

## JAINISM

Jainism is also a non-Brahminical religion, founded as a result of the revolt against the Brahmanism of the sixth century BC. Some sources place Jainism as one of the oldest religions, belonging to the era of Rig Veda. Jainism rejects the Vedas and condemns the caste system. It believed in Thirtankaras and rejects the existence of God as a Paramatma.

### The Founder

Jainism was founded by **Rishabha**, who was the father of King Bharata the first Chakravarti of India. Rishabha was succeeded by 23 other Tirthankaras. Jainism became a major religion under Vardhamana Mahavira who was the 24th Tirthankara or Prophet of Jainism. Persons of prime importance to Jainism are

### PARSVANATHA (850 BC)

The 23rd Tirthankara, has an important place in the history of Jainism. He laid down four

#### Triratna or Three Gems of Jainism

The following three gems are the route to moksha or liberation or deliverance according to Jainism:

- Right Faith (firm belief in the omniscient Lord Mahaveera)
- Right Knowledge (understanding the doctrines of Jainism)
- Right Conduct (fulfilment of the great five vows of Jainism)—(i) nonviolence, (ii) truthfulness (iii) no stealing, (iv) no attachment to property and (v) brahmacharya or chastity.

Fundamental principles for his followers: (i) ahimsa or non-injury, (ii) truthfulness, (iii) no stealing and (iv) non-attachment to property. He was the son of the King of Banaras, Ashwasena, and renounced the world to become an ascetic at the age of 30.

### VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA (599-527 BC)

He was a great Kshatriya belonging to the royal family of Magadha. He was born at Kundalgrama (Vaishali), near Muzaffarpur in Bihar. At the age of 30, he became an ascetic and after 12 years of penance, at the age of 42, he attained perfect knowledge— kaivalya. He conquered misery and happiness and came to be known as Jina (the conqueror). He added the last vow, to the four vows given by Parsvanatha, Brahmacharya or chastity. These five vows became the fundamentals of Jainism. Many kings like Bimbisara and Ajatshatru became his patrons and he visited many parts of India, the most significant being Kosala, Magadha and Anga. He died at the age of 72, in 527 BC, in Bihar.

### Influences of Jainism

#### POLITICAL

Jainism weakened the prevailing military spirit and created a peaceful atmosphere.



#### Vedic Hymns

The number of hymns attributed to different Vedic gods is as follows:

Indra: 250; Agni: 200; Soma: 120. Varuna 12; Surya: 10; Pushan: 08; Vishnu: 06; Rudra: 03, Mitra: 01.

#### SOCIAL

Further weakening of the caste system, development of new styles in art and architecture in temples, construction of several inns, hospitals, schools and other institutions of public utility. Tiger Caves at Udaygiri, Indrasabha at Ellora, Dilwara temples at Mount Abu, Khajuraho at Bundelkhand, Adhinath temple in Chittoor, and the Shravanabelagola Gomateswara (huge statue of Bahubali) are among the famous monasteries and temples

that depict the high level of Jain art and architecture in India. Despite being a small community in India, Jainism has contributed to culture and civilization in a big way. Prominent Jain scholars also helped develop various vernacular languages like Tamil and Hemachandra (author of History of Gujarat) and Amarasimha (author of Amarakosha) were the greatest of the Jain scholars. Bhadra and Swami Kartikeya were the other important Jain scholars.



TABLE 1.2 Occurrence and Results of Jain Councils

Place	Year	Under the Chairmanship of	Results/Events
First council at Pataliputra	Third century BC	Sthalabahu	The 14 lost Purvas (former texts) were replaced by compiling 12 new sections (angas). 1. Acharanmt 2. Sutrakruthanga 3. Sthananga

4. Samavayanga
  5. Vakvaprainsap i
  6. Dharma-Kathanga
  7. Upasaka Adhyananga
  8. Anthakrudasanga
  9. Anuttarapadanga
  10. Prashnavyakanaka
  11. Vipakasutrang a
  12. Drustipravadanga
- The 12 angas and upangas (minor sections) were finally compiled. But these were accepted by Swethambaras only, while Digambaras virtually rejected them.

Second council at Valabh i  
Fifth cent ury AD  
Devardhi Kshamasrama

### Spread of Jainism

Unlike Buddhism, Jainism did not spread outside India and remained confined to certain parts of India only. The emphasis of Jainism on non-violence (Ahimsa) prevented agriculturalists from embracing Jainism, as

cultivation involved killing of insects and pests. As per the **Hathigumpā** inscriptions, Jainism got plenty of support from kings like Bimbisara, Ajatashatru and Chandragupta Maurya along with the Nandas, Kalinga and the Raja Karavela of Abhaya. Its spread to South India is mostly attributed to the rulers of the Ganges, the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas. In the Deccan region, a companion of Chandragupta Maurya (during his Shravanabelagola campaign) Badrabahu, promoted Jainism.

### **Decline of Jainism**

Owing to very rigid and high ideals, Jainism suffered a downfall. The austere ways and high ideals of Jainism led to its decline. The followers of Jainism found it difficult to

doing this, Magadha eliminated d threatening competitor at the very start of its imperial consolidation.

Follow the enshrined tenets of austerity and chose to adapt to the changing environment, thus leading to the loss or popularity of the religion. Another reason for the decline of Jainism was the lack of royal support.



### **Jain Councils**

Two Important Jain Councils were held to settle the prevailing differences between the Jain scholars of the respective era. The main difference in opinion was between the followers of Parsvanatha and those of Mahavira. However, the second Council failed to solve the differences and thus, was the last council. It also marked a split in the religion and the advent of two new sects within Jainism: Swethambaras and Digambaras. **Swethambaras** are flexible in their approach, follow the teachings of the 23rd Thirthankara Parasvanatha and clad themselves in white garments. **Digambaras** are followers of the 24th Thirthankara Mahavira. They believe in rigid penance, which can be attained by punishment to self and body. They stress on nudity and not allow the use of cloth to cover the body.

### **Significance of Iron**

Several historians are of the opinion that the introduction of iron implements (around 750 to 700 BC) enabled the people to clear the jungle. They were then able to reclaim the fertile land of the eastern Gangetic It was here that the powerful Mahajanapadas came into existence. However, there has been no solid evidence to support this theory which can explain the use of iron in the rise of the Magadha into an economic and military power. There is no denying of the fact that iron did play

a significant role during this period as it was used mostly for making weapons and the Magadha could have had strategic advantage because of its proximity to the iron rich Chatanagpur region. Therefore, perhaps Maghadha conducted its first great expedition against 'Anga' its neighbour, which was equally close to those iron-ore deposits and possibly controlled the trade routes through which iron could reach northern India. By



### **Tirthankaras**

Tirthankaras are believed to be the great preachers of the religious order. They can take birth like any other person and they follow the tight path to achieve salvation. In Jainism, there are 24 Tirthankaras, starting from Rishabhdev (Adinath or Adeshwar) to Vardhaman (Mahaveer)– Rishabhdev, Ajitnath, Sambhavnath; Abhinandan; Sumathinath; Padmaprabhu,

Suparaswanath; Chandraprabhu; Suvidhinath; Sitalnath, Shreyansnath Vosupujya; Vimalnath Anartihnalh; Dharamnatn, Shanthinath; Kunthunath; Aranath; Mallinath; Munisuvrath; Naminath (Neminath); Paraswanath Bhagwan and Mahaveer Swami Bhagwan.

### ★ Important Facts About Mahavira

Maha vita's original name : Vardhamana  
 Date of birth : 540 BC  
 Place of birth : Kundalgrama (in Vaishali)  
 father : Siddhartha, head of the jnatri Clan Ikshvaku Dynasty  
 Mother : Trishala, Lichhavi Princess  
 Became monk : At the age of 30  
 Period of ascetism : 12 years  
  
 Attainment of Omniscience : At the age of 42 (Kaivalya)  
 Death : At the age of 72 (468 BC)  
 Cause of death : Self starvation at Pava, near Rajagriha.

### ★ Additional information about Jainism

Founded as a result of the the revolt against Brahmanism (sixth century BC)  
 Number of Thirthamkaras: 24  
 24<sup>th</sup> Thirthankaras : Mahavira  
 23<sup>rd</sup> Thirthankara : Parsvanath  
 Founded by : Rishabha  
 Digambaras : Space-cled; naked  
 Swethambaras : White clothes dad  
 Nigrantha : Those who are free from every bond  
 Arhant : Refers to one who has attained nirvana

### ★ Some Aspects of Dharma

- (a) Ordinarily, it means Pious Act.
- (b) Duty towards others, society, country, etc.
- (c) Nature: (i) the nature of fire is to burn, (ii) the nature of water is to cool, (iii) the nature of soul is conscience, sentient, immortality, infinite knowledge, perception, energy, bliss, longs to be purified, to rise upward to moksha — external salvation.
- (d) Religion; that saves one from sinking in the temporal ocean of births and deaths (Samsar). Religion consist of Dona [Charity], Sheel (Chastily), Tapa (Penance) and Bhava (Intention).
- (e) Dharma: Spiritual Samyaka/Jnana, Darshana and Charitra (Right and True Kno-wledce, Faith and Conduct)
- (f) Dharma: Shramara Dharma (monkhood) having (i) Khsama: forgiveness, forbearance; (ii) Mardavo: humbleness, politeness, humility and courtesy; (iii) Arjava: frankness, straight forwataness, deceitless; (iv) Mukti. free from desires and greed; (v) Tapa: penance of 12 kinds; (vi) Samyama: to stop all the inflow of karmas, (vii) Satya: beneficial, pleasant end well-thought truth, avoiding untruth; (viii) Saucha: purity of conduct, to avoid all, shortcomings; (ix) Akimchanya: to abstain from wealth and other material desires, even love and affection of own body; (x) Bhramcharya; complete celibacy, chastity in thought, word and deed.

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