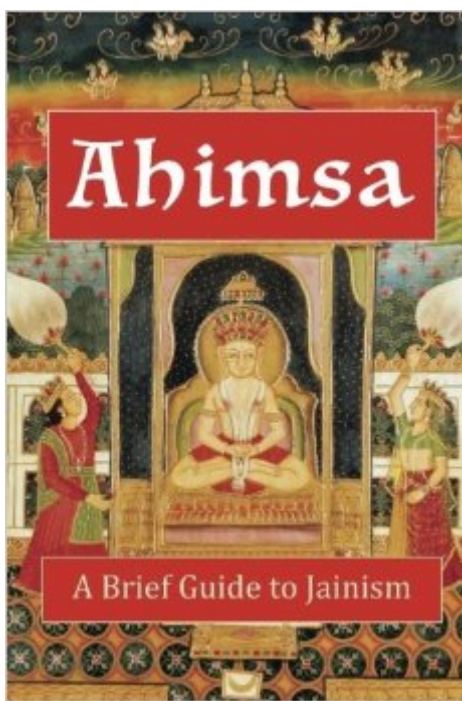


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Ahimsa: A Brief Guide To Jainism



Synopsis

Jainism arose as a systematic response to human and animal violence by positing a radical alternative—the path of ahimsa or non-violence. Their argument is a simple but profound one. If we can lessen the pain and suffering of those around us why not choose that option instead of needlessly perpetuating the never-ending cycle of violent retribution. Jainism raises a most pregnant question for all of us: how big is our circle of compassion? Can we extend its circumference beyond our selves and ken to include other human beings not of our tribe and even further to include animals and other living beings? In those brief moments where we almost instinctively lash out others, can we instead pause and change our responses? The Jains believe that we can and have demonstrated over hundreds of years of how it can be ecologically and ethically successful. This book is a brief introduction to the Jain religion, including a close look at its inception and how it evolved over time to its present day status. Special attention will be given to how Jain ideals such as ahimsa and anekantavada (the doctrine of non one-sidedness) can serve as a much needed and welcome panacea to the world's strife and misery. Although Jainism is perhaps the smallest of the world's religions, what it has to offer humankind is of inestimable value.

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