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Class 6 - ICSE

History

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Jainism And Buddhism Notes



THE GREAT PREACHERS:

- The religion of the Early Vedic period was based on nature worship and was simple and easy to follow. By the end of the Later Vedic period, religion became complex and difficult.
- Costly sacrifices, superstitions, and elaborate rituals made religion oppressive and expensive, leading to the exploitation of common people.
- The Brahmanas explained the Vedic texts, which were only written in Sanskrit, in a way that increased their own power, wealth, and status.
- The caste system became rigid, and lower castes, especially shudras, were isolated and persecuted.
- Vardhamana Mahavira and Gautama Buddha emerged as great preachers and reformers, reacting to the prevailing religious practices. Their teachings led to Jainism and Buddhism.

JAINISM-VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA:

Early Life:

- Vardhamana Mahavira, the most important teacher of Jainism, was born in 540 BCE in Kundagram near Vaishali.
- He was a kshatriya prince who left his luxurious life at 30 to search for truth and became an ascetic.

Search For Truth:

- Mahavira wandered for 12 years in penance and meditation, gaining spiritual knowledge.
- He became a jina, or conqueror of self, and his teachings form Jainism. His followers are called Jain.

TEACHING OF MAHAVIRA:

Ahimsa:

- Ahimsa, or non-violence, is Mahavira's first great teaching. He preached that no one should harm any living creature, not even insects and plants.

Sacrifices, Yagnas, and Rituals:

- Mahavira did not accept the Vedas and opposed all forms of religious rites and rituals.

Caste System:

- Mahavira believed all people are equal and opposed dividing people into different castes.

God:

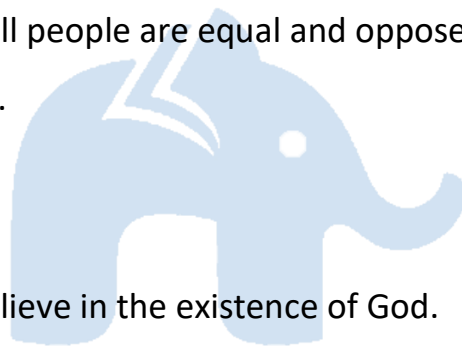
- Mahavira did not believe in the existence of God.

Karma And Rebirth:

- A person's soul is reborn repeatedly due to karma. The highest goal is attaining moksha, or freedom from the cycle of birth and rebirth.
- Moksha can be achieved by following the triratna (three jewels): right knowledge, right belief, and right conduct.

SPREAD OF JAINISM:

- After Mahavira's death at 72, Jainism spread, dividing into Digambaras (sky-clad) and Svetambaras (white-clad).
- Jainism spread across India with significant patronage from several



kings and is practiced in states like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

BUDDHISM-GAUTAMA BUDDHA:

Early Life:

- Siddhartha, later known as Gautama Buddha, was born in 567 BCE in Lumbini near Kapilavastu.
- A kshatriya prince, he left his royal life at 29 to seek answers to life's mysteries.

Search For Truth:

- Siddhartha witnessed the four great sights—an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and an ascetic—which deeply affected him.
- He renounced worldly life and meditated under a pipal tree in Bodh Gaya, attaining enlightenment and becoming the Buddha.

TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA:

Four Noble Truths:

- The world is full of suffering.
- The cause of suffering is human desire.
- Suffering can be ended by overcoming desires.
- Overcoming desires leads to nirvana.

The Eightfold Path:

- Right belief, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right memory, and right meditation.

God:

- Buddha was silent on God's existence, emphasizing moral values such as honesty, non-violence, and kindness to all living beings.

SPREAD OF BUDDHISM:

- Buddha preached in Pali, making his teachings accessible to common people.
- Buddhism spread rapidly across India and other countries due to royal patronage and the establishment of monasteries.
- Divided into Hinayana and Mahayana sects, Buddhism remains significant in countries like China, Japan, and Tibet.

DECLINE OF BUDDHISM:

- Buddhism declined in India due to the reformation and patronage of Hinduism by Gupta kings and invasions by the Huns.
- Although it declined in India, it spread and became the main religion in parts of Asia.

COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN JAINISM AND BUDDHISM:

Similarities:

- Both Mahavira and Buddha started reform movements against prevailing religious practices.
- Both preached non-violence (ahimsa) and equality.
- Both religions rejected the authority of the Vedas and the existence of God.

Differences:

- Buddha was the founder of Buddhism, while Mahavira was the 24th tirthankara of Jainism.
- Jainism follows strict austerity and physical suffering, including death by starvation, while Buddhism follows a middle path avoiding severe penance.
- Jainism practices extreme non-violence, even towards plants and insects, while Buddhism limits non-violence to humans and animals.

