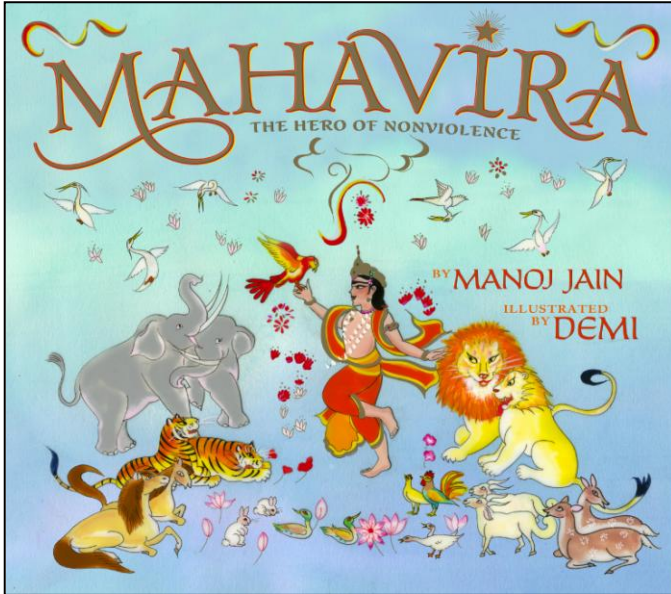


Mahavira: The Hero of Nonviolence

By Manoj Jain

Illustrated by Demi



Mahavira: The Hero of Nonviolence tells the remarkable story of Mahavira, a young prince who renounces his wealth and power to become a wandering monk. Mahavira imagined a world where no one gets hurt, a world where no one is teased or bullied, a world where there is no fear or anger. Today, more than 2,500 years later, over 10 million Jains follow Mahavira's example. Beautifully brought to life by award-winning illustrator, Demi, let the story of Mahavira's belief in compassion and nonviolence inspire you as he inspired the visionary leader Mahatma Gandhi, who in turn inspired Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wisdom Tales is honored to have closely worked with JAINA (The Federation of Jain Associations in North America), throughout the production of *Mahavira: The Hero of Nonviolence*. JAINA represents eighty Jain temples and centers and 120,000 Jains in North America with the goal of sharing the Jain teaching and way of life.



Mahavira and Jainism

- ❖ Jainism is one of the world's oldest religions, with its original roots in India
- ❖ Mahavira, who lived at the time of the Buddha in the 6th century BCE, is the twenty-fourth spiritual teacher of the Jain religion
- ❖ A prince who renounced his kingdom, he propagated the universal ethic of nonviolence towards all living beings
- ❖ Today there are more than 10 million Jains worldwide
- ❖ Inspired by the example of Mahavira, they live a life of compassion and forgiveness and promote a vegetarian diet and ecological practices

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- ❖ Ages : 6 and up

Page Spreads from *Mahavira*

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Mahavira's brother could see the young prince's strong dedication to the spiritual life. And so he gave Mahavira permission to leave the worldly life. The prince became a monk!

A long line of people escorted Mahavira to the forest. There he gave up his princely jewels and clothing. He said farewell to his family and his kingdom.

Then Mahavira started on the spiritual journey. With great focus and devotion he achieved the three spiritual "jewels." In Jainism these are called right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct.



The first jewel is right faith. It is to believe that the clean and pure soul is divine in nature.

The second jewel is right knowledge. It is to see the difference between the living and the non-living. Humans, animals, and plants are all living. They have a soul. Houses, tables, and computers are non-living. They don't have a soul.

The third jewel is right conduct. It means to put right faith and right knowledge into practice. Right conduct means not to hurt other living things. It means not to think, say, or do anything harmful.

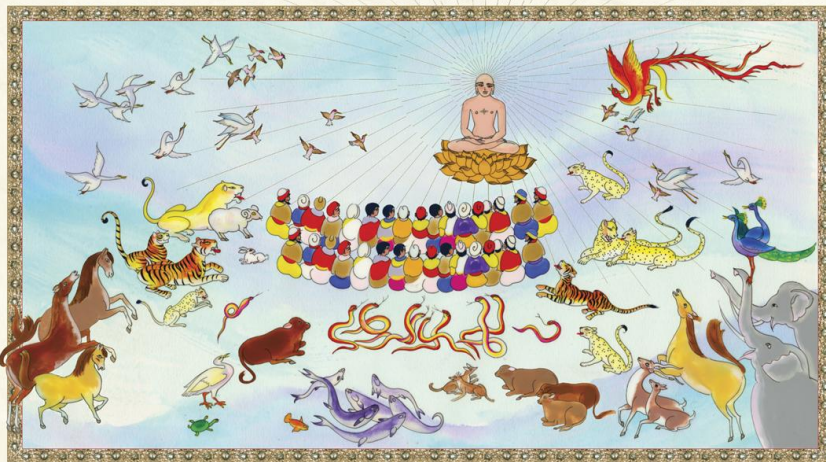


On this day, all living things rejoiced. They knew that Mahavira's soul had been freed from this world. Since then, the Jains celebrate the festival of Dwali on this day. They eat tasty sweets and sing religious songs. And they visit family and friends and exchange gifts.

The first belief is nonviolence or love. It is not to cause harm to any living being. It is to have love and compassion for all living things. To do this, a person must avoid anger and learn to forgive.

The second belief is non-absolutism or pluralism. It is to tolerate and accept another person's view, to keep an open mind. And if there are disagreements, to understand that the truth has many sides. To do this, a person must avoid pride and learn to be humble.

The third belief is non-possessiveness or detachment. It is to separate true needs from false desires. To do this, a person must avoid greed and learn to be charitable.



Mahavira lived and traveled in Northern India. During this time, there lived another great teacher, the Buddha. Although the two never met, both taught the truth about the spiritual life. The religion of the Buddha, Buddhism, spread from India to East Asia. The religion of Mahavira, Jainism, remained in India. But today both religions have expanded throughout the world.

The teachings of Mahavira were very popular. All living beings, including animals, would gather to listen to his words of peace. Each would understand Mahavira in their own language. The lion would sit down with the lamb, and the king with the beggar. Each would respect the other. For they could see a living soul, and not just a body, in their neighbor.

Praise for the Illustrator's Previous Work

“Demi’s paintings are full of bright, intricate patterns, and bold touches of gold produce a feeling of awe and splendor.”

—*School Library Journal*

“Dazzling illustrations. . . . I found myself flipping the pages [of Demi’s work] just to admire the pictures.”

—*The New York Times*

“Demi’s paintings are jewel-like miniature studies.”

—*Oppenheim Toy Portfolio*

About the Author



Manoj Jain is a physician and widely published writer on both medical and faith-based subjects. He is a frequent contributor to the *Washington Post* and the *Huffington Post*, and his work has also appeared on NPR, CNN, and the *New York Times*. As a Jain committed to following Mahavira’s teaching of nonviolence, he co-founded the annual Gandhi-King Conference with Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi. He lives with his wife and three children in Memphis, TN.

About the Illustrator

Demi is the award-winning author of over 130 bestselling children’s books. Her titles have sold over half a million copies. *The Empty Pot* was selected by former First Lady Barbara Bush in 1990 as one of the books to be read on the ABC Radio Network Program *Mrs. Bush’s Story Time*, sponsored by the Children’s Literacy Initiative. Demi’s book *Gandhi* was named a *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book and received an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Award. In addition, she represented the United States at the First International Children’s Book Conference in Beijing, China, in 1992. She lives with her husband in Yarrow Point, WA.

