

= Ahimsa =

Ahimsa (Sanskrit : अहिंसा ; IAST : ahimsā , Pāli : avihiṃsa) is a term meaning ' not to injure ' and ' compassion ' . The word is derived from the Sanskrit root hiṃs to strike ; hiṃs is injury or harm , a @-@ hiṃs is the opposite of this , i.e. cause no injury , do no harm . Ahimsa is also referred to as nonviolence , and it applies to all living beings including all animals according to many Indian religions .

Ahimsa is one of the cardinal virtues and an important tenet of 3 major religions (Jainism , Hinduism , and Buddhism) . Ahimsa is a multidimensional concept , inspired by the premise that all living beings have the spark of the divine spiritual energy ; therefore , to hurt another being is to hurt oneself . Ahimsa has also been related to the notion that any violence has karmic consequences . While ancient scholars of Hinduism pioneered and over time perfected the principles of Ahimsa , the concept reached an extraordinary status in the ethical philosophy of Jainism . Most popularly , Mahatma Gandhi strongly believed in the principle of ahimsa .

Ahimsa 's precept of ' cause no injury ' includes one 's deeds , words , and thoughts . Classical literature of Hinduism such as Mahabharata and Ramayana , as well as modern scholars debate principles of Ahimsa when one is faced with war and situations requiring self @-@ defence . The historic literature from India and modern discussions have contributed to theories of Just War , and theories of appropriate self @-@ defence .

= = Etymology = =

The word Ahimsa sometimes spelled as Ahinsa is derived from the Sanskrit root hiṃs to strike ; hiṃs is injury or harm , a @-@ hiṃs is the opposite of this , i.e. non harming or nonviolence .

There is a debate on the origins of the word Ahimsa , and how its meaning evolved . Mayrhofer as well as Dumot suggest the root word may be han which means kill , which leads to the interpretation that ahimsa means do not kill . Schmidt as well as Bodewitz explain the proper root word is hiṃs and the Sanskrit verb hinasti , which leads to the interpretation ahimsa means do not injure , or do not hurt . Wackernagel @-@ Debrunner concur with the latter explanation .

Ancient texts use ahimsa to mean non @-@ injury , a broader concept than non @-@ violence . Non @-@ injury implies not killing others , as well as not hurting others mentally or verbally ; it includes avoiding all violent means including physical violence anything that injures others . In classical Sanskrit literature of Hinduism , another word Adrohi is sometimes used instead of Ahimsa , as one of the cardinal virtues necessary for moral life . One example is in Baudhayana Dharmasutra 2 @. 6 @. 23 : अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा अहिंसा (One who does not injure others with words , thoughts or acts is named Adrohi) .

= = Hinduism = =

= = Ancient Vedic Texts = =

Ahimsa as an ethical concept evolved in Vedic texts . The oldest scripts , along with discussing ritual animal sacrifices , indirectly mention Ahimsa , but do not emphasise it . Over time , the Hindu scripts revise ritual practices and the concept of Ahimsa is increasingly refined and emphasised , ultimately Ahimsa becomes the concept that describes the highest virtue by the late Vedic era (about 500 BC) . For example , hymn 10 @. 22 @. 13 in the Rig Veda uses the words Satya (truthfulness) and Ahimsa in a prayer to deity Indra ; later , the Yajur Veda dated to be between 1000 BC and 600 BC , states , " may all beings look at me with a friendly eye , may I do likewise , and may we look at each other with the eyes of a friend " .

The term Ahimsa appears in the text Taittiriya Shakha of the Yajurveda (TS 5 @. 2 @. 8 @. 7) , where it refers to non @-@ injury to the sacrificer himself . It occurs several times in the Shatapatha Brahmana in the sense of " non @-@ injury " . The Ahimsa doctrine is a late Vedic era

development in Brahmanical culture . The earliest reference to the idea of non @-@ violence to animals (" pashu @-@ Ahimsa ") , apparently in a moral sense , is in the Kapisthala Katha Samhita of the Yajurveda (KapS 31 @.@ 11) , which may have been written in about the 8th century BCE .

Bowker states the word appears but is uncommon in the principal Upanishads . Kaneda gives examples of the word Ahimsa in these Upanishads . Other scholars suggest Ahimsa as an ethical concept that started evolving in the Vedas , becoming an increasingly central concept in Upanishads .

The Ch?ndogya Upani?ad , dated to the 8th or 7th century BCE , one of the oldest Upanishads , has the earliest evidence for the use of the word Ahimsa in the sense familiar in Hinduism (a code of conduct) . It bars violence against " all creatures " (sarvabhuta) and the practitioner of Ahimsa is said to escape from the cycle of metempsychosis (CU 8 @.@ 15 @.@ 1) . A few scholars are of the opinion that this might have been a concession to the growing influence of Jainism , in Vedic Hinduism .

Ch?ndogya Upani?ad also names Ahimsa , along with Satyavacanam (truthfulness) , Arjavam (sincerity) , Danam (charity) , Tapo (penance / meditation) , as one of five essential virtues (CU 3 @.@ 17 @.@ 4) .

The Sandilya Upanishad lists ten forbearances : Ahimsa , Satya , Asteya , Brahmacharya , Daya , Arjava , Kshama , Dhriti , Mitahara and Saucha . According to Kaneda , the term Ahimsa is an important spiritual doctrine shared by Hinduism , Buddhism and Jainism . It literally means ' non @-@ injury ' and ' non @-@ killing ' . It implies the total avoidance of harming of any kind of living creatures not only by deeds , but also by words and in thoughts .

= = = The Epics = = =

The Mahabharata , one of the epics of Hinduism , has multiple mentions of the phrase Ahimsa Paramo Dharma (?????? ????? ?? ? ??) , which literally means : non @-@ violence is the highest moral virtue . For example , Mahaprasthanika Parva has the verse :

The above passage from Mahabharata emphasises the cardinal importance of Ahimsa in Hinduism , and literally means : Ahimsa is the highest virtue , Ahimsa is the highest self @-@ control , Ahimsa is the greatest gift , Ahimsa is the best suffering , Ahimsa is the highest sacrifice , Ahimsa is the finest strength , Ahimsa is the greatest friend , Ahimsa is the greatest happiness , Ahimsa is the highest truth , and Ahimsa is the greatest teaching . Some other examples where the phrase Ahimsa Paramo Dharma are discussed include Adi Parva , Vana Parva and Anushasana Parva . The Bhagavad Gita , among other things , discusses the doubts and questions about appropriate response when one faces systematic violence or war . These verses develop the concepts of lawful violence in self @-@ defence and the theories of just war . However , there is no consensus on this interpretation . Gandhi , for example , considers this debate about non @-@ violence and lawful violence as a mere metaphor for the internal war within each human being , when he or she faces moral questions .

= = = Self @-@ defence , criminal law , and war = = =

The classical texts of Hinduism devote numerous chapters discussing what people who practice the virtue of Ahimsa , can and must do when they are faced with war , violent threat or need to sentence someone convicted of a crime . These discussions have led to theories of just war , theories of reasonable self @-@ defence and theories of proportionate punishment . Arthashastra discusses , among other things , why and what constitutes proportionate response and punishment .

War

The precepts of Ahimsa under Hinduism require that war must be avoided , with sincere and truthful dialogue . Force must be the last resort . If war becomes necessary , its cause must be just , its purpose virtuous , its objective to restrain the wicked , its aim peace , its method lawful . War can only be started and stopped by a legitimate authority . Weapons used must be proportionate to the opponent and the aim of war , not indiscriminate tools of destruction . All strategies and weapons

used in the war must be to defeat the opponent , not designed to cause misery to the opponent ; for example , use of arrows is allowed , but use of arrows smeared with painful poison is not allowed . Warriors must use judgment in the battlefield . Cruelty to the opponent during war is forbidden . Wounded , unarmed opponent warriors must not be attacked or killed , they must be brought to your realm and given medical treatment . Children , women and civilians must not be injured . While the war is in progress , sincere dialogue for peace must continue .

Self @-@ defence

In matters of self @-@ defence , different interpretations of ancient Hindu texts have been offered . For example , Tähtinen suggests self @-@ defence is appropriate , criminals are not protected by the rule of Ahimsa , and Hindu scriptures support the use of violence against an armed attacker . Ahimsa is not meant to imply pacifism .

Alternate theories of self @-@ defence , inspired by Ahimsa , build principles similar to theories of just war . Aikido , pioneered in Japan , illustrates one such principles of self @-@ defence . Morihei Ueshiba , the founder of Aikido , described his inspiration as Ahimsa . According to this interpretation of Ahimsa in self @-@ defence , one must not assume that the world is free of aggression . One must presume that some people will , out of ignorance , error or fear , attack other persons or intrude into their space , physically or verbally . The aim of self @-@ defence , suggested Ueshiba , must be to neutralise the aggression of the attacker , and avoid the conflict . The best defence is one where the victim is protected , as well as the attacker is respected and not injured if possible . Under Ahimsa and Aikido , there are no enemies , and appropriate self @-@ defence focuses on neutralising the immaturity , assumptions and aggressive strivings of the attacker .

Criminal law

Tähtinen concludes that Hindus have no misgivings about death penalty ; their position is that evil @-@ doers who deserve death should be killed , and that a king in particular is obliged to punish criminals and should not hesitate to kill them , even if they happen to be his own brothers and sons .

Other scholars conclude that the scriptures of Hinduism suggest sentences for any crime must be fair , proportional and not cruel .

Pacifism

There is no universal consensus on pacifism among Hindu scholars of modern times . The conflict between pacifistic interpretations of Ahimsa and the theories of just war prescribed by the Gita has been resolved by some scholars such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi , as being an allegory , wherein the battlefield is the soul and Arjuna , the war is within each human being , where man 's higher impulses struggle against his own evil impulses .

= = = Non @-@ human life = = =

The Hindu precept of ' cause no injury ' applies to animals and all life forms . This precept isn't found in the oldest verses of Vedas , but increasingly becomes one of the central ideas between 500 BC and 400 AD . In the oldest texts , numerous ritual sacrifices of animals , including cows and horses , are highlighted and hardly any mention is made of Ahimsa to non @-@ human life .

Hindu scriptures , dated to between 5th century and 1st century BC , while discussing human diet , initially suggest ?? kosher ?? meat may be eaten , evolving it with the suggestion that only meat obtained through ritual sacrifice can be eaten , then that one should eat no meat because it hurts animals , with verses describing the noble life as one that lives on flowers , roots and fruits alone .

Later texts of Hinduism declare Ahimsa one of the primary virtues , declare any killing or harming any life as against ?? dharma ?? (moral life) . Finally , the discussion in Upanishads and Hindu Epics shifts to whether a human being can ever live his or her life without harming animal and plant life in some way ; which and when plants or animal meat may be eaten , whether violence against animals causes human beings to become less compassionate , and if and how one may exert least harm to non @-@ human life consistent with ahimsa precept , given the constraints of life and human needs . The Mahabharata permits hunting by warriors , but opposes it in the case of hermits

who must be strictly non @-@ violent . Sushruta Samhita , a Hindu text written in the 3rd or 4th century , in Chapter XLVI suggests proper diet as a means of treating certain illnesses , and recommends various fishes and meats for different ailments and for pregnant women , and the Charaka Samhita describes meat as superior to all other kinds of food for convalescents .

Across the texts of Hinduism , there is a profusion of ideas about the virtue of Ahimsa when applied to non @-@ human life , but without a universal consensus . Alsdorf claims the debate and disagreements between supporters of vegetarian lifestyle and meat eaters was significant . Even suggested exceptions ? ritual slaughter and hunting ? were challenged by advocates of Ahimsa . In the Mahabharata both sides present various arguments to substantiate their viewpoints . Moreover , a hunter defends his profession in a long discourse .

Many of the arguments proposed in favor of non @-@ violence to animals refer to the bliss one feels , the rewards it entails before or after death , the danger and harm it prevents , as well as to the karmic consequences of violence .

The ancient Hindu texts discuss Ahimsa and non @-@ animal life . They discourage wanton destruction of nature including of wild and cultivated plants . Hermits (sannyasins) were urged to live on a fruitarian diet so as to avoid the destruction of plants . Scholars claim the principles of ecological non @-@ violence is innate in the Hindu tradition , and its conceptual fountain has been Ahimsa as their cardinal virtue .

The classical literature of Hinduism exists in many Indian languages . For example , Tirukku?a? written between 200 BC and 400 AD , and sometimes called the Tamil Veda , is one of the most cherished classics on Hinduism written in a South Indian language . Tirukku?a? dedicates Chapter 32 and 33 of Book 1 to the virtue of Ahimsa . Tirukku?a? suggests that Ahimsa applies to all life forms .

= = = Modern times = = =

In the 19th and 20th centuries , prominent figures of Indian spirituality such as Swami Vivekananda , Ramana Maharshi , Swami Sivananda , A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami and in the present time Vijaypal Baghel emphasised the importance of Ahimsa .

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi promoted the principle of Ahimsa , very successful by applying it to all spheres of life , particularly to politics (Swaraj) . His non @-@ violent resistance movement satyagraha had an immense impact on India , impressed public opinion in Western countries , and influenced the leaders of various civil and political rights movements such as the American civil rights movement 's Martin Luther King , Jr. and James Bevel . In Gandhi 's thought , Ahimsa precludes not only the act of inflicting a physical injury , but also mental states like evil thoughts and hatred , unkind behavior such as harsh words , dishonesty and lying , all of which he saw as manifestations of violence incompatible with Ahimsa . Gandhi believed Ahimsa to be a creative energy force , encompassing all interactions leading one 's self to find satya , " Divine Truth " . Sri Aurobindo criticised the Gandhian concept of Ahimsa as unrealistic and not universally applicable ; he adopted a pragmatic non @-@ pacifist position , saying that the justification of violence depends on the specific circumstances of the given situation . Sri Aurobindo also indicated that Gandhi 's Ahimsa led to partition of India as it blocked the forceful action that the Indian people were engaged in during the 1920s and 30s , which caused delay in independence , allowing other forces to take root , including those who wanted India divided .

Gandhi stated that he viewed " Ahimsa is in Hinduism , it is in Christianity as well as in Islam . " He added , " Nonviolence is common to all religions , but it has found the highest expression and application in Hinduism (I do not regard Jainism or Buddhism as separate from Hinduism) . " When questioned whether violence and non @-@ violence is both taught in Quran , he stated , " I have heard it from many Muslim friends that the Koran teaches the use of non @-@ violence . (... The) argument about non @-@ violence in the Holy Koran is an interpolation , not necessary for my thesis . "

A historical and philosophical study of Ahimsa was instrumental in the shaping of Albert Schweitzer 's principle of " reverence for life " . Schweitzer praised Indian philosophical and religious traditions

for ethics of Ahimsa as , " the laying down of the commandment not to kill and not to damage is one of the greatest events in the spiritual history of mankind " , but suggested that " not @-@ killing and not @-@ harming " is not always practically possible as in self @-@ defence , nor ethical as in chronic starving during a famine case .

= = = Yoga = = =

Ahimsa is imperative for practitioners of Patañjali ' s eight limb Raja yoga system . It is included in the first limb and is the first of five Yamas (self restraints) which , together with the second limb , make up the code of ethical conduct in Yoga philosophy . Ahimsa is also one of the ten Yamas in Hatha Yoga according to verse 1 @. @ 1 @. @ 17 of its classic manual Hatha Yoga Pradipika . The significance of Ahimsa as the very first restraint in the very first limb of Yoga (Yamas) , is that it defines the necessary foundation for progress through Yoga . It is a precursor to Asana , implying that success in Yogasana can be had only if the self is purified in thought , word and deed through the self @-@ restraint of Ahimsa .

= = Jainism = =

In Jainism , the understanding and implementation of Ahimsa is more radical , scrupulous , and comprehensive than in any other religion . Killing any living being out of passions is considered hiṃsā (to injure) and abstaining from such an act is ahimsā (noninjury) . The vow of ahimsā is considered the foremost among the ' five vows of Jainism ' . Other vows like truth (satya) are meant for safeguarding the vow of ahimsā . In the practice of Ahimsa , the requirements are less strict for the lay persons (sravakas) who have undertaken anuvrata (Smaller Vows) than for the Jain monastics who are bound by the Mahavrata " Great Vows " . The statement ahimsā paramo dharma is often found inscribed on the walls of the Jain temples . Like in Hinduism , the aim is to prevent the accumulation of harmful karma . When Mahavira revived and reorganised the Jain faith in the 6th or 5th century BCE , Ahimsa was already an established , strictly observed rule . Rishabhanatha (Ṛṣabha) , the first Jain Tirthankara , whom modern Western historians consider to be a historical figure , followed by Parshvanatha (Pārśva) the twenty @-@ third Tirthankara lived in about the 8th century BCE . He founded the community to which Mahavira ' s parents belonged . Ahimsa was already part of the " Fourfold Restraint " (Caujjama) , the vows taken by Parshva ' s followers . In the times of Mahavira and in the following centuries , Jains were at odds with both Buddhists and followers of the Vedic religion or Hindus , whom they accused of negligence and inconsistency in the implementation of Ahimsa . According to the Jain tradition either lacto vegetarianism or veganism is mandatory .

The Jain concept of Ahimsa is characterised by several aspects . It does not make any exception for ritual sacrificers and professional warrior @-@ hunters . Killing of animals for food is absolutely ruled out . Jains also make considerable efforts not to injure plants in everyday life as far as possible . Though they admit that plants must be destroyed for the sake of food , they accept such violence only inasmuch as it is indispensable for human survival , and there are special instructions for preventing unnecessary violence against plants . Jains go out of their way so as not to hurt even small insects and other minuscule animals . For example , Jains often do not go out at night , when they are more likely to step upon an insect . In their view , injury caused by carelessness is like injury caused by deliberate action . Eating honey is strictly outlawed , as it would amount to violence against the bees . Some Jains abstain from farming because it inevitably entails unintentional killing or injuring of many small animals , such as worms and insects , but agriculture is not forbidden in general and there are Jain farmers .

Theoretically , all life forms are said to deserve full protection from all kinds of injury , Jains recognise a hierarchy of life . Mobile beings are given higher protection than immobile ones . For the mobile beings , they distinguish between one @-@ sensed , two @-@ sensed , three @-@ sensed , four @-@ sensed and five @-@ sensed ones ; a one @-@ sensed animal has touch as its only sensory modality . The more senses a being has , the more they care about non @-@ injuring it .

Among the five @-@ sensed beings , the precept of non @-@ injury and non @-@ violence to the rational ones (humans) is strongest in Jain Ahimsa .

Jains agree with Hindus that violence in self @-@ defence can be justified , and they agree that a soldier who kills enemies in combat is performing a legitimate duty . Jain communities accepted the use of military power for their defence , there were Jain monarchs , military commanders , and soldiers .

= = Buddhism = =

In Buddhist texts Ahimsa (or its P?li cognate avihi?s?) is part of the Five Precepts (Pañcas?la) , the first of which has been to abstain from killing . This precept of Ahimsa is applicable to both the Buddhist layperson and the monk community .

The Ahimsa precept is not a commandment and transgressions did not invite religious sanctions for layperson , but their power has been in the Buddhist belief in karmic consequences and their impact in afterlife during rebirth . Killing , in Buddhist belief , leads to rebirth in the hellish realm , and for a longer time in more severe conditions if the murder victim was a monk . Saving animals from slaughter for meat , is believed to be a way to acquire merit for better rebirth . These moral precepts have been voluntarily self @-@ enforced in lay Buddhist culture through the associated belief in karma and rebirth . The Buddhist texts not only recommended Ahimsa , but suggest avoiding trading goods that contribute to or are a result of violence :

These five trades , O monks , should not be taken up by a lay follower : trading with weapons , trading in living beings , trading in meat , trading in intoxicants , trading in poison .

Unlike lay Buddhists , transgressions by monks do invite sanctions . Full expulsion of a monk from sangha follows instances of killing , just like any other serious offense against the monastic nikaya code of conduct .

= = = War = = =

Violent ways of punishing criminals and prisoners of war was not explicitly condemned in Buddhism , but peaceful ways of conflict resolution and punishment with the least amount of injury were encouraged . The early texts condemn the mental states that lead to violent behavior .

Nonviolence is an overriding theme within the Pali Canon . While the early texts condemn killing in the strongest terms , and portray the ideal king as a pacifist , such a king is nonetheless flanked by an army . It seems that the Buddha 's teaching on nonviolence was not interpreted or put into practice in an uncompromisingly pacifist or anti @-@ military @-@ service way by early Buddhists . The early texts assume war to be a fact of life , and well @-@ skilled warriors are viewed as necessary for defensive warfare . In Pali texts , injunctions to abstain from violence and involvement with military affairs are directed at members of the sangha ; later Mahayana texts , which often generalise monastic norms to laity , require this of lay people as well .

The early texts do not contain just @-@ war ideology as such . Some argue that a sutta in the Gamani Samyuttam rules out all military service . In this passage , a soldier asks the Buddha if it is true that , as he has been told , soldiers slain in battle are reborn in a heavenly realm . The Buddha reluctantly replies that if he is killed in battle while his mind is seized with the intention to kill , he will undergo an unpleasant rebirth . In the early texts , a person 's mental state at the time of death is generally viewed as having a great impact on the next birth .

Some Buddhists point to other early texts as justifying defensive war . One example is the Kosala Samyutta , in which King Pasenadi , a righteous king favored by the Buddha , learns of an impending attack on his kingdom . He arms himself in defence , and leads his army into battle to protect his kingdom from attack . He lost this battle but won the war . King Pasenadi eventually defeated King Ajatasattu and captured him alive . He thought that , although this King of Magadha has transgressed against his kingdom , he had not transgressed against him personally , and Ajatasattu was still his nephew . He released Ajatasattu and did not harm him . Upon his return , the Buddha said (among other things) that Pasenadi " is a friend of virtue , acquainted with virtue ,

intimate with virtue " , while the opposite is said of the aggressor , King Ajatasattu .

According to Theravada commentaries , there are five requisite factors that must all be fulfilled for an act to be both an act of killing and to be karmically negative . These are : (1) the presence of a living being , human or animal ; (2) the knowledge that the being is a living being ; (3) the intent to kill ; (4) the act of killing by some means ; and (5) the resulting death . Some Buddhists have argued on this basis that the act of killing is complicated , and its ethicization is predicated upon intent . Some have argued that in defensive postures , for example , the primary intention of a soldier is not to kill , but to defend against aggression , and the act of killing in that situation would have minimal negative karmic repercussions .

According to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar , there is circumstantial evidence encouraging Ahimsa , from the Buddha 's doctrine , " Love all , so that you may not wish to kill any . " Gautama Buddha distinguished between a principle and a rule . He did not make Ahimsa a matter of rule , but suggested it as a matter of principle . This gives Buddhists freedom to act .

= = = Laws = = =

The emperors of Sui dynasty , Tang dynasty and early Song dynasty banned killing in Lunar calendar 1st , 5th , and 9th month . Empress Wu Tse @-@ Tien banned killing for more than half a year in 692 . Some also banned fishing for some time each year .

There were bans after death of emperors , Buddhist and Taoist prayers , and natural disasters such as after a drought in 1926 summer Shanghai and an 8 days ban from August 12 , 1959 after the August 7 flood (????) , the last big flood before the 88 Taiwan Flood .

People avoid killing during some festivals , like the Taoist Ghost Festival , the Nine Emperor Gods Festival , the Vegetarian Festival and many others .