

Jainism

On opposing the excessive Vedic customs and rituals. Lord Mahavira, known as Vardhamana in childhood established a new path of Dharma ñ Jainism. Jins (conqueror of passions) believe in twenty-three other tirthankars (Perfect soul) before Lord Mahavira commenced from Risabhadev as the first tirthankar.

Basic features of Jainism as a religion

- It is an atheistic religion not believing in existence of God behind the world as a creator, but the world according to Jainism exists eternally by its inherent law.
- The main aim of Jainism is to attain Godhood and perfection through morality and spiritual purity. It does not believe in God but has faith in Godhood which can be attained by man.
- According to Jainism the world is real perfectly and is a function of six eternally existing substances, five materials and the spiritual one.
- All living beings have soul within them, but that of human being is most conscious and manifested which is called Jiva (soul). Human soul is potentially perfect with the capacity of attaining unlimited power, knowledge, faith, bliss, goodness and all other godly attributes.
- It also has faith in a life after death which is otherwise

called rebirth, transmigration of the soul from one body to another. The salvation or *Nirvana* is the final attainment and liberation of the soul from the chain of birth, rebirth and transmigration from body to body etc.

- The state of man is nothing, but the state of bondage which is due to his past deeds done being driven by passions; the poison of the soul and actual reason of his rebirth. In this way, Jainism has similarities with Hinduism in fields of main doctrines as *karma* (deed), *punarjanma* (rebirth), *vandhan* (bondage), *moksha* (salvation).

- The main and only reason behind all human sufferings is *karmas* (deeds) done by man in past.

- In order to attain liberation from the circle of birth and bondage of deeds the worshipping, offering and prayer to Gods and Goddesses are not necessary at all but to follow the path of three jewels : right faith, right knowledge and right conduct instructed by Jain ideology is most essential.

- The utmost emphasis laid by Jainism on the value of moral conduct under which Ahimsa is foremost and others are purity, chastity, non-attachment, compassion, love, fellow-feeling etc.

- Jainism praises the saints who have abandoned the world and created opportunity for those who have little bit attitude of non-attachment in world affairs. These monks should lead their lives on a path of rigorous moral and spiritual discipline.

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