

Chapter – 7 History

New Questions and Ideas

- By the sixth century BC, religious worship in India became ritualistic and rigid, bound by caste rules.
- It forced many thinkers to give up worldly life and meditate in search of peace and enlightenment.
- Such thinkers spread their teachings through the Upanishads and two new religions: Buddhism and Jainism popularized by Gautam Buddha and Lord Mahavira respectively.
- **The Upanishads:**
 - (i) With expansion of trade around 600 BC, people had less time for performance of rituals and focused on right belief.
 - (ii) Scholars criticized all rituals and focused on right belief.
 - (iii) Literally 'Upanishad' means approaching and sitting near the teacher.
 - (iv) It became an important elaboration of Vedas. Thus its illustrations and conclusions were called Vedanta.
 - (v) The Upanishads stressed on the need to create a desire for knowledge to achieve Moksha.
 - (vi) The Upanishads focused on the fact the knowledge of Atman (self) should be acquired and related with Parmatman (ultimate reality).
 - (vii) This philosophy was given by scholars like Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi, Gargi, Aitareya, etc.
- **Message of Lord Mahavira:**
 - (i) Lord Mahavira is usually regarded as the founder of Jainism.
 - (ii) He left his palace and meditated for many years.
 - (iii) He gained supreme knowledge in the thirteenth year.
 - (iv) He was able to control and conquer the indriyas (senses). He was thus called Jina and his disciples were called Jains.
- **Mahavira Spreads his Religion:**
 - (i) Mahavira travelled widely in the country preaching Jainism for thirty years.
 - (ii) He also received royal support.
 - (iii) King Bimbisara of Magadha, Pradyota of Avanti, helped him to spread the religion.
 - (iv) Some of his famous disciples were Ananda, Sudatta, etc.

- **Doctrines of Jainism**

- (i) Mahavira gave five doctrines
- (ii) These include not to injure life, not to speak lie, not to steal, not to possess property, and to vow chasity.
- (iii) This could be achieved through righ faith, right knowledge and right action.

- **The Jain Sangha and the Division in Jainism:**

- (i) At Pawanagar, Mahavira entered into a debate with Brahmanas and was able to impress them.
- (ii) With their help he laid the foundation of the Jain Sangha.
- (iii) The members of the Jain Sangha were divided into four categories: Bhikkus, Bhikkhunis, Shraveks and Shravikas. The first two were ascetics while the other two were householders.
- (iv) The great igration of Jain under Bhdrbahu to south India divided the religion into two cults.
- (v) The orthodox followers of Mahavira who hold Bhadrabahu in high esteem go completely naked. They are called Digambaras.
- (vi) The other sect followers of Parsvanath wear white clothes. They are called Shvetambaras.