.

[Anveshan is a project that pursues research-driven documentation of the Jain tradition.](#)