



## Ethics in Buddhism & Jainism

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### Ethics in Buddhism

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- Buddhist ethics are neither arbitrary standards invented by man for his own utilitarian purpose nor are they arbitrarily imposed.
- Man-made laws and social customs do not form the basis of Buddhist ethics.
- Buddhist ethics finds its foundation not on the changing social customs but rather on the unchanging laws of nature.

### Morality in Buddhism

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- Buddhist morality judges an action good or bad basing on the intention or motivation from which it originates.
- Actions that have their roots in greed, hatred or selfishness are considered to be bad - called Akusala Kamma.
- Actions which are rooted in the virtues of generosity, love and wisdom are meritorious and good - called Kusala Kamma.

### Three Essentials for Life

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- Buddhism considers - Wisdom (Prajna), Ethical conduct (Sila) and the Concentration (Samadi) as the three essentials for life.
- Wisdom comes from right view, it leads to the right intention.
- The right view and intentions are guides to ethical conduct - right speech, right action, right livelihood and right effort.
- Concentration - pointed focus is 'self - activity' to have right mindfulness and right concentration.
- When wisdom, ethics and concentration become way of life; one gains enlightenment.

### Pancasila (Five Refrains)

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- Buddhism invites Buddhists to adopt five precepts voluntarily in order to live together in civilised communities with mutual trust and respect.
- Following these five precepts helps the Buddhist make a spiritual journey towards liberation. These are:
  1. no killing,
  2. no stealing,
  3. no lying,
  4. no sexual misconduct, and
  5. no intoxicants.

## Ten Demeritorious Deeds

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- People are advised to keep away from deeds rooted in greed, hatred, and delusion as they will bring suffering to others.
- These ten deeds are divided into three sets:
  1. Actions of the Body: Bodily actions such as killing of living beings, stealing, and unlawful sexual intercourse.
  2. Verbal Actions: lying, slander, harsh speech, and meaningless talk.
  3. Actions of the Mind: Covetousness or being desirous, especially of things belonging to others, ill-will, wrong views.

## Ethics in Jainism

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- Jainism provides threefold path known as Triratna (three jewels) for the attainment of Moksha (salvation):
  1. Right faith (Samyag Darsana),
  2. Right knowledge (Samyag Jnana),
  3. Right conduct (Samyag Caritra).
- They work like a medicine to cure a sick mind– faith in its efficacy, knowledge by its use and actual taking of the medicine, right conduct.

## Pancha-mahavratas

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

1. **Ahimsa** – nonviolence or abstinence from all injuries to life, either trasa (mobile) or sthavara (immobile).
  - Jainism emphasises upon equality to all life, so killing a living being is violence.
  - Hurting others through speech by intentional insults and by making others suffer emotionally is also violence.
  - Since a householder cannot lead a life without violence, therefore, one should discharge his/her worldly responsibilities with the minimum injuries to others.
  - But killing animals for eating is strictly prohibited.
2. **Satyam** - Abstinence from falsehood; rather that speaking what is true, good and pleasant.
  - One should not hesitate to tell the truth even when his/her life is in danger.
  - But at the same time; if the truth results brings harm to others, in such case, the truth should be withheld in the interest of the others.
3. **Asteyam** - Abstinence from stealing.

Stealing has various dimensions such as – stealing others property, directing others to steal, receiving stolen property or retaining things with a motto ‘finders keepers’.
4. **Brahmacharya** - abstinence from sensual and casual pleasures.
  - A person must not look at women with an evil intention.
  - Treat opposite genders with respect.
5. **Aparigraha** - Abstinence from amassing wealth greedily or any kind of attachments.
  - Each householder needs money to lead a decent life but mindless accumulation of wealth leads to suffering and unhappiness.
  - Therefore, one must have limited necessity and learn to be content.