

Revision Notes
Chapter – 7
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 Story of the Buddha

- (i) Siddhartha, also known as Gautama, was the founder of Buddhism.
- (ii) The Buddha belonged to the Sakya gana, and was a *kshatriya*.
- (iii) When Buddha was a young man, he left the comforts of his home in search of knowledge.
- (iv) He meditated for many days under a *peepal* tree at Bodh Gaya in Bihar, where he finally attained enlightenment.

Doctrine of the Buddha

- (i) Life is full of suffering and happiness, which is caused because we have cravings and desires.
- (ii) Sometimes, even if we get what we want, we are not satisfied, and want even more.
- (iii) The Buddha described this as thirst or *tanha*.
- (iv) He taught that this constant craving could be removed by following moderation in everything.

(v) He taught people to be kind and to respect the lives of others, including animals.

(vi) He believed that the results of our actions, whether good or bad, affect us both in this life and the next.

(vii) The Buddha taught in the language of the ordinary people, Prakrit, so that everybody could understand his message.

(viii) He also encouraged people to think for themselves rather than to simply accept what he said.

• **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 and the text contains conversation between teacher and student.

(iv) It became an important elaboration of Vedas. Thus its illustrations and conclusions were called Vendata.

(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 (individual soul) should be acquired and related with brahman (universal soul).

(vii) This philosophy was given by scholars like Yajnavalkya, Maitreyi, Gargi, Shankaracharya, etc.

• **Message of Lord Mahavira:**

(i) Lord Mahavira is usually regarded as the founder of Jainism.

(ii) Vardhman Mahavira was a kshatriya prince of the Lichchavis, a group that was a part of the Vajji sangh.

(iii) At the age of 30, he left his palace and went to live in forest where he meditated for many

years.

(iv) For 12 years he led a hard and lonely life and gained supreme knowledge(enlightenment) 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, Surdev, 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. He taught men and women must strictly practice Ahimsa.

(iii) This could be achieved through righ faith, right knowledge and right action.

(iv) All men have to give up everything including their clothes.

• **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 migration of Jains under Bhadrabahu 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.

The Sangha

(i) Both the Mahavira and the Buddha felt that only those who left their homes could gain true knowledge. They arranged for them to stay together in the sangha, an association of those who left their homes.

(ii) The rules made for the Buddhist sangha were written down in a book called the Vinaya Pitaka. From this we know that there were separate branches for men and women.

(iii) Men and women who joined the sangha led simple lives and were known as bhikkus and bhikkunis.

(iv) Those who joined the sangha included brahmins, kshatriyas, merchants, labourers, barbers, courtesans and slaves.

Monasteries

(i) Both Jaina and Buddhist monks went from place to place throughout the year, teaching people.

(ii) During rainy season, when it was difficult to travel they stayed in one place in temporary shelters.

(iii) As time went on, the need for permanent shelters urged to build monasteries, which were known as viharas.