

In the name of God the munificent the merciful

# AHIMSA

## अहिंसा

### Preface:

India has great and old history of civilisation. In this area a vast variety of culture, religion, philosophy, nature, comes to birth during ages. Although there is a diversity of believes, but some elements of Indian philosophy are common among this severalty. **“Ahimsa”** is one of the common and basic cores of Indian culture.

In this article we will look to the pattern and presence of Ahimsa in different kind of Indian religion and lifestyle.

Although Ahimsa is one of the most fundament and basic rule in the core of “Jainism”, but in “Hinduism” and “Buddhism” also recognised and practise. Although it does not come in their basic text, but especially in Hinduism nowadays is a common and base rule that is practice and observance in general. ordinary Buddhism ‘s people dose not practise Ahimsa, but the Buddhist Monk<sup>(1)</sup> in their dealing with the path that they should pass to reach to “Nirvana”<sup>(2)</sup>, they practise Ahimsa as well.

So as we can see Ahimsa is basic element in Indian philosophy that in somehow observe by all three main religion in India and have its effect on their political, social and individually and Group on their psychological behaviour. So in the main contemporary political

movement that lead by Mr Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi <sup>(3)</sup> , well known as Mahatma Gandhi <sup>(4)</sup>, that make “Indian subcontinent” free from ruling of “British colonial system”, you can see ahimsa had main role in between, and became one of the main instrument and the factor of victory for them. Ahimsa as old tradition of Indian philosophy is come to all social and political aspect of Indian revolutionary force by Mahatma Gandhi ‘s initiative and make social forces powerful against Indian occupier, but unfortunately at the eve of victory Ahimsa lose its force and the clash erupt among them and take hundred thousands of life. So Ahimsa against the Outsider works properly, but it loses its powers and functions toward the Insider.

### Expansion of Indian main religion :

Religion	Percentage population
Hindu	80.5%
Muslim	13.4%
Christians	2.3%
Sikhs	1.9%
Buddhists	0.8%
Jains	0.4%
others <sup>(8)</sup>	0.6%

Indian religions<sup>(5)</sup> base on formal statement of Indian government<sup>(6)</sup> (listed as it come in the chart<sup>(7)</sup>) today with the majority of Hindus (80.5%), and then great minority of Muslim (13.4%), Christians (2.3%), Sikhs (1.9%), Buddhists (0.8%), Jains (0.4%) and other religions with (0.6%) are known. But Indian main religion or lifestyle that born in this area are **Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism** and new one **Sikhism**. The others religions were come from Middle East base on immigration or adopted by Indian during exchange culture later.

### Definition of the word Ahimsa :

Ahimsa has root in “Sanskrit” <sup>(Indian ancient and religion)</sup> language. It means no harm and no injures, kindness, non-violence towards living being. As

they believe if you don't practice Ahimsa base on "karma <sup>(9)</sup>" rule it will have bad consequences on your "Reincarnation <sup>(10)</sup>" circlet. Himsa (हिंसा) means "harm" and "injure" when add "A" to it (अहिंसा) take negative meaning. This philosophy look at being as unity that connects to each other in this world.

### Jainism as a main container of Ahimsa philosophy :



Philosophy of Jainism <sup>(11)</sup> as a main container of Ahimsa among Indian religion is one of oldest but less populated religion in India and its followers mostly live in India. The Jain population in India according to 2001 government census is about **4,225,053** out of total **1,028,610,328**. Jains are separated in different states and regions <sup>(12)</sup> in India. Although most of them live in India and it seem as a local religion, but nowadays it try to find some follower abroad also, for example Jain population in US is estimated to be around 200,000.



Highlighted blue colour is Jains living place in India with 2-7% population

### Jain 's school of thought :



There are about 110 different Jain communities in India and overseas. They can be divided into six groups based on historical and current residence,

but Jainism has two main sects the two main sects of Jainism are:

- A) - Svetambaras (wearing white clothes)**
- B) – Digambaras (Naked - without clothing)**

Generally the two are agreed on all the fundamental principles of Jainism



**A family Svetambaras devotees**



**Digambaras (Naked - without clothing)**

### Ahimsa in Jainism:



In Jainism, the understanding, implementation and necessity of ahimsa is more radical, honourable and comprehensive than any other Indian religion. Non-violence is seen as the most essential religious duty for every devotee. A statement that is often emphasises in all Jain temples.

Like Hinduism, in Jainism also the aim of practise

Ahimsa is to prevent the increase of harmful karma. When the Tirthankara(तीर्थकर)<sup>(14)</sup> Mahavira<sup>(13)</sup> revitalized and reorganized the Jain movement (in the 6th or 5th century BCE), ahimsa was already an established, strictly observed rule. In Parshva <sup>(15)</sup> time Ahimsa was already part of the "Fourfold Restraint" (*Caujjama*), the vows taken by Parshva 's followers.

The Acaranga Sutra (or Acharanga) <sup>(16)</sup> that is based on mahavira teaches, describes the fundamental need for non-violence as *"All beings are loving life; they like pleasure and hate pain, avoid destruction and like to live, they long to live. To all, life is beloved"*. Ahimsa is a way of living and thinking which respects this deeply.

In the times of Mahavira and in the following centuries, Jains were at balances with both Buddhists and followers of the Vedic religion (Hindus), whom they accused of carelessness and inconsistency in the implementation of Ahimsa. There is some evidence, however, that ancient Jain accepted meat as charities, if the animal had not been specifically killed for them.

Modern Jains deny this heatedly, especially with regard to Mahavira himself. According to the Jain tradition either "vegetarianism" is mandatory. The Jain concept of ahimsa is characterized by several aspects. It does not make any exception for ritual sacrifice's and professional warrior-hunters. Killing of animals for food is absolutely ruled out.

Jains also make considerable efforts not to injure plants in everyday life as far as possible. Though they admit that plants must be destroyed for the purpose of food, they accept such violence only in as much as it is necessary for human survival, and there are special instructions for preventing unnecessary violence against plants. Jains

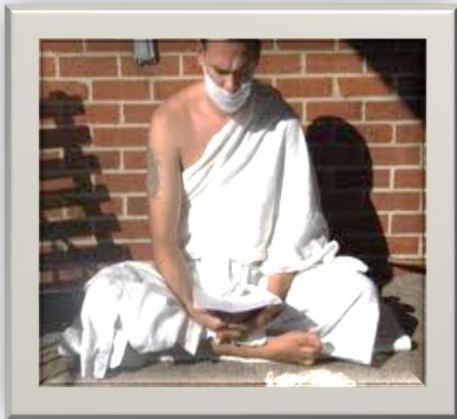


go out of their way so as not to hurt even small insects and other little animals.

For example, Jains often do not go out at night, when they are more likely to step upon an insect. In their view, injury caused by

carelessness is like injury caused by thoughtful action.

Eating honey is strictly forbidden, as it would amount to violence against the bees. Some Jains abstain from farming because it inevitably needs accidentally killing or injuring of many small animals, such as worms and insects, but agriculture is not banned in general and there are Jain farmers.

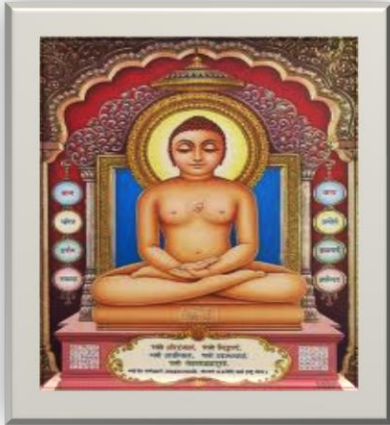


Additionally, because they consider harsh words to be a form of violence, they often keep a cloth to ritually cover their mouth, as a reminder not to allow violence in their speech.

In contrast, Jains agree with Hindus that violence in self-defence can be acceptable, and they agree that a soldier who kills enemies in combat is performing a reasonable duty. Jain communities accepted the use of military power for their defence, and there were Jain monarchs, military commanders, and soldiers. Though, theoretically, all life forms are said to deserve full protection from all kinds of injury, Jains admit that this ideal cannot be completely implemented in practice. Hence, they recognize a chain or pyramid of life. Mobile beings are given higher protection than immobile ones.

For the movable beings, they distinguish between one-sensed, two-sensed, three-sensed, four-sensed and five-sensed ones; a one-sensed animal has touch as its only sensory modality. The more senses a being has, the more they care about its protection. Among the five-sensed beings, the rational ones (humans) are most strongly protected by Jain ahimsa. In the practice of ahimsa, the requirements are less strict for the lay persons who have undertaken *anuvrata* (Lesser Promises) than for the monastics who are sure by the Mahavrata "Great Promises".

### **Ahimsa in Mahavira 's opinion:**

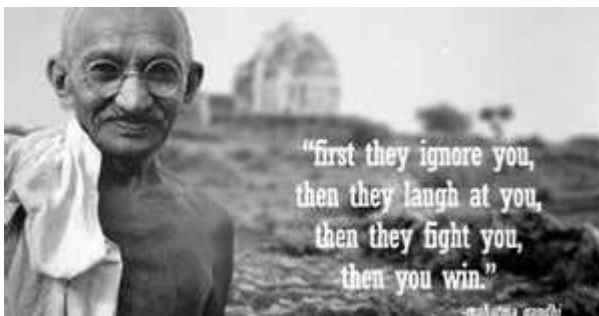


Mahavira (the last Jainism teacher) define Ahimsa as **“Inflexibility and carefulness to prevent oneself from being the cause of any kind of injury to any living being in any way”**. Mahavira’s suggestion to householder is :

**digvirati** **“to carryout activities within a restricted (controlled) area and there by desist (stop) from injuring living beings in different places.”** **bhogopabhogmdna** :

**“to desist from drinking liquors, taking flesh(skin), butter, honey, figs, certain other kinds of plants, fruits, and vegetables, to observe certain other kinds of restriction (regarding time and place of taking meals),”** **anarthadanda** : consisting of : **apadhydna** : (stop causing any bodily injuries, killing of one s enemies, etc.), **pdpopadesa** (desisting from advising people to take to agriculture which leads to the killing of so many insects), **himsopakdriddna** : (desisting from giving implements of agriculture to people which will lead to the injury of insects), **pramdddcarana** (to desist from attending musical parties, theatres, or reading sex-literature, gambling, etc.) **siksdpadabrata** consisting of : **Sdmayikabrata**: (to try to treat all beings equally), **posadhabrata**: (certain other kinds of restriction), All transgressions (*misbehaviours*) of these virtues (*qualitis*), called **aticdra**, should be carefully avoided.

### Ahimsa is Mahatma Gandhi ‘s miracle :



Gandhi strongly believes in Ahimsa to avoiding of verbal and physical violence. Gandhi promoted the principle of ahimsa very successfully by applying it to all spheres of life, particularly to politics. His non-violent resistance movement (**satyagraha**)

“Soul-Force”) had a vast impact on India, impressed public opinion in Western countries and influenced the leaders of various civil and political rights movements such as Martin Luther King, Jr. In Gandhi’s thought, ahimsa stops not only the act of a physical injury, but also mental states like evil thoughts and hatred, unkind behaviour such as harsh words, dishonesty and lying, all of which he saw as manifestations of violence incompatible with ahimsa. Gandhi believed ahimsa to be a creative energy force, encompassing all interactions leading one's self to find “**satya**”, "Divine Truth".

Gandhi was religious (he was Hindu) and open-minded, and saw the different religions as paths to the same goal. He was inspired by the teachings of Jesus, in particular the emphasis on love for everyone, even one’s enemies, and the need to strive for justice. He also took from Hinduism the importance of action in one’s life, without concern for success; the Hindu text Bhagavad-Gita says, “On action alone are thy interest, / Never on its fruits / Abiding in discipline perform actions, / Abandoning attachment / Being indifferent to success or failure”.

For Gandhi, ahimsa was the look of the deepest love for all humans, including one’s opponents; this non-violence therefore included not only a lack of physical harm to them, but also a lack of hate towards them. Gandhi rejected the traditional dichotomy between one’s own side and the “enemy;” he believed in the need to convince opponents of their injustice, not to punish them, and in this way one could win their friendship and one’s own freedom. If need be, one might need to suffer or die in order that they may be converted to love.



Gandhi’s main tactic in his fight against the British was what he called Satyagraha, which means “Soul-Force” or “The power of truth”. Gandhi developed Satyagraha as the practical extension of ahimsa and love; it meant standing definitely behind one’s ideals, but without hate. Satyagraha took the form of civil disobedience and non-cooperation with evil. Civil disobedience involved breaking a specific law

if it was believed to be unjust, and then facing the consequences. The Salt March of 1930, was one of Gandhi’s greatest successes in civil disobedience. Salt was necessary to the life of Indian farmers, cattle, and the British monopoly on salt production had led to massive taxes on the vital substance.

The other element of Satyagraha, non-cooperation with evil, consisted of pulling out all support for an unjust system, such as the British rule of India. This tactic need not break any law, but might include boycotting British



products, refusing to work for British employers, pulling one's children out of British schools, refusing to supply the British with services, and not paying taxes.



In 1920, after the British army massacred 400 unarmed demonstrators, Gandhi organized a nation-wide Satyagraha which used non-cooperation techniques, as well as public demonstrations, in order to “withdraw Indian support from the vast, monstrous Machine of Empire until it ground to a halt.

Although this nation-wide strike hit the British hard, and led to thousands of Indians being jailed, in 1922 it erupted in to violence. A mob of “Satyagrahis” lit fire to a police station, killing two dozen police officers trapped inside. Gandhi called off the entire Satyagraha and apologized for his “Himalayan blunder”; he had mistakenly believed that his followers truly understood non-violence. To examine whether Gandhi’s programme of Satyagraha was a success, we must first look at his objectives. I have already mentioned two of his aims -- to earn Indian independence, and to do it non-violently. In these, Gandhi was successful. India became independent in 1947, with scarcely any violence toward the British, and Gandhi’s leadership was crucial. The struggle had been difficult and long, but, in the end, Britain simply lowered its flag over India and left.

Sadly, however, Gandhi’s dream was not fulfilled. Gandhi was dismayed by Hinduism’s treatment of the Muslim minority in India, and by the resulting calls for the creation of a separate Muslim state of Pakistan. Widespread distrust and hatred was growing between Hindus and Muslims and, on the eve of India’s independence, riots erupted all over India. The country became a bloodbath, in which it was estimated that millions lives were lost. Many believed that Gandhi’s non-violence had failed. “months of chaos and terror,” Gandhi spent his time in the most violent areas: “Each night he preached Peace and Love and prayed, Gandhi walked from village to village through the heart of that violent madness, preaching Ahimsa”. he was a failure In a world seemingly dominated by violence and hatred, Mahatma Gandhi restored the ancient idea of Ahimsa, non-violence, as the only way of living in peace.

"My faith is as strong as ever. There is no hope for the aching world except through the narrow and straight path of non-violence. Millions like me may fail to prove the truth in their own lives; that would be their failure, never of the eternal law.

According to Gandhi, violent action, regardless of the short-term outcome, is destructive and becomes the very cycle of oppression and injustice it seeks to eliminate. By focusing on the Indian philosophical doctrine of karma, of action and causality, Gandhi argued that sustainable peace could only emerge through genuine peace-making, **for a violent process would ultimately result in a violent outcome.**

"My love for non-violence is superior to that for every other thing (mundane (ordinary) or supramundane). It is equalled only by love for Truth, which is to me synonymous with non-violence; through which and which alone I can see and reach Truth."

"If one has pride and egoism, he is not non-violent. Non-violence is impossible without humility.(modesty) *Identification with everything that lives is impossible without self-purification; without self-purification the observance of the law of Ahimsa must remain an empty dream; God can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to purification of one's surroundings.*"

### **Ahimsa is Misunderstand :**

Today some Indian politician believe that Gandhi's Philosophy (in which Ahimsa is nucleus) of Ahimsa (non- violence) don't work with current situation that India face. they evaluate ahimsa strategy as non-serious positioning.

According to Dr Ambedkar, the doctrine of Ahimsa does not say "Kill not" it says, "Love all". Buddha said "*Love all, so that you may not wish to kill any*" This is a positive way of stating the principle of Ahimsa

Sri Aurobindo<sup>(17)</sup> : criticized the Gandhian concept of ahimsa as unrealistic and not universally applicable; he adopted a pragmatic non-pacifist position, saying that the justification of violence depends on the specific circumstances of the given situation.

(Dr. Ravindra Kumar) <sup>(18)</sup> : we attribute Ahimsa-the non-violence as a dictum that prescribes non-snatching of anyone's life. Or in other simple words, not to take life of any of the living beings is non-violence But, in reality, this is neither a true meaning of Ahimsa nor it is a complete root pertaining to the concept of it. As Ahimsa is quite opposite to Ahimsa, we can say: "*Total non-violence consists in not hurting some other one's intellect, speech or action by own thought, utterance or deeds and not to deprive some one of his life.*"

To overcome current conflict it is absolutely necessary for parties involved in dispute or a particular conflict that they come forward on the basis of following three fundamental points:

- To be serious;
- To accept reality; and
- To be ready to make sacrifices

### **Bloodiest century is symbol of violence :**



the World War First (1914-8) claimed the lives of more than ten million people. Besides, twenty-two and a half million people were badly injured. Similarly, in the World War Second (1939-45) fifty million people were killed and approximately thirty-five million people were either badly injured or injured. Most of the countries involved in the two wars took ten and fifteen years to stand again on their own feet, or to pave the way of development. And, we know that the warring nations after getting tired of wars and naked dance of violence and death aspired for peace and pacific measures.

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### **Foot – article :**

1. Hermit, male member of a religious order
2. Heavenly state that exists beyond the cycle of reincarnation, freedom from karmic suffering (Hinduism, Buddhism); state of being heavenly, paradise (Slang)
3. Was born on 2 October 1869 (In 2007 the U.N. General Assembly adopted a resolution as international Day of non - violence) in Gujarat and he assassinated on 30 January 1948 by one of Hindu hardliner and was killed. Commonly known as Mahatma Gandhi (great soul) he led Indian freedom movement from British ruling. At this straggle, His two main strategies was non-violent and civil disobedience. In 1921 became the leader of National Indian Congress in 1930 he lead a protest that was named “national salt tax”. In 1942 he ask British to Quit India his movement take it result in 1947 and India became independent.
4. Great soul
5. Census of India 2001

6. It is likely that the actual population of Jains and Muslim are more and may be significantly higher than the census numbers. The Muslim population in India is the third largest in the world some estimate it 20% of India population
7. <http://www.censusindia.gov.in/> (*censusindia.gov.in/Ad.../drop\_in.../04-Distribution\_by\_Religion.pdf*)
8. Zoroastrian – Jew - Bahá'í Faith
9. idea that an individual's actions determine his fate in each successive existence (Buddhism, Hinduism)
10. rebirth of souls in new bodies, regeneration of souls, re-embodiment
11. Anekāntavāda - Aparigraha - Syādvāda - Jain Cosmology - **Ahimsa** - Karma - Dharma - Nirvana - Kevala Jñāna - Mokṣa - Dravya - Navatattva
12. Maharashtra (1,301,8430) - Rajasthan ( 650,493) - Madhya pradesh ( 545,446) - Gujarat (525,305) - Karnataka (412,659) -Uttar Pradesh (207,111) - Delhi (155,122) - Tamil Nadu (83,359)
13. the 24 Tirthankars(Sanskrit: तीर्थंकर "ford-Maker") of Jainism are : Rishabha or Adinath - Ajitnath - Sambhavanath- Abhinandannath- Sumatinath -Padmaprabha - Suparshvanath - Chandraprabha - Pushpadanta - Sheetalnath - Shreyansanath - Vasupujya - Vimalnath - Anantnath - Dharmanath - Shantinath - Kunthunath - Aranath - Mallinath - Munisuvrata - Naminatha - Neminath - **Parshva - Mahavira** In Jainism mahavira the last one. Tirthankara is a human being who helps in achieving liberation and enlightenment as an "Arihant" by destroying all of their soul constraining (ghati) karmas
14. The last Jainism Tirthankara.
15. the earliest Jain Tirthankara before Mahavira, whom modern Western historians consider him to be a historical figure, lived in about the 8th century BCE. He founded the community to which Mahavira 's parents belonged.
16. the Acaranga Sutra which is used by the Svetambara sect of Jainism, it is based on the teachings of Mahavira and is include of discusses the conduct of a Jain monk
17. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri\\_Aurobindo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Aurobindo) - Aurobindo Akroyd Ghosh Born on 15 August 1872 in Calcutta (India), Died 5 December 1950 (aged 78) Pondicherry (India),
18. Dr. Ravindra Kumar (born 1959) is a political scientist, peace-worker, educationalist and the former Vice-Chancellor of Meerut University. Currently he is the editor-in-chief of the 'Global Peace International Journal', and has more than a hundred books and four hundred articles/talks/lectures on great leaders of the Indian sub-continent, especially Mahatma Gandhi, and on various social, religious, political, educational, cultural and academic issues.