



JAINISM

An Inspiration from Yesterday
A path for Today
Freedom from Tomorrow



Ahimsa Parmo-Dharma
(Non-Violence is The Supreme Religion)

JAINISM

Jainism is an ancient religion that has been around for time immemorial. Its followers are called **Jains**.

Jain belief holds that 24 historical saints have lived and taught Jain truths in this most recent time stage of Jain history. They are called **Tirthankars**, and **Lord Mahavir**, the 24th and the last Tirthankar, is believed to have lived around 2500 BC.

Lord Mahavir's preachings were noted by his disciples and were written many years after **Lord Mahavir** attained **Moksh** - the ultimate liberation. The sacred books of his teachings were compiled, and they are known as **Agam Sutra**. At the core of Jainism, are the virtues of Non-Violence, Compassion and Respect for all living beings.

The life of a Jain may shine with divine radiance when he attains **The 3 Jewels of Jainism**

1) Gyan - Right Knowledge

2) Darshan - Right Belief

3) Charitra - Right Conduct

These are the three goals in life for Jains, the world over .

Tenets of JAINISM (AAA)

Ahimsa (Non-Violence) This is the foundation of Jainism.

Jains define Himsa (Violence) as intentional or unintentional harm of any living being by one's speech, actions or thought. Practicing **Ahimsa** is avoiding violence of any form and having compassion towards all living forms.

Anekantavad (Non-Absolutism) Jainism accepts and respects views of one and all. They believe that truth may be perceived differently by different beings and that forcing one's viewpoint on others is a form of violence. To cling to a belief dogmatically is committing an error based on a limited point of view. **Anekantavad** means to respect others' views and to have regard for differences.

Aparigraha (Non-Possessiveness) **Aparigraha** means minimizing one's desire for material things and limiting one's attachment to individual possessions. Jainism believes in conserving scarce resources by living a simple life.

Code of Conduct

The most important **Five Vrats** (vows) to be pursued by Jains :

1) Ahimsa - Non violence in action, words and thoughts.

2) Satya - Truth at all times.

3) Asteya - Abstaining from taking anything without permission of its rightful owner.

4) Brahmacharya - Practicing celibacy

5) Aparigraha - Limiting desires

JAIN PRACTICES IN DAY TO DAY LIFE

Worship

Most Jains perform prayers, recite scriptures and sing holy songs. Ceremonies and festivals are part of Jain tradition. The Jain rituals are performed with focused attention and quietude for physical, mental and emotional well-being.



Greetings

Jains greet each other with the term '*Jai Jinendra*'. This greeting is in appreciation of all those who have conquered the desires of five senses. It is also a reminder for all Jains of their ultimate goal is to attain salvation and liberation of the Soul.

Diet

Jains are strict vegetarians and live in a way that minimises their use of the world's resources. Jains believe that animals and plants, as well as human beings, contain living souls. Each of these souls is considered of equal value and should be treated with respect and compassion. Jains avoid root vegetables in their diet as roots host microscopic life forms that Jains believe ought not to be killed. The consumption of alcohol, drugs and cigarettes are also forbidden.



Marriage

Jains follow wedding rituals and customs similar to Hindu traditions and culture. They are joyous occasions where the bride and the groom exchange the vows in presence of close relatives and friends.



Funeral

The *Navkar mantra* (Jain Prayer) is recited and hymns are sung at a Jain's funeral. Jain mantras are chanted for the peace of departed souls. The body is usually cremated as soon as possible. After cremation, the ashes are traditionally scattered in a sacred river. Condolence prayers are conducted within 2- 3 days upon death of the Jain soul.



JAIN FESTIVALS

Paryushan/Daslakshani

Unlike other festivals, **Paryushan Parva** is about reflecting on one's **Chitta**, (state of being), rather than celebrating through sensory excitement. During this period, Jains around the world try to live a life, focusing on the enrichment of the inner self. On the last day of this festival, Jains go through prayers called "**Samvatsari Pratikraman**" which means all the energies that have so far been spent externally need to return towards the eternal self. On this day of this festival Jains reflect on their actions, words and thoughts that may have brought in any harm to living beings. They bow down and say "**Micchami Dukkadam**" which means to ask for forgiveness for any thoughts, words or action of theirs that may have caused pain and suffering to any living being.



Pratikraman Prayers during Paryushan



Discourses by religious leaders

Paryushan is the most prominent festival when a Jain may fast for many days. However, Jains can choose to fast at any time of the year to satisfy the inner urge to abstain from physical aspects of life and focus on inner wellness.

Fasting is primarily an act of willing abstinence or reduction from certain or all foods, drink, or both, for a period of time. The idea behind fasting is to purify the soul and attain internal peace. Most Jains fast at special times, during festivals, and on holy days.

On completion of the fast, **Parna** (fast breaking Ceremony) takes place. This may be done individually or as a community activity known as **Samuh Parna** (collective fast breaking)



Special food for breaking a Fast



Breaking Of a Fast (Parna)

Ayambil Oli

It is a religious period of 9 days that focuses on abstinence and simplicity of food. The food is prepared without any oil, dairy products and spices. The main intent again is about taking attention away from pleasures to look for inner silence.



Women volunteering to prepare special food for Ayambil Oli



Jains eating special diet in one sitting at Ayambil Oli

Mahavir Jayanti

Jains world over celebrate **Mahavir Jayanti**, the birth anniversary of its 24th **Tirthankar** by gathering and singing his praises and learning stories about his childhood. The intent is to recall the values and virtues of **Lord Mahavir** who personifies compassion and detachment. Jains world over aspire to be like him.



Mahavir Jayanti celebrations with the 14 dreams of his Mother Trishla



Celebrating Diwali by Community prayers at Jain Temple

Diwali

Tirthankar Mahavir left his physical body and attained **Nirvan** (liberation) on the day of **Diwali** (Deepavali). On this day prayers are performed and sermons delivered to remind all Jains that the ultimate goal in life is to follow the path showed by **Lord Mahavir**, the one who conquered all attachments and aversions.

SINGAPORE JAIN RELIGIOUS SOCIETY (SJRS)

Jains have settled in Singapore since the beginning of the 20th Century, around the period of the First World War. The Singapore Jain Religious Society was registered in 1972 and our Jain Elders secured its current premises in 1978, for use by its members. This location has since been renovated a number of times and in the year 2009, a **Murti (Idol) of Lord Mahavir** was consecrated at the premises. This Jain Centre is unique in the world, as it has progressed with the times in accommodating all the different Jain sects in the same premises, keeping to fundamental principles of Jainism. The Society maintains its prime objective of preserving Jain unity in Singapore. The year 2010, also marked 100 years of Jains in Singapore and the Society had organized a grand celebration for this joyous occasion.



Idol of Lord Mahavir at SJRS

Singapore Multi Racial and Multi Religious Community

In the year 1949, the Inter Religious Organisation (IRO) was formed to meet the needs of multi-racial and multi-cultured society of Singapore. Jainism was officially accepted and became the 10th religion to join the IRO in 2006. This recognition was a major milestone for SJRS. Being a member of IRO raised the awareness of Jainism in Singapore. SJRS is also actively involved in Inter-Racial and Religious Confidence Circle (IRCC) which gives the Jain community greater insights on living in harmony with other religious groups and also participates in Community engagement towards the welfare of the nation.

The Jain Community contributes generously in cash or kind towards national initiatives and set-up of volunteer groups during times of natural calamities or tragic events to support the relief efforts. The Society and its sub-groups plan visits to various places of worship island wide to get deeper knowledge on other faiths and their perspectives. Similarly, it also invites others in order to share about Jainism and gain understanding about its message and acceptance for a harmonious world today.



**Emeritus Senior Minister
Mr. Goh Chok Tong at SJRS**



MP's Visit at SJRS event

JAIN COMMUNITY IN SINGAPORE

It is a strong community of over 500 families. They congregate for various religious activities throughout the year with various sub groups formed for effective participation such as the Jain children, Jain youth, Ladies Wing and Senior Citizens. Throughout the year, scholars and religious leaders are invited to hold discourses so that the community can grow spiritually.

Singapore Jain Shala (SJS)

This sub-group functions as a school for Jain children from the ages 4 yrs to 12 yrs. It aims to inculcate the love for the religion by imparting Jain knowledge in an interesting and engaging manner. This helps the children to appreciate and understand the relevance of Jainism in today's time.



Young Jains of Singapore (YJS)

The YJS sub-group was formed to build up a strong sense of comradeship amongst Jain youths from ages 13 yrs to 25 yrs. The members of this group organise their own activities as well as support activities for the society during events and festivals under the guidance of the management committee.



Ladies Wing

The SJRS Ladies' Wing is an important pillar of the Society. They are instrumental in preparing the community meals for about 700 people during *Swami Vatsalya* (Community lunch). The ladies wing organises annual events such as Mother's Day and Senior Citizen's Day. They also organise workshops in the fields of health, fitness & parenting. This group also volunteers to prepare and serve meals for the 9 days of *Ayambil Oli*. (An annual Jain festival celebrated in the month of April.)



Senior Wing

The Senior Wing of Singapore Jain Religious Society provides an excellent avenue for our Seniors above age of 60 to interact as well as collaborate with other SJRS sub-groups in conducting community service. They visit charitable homes and places to distribute necessities and engage residents in happy and joyful activities.



Commit

Commit is an initiative launched in late 2009 to enable our community members to make more focused and consolidated charity contribution to the wider Singaporean community. A group of SJRS members champion this cause towards promoting community service projects.





Location

18 Jalan Yasin, Singapore 417991

Postal Address

Katong P. O. Box 106, Singapore 914304

Website: www.sjrs.org.sg

Email: sjrs@sjrs.org.sg

"Whilst every care has been taken to ensure accuracy of inputs in this brochure, do excuse any inadvertent oversights and / or omissions. Micchami Dukkadam"