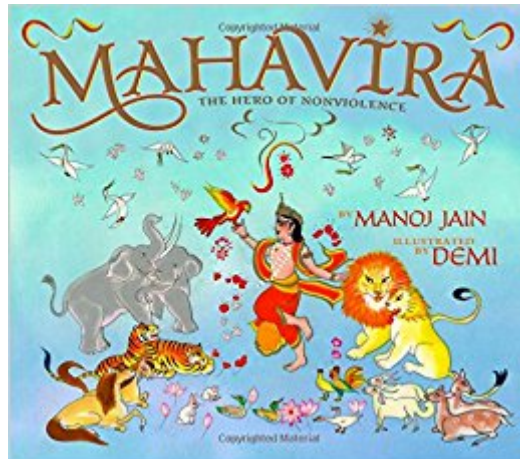


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# Mahavira: The Hero Of Nonviolence (Wisdom Tales)



## Synopsis

Imagine 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. Six centuries before the birth of Jesus, in the faraway land of India, there lived a great spiritual teacher name Mahavira (which means “very brave”), who imagined just such a world. He showed kindness to every living being and emphasized the practice of nonviolence, compassion, and forgiveness. The religion of Mahavira was called Jainism. Mahavira was born a prince, but because he had such deep love and respect for all living creatures, he renounced his wealth and power to become a wandering monk. The Jain teachings of Mahavira became very popular. He taught three important lessons: that one should have love and compassion for all living things; that one should not be too prideful of one’s own point of view because the truth has many sides; and that one should not be greedy and should avoid attachment to possessions. Today Jainism has more than 10 million adherents throughout the world. In following the example of Mahavira, Jains practice a vegetarian diet and are committed to sound ecological and environmental practices. Mahavira’s lessons on nonviolence and compassion still have a profound impact around the globe, and he is credited with influencing Mahatma Gandhi, who in turn inspired Martin Luther King, Jr. Beautifully brought to life by the delicate paintings of Demi and the powerful yet simple narrative of nationally recognized writer, Manoj Jain, the story of Mahavira’s life will provide a shining example of how one spiritual teacher’s noble ideals can echo throughout the ages.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 4

## Customer Reviews

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. Committed to following Mahavira's teaching of nonviolence, Dr. Jain 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. 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.

Gorgeous illustrations, Wonderful story.

Excellent book with good pictures and story telling. My 4 year old likes it. I would definitely recommend this to everyone who wants their kids to learn about Lord Mahavira and Jain religion.

Very moving, beautiful book.

I've been a journalist covering religious and cultural diversity for more than 30 years, both in the U.S. and overseas, and I am aware of the great importance of the Jain religious tradition and the lack of good materials to learn about Jainism here in America. Jainism may be a small in numbers, but it is one of the oldest and most influential of the world's great faiths. Jainism was founded roughly in the same pre-Christian era when Buddhism was born (historians aren't sure whether the founders of Jainism were exact contemporaries of the Buddha in India). Over the millennia, while Buddhism tended to spread far and wide, Jainism primarily remained centered in India. Some American communities, today, have substantial Jain communities, but because most

Jain clergy remain in India, this is not a well-known faith in the U.S. Historians agree, though, that the Jains' absolute commitment to nonviolence and the peaceful preservation of life influenced such modern heroes as Ghandi and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This small group's influence is far larger than its numbers. As a journalist covering these issues over many years, I have never seen an American children's picture book on Jainism. Some may have been published, along the way, but I'm not aware of them. So, I consider the publication of "Mahavira" a landmark in cross-cultural publishing. This is, indeed, a rare opportunity for you and your family to celebrate religious diversity in your home and community. What's most important is the sheer WOW factor of opening these pages with a curious child. The book's illustrations are colorful and are full of beautiful, exotic plants and animals. Just as important, the book does a masterful job of distilling Jainism's complex teachings to core principles. One page summarizes three main beliefs of Jainism in just a few sentences. A journalist couldn't have done a better job of it! Most of this story is short and exciting and, in this case, the real enjoyment for younger children will be the expansive illustrations. They're delightful! I highly recommend this book for your family, school or community reading program.

What immediately draws your attention as you open this high-quality, fresh new-book smelling children's book is the peacefulness of the illustrations. Mahavira hailed from India about the same time as Siddhartha became the Buddha, so the book has a very Indian feel to it as the characters are dressed in Indian garb and often seated in the lotus position. There are exotic animals and symbols from India. Yet on the other hand, the book is engaging, colored in peaceful pale blues and vibrant pinks and purples, drawing the reader in and making the book feel oddly familiar and comforting. The story is that of Mahavira, one of the earliest spiritual leaders of Jainism, who propagated the ideas of nonviolence as a way of life. As a story, it's more the type of "story" that might be found in a history book rather than in a fiction book. This is really more of a book about Mahavira rather than his story. As such, it may not be your children's favorite book. There is little action or suspense, we simply learn about Mahavira's life as his mother's dream and the astrologer's predictions about the child to be; his life as a privileged prince and his desire to follow a spiritual path; his renunciation of the worldly life and his spiritual journey and teaching. In the end we learn the three basic beliefs of

Jainism and then we learn about modern Jainism including its influence on Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Even if this is not your children's favorite book, it is valuable to expose them to the Jain religion and worldview. Regardless of your own religion, it is helpful for children to learn other perspectives. Jainism in particular is a very hopeful and peaceful religion, one based on nonviolence as a way of life. It represents a vision of how life could be for every child born into a world of security, acceptance and respect for all life. Of course, inquisitive children might have some provocative questions. For instance, Jainism believes that all life including animals and plants has a "soul". For this reason, Jains are vegetarians. But if plants also have a soul, how is it justified to eat them, but not to eat animals? The name "Mahavira" means "very brave". But as depicted in this book, Mahavira wasn't so much brave as he was simply without fear. He was so secure in himself and the universe that he never believed he had anything to fear not even a demon in the form of a raging elephant. But real bravery involves confronting and overcoming fear, something which nearly all humans experience. In this way (and other ways), Mahavira (like Jesus, Buddha or any other religious figure) seems greater than human in a way that makes it difficult to relate to him on a human level. It's great to talk about a world with no anger, fear or suffering, but that's not the world we live in and experience every day. While I admire the beauty and possibility of Jainism, what attracts me to Christianity is its attempt to wrestle with however imperfectly with the darker side of life and human nature. Nevertheless, this book doesn't aim to convert but rather to inform and in this regard it does its job quite well. This is a worthy addition to any children's library, whether home, school or public.

*Mahavira, The Hero of Nonviolence* by recognized Tennessee physician and writer Manoj Jain and illustrated by bestselling author Demi is a colorful quality made hardback book printed on top-notch acid free paper and is designed for readers 6 and older. It is a delightful book that tells an interesting story of a Prince who rejected his royal inheritance to become a renowned monk, contemporary of Gautama Buddha in the 6th Century B. C. and spiritual teacher of the Jain religion founded in India and has grown to over ten million followers worldwide to date. Mahatma Gandhi was inspired by Mahavira's story just as Martin Luther King was inspired by Mahatma Gandhi. Interestingly, Dr. Jain and the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Arun Gandhi co-founded the Gandhi-King annual conference promoting Mahavira's teaching of

non-violence. This easy to follow story tells the story of Mahavira and his teaching of the Jain religion. I enjoyed it and think it has a wonderful message for both children and adults. I will add it to my treasured children's books that I plan to read to my future grandchildren. This is a great gift and prized book that I am proud to display in my home. I think many of you will feel the same. Enjoy! I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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