

## **Jainism and Buddhism**

**Jainism and Buddhism** are two ancient religions that originated in India and share many similarities in their teachings and practices. Both religions emerged as a response to the prevailing socio-economic and religious conditions of their time and offered alternative ways of living and understanding the world.

## **Introduction of Jainism and Buddhism**

Jainism and Buddhism are two ancient Indian religions that emerged around the same time in the 5th and 6th centuries BCE. They share many similarities, such as a focus on non-violence, ethical behavior, and spiritual purity, but they also have some distinct differences. Let's see what they are exactly individually.

### **What is Buddhism?**

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy that originated in ancient India around the 5th century BCE. It was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who later became known as the Buddha, which means "the enlightened one." Buddhism is based on the Four Noble Truths, which teach that suffering is an inherent part of life, but that it is possible to end suffering by following the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path consists of right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

### **What is Jainism?**

Jainism is a religion and philosophy that originated in ancient India around the same time as Buddhism, around the 6th century BCE. It was founded by a man named Mahavira, who is considered to be the last and most important of the 24 [Tirthankaras](#), or spiritual teachers, in Jainism.

Jainism is based on the belief that every living being has a soul, or jiva, and that the ultimate goal of life is to achieve liberation, or moksha, from the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Jains believe that this can be achieved by following a path of non-violence, or ahimsa, and by living a life of compassion, honesty, and self-discipline.

## **Rise of Jainism and Buddhism**

Jainism and Buddhism emerged in India during the 6th century BCE, as a response to the social, political, and religious changes that were taking place in the country at that time.

Both religions rejected the authority of the Brahmanical caste system, and sought to provide an alternative path to liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsara).

Jainism was founded by Mahavira, who was born in the state of Bihar in around 599 BCE. He was born into a royal family, but renounced his worldly possessions at the age of 30 and spent the rest of his life seeking spiritual enlightenment. Jainism teaches that liberation can be attained through a strict adherence to the principles of non-violence (ahimsa), truthfulness (satya), non-stealing (asteya), chastity (brahmacharya), and non-possession (aparigraha).

Buddhism, on the other hand, was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who was born in the state of Lumbini, in present-day Nepal, in around 563 BCE. He was also born into a royal family, but renounced his wealth and status in search of spiritual enlightenment. Buddhism teaches that liberation can be attained by following the Eightfold Path, which includes right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Both Jainism and Buddhism challenged the dominance of Brahmanism, which was the dominant religion in India at the time. They rejected the authority of the Vedas, which were the sacred texts of Brahmanism, and offered a new path to spiritual liberation. Jainism and Buddhism also emphasized the importance of ethics and morality in achieving liberation, and their teachings had a significant impact on Indian society and culture

## Principals of Jainism and Buddhism

| Principle      | Jainism   | Buddhism   |
|----------------|---|--|
| Non-Violence   | Emphasizes non-violence towards all living beings     | Teaches non-harm and compassion towards all beings       |
| Self-Control   | Focuses on self-control and discipline                | Emphasizes the cultivation of ethical behavior           |
| Non-Attachment | Encourages non-attachment to material possessions     | Encourages detachment from desires and craving           |
| Karma          | Believes in the accumulation of karmic consequences   | Believes in the concept of karma and its effects         |
| Liberation     | Seeks liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth  | Seeks liberation from suffering through enlightenment    |
| Meditation     | Practices meditation to cultivate spiritual awareness | Practices meditation to cultivate mindfulness and wisdom |
| Enlightenment  | Emphasizes self-realization and spiritual purity      | Emphasizes the attainment of enlightenment               |

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# Teachings of Jainism and Buddhism

Given below are the basic teachings of both the religions. You can have a look at both of them to know more.

## Teachings of Jainism:

**Non-Violence (Ahimsa):** Jainism places great emphasis on non-violence towards all living beings, including animals and plants. Jains believe that non-violence is the highest virtue and is essential for spiritual purity and liberation.

**Self-Control (Sanyam):** Jainism encourages the practice of self-control and discipline in all aspects of life, including thoughts, words, and actions. The ultimate goal is to achieve spiritual purity and liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.

**Non-Attachment (Aparigraha):** Jainism emphasizes the importance of non-attachment to material possessions and desires. Jains believe that attachment leads to greed, which is a source of negative karma.

**Karma:** Jains believe in the accumulation of karmic consequences based on one's actions, thoughts, and intentions. Good deeds result in positive karma, while bad deeds result in negative karma.

**Liberation (Moksha):** The ultimate goal of Jainism is to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth and attain spiritual purity. Jains believe that this can be achieved through the practice of non-violence, self-control, and non-attachment.

## Teachings of Buddhism:

**Four Noble Truths:** Buddhism teaches that all life is marked by suffering (dukkha) and that the way to overcome suffering is to follow the Four Noble Truths. These truths are the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering.

**Eightfold Path:** Buddhism teaches the Eightfold Path as a means to achieve liberation from suffering. The eight factors are right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

**Karma:** Buddhism also believes in the concept of karma, but in Buddhism, karma refers to the idea that one's actions have consequences that can impact one's current and future lives.

**Non-Self (Anatta):** Buddhism teaches that there is no permanent self or soul. Rather, the self is constantly changing and is made up of various parts and elements.

**Impermanence (Anicca):** Buddhism teaches that everything in life is impermanent and constantly changing. This impermanence is the root of suffering, and the way to overcome suffering is to cultivate a deep understanding and acceptance of impermanence.

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## Difference Between Jainism and Buddhism

| Aspect        | Jainism                      | Buddhism                              |
|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Founder       | Mahavira                     | Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)           |
| Origin        | India                        | India                                 |
| Belief in God | No belief in a supreme being | No belief in a supreme being          |
| Karma         | Central concept              | Central concept but not as emphasized |
| Reincarnation | Central concept              | Central concept                       |
| Goal          | Liberation from suffering    | Enlightenment                         |
| Non-violence  | Key principle                | Key principle                         |
| Ahimsa        | Emphasized in practice       | Emphasized in practice                |
| Vegetarianism | Practiced by many Jains      | Practiced by some Buddhists           |
| Scriptures    | Agamas                       | Tripitaka                             |
| Path          | Threefold path               | Eightfold path                        |
| Meditation    | Practiced but not emphasized | Emphasized                            |

## Similarities Between Jainism and Buddhism

| Similarities       | Jainism  | Buddhism  |
|--------------------|--|---|
| Nonviolence        | Jainism places a strong emphasis on ahimsa, the principle of non-violence towards all living beings  | Buddhism also teaches the principle of non-violence, and considers it a fundamental aspect of spiritual practice      |
| Karma              | Both religions believe in the concept of karma, where an individual's actions have consequences that affect their future lives or rebirths | Both Jainism and Buddhism believe that one's actions (karma) determine the quality of one's rebirth                   |
| Meditation         | Both religions emphasize the practice of meditation as a means of attaining spiritual enlightenment or liberation                          | Both Jainism and Buddhism have developed different types of meditation practices                                      |
| Rejection of Vedas | Both religions reject the authority of the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism  | Both Jainism and Buddhism reject the caste system and emphasize the importance of individual effort and self-reliance |

|              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| Renunciation | Both religions advocate for renunciation of worldly pleasures and detachment from material possessions | Both Jainism and Buddhism emphasize the importance of practicing self-discipline and controlling one's desires in order to achieve spiritual liberation |
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