

Jainism

1. Origin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jainism is an ancient religion from India. There are about 25,000 Jains in the U.K.
2. Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English and Indian languages such as Gujarati and Rajasthani may be spoken.
3. Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jainism is concerned for the welfare of every being in the universe and for the health of the universe itself. The essence of this concern is expressed through non-violence which is understood to mean that the only way to save one's soul is to protect every other soul. Jainism is a religion of self-help. There are no gods or spiritual beings that will help human beings. However, Jainism does believe that there are divine human beings / teachers called "Jinas" who are worthy of devotion. Mahavira is regarded as being special among them. Jains believe in reincarnation and seek ultimate liberation by escaping the continuous cycle of birth, death and rebirth so that the immortal soul lives for ever in a state of bliss.
4. Birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prayer is chanted in the new born baby's ear. Naming takes place on the 11th, 13th or 29th day after birth. Abortion is forbidden in principle even at the expense of the mother's own life, though it is sometimes practiced. Contraception isn't favoured.



5. Prayer & Customs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Devotees like to rinse their mouths before reciting prayers. ▪ Jains should carry out sitting meditation in one place for 48 minutes each day. They may pray before dawn, lunch, and visit the Temple daily though such prayer can be undertaken at home. They read scriptures. ▪ Main festivals include the celebration of Mahavira's birthday (March / April), Diwali a festival of light in the autumn marking Mahavira's liberation; and New Year which begins the next day. ▪ May like family or close friends to be present often.
6. Diet & Fasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jains are strict vegetarians and some are vegan (no meat, seafood, eggs or mushrooms but milk is permitted). ▪ Ideally food is prepared separately to avoid contamination. ▪ Some don't eat root and green vegetables. They will refuse food obtained in a cruel manner. ▪ Some prefer to drink water that is boiled, cooled to room temperature and filtered. Some will not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. Alcohol is forbidden. ▪ Fasting is very common. A Jain may fast at any time but most will fast at special times such as Paryushan which is 8 days of fasting Aug. / Sep. Fasting is more often done by women than men. There are several types of fasting: 1) Complete fasting, 2) Partial fasting, 3) Limiting the number of items of food eaten, 4) Giving up favourite foods.
7. Clothing & Washing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May dress modestly in white and without shoes though this may depend on people's cultural background. ▪ Jains like to brush their teeth before breakfast and to wash themselves in flowing water. ▪ They prefer single sex accommodation.



8. Medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict vegetarianism means that some Jains wish for medicines without animal substances such as gelatine or cod-liver oil, or which have been developed by testing on animals, however individual choices will be made. Jains will not touch people of the opposite sex. Blood transfusion is by personal choice but is a generally accepted practice.
9. Care of the Dying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where someone, who is aware that he may die soon, feels he has completed all of his duties, he may cease to eat or drink until death. This form of dying is called santhara. It is Jain culture for relatives to visit the sick; they may sing hymns and read special writings. The presence of a Jain spiritual care-giver would be preferred. It may be difficult for a Jain monk to visit.
10. Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organ donation is by personal choice. There may be objections to post mortems and a coroner may be needed to convince a family that it is necessary. The body may be washed and dressed with clothes and flowers which the family provide, before being cremated as soon as possible; prayers are continuously chanted, a lamp lit using clarified butter. The bodies of infants aren't cremated but usually buried instead; some Jains pursue Hindu customs.
11. Contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The chaplaincy department has contact numbers for obtaining further advice.

