



Mahavir Jayanti

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Prime Minister inaugurated **Navkar Mahamantra Divas** to mark [Mahavir Jayanti](#) (10th April 2025), emphasizing that **Lord Mahavir's teachings of non-violence, truth, and compassion** offer contemporary solutions to global challenges and align with the vision of 'Viksit Bharat'.

What is the Historical Background of Mahavir Jayanti?

- **About:** Mahavir Jayanti, also known as **Mahaveer Janma Kalyanak**, is one of the significant religious festivals in Jainism.
 - It celebrates the **birth of [Vardhamana Mahavira](#)**, the **24th and last Tirthankara** of Jain tradition (succeeded the 23rd Tirthankara Parshvanatha), who is considered a great spiritual teacher and reformer.
 - Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated on the **13th day of Chaitra month** in the Hindu calendar, the date varies annually.
- **Vardhamana Mahavira:**

VARDHAMAN MAHAVIRA

The 24th and last Tirthankara; succeeded the 23rd Tirthankara, Parshvanatha
(Mahavira was not the founder of Jainism)

BIRTH

- To King Siddhartha of Kundalgram and Queen Trishala, a Lichchhavi princess
- In 6th century BC, Vajji kingdom (modern day Vaishali, Bihar)
- Belonged to Ikshvaku dynasty

Mahavir Jayanti, one of the most auspicious festivals for Jains, marks the birth of Vardhamana Mahavira

SPIRITUAL LIFE

- Abandoned worldly life at age 30
- Attained '*kaivalya*' (omniscience) at age 42
- Delivered his first sermon at Pava (near Patna)

A symbol is associated with every Tirthankara, Mahavira's symbol was a lion

DEATH

- Believed to be passed away and attained Moksha at age 72 (5th century BC)
- Died at Pavapuri (near modern-day Rajgir, Bihar)

Moksha - liberation from the cycle of birth and death

TITLES

- Mahavira (great hero)
- Jaina/Jitendriya (who conquered all his senses)
- Nirgrantha (who is free from all bonds)

TEACHINGS (JAIN AGAMAS)

- Ahimsa (non-violence)
- Satya (truth)
- Asteya (non-stealing)
- Aparigraha (non-attachment)
- Brahmacharya (chastity) (propounded by Mahavira)

Mahavira and his disciples taught in Prakrit to teach ordinary people



What is the Contemporary Relevance of Teachings of Lord Mahavira?

- **Ahimsa (Nonviolence):** Lord Mahavira's teaching of Ahimsa advocates ending all forms of violence, including **physical, verbal, and psychological**, and promotes compassion towards all living beings.
 - In today's world, plagued by **armed conflicts, terrorism, and nuclear threats**, this principle calls for **peaceful resolutions and compassionate dialogue**.
 - This principle is also echoed in the [UN Charter](#), [Gandhian ethics](#), and [Sustainable Development Goal 16](#) (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), highlighting its global relevance and contemporary importance..
- **Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness):** Mahavira's principle of detachment from material possessions encourages a **sustainable lifestyle**, fostering **minimalism** and curbing greed, values that align with [Mission LIFE \(Lifestyle for Environment\)](#) and [SDG 12 \(Responsible Consumption and Production\)](#) to address environmental degradation and climate change
- **Anekantavada:** It teaches that truth has many dimensions, promoting respect for diverse perspectives and helping reduce **religious intolerance, racial discrimination, and societal divisions**.
 - It resonates with constitutional morality, freedom of thought and expression ([Article 19](#)), and [secularism \(Article 25\)](#) in the Indian Constitution.
- **Satya (Truth) and Asteya (Non-stealing):** Mahavira's principles of honesty and respecting others' rights **promote transparency and integrity** in today's world, combating [corruption](#) and **unethical practices**.
 - These teachings guide the creation of **ethical businesses** that prioritize social responsibility.
 - In business, Asteya promotes **ethical sourcing, fair wages, and sustainability**, aligning with fair trade principles and **ESG (Environmental, Social, and**

Governance) frameworks to combat exploitation in the global economy.

- **Brahmacharya (Celibacy/ Self-restraint):** Though interpreted in modern times as self-discipline, it helps address issues like **substance addiction, mental health, and emotional instability**.

ETHICS IN JAINISM

Triratna (Three Jewels)

Jainism provides threefold path known as Triratna for the attainment of Moksha (salvation):



Right faith
(Samyag
Darsana)



Right
knowledge
(Samyag Jnana)



Right
conduct
(Samyag Caritra)

Pancha-mahavratas

In general, Jaina morality consists of the essential observance of Pancha-mahavratas which are the ingredients of right conduct. They are:

- **Ahimsa** – nonviolence or **abstinence from all injuries to life**, either trasa (mobile) or sthavara (immobile)
- **Satyam** – Abstinence from falsehood
- **Asteyam**–Abstinence from stealing
- **Brahmacharya** – Abstinence from sensual and casual pleasures
- **Aparigraha** – Abstinence from amassing wealth greedily or any kind of attachments



What are the Key Facts About Jainism?

Click here to Read: [Jainism](#)

Drishti Mains Question:

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. With reference to the religious practices in India, the “Sthanakvasi” sect belongs to (2018)

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Vaishnavism
- (d) Shaivism

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2017)

1. Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
2. Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism? (2012)

1. Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
2. Indifference to the authority of the Vedas
3. Denial of the efficacy of rituals

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Q. Anekantavada is a core theory and philosophy of which one of the following? (2009)

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Sikhism
- (d) Vaishnavism

Ans: (b)

