

## Jainism in the 21st century

Jainism is an Indian religion, teaching a path to spiritual purity through disciplined non-violence (ahimsa) to all living creatures. It is amazing to see how because of omniscience, the Tirthankaras could visualize the structure of the universe from micro to macro level without the aid of any modern day instruments and research. It is as relevant today as it was then.

**Health:** Jainism promotes straining and boiling of water before drinking. The groundwater sources are contaminated with pathogens like bacteria, viruses, amoebas and eggs/larvae of parasitic worms which lead to many water-borne diseases and deaths. WHO recommends household water treatment like filtering and boiling. Jainism advocates eating before sunset and after sunrise (chauthar) Even research has proved that eating before sunset prevents obesity. The digestive system processes the food well in time and reduces gastrointestinal problems. It promotes good sleep by preventing poor digestion, nocturnal acidity, cough, heartburn which tends to wake us up at night. Jainism lays importance on different types of fasting. Human trials have shown good results of intermittent fasting on weight loss, stress resistance, increased insulin sensitivity, reduction in lipid profile particularly LDL and increased life span. Fasting detoxifies our body and mind. Jainism promotes a vegetarian diet. Recent studies have shown a diet high in animal protein may increase the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer.

**Terrorism:** Ahimsa (non-violence) is the path of Jainism. Chandragupta Maurya who founded Maurya empire followed Jainism and was the first king to unite the nation. Education about controlling emotions like aggression, possession that are usually the root cause of violence and dialogue based on nonviolence and unity in diversity can solve the conflicts.

**STD/HIV:** Jainism principle of celibacy for householders limits one's sexual activities to married partner only and abstinence. Even healthcare workers advocate abstinence and mutual monogamy to reduce risk of sexually transmitted disease.

**Ecological Balance:** Jainism teaches to practice self-control by minimizing our consumption of natural resources like the use of water, electricity, energy, food, trees. Jainism is one of the most environmentally conscious religions in the world.

Thus Jain way of life is very important in the 21st century to solve many of our health, environmental, ecological, economical and violence related problem. No doubt everybody wants a comfortable life but we have to be careful so that span of comfortable life changes from momentary to long term.

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