

LESSON 02

JAIN PRINCIPLES

The Jain Principles are taught by Jina (Tirthankara) Bhagwan. The followers of Jina are called Jains. The teaching of Jina is called Jainism. Principles taught in Jainism are called Jain principles. Jainism is one of the oldest religions in India and may be even in the world. Rushabhdev was the first teacher as Tirthankara and the last and 24th Tirthankara was Mahavira in this time cycle. All 24 Tirthankaras taught us what Jainism is about and what Jain principles are. They could do that so perfectly because they had attained Kevaljnan or Omniscience and had no attachment or hatred towards any worldly things and therefore their teaching is unbiased. Omniscience means all-knowing and is also able to see and understand everything completely at all the time.

Mahavira taught us that all living beings have a soul and all souls are equal in nature and have potential to be liberated and live in a state of bliss. Therefore, the soul of a worm, a plant, chicken, fish, pig, cow, dog or a human being like us have same potential to be liberated.

All souls are independent from each other.

All souls until liberated live in the body but they are not body.

The process of liberation starts with adopting right faith, right thoughts and right actions.

The main principle in Jainism is the practice of non-violence (Ahinsa).

Ahinsa means we must never think unkind thoughts, say an unkind word, or do unkind activities.

We should love all living beings whether they are plants, bugs, birds, fish, mammals, or animals, heavenly, infernal or human beings and not hurt them.

We should always tell the truth.

We should not take things that don't belong to us or given to us.

We should control our desires or passions.

We should be satisfied with what we have.

We should share and care.

We should always help others.

We should admire the virtuous.

The earlier twenty-three Tirthankaras also taught the same principles. The Jain principles have been proven correct over thousands and thousands of years. They are time tested and we must follow them carefully.