

# Religious Reform Movements in 6th Century BC – The Rise and development Of Jainism and Buddhism (Part-2)

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# PRINCIPLES OF JAINISM

*The following principles of Jainism were preached by him.*

- ❖ He rejected the authority of the Vedas and the Vedic rituals.
- ❖ Advocated an austere and simple life with the ultimate aim to attain *Kaivalya (nirvana)*.
- ❖ Did not believe in the existence of God. He said that the universe is the product of nature - the outcome of cause and effect. Man's salvation does not depend upon the mercy of God but on his own acts. ·
- ❖ Believed in *karma and punarjanma*. Man is punished or rewarded in successive births according to his Karma.
- ❖ He believed in dualistic philosophy (*syadvada*) and held that

# PRINCIPLES OF JAINISM

matter (*Jiva*) and soul (*atman*) are the only two existing elements; the former is perishable while the later is eternal and evolutionary. The ultimate aim of *Jiva* should be to get rid of the cycle of birth and rebirth and attain (nirvana).

- ❖ The five cardinal principles (*Panch vratas*) of Jainism are- *Ahimsa* (Non-violence) *Satya* (Truth) *Asteya* (Non-stealing) *Aparigraha* (Non-possession) *Brahmacharya* (Chastity) Only the last principle was added by Mahavira, the other four being the teachings of his predecessors. Mahavira put great emphasis on the observance of Ahimsa. According to Mahavira, Nirvana or Salvation is getting rid of bondage of worldly desires.

# JAINA SECTS

To become a *Sanyasi* Nirvana was inevitable. It must be followed by observance of '*Tri-Ratnas*' – (the three principles) of Jainism. The Tri-Ratnas of Jainism consist of *Samyak Gyan* (Right knowledge) *Samyak Darshan* (Right faith) *Samyak Acharan* (Right conduct)

**Jaina Sects** Mahavira organized the *Sangha* to spread his teachings. He admitted both men and women in to *Sangha*, which consisted of both monks and lay followers. The spread of Jainism was due to the dedicated work of the members of the Sangha. The Jaina Sangha remained united for approximately two centuries after Mahavira's death.



## JAINA SECTS

But it could not maintain its unity for a longer period. *It split during Mauryan age* and two sects came into existence. *Bhadrabahu*, the greatest ever exponent of Jain philosophy, composed Kalpasutra which is the most authentic treatise on the rise and development of Jainism from its origin to his time. He left Magadha for Mysore. About 300 BC *Sthulabhadra* called the first Jain council in which the Jain canons were compiled. When *Bhadrababhu* returned to Magadha, he refused to acknowledge the leadership of *Sthulabhadra*. The Jain Sangha was then divided into two parts – *Digambara* and *Svetambara*. The followers of Bhadrabahu who remained naked and did not wear clothes came to be known as Digambaras, while the followers of Sthulabhadra had adopted white dress came to be known as *Svetambaras*.

# GROWTH OF JAINISM

Jainism never witnessed the rapid and extensive growth as was the case of Buddhism. On the other hand, its *growth was slow and steady*. It was confined to India only. Jainism had become an important religion in eastern UP during the life time of Mahavira itself. Later on, *it spread to Kosala, Videha, Magadha, Anga, Mathura, Ujjain and part of Rajasthan*. The Mauryan ruler, Chandragupta Maurya, became a follower of Jainism in the last years of his life. He left Pataliputra and accompanied by Bhadrabahu reached *Sravanabelagola* in Karnataka where he performed a fast unto death and like a true Jain *upasaka* attained *Kaivalya*. Asoka's grandson Samprati had accepted Jainism. In the second century BC king Kharavela of Orissa professed Jainism and became its illustrious patron. The second Jain Council was held at Vallabhi



# GROWTH OF JAINISM

(Gujarat) in 512 AD under the chairmanship of *Devardhi Kshamasramana*. The final compilation of Jaina literature called twelve *Angas* was completed in this council. The royal dynasties of South India such as the Gangas, the Kadambas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas patronized Jainism. King Amoghavarsha of the Rashtrakuta dynasty became a Jain monk.



## DECLINE OF JAINISM

The extreme character of Mahavira's teachings, its over emphasis on Ahimsa could not be followed by masses in large numbers. The Jain Sangh and monks did not display same spirit of commitment and dedication to spread the religion as was shown by Buddhist missionaries. With the passage of time many evils entered the Jain faith. The royal patronage was not forthcoming. The foreign invaders, first the Sakas and the Huns and later the Muslims gave a serious setback. Lastly, the revival of Hinduism sounded the death knell of Jainism.



# CONTRIBUTION OF JAINISM TO INDIAN CULTURE

Jainism made valuable contribution to Indian Culture in the sphere of religion, society, literature, philosophy, education, art and architecture.

- ❖ Non-violence was the guiding principle of Indian life.
- ❖ In society, Jainism spread the message of social equality.
- ❖ It also stood for abolition of gender based discrimination.
- ❖ Jainism paved the way for the development of literature. In the early stages the Jains adopted the Prakrit language of the common people to preach their doctrines. The adaption of Prakrit by the Jains as their medium of expression and language for the compilation of their canonical literature gave a

# CONTRIBUTION OF JAINISM TO INDIAN CULTURE

tremendous stimulation for the growth of Prakrit language particularly by Saurasena.

- ❖ The Jains also contributed to the growth of Kannada literature in which they wrote extensively.
- ❖ The Jains also contributed substantially for the development of the art of painting. The Jain paintings are found at Ellora and Sittannavasal.
- ❖ Jainism enriched Indian architecture. Hathigumpha of Orissa, Mt-Abu in Rajasthan, Girnar in Saurashtra have good specimens of cave architecture.

# CONTRIBUTION OF JAINISM TO INDIAN CULTURE

The rock cut caves at Badami and Aihole have the figures of Jain Thirthankaras which belong to early Chalukya period. Jain temples at Jodhpur, Chittore, Khajuraho and Dilwara in particular are valuable contributions to architectural heritage of India. The gigantic statue of Bahubali (Gomateswara) at Sravanabelagola in Karnataka is a marvel.

(To be continued)