

JAINISM

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JAINISM

A Religion of non-violence and reverence of all life, equality, concern for animal welfare and the environment, calmness of self and liberation by self effort.



Origin of Jainism

- Jainism evolved from the “Shramana” Tradition of Ancient India.
- Derived from Sanskrit word ‘JINA’ meaning conqueror over passion and self.
- Jains aspire to be spiritual victors and worship 24 past enlightened ones – Tirthankaras who show the path to liberation.



Tirthankaras

- It is traditionally believed that- In this Cosmic cycle,
 - 1st Tirthankara – Rishabhdev lived thousands of Centuries ago
 - 22nd Tirthankara – Nemnath, who was a cousin of Lord Krishna (Hindu Faith)
- Historically,
 - 23rd Tirthankara – Parshvanath (870 – 770 BCE)
 - 24th Tirthankara – Vardhamana Mahavira (599 – 527 BCE), contemporary of Buddha.



MAHAVIRA

- Born as a Prince; became an ascetic at 30 years of age.
- After severe austerities for 12 ½ yrs, he became enlightened and Jina.
- He established 4 fold order – Jain Sangha (monks, nuns, lay man and lay woman)
- He preached the meaning of life and path of liberation for 30 years.



Teachings of Mahavira

- Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct → together → liberation
- Right Faith: Acceptance of Realities that make the universe.
- Right Knowledge: Knowledge preached by Omniscient.
- Right Conduct: Path of Purification for Spiritual liberation and Ethical Living.



Right Conduct

- Mahavira advocated all to follow:
 - AHIMSA (non violence & reverence for all life)
 - SATYA (Truth, Speech : Pleasant & Beneficial)
 - ACHAURYA (Not taking anything which is not yours)
 - BRAMHACHARYA (Chastity and Control over senses)
 - APARIGRAHA (non attachment to worldly things)
 - ANEKANTVAD (Acceptance of multiple views) and SYAADVAD (Relative pluralism)



PHILOSOPHY

- Universe : occupied and unoccupied
- Six substances: soul, matter, medium of motion, medium of rest, space and time.
- The soul is living being (jiva)- worldly and liberated.
- Others are non living substances (ajiva)
- Jiva and Ajiva are interdependent
- Attachment of non living substance (Karma) to the soul causes clouding of its characteristics.
- AIM : remove the Karmic bondage - Liberation



KARMA

- Dynamic high energy fine particles of subtle matter attracted by the activity of body, mind and speech– stain worldly soul
- Karmic particles cloud the soul and its space points – obscure it and affect its characteristics.
- Influx of Karma (Asrava) precipitates the bondage of soul.
- Quantity, size, type and density of karmic particles determine the forthcoming birth, inherent passions and apparent injustice, longevity, health, happiness and unhappiness.



Nine Fundamentals

- Universe : jiva and ajiva
- Principles of Behaviour :
 - Merit (punya), good results of Karma
 - Demerit (paapa), bad results of Karma
- Development of Karma
 - Inflow into soul (asrava)
 - Binding of Karma (bandha)
 - Stopping the inflow (samvara) – ethical living
 - Shedding the Karma (nirjara)- austerities
- Final Goal : complete liberation of soul (moksha)



Sacred texts

- Svetambaras accept 32-45 sacred texts (Aagams) composed 453 – 466 CE
- Digambaras accept two canonical texts composed in 2nd Century CE
- Vast Sacred literature such as Tattvartha sutra, Kalpa sutra, Uttaradhyan Sutra etc.
- Sacred literature contains subjects such as philosophy, code of conduct and all worldly subjects like mathematics etc.



Jain Sects

In 4th Century CE, Jainism developed :

- Digambara (sky clad ascetics)
- Svetambara (white robed ascetics)
- Both Sects have same belief and practices for spiritual progress.
- Murtipujak, Sthanakvasi and Terapanthi are sub divisions of the above two – and are of sizeable population.



Daily Religious Practices

- Jains venerate Dev (Tirthankaras), Guru (Ascetics) and Dharma (Sacred texts)
- Temple rituals – devotional; individual or collective.
- They worship Jina as an example
- Essential duties include Samayika, Chauvisattho, Vandan, Pratikraman, Kausagga, Pratyakhyana and Daan.



Sacred Places and Festivals

- Thousands of places of pilgrimage in India, some in UK (Leicester and Potters Bar), USA, East Africa and Far East.
- Sacred Days include: Birth and Death Anniversary of Mahavira. Paryushana, two Ayambil oli during the year & important sacred days for Tirthankaras.
- Festivals: Diwali, Community Dinners and elaborate rituals.



Daily Prayers and Activities

- Navkar mantra is the main daily prayer.
- Prayer for forgiveness
- Prayer for Bliss for all.
- Prayer for Peace.
- Temple Rituals
- Guru Vandan
- Pratikraman and Samayik



Interfaith Relations

- Jain Social Customs show Hindu Influence but there are distinct Jain features of these rituals
- The influence of Jainism on Hinduism
- The influence of Hinduism on Jainism
- Interfaith Work
- Community institutions for education, health and welfare.



Learning

- Monks & Nuns (India)
- Children: Home
 - Pathshala
 - Schools
- Adult: Academic Institutions
 - UK, USA & INDIA
- Curriculum for Schools



Conclusion

- Jains lay stress on the individual and self effort, equality, tolerance and respect for all faiths, philanthropy and non violence, reverence for all life including the care of natural world, environment and animals.
- Jains are vegetarians, law abiding citizens, highly educated, professional and business community.
- Jain population in UK about 25000; Barnet about 4000. 12 Million – World Jain Population – majority in India. More than 10,000 Monks and Nuns in India.

