

JAINISM

A COMPLETE DEEP DIVE

Ahimsa, Anekantavada, Aparigraha — The Most Radical Ethics in Human History

Ahimsa: Non-violence toward every living being including microorganisms.

Anekantavada: No single perspective captures the whole of reality — the most sophisticated philosophical principle in any tradition anywhere.

Aparigraha: Non-possession — the radical liberation from wanting.

The Tirthankaras who walked to liberation before us, leaving the path marked.

Micchami Dukkadam: May all the evil I have done be undone.

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Introduction

Jainism is among the oldest living religious traditions in the world — an independent Indian tradition with roots that predate the historical Mahavira (6th century BCE), contemporaneous with early Buddhism and the Vedic tradition in the same cultural milieu but completely distinct from both. Its foundational insights represent the most radical, most consistent, and most philosophically sophisticated application of the ethical recognition of the sanctity of life available in any tradition anywhere.

The three foundational Jain principles — Ahimsa (non-violence toward every living being), Anekantavada (no single perspective captures the whole of reality), and Aparigraha (non-possession as liberation from wanting) — are not merely ethical recommendations. They are the practical applications of the most complete ancient account of the nature of consciousness, karma, and liberation that any tradition has produced. This guide covers all of it: the metaphysics, the cosmology, the karma theory, the philosophical logic of Anekantavada, the specific practices of the monks and laypersons, the sacred texts, and the tradition's extraordinary influence on the wider world through Gandhi and the global nonviolent resistance tradition.

Jain Origins and History

Jainism's origins extend further back than the historical Mahavira. The tradition holds that in each cosmic half-cycle (avasarpini — the descending half, in which we currently live), 24 Tirthankaras (ford-makers, those who create a crossing point from the cycle of rebirth to liberation) appear and teach the eternal path. Rishabhanatha, the first Tirthankara of the current cycle, is placed at the very beginning of the current cosmic era — an era so vast that its scale is measured in epochs rather than centuries.

The Historical Record

The 23rd Tirthankara, Parshvanatha (approximately 872-772 BCE), is the earliest Tirthankara for whom there is possible archaeological and textual evidence. He is credited with establishing the four major vows (Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Aparigraha) — Mahavira added the fifth (Brahmacharya) and systematized the teaching. The existence of Parshvanatha as a pre-Mahavira Jain teacher is acknowledged by Buddhist texts, making Jainism one of the few traditions that has pre-founder documentation from an independent source.

JAINISM VS HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM — THE KEY DIFFERENCES

INDEPENDENT TRADITION: Jainism is not a reform movement within Hinduism (as sometimes incorrectly characterized) — it has its own cosmology, its own understanding of the soul, its own karma theory, and its own path to liberation that are structurally different from both Hindu and Buddhist frameworks. **VS HINDUISM:** Jainism rejects the authority of the Vedas, the caste system, and the existence of a creator God. The Jain universe is eternal and uncreated — there is no Brahma, no Vishnu, no Shiva as cosmic governors. The liberated souls (Siddhas) are not God; they are beyond all relationship with the material universe. **VS BUDDHISM:** Both traditions emphasize non-violence and the unreality of a permanent self — but Jainism, unlike Buddhism, holds that the soul (jiva) IS real and IS permanent (in its liberated state). The Jain path is more ascetic than most Buddhist paths; the tradition of sky-clad monasticism (Digambara) has no Buddhist parallel. **THE SHARED MILIEU:** Jainism, Buddhism, and the Upanishadic tradition all emerged from the same 6th-century BCE Indian intellectual ferment — the period when Indian thought challenged the dominant Vedic ritualism with more interior, more ethical, and more experiential approaches to the sacred.

Jain Metaphysics: The Nature of Reality

Jain metaphysics is among the most complete and most rigorously consistent in any philosophical tradition. Unlike traditions that leave fundamental metaphysical questions vague or mysterious, Jainism provides precise, detailed, internally consistent accounts of the nature of souls, matter, space, time, and the principles that govern their interactions.

THE SIX DRAVYAS (FUNDAMENTAL SUBSTANCES)

Jain metaphysics identifies six fundamental substances (dravyas) that constitute the whole of reality: JIVA (Soul/Consciousness): The living principle — individual, eternal, self-luminous consciousness. Each jiva is unique, uncreated, and in its pure state omniscient and infinitely capable. PUDGALA (Matter): The non-conscious physical substance — composed of atoms, capable of forming complex structures, the material through which karma operates on the soul. AKASHA (Space): The medium in which all other substances exist. KALA (Time): The serial process of change — Jain cosmology has an elaborate account of time as both infinite and cyclically structured. DHARMA (Medium of Motion): Not the ethical principle but a specific metaphysical substance — the medium that enables movement. Without the dharma dravya, nothing could move. ADHARMA (Medium of Rest): The complementary substance — the medium that enables rest. Without adharma dravya, nothing could stop. THE SIGNIFICANCE: The dharma/adharma dravyas are unique to Jain metaphysics — no other tradition has proposed specific metaphysical substances to explain the conditions of movement and rest. This specificity and completeness is characteristic of the Jain metaphysical project.

The Jiva and the Ajiva

Soul and Non-Soul — The Fundamental Division

The most fundamental distinction in Jain metaphysics is between jiva (soul, the living, the conscious) and ajiva (non-soul, the non-living, the non-conscious). Every possible entity in the universe falls into one of these two categories — nothing is both and nothing is neither.

THE JIVA — JAIN SOUL THEORY

INFINITE NUMBER: The universe contains an infinite number of individual jivas — each one unique, each one eternal, each one in the process of working out its own liberation. **INHERENT QUALITIES:** Every jiva, in its pure unobstructed state, possesses four infinite qualities: infinite knowledge (ananta jnana), infinite perception (ananta darshana), infinite bliss (ananta sukha), and infinite power (ananta virya). **KARMA OBSCURATION:** These infinite qualities are obscured in all non-liberated jivas by the accumulation of karma — the specific karmic matter (karma pudgala) that adheres to the soul through its actions and determines its specific capacities in each life. **THE EQUALITY OF ALL JIVAS:** Every jiva — from the soul of a microorganism to the soul of a human being to the souls of the Tirthankaras — is fundamentally equal in its intrinsic nature. The differences between beings are the differences in their karmic accumulation, not in their essential nature. This is the metaphysical foundation of Jain ahimsa: every living being carries a divine soul equal in its intrinsic nature to every other. **SAMSARA AND MOKSHA:** The jiva's journey is through samsara (the cycle of birth and death across different bodies — plant, insect, animal, human, divine) until the complete elimination of karma makes moksha (liberation) possible. In moksha, the jiva rises to the top of the universe (the Siddha Loka) and remains there in infinite bliss and omniscience, never returning to the cycle.

Karma in Jain Understanding

The Most Complete Karma Theory

The Jain theory of karma is the most detailed and most mechanically precise karma theory in any tradition — specifying eight types of karma, each with specific functions, specific durations, and specific conditions for their exhaustion. Unlike Hindu karma (often understood as a general moral accounting system) or Buddhist karma (more focused on intention as the determinative factor), Jain karma is treated as a specific category of subtle physical matter that literally adheres to the soul.

THE EIGHT TYPES OF KARMA

GHATIYA KARMA (Destructive Karma — directly destroys the soul's inherent qualities): 1. JNANAVARANIYA KARMA: Knowledge-obscuring karma — obscures the soul's inherent omniscience. The greater the knowledge-obscuring karma, the less knowledge the being has. 2. DARSHANAVARNIYA KARMA: Perception-obscuring karma — obscures the soul's inherent infinite perception. 3. MOHANIYA KARMA: Delusion-producing karma — the most important and most dangerous type. Mohaniya karma produces delusion about the nature of the soul and about what constitutes right conduct. It is the root of all the other karmas' accumulation. 4. ANTARAYA KARMA: Obstruction karma — creates obstacles to the exercise of the soul's inherent infinite power, particularly to giving, receiving, and enjoyment. AGHATIYA KARMA (Non-Destructive Karma — does not directly destroy soul qualities but determines the conditions of embodied existence): 5. NAMA KARMA: Body-determining karma — determines the specific form, body type, and physical characteristics of the next birth. 6. GOTRA KARMA: Status-determining karma — determines the social and family status of the birth. 7. AYUSHYA KARMA: Lifespan karma — determines the duration of the next life. 8. VEDNIYA KARMA: Feeling-producing karma — determines the types of pleasure and pain experienced in the life.

Ahimsa

The Foundational Cosmological Principle

Ahimsa (non-violence, non-harm, harmlessness) is the foundational principle of Jainism — and in the Jain tradition, it is not merely an ethical recommendation or a social contract. It is the direct practical application of the Jain metaphysical recognition that every living being is a soul (jiva) equal in its intrinsic nature to every other soul, including one's own. Violence toward any being is therefore simultaneously a moral wrong (it harms a being that is, in its deepest nature, as divine as oneself) and a practical error (it generates karma that delays one's own liberation).

The Scope of Jain Ahimsa

Jain ahimsa is the most extensive in scope of any tradition. It extends to: every human being (the most obviously covered), every animal (including insects), every plant (plants are one-sensed beings — they feel), every micro-organism (water contains living beings; air contains living beings; fire destroys living beings), and even beings in other planes of existence (the Jain cosmology's denizens of hell and of the divine realms). No other tradition extends ahimsa as consistently or as completely.

THE FIVE FORMS OF VIOLENCE IN JAIN ETHICS

STHULA HIMSA (Gross Violence): The direct, intentional taking of life — murder, hunting, deliberate destruction of any living being. This is the most obvious form and the easiest to avoid. **SUKSHMA HIMSA (Subtle Violence):** The indirect harm caused by one's lifestyle choices — the farming practices that kill soil organisms, the products made through exploitative labor, the food choices that require the killing of complex animals. The Jain layperson's practice focuses heavily on minimizing sukshma himsa. **MANASA HIMSA (Mental Violence):** Violent thoughts toward any being — hatred, resentment, contempt. The most difficult to eliminate because it is internal and often unconscious. **VACHANA HIMSA (Verbal Violence):** Harsh speech, insult, the use of language to wound. The Jain emphasis on careful, measured, kind speech is rooted in the recognition that verbal violence is genuine violence. **KRIYA HIMSA (Action-Based Violence):** Harm caused through one's work and economic activity — the farmer who plows, the businessman who exploits, the professional whose work causes harm. Jain laypersons are traditionally guided toward occupations that minimize this form.

Anekantavada

The Many-Sidedness of Truth

Anekantavada (literally 'non-one-sidedness' or 'many-sidedness of reality') is Jainism's philosophical doctrine that no single perspective can capture the whole truth about any reality — that every object of knowledge has infinite aspects, that every statement about reality is true only from a specific perspective (naya), and that the most honest and most accurate approach to knowledge involves the simultaneous acknowledgment of multiple valid perspectives rather than the insistence on any single perspective as exclusively true.

The Blind Scholars and the Elephant

The most famous illustration: six blind scholars each touch a different part of an elephant. Each reports their finding: 'It is a wall' (the side), 'a rope' (the tail), 'a tree trunk' (the leg), 'a fan' (the ear), 'a spear' (the tusk), 'a snake' (the trunk). Each is accurate about their specific experience. Each is wrong to claim their experience is the complete truth. The whole elephant is most accurately described by holding all six perspectives simultaneously.

SYADVADA: THE SEVEN PREDICATIONS

Anekantavada is formalized in Syadvada (conditional assertion — 'syat' means 'perhaps' or 'in some respect') — a seven-fold logical system for making accurate statements about reality: 1. SYAD ASTI: In some respect, it is (from one perspective, it exists or has this property) 2. SYAD NASTI: In some respect, it is not (from another perspective, it does not) 3. SYAD ASTI NASTI: In some respect, it both is and is not (from different perspectives simultaneously) 4. SYAD AVAKTAVYA: In some respect, it is indescribable (when both is and is not apply simultaneously, no single predication captures it) 5. SYAD ASTI AVAKTAVYA: In some respect, it is and is indescribable 6. SYAD NASTI AVAKTAVYA: In some respect, it is not and is indescribable 7. SYAD ASTI NASTI AVAKTAVYA: In some respect, it both is and is not and is indescribable THE PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE: Syadvada is not relativism — it is not saying that all claims are equally valid. It is saying that every claim is valid from its specific perspective and limited by that perspective, and that the honest thinker qualifies their statements with 'in some respect' (syat) to acknowledge this limitation. This produces profound epistemic humility without collapsing into the position that no knowledge is possible.

CONNECTION TO HALIGRICITY

Anekantavada — the philosophical recognition that no single perspective captures the complete truth about any reality, and that the most accurate knowledge requires the simultaneous acknowledgment of multiple valid perspectives — is the most formally developed ancient philosophical framework for what Haligricity does with the world's sacred traditions. Every PDF in the Haligricity library is an anekantavada exercise: the recognition that the Yoruba perspective on Ashe and the Chinese perspective on Qi and the Druidic perspective on Nwyfre are all partial and valid perspectives on the same reality, and that Haligricity's synthesis is the attempt to hold the elephant whole. This is not eclecticism or relativism — it is the most philosophically rigorous available approach to the question of truth across traditions.

Nayavada

The Doctrine of Partial Perspectives

Nayavada (the doctrine of nayas — partial perspectives or standpoints) is the epistemological complement to Anekantavada. Where Anekantavada addresses the nature of reality (it has infinite aspects), Nayavada addresses the nature of knowledge claims (every claim is made from a specific naya — a specific partial standpoint).

THE SEVEN NAYAS — TYPES OF VALID PARTIAL PERSPECTIVES

NAIGAMA NAYA (Teleological Standpoint): Understanding something in terms of its purpose or goal — 'He is cooking' (referring to someone who has only begun collecting firewood). Valid as a teleological description. SANGRAHA NAYA (Collective Standpoint): Understanding something in terms of its genus or collection — 'This is matter' (ignoring the specific characteristics of this particular piece of matter). Valid at the collective level. VYAVAHARA NAYA (Practical Standpoint): The conventional, practical understanding — how things appear and function in ordinary experience. Valid for practical purposes. RIJUSUTRA NAYA (Linear Standpoint): Understanding something in terms of only the present moment — ignoring past and future states. Valid for immediate, instantaneous description. SHABDA NAYA (Verbal Standpoint): Understanding something in terms of its grammatical or verbal characteristics — the standpoint of linguistic analysis. SAMABHIRUDHA NAYA (Etymological Standpoint): Understanding something strictly by the etymology of the word used to describe it. EVAMBHUTA NAYA (Current Activity Standpoint): Understanding something only in terms of its actual current activity — a knife is a 'cutter' only when it is currently cutting. THE PRACTICAL LESSON: Every intellectual and spiritual disagreement can be analyzed through Nayavada — asking which naya each position is operating from and recognizing that both may be valid partial perspectives on a reality that neither fully captures.

Aparigraha

Non-Possession as Liberation from Wanting

Aparigraha (non-possession, non-attachment, non-acquisitiveness) is the fifth of the Jain great vows — and for the Jain tradition it is not merely a practical ethical constraint but a specific spiritual technology for loosening the karma-generating power of desire and attachment that most fundamentally chains the soul to the cycle of rebirth.

The Digambara Expression

The Digambara ('sky-clad') sect of Jainism expresses aparigraha in its most complete available form: the fully initiated Digambara monk owns nothing at all — not even clothing. The sky is their only covering. They eat from their cupped hands — not from a bowl, which would be a possession. They sleep on the floor of their host's home. They carry nothing, own nothing, have nothing to protect or lose. This is not poverty or deprivation in the ordinary sense: it is the complete freedom that comes from having eliminated the entire apparatus of wanting and having that defines ordinary human consciousness.

APARIGRAHA AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

FOR DIGAMBARA MONKS: Complete non-possession — no clothing, no bowl, no possessions of any kind. FOR SHVETAMBARA MONKS AND NUNS: Minimal possessions — white robes, a begging bowl, a broom (to sweep away insects before sitting or walking), a muhapatti (mouth cloth to prevent insects from entering the mouth). Each item is functional and non-additional. FOR JAIN LAYPERSONS (ICCHA PARINAM — LIMITING DESIRES): The practice of setting a specific limit on one's wealth accumulation — 'I will not own more than X amount.' Beyond that limit, the surplus is given away. This is not philanthropy for social approval; it is the recognition that attachment to wealth is a specific karma-generating activity, and that liberation requires the progressive loosening of the grip of wanting. APARIGRAHA AND MATERIAL POSSESSIONS IN DAILY LIFE: The Jain layperson is not required to be poor — the Jain community has historically been successful in trade and commerce. What is required is non-attachment: owning things without being owned by them, having resources without being defined by having them.

The Five Great Vows

Mahavratas — The Complete Ethical Architecture

THE FIVE MAHAVRATAS — COMPLETE TREATMENT

AHIMSA (Non-Violence): Non-harm to any living being in thought, word, and deed — in its full Jain scope extending to microorganisms. The most fundamental vow — all others support and enable it. **SATYA (Truthfulness):** Speaking only what is true, beneficial, measured, and kind. The Jain understanding of truth connects to Anekantavada — truthful speech acknowledges the limitations of one's own perspective rather than claiming absolute certainty. **ASTEYA (Non-Stealing):** Not taking what has not been given, including not accepting more resources than is appropriate. For monks: accepting food and shelter only when explicitly offered. For laypersons: honest dealing in all commercial and personal transactions. **BRAHMACHARYA (Celibacy):** For monks and nuns, complete celibacy. For laypersons (in the anuvratas — lesser vows), fidelity within marriage and restraint outside it. The vow is understood not as a rejection of sexuality but as the channeling of the life force (virya) away from sense-gratification toward spiritual liberation. **APARIGRAHA (Non-Possession):** The complete or limited renunciation of attachment to possessions, as appropriate to the practitioner's level of commitment. For Digambara monks, complete nudity. For Shvetambara monks, minimal possessions. For laypersons, the self-imposed limits of iccha parinam.

Sallekhana

The Sacred Fast unto Death

Sallekhana (also called Santhara — the sacred laying down of the body) is the Jain practice of the voluntary fast unto death — the deliberate, gradual, meditative withdrawal from food and water as a way of consciously completing the current life and discharging the maximum possible karma in the process of dying. It is the most distinctively Jain of all practices and the most frequently misunderstood.

What Sallekhana Is and Is Not

SALLEKHANA — COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING

WHAT IT IS: A voluntary, gradual, meditative process of fasting that is undertaken only by someone who has reached the end of their productive life — when the body can no longer be used for spiritual practice, when illness or age has made continued productive living impossible, and when the practitioner has settled all outstanding obligations. **WHAT IT IS NOT:** Suicide in the ordinary sense. The tradition explicitly distinguishes sallekhana from suicide on these grounds: suicide is motivated by passion (fear, despair, anger) and generates karma; sallekhana is motivated by the desire for liberation and performed in a state of equanimity and detachment that generates no karma. The goal of sallekhana is to exit the body consciously, without the karmic accumulation that accompanies violent death. **THE PREREQUISITES:** Sallekhana is not available to anyone at any time. The tradition specifies that it requires: the completion of all obligations (family, financial, social), the consent of the community (including the guru), the absence of fear, passion, or grief as motivating factors, and the genuine impossibility of continued productive spiritual practice. **THE PRACTICE:** The process is gradual — weeks or months of progressive reduction in food and water intake, accompanied by continuous meditation, prayer, and the review and release of attachments. The practitioner is surrounded by the religious community throughout. **THE HISTORICAL RECORD:** Multiple Jain masters throughout history have undertaken sallekhana — it is documented in Jain texts and in some cases in external historical records. The practice continues in the contemporary Jain community, though rarely.

Paryushana and Samvatsari

The Annual Sacred Period and Universal Forgiveness

Paryushana (in the Shvetambara tradition, eight days; in the Digambara tradition, ten days called Das Lakshana Parva) is the most sacred period in the Jain calendar — occurring in the month of Bhadrapada (August/September). It is a period of intensified spiritual practice: extended fasting, extended study, extended meditation — the most concentrated available period of spiritual labor in the Jain year.

PARYUSHANA — THE COMPLETE PRACTICE

THE EIGHT OR TEN DAYS: Each day of Paryushana has a specific focus — a specific quality or virtue to contemplate and practice. For the Digambara Das Lakshana, the ten days focus on: Uttama Kshama (Supreme Forgiveness), Uttama Mardava (Supreme Tenderness), Uttama Arjava (Supreme Straightforwardness), Uttama Shaucha (Supreme Purity), Uttama Satya (Supreme Truth), Uttama Samyam (Supreme Restraint), Uttama Tapa (Supreme Austerity), Uttama Tyaga (Supreme Renunciation), Uttama Akincanya (Supreme Non-Attachment), and Uttama Brahmacharya (Supreme Celibacy). **EXTENDED FASTING:** Many Jains undertake extended fasts during Paryushana — from single-day fasts to eight-day or even month-long fasts. The fasting is not mortification; it is the deliberate withdrawal of energy from physical maintenance toward spiritual practice. **THE SAMVATSARI PRATIKRAMAN:** The most important single ceremony of the Jain year — the comprehensive review of the past year's violations of the five vows, performed by both monks and laypersons. The Pratikraman is a specific ritual of confession and repentance that can last several hours. **SAMVATSARI — MICCHAMI DUKKADAM:** The final day of Paryushana is Samvatsari — the day of universal forgiveness. Every Jain practitioner seeks forgiveness from every being they may have harmed in the past year, knowingly or unknowingly, and extends forgiveness to every being who may have harmed them. The formula: 'Micchami Dukkadam' — 'May all the evil I have done be undone. If I have offended you in any way — in thought, word, or deed — I ask for your forgiveness.' **THE SCOPE:** The forgiveness sought is not only from humans. It is from every living being harmed in the past year — every step may have crushed microorganisms, every breath may have harmed airborne creatures. Samvatsari acknowledges the comprehensive entanglement of all life in the web of living and sincerely seeks its resolution.

Jain Cosmology

The Universe Without a Creator

Jain cosmology is one of the most detailed and most distinctive in any tradition — and its most defining characteristic is the one it shares with Buddhism and with modern scientific cosmology: there is no creator God. The universe is eternal, uncreated, and self-regulating. The Tirthankaras do not create or sustain the universe; they have transcended it. The universe operates according to its own natural laws (the interactions of jivas and ajivas, the mechanics of karma) without requiring a divine superintendent.

THE JAIN UNIVERSE — STRUCTURE AND SCALE

THE LOKA (Universe): The Jain universe is shaped like a cosmic being standing with their feet apart — broader at the middle and narrower at top and bottom. It is finite but vast.

THE THREE REALMS:

- **Adholoka (Lower World):** Seven levels of infernal regions (narakas) where souls experiencing the consequences of extreme negative karma are born.
- **Madhyaloka (Middle World):** The middle realm — where human beings, animals, and plants exist. The human realm is the only realm from which liberation is possible.
- **Urdhvaloka (Upper World):** Multiple levels of celestial realms where divine beings exist in various degrees of bliss. Above all the celestial realms is the Siddha Loka.

THE SIDDHA LOKA: The crescent-shaped realm at the very top of the universe — the dwelling place of the liberated souls (Siddhas). The Siddhas remain here in infinite bliss and omniscience forever, neither acting in the world nor being acted upon by it.

THE COSMIC CYCLES: Time operates in infinite cycles of ascent (utsarpini) and descent (avasarpini), each lasting billions of years. We are currently in a descending half-cycle — a period in which the moral and spiritual condition of the world gradually deteriorates. The last Tirthankara of this cycle, Mahavira, appeared near the beginning of this descending half; no more Tirthankaras will appear until the next ascending half-cycle.

Gandhi and Jain Influence on the World

Mohandas Gandhi's explicit acknowledgment of Jain influence on his philosophy of nonviolent resistance (satyagraha) makes Jainism the tradition with arguably the most consequential direct influence on 20th-century history of any ancient tradition. Through Gandhi, Jain ahimsa influenced the Indian independence movement, and through Gandhi's documented influence on Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, Jain ahimsa influenced the American civil rights movement and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.

THE JAIN-GANDHI CONNECTION

RAJCHANDRA RAYCHANDBHAI: Gandhi's most important spiritual teacher was a Jain scholar and businessman — Rajchandra Raychandbhai (Shrimad Rajchandra, 1867-1901), a Jain mystic of extraordinary learning who corresponded with Gandhi extensively during Gandhi's years in South Africa. Gandhi wrote: 'Of all the people who influenced me, Raychandbhai influenced me more than anyone else.'

AHIMSA AND SATYAGRAHA: Gandhi took Jain ahimsa (extended to political and social struggle) and developed it into satyagraha — the force of truth, the method of nonviolent resistance. The direct line from Jain ahimsa through Gandhi's satyagraha to King's nonviolent civil rights strategy to Mandela's negotiated transition is one of the most significant ethical transmission chains in modern history.

APARIGRAHA AND GANDHI'S LIFESTYLE: Gandhi's deliberate simplicity — the homespun cloth, the minimal possessions, the self-limitation of wants — is directly influenced by Jain aparigraha. His ashram life embodied Jain principles in a political and social context.

ANEKANTAVADA AND GANDHI'S PLURALISM: Gandhi's respect for all religious traditions — his insistence that truth is not owned by any single tradition — reflects the influence of Jain anekantavada. His prayer meetings included hymns from Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Sikh traditions.

The Haligricity Lens

Anekantavada and Ahimsa as Practice

Jainism's contribution to Haligricity is philosophically foundational and practically radical. Anekantavada provides the most formally complete philosophical framework for the synthesis approach that Haligricity employs; ahimsa provides the ethical orientation through which the Haligricity practitioner relates to every tradition in the library.

Anekantavada and the Haligricity Synthesis

Every guide in the Haligricity library is an act of anekantavada. The recognition that the Yoruba understanding of Ashe and the Zoroastrian understanding of Asha and the Chinese understanding of Qi and the Druidic understanding of Nwyfre are all partial and valid perspectives on the same sacred reality — and that holding them simultaneously produces a more complete picture than any single perspective — is Syadvada applied to the world's sacred traditions. The 'syat' (in some respect, perhaps) that qualifies every Jain philosophical statement is the epistemic humility that every sincere engagement with another tradition requires.

Ahimsa and the Practitioner's Relationship to Other Traditions

Jain ahimsa, applied to the practitioner's relationship with other sacred traditions, means: no tradition is dismissed, diminished, distorted, or treated as inferior to one's own primary tradition. Each is approached with the same respect and care one would bring to a living being deserving of non-harm. This is the ethical foundation of Haligricity's synthesis: not merely tolerance or curiosity, but the specific active commitment to non-harm in every engagement with every tradition's specific sacred content.

CONNECTION TO HALIGRICITY

Micchami Dukkadam. May all the evil I have done be undone. Every time Haligrlicity engages with a tradition — every guide in this library — the Jain principle of ahimsa and anekantavada is operative: the commitment not to harm the tradition through misrepresentation, not to appropriate its most sacred elements without acknowledgment, not to flatten its complexity into the convenient, and to hold its specific partial truth with the genuine epistemic humility that Syadvada demands. The marble is carved so finely at Dilwara that the stone looks like lace. The 1,444 pillars at Ranakpur are each different. The 900 temples at Palitana cover an entire mountain. This is what it looks like when a tradition takes the sacred as seriously as Jainism does. Grand Rising.

*"Micchami Dukkadam.
May all the evil I have done be undone."*

— The Jain formula of universal forgiveness, spoken on Samvatsari

Every living being carries a divine soul. The jiva of the microorganism crushed underfoot is, in its intrinsic nature, equal to the jiva of the Tirthankara. Ahimsa is the practical application of this recognition. Anekantavada is its epistemological companion — the recognition that no single perspective, including mine, captures the whole. These two together are among the most precise available tools for the Haligric practitioner navigating a library of sacred traditions whose combined truth is greater than any one of them. Grand Rising.

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