

# Jainism: the concepts of ahimsa and karma

[Religion](#), [Buddhism](#)



First and foremost, Jainism is built on the foundation of ahimsā which is the absence of desire to harm any living being. In other words, Jains believe in nonviolence not only in action but in words and thoughts. Jains believe in positive ethic of love for all beings, a wish to see all living beings live happily and thrive. Jains even wear something called a munpatti which is the mouth shield that Jains will wear to avoid killing small organisms and bugs by inhaling them.

Like the other Vedanta traditions, Jainism affirms infinite bliss and infinite awareness. Therefore, they all believe that they have a pure nature of the soul that can be obscured by karma. Unlike other Dharma traditions that believe solely in the idea of action and reaction, Jains believe in karma as a form of subtle matter or energy that is drawn to the soul when the soul is disrupted by passions. These passions can be either positive or negative emotions but are seen as being extreme emotional states that disturb the soul. This can be compared to a body of water. A calm body of water with no waves is compared to a calm mind with level emotions; this mindset draws no karma particles. Contrarily, an ocean with strong waves can be compared to a busy mind with extreme emotions. In this scenario, the waves draw karma and karma particles get embedded into the soul. These karma particles will eventually “ sprout,” creating either an experience of happiness or not. Jains believe that all living beings are subjected to karma and that maya is synonymous with karma. The passions that draw karma particles also increase our ignorance of the real nature of reality and God-realization. When we draw karma particles into our soul, we are identifying ourselves

with the ego, submitting to anger, hatred, and other miseries by letting our emotional states overcome us and mask the divine within us.

Jains believe that all living beings experience karma and that no one should interfere with a being's karma. For example, Jains will allow humans and animals to suffer in great pain as they die because they believe that it is all the result of karma and if it doesn't come now, it will come in some past life. In order to prevent a potentially endless cycle of karma, Jains are encouraged to live in equanimity and accelerate the "burning off" of karmic particles by participating in ascetic practices and disassociating our soul from our physical body. Likewise, to free oneself from karma, it is expected to become divine and manifest our already present divinity within us. When we are nonviolent in our thoughts and actions, we are manifesting passions within ourselves which will ultimately attract karma particles. Therefore, it is important to practice nonviolence because it can cause passions that will attract karma particles and prevent us from the ultimate aim of moksha. Although the cycle of karma is escapable, the workings of karma are held by Jains to be sufficient to explain occurrences in the world and explains the orderly nature of events.