

The religion of jainism and its practices

Religion



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Introduction

Some of the most well-known religions include certain practices that have to be followed because of their customs. For Islam, Muslims are only able to consume halal meat. In terms of Jainism, Jains are either vegetarian or they are completely vegan. In fact, Jains are not allowed to eat some roots, like potatoes, because of the potential harm from harvesting to some of the organisms in the soil. These kinds of reasons lead people to believe that Jainism could be one of the most peaceful religions. This is because Jainism has its own values, history, beliefs, and culture they look towards. Starting from the history, to the beliefs and practices, these factors play important roles within the faith, which also contributes to how Jains follow the religion and achieve their nirvana.

The History of Jainism

To start, Jainism has been around for a very long time. Not only is Jainism is an ancient religion that still exists from around the 6th century BCE, it is also one of the oldest philosophies in the world. Around a couple of thousand years ago, it emerged alongside Hinduism. Jainism is an atheist religion, which means Jains do not believe in the concept of a God. Although there is no official founder, there have been 24 Tirthankaras, teachers who “ show the way”, that are part of Jainism. It is believed that Tirthankaras cleansed and finally freed their eternal and endless souls from their bodies. From Jainistic belief, the Tirthankaras’ knowledge of everything, their omniscient soul and existence allowed them to teach others of how to accomplish their spiritual goal of existence. The first evidence of the historical figure of the Jain faith is Parshvanatha, who is the 23rd tirthankara and believed to have <https://assignbuster.com/the-religion-of-jainism-and-its-practices/>

lived during 700 BCE. Scholars believe that the religion originated in India, and around the time Buddhism appeared around the eastern India region of the Ganges basin. Mahavira, lived from around six-hundred BCE to the mid five-hundred BCE, is believed to have lived around Buddha. Mahavira, the last tirthankara of the 24, is mistakenly regarded as the founder. Mahavira is thought to have added the last principle, chastity, of the five Jain principles. He was able to convert 11 ganadharas, also known as disciples, who were all originally Brahmins, part of the highest Hindu caste. When Mahavira was around 30 years old, Mahavira decided to live life and follow the path of asceticism for nearly 13 years. The decision was made based off of the common beliefs from Jainism.

The Main Principles of Jainism

There are some objectives surrounding Jainism and Jains must do their best to live out at least some of these beliefs. Liberating the soul is a broad and a widely known purpose that is focused on by Jains. Unlike Catholics, they believe that the body and soul are different and are not connected. Jains believe that reality is divided into two components, the jiva and the ajiva. The jiva refers to the concept of limitlessness of consciousness, and how every living thing has an infinite soul. They reinforce how the soul has always existed and it was not created by anyone. The Ajiva refers to the ideas of time, matter, space, and the universe. Jains incorporate the objectives of each of these concepts to live out their lives to cleanse the eternal soul. They believe that the laws of the Ajiva affects the souls of all living things and there is no way to escape. From these ideas, Jains also believe in reincarnation and rebirth. Reincarnation is the product from how every soul

is eternal and the universe has always existed. The aim is to attain moksha, the spiritual freedom, escape the repeated rebirths. In Jainism, asceticism is promoted to earn freedom from continuous rebirth. Jains also believe in how karma plays an important role in the eternal souls. Like how it is part of Hinduism and Buddhism, Karma is fundamentally part of the Jain doctrine. The life of a being is connected to an endless chain of cause and effect. The actions and decisions of a Jain in their life will affect their situation in their next life. Their choices attaches to the soul and impact the bodies of how their new life will be. They believe that they have to stop the increase of new ones and get rid of the currently acquired ones to escape reincarnation. Jains have to follow certain practices and rules to gain this goal. There are five Jain principles that Jains live by. According to a BBC article, these include chastity, non-violence, truthfulness, not stealing, and not owning things. These work as a foundation of how Jains choose to live out their lives. All in all, Jainism is about the religious goal of the Jain faith is to achieve a purified soul.

Ahimsa in Everyday Life

Lastly, these ideas of purifying the soul and ahimsa, are practiced by Jains in their everyday lives. Similar to Hinduism and Buddhism, ahimsa, non-violence, is a central belief in the Jainist tradition. Jains respect the lives of every living thing. Like it was previously mentioned, Jains are mostly vegan or vegetarian, with some exceptions of other vegetables and food grown underground. When harvesting, taking out the roots of a plant is harming the plant itself, and potentially the organisms around and in the soil. As it is part of the five principles, Jains live by the concepts around ahimsa that they

even want to avoid harm of insects, as well. Their goal influences most of their actions and the way they live. Mask are commonly worn by Jains, because of the beliefs around ahimsa. If a mask is not worn, they believe that they will potentially breathe in small bugs and harm them. This idea also affects the daily lives of monks, as they are not allowed to wear clothes. Everyday, they have to live naked and without any kind of clothing. However, they are allowed to possess a robe. While chastity is to be kept by regular Jains, nuns and monks are to take a vow of celibacy. Jains, and their lifestyle and actions reflect how they are both concerned with themselves and the world around them. These daily and common practices are taken very seriously by Jains. Hard work and dedication can be found and used during most Jains' lives.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the history, beliefs and practices of Jainism cooperate together for Jains as they live out their lives. Although Jains do the best they can to do, their ultimate goal is to conquer possessiveness, desire, greed, ego, and anger to accomplish salvation. Since most Jains go through immense work of self-discipline and asceticism, they try to fulfill their goal, to escape this universe towards moksha.