

6th Social Science Lesson 10 Notes in English

10] Great Thinkers And New Faiths

Intellectual Awakening

- The Sixth Century BC (BCE) is regarded as an important period in the history of ancient India.
- As a land mark period in the intellectual and spiritual development in India, historian Will Durant has rightly called it the “shower of stars”.

Sources

Literary sources

- Angas – Jain texts
- Tripitakas and Jatakas - Buddhist texts

Causes for the Rise of Intellectual Awakening and the Birth of Buddhism and Jainism

- There were several reasons for the rise of new intellectual awakening. Some of the exploitative practices that paved way for new faiths include:
- The complex rituals and sacrifices advocated in the later Vedic period
- Expensive sacrificial ceremonies
- Superstitious beliefs and practices that confused the common man.
- Upanishads taught as alternative to sacrificial rites were too philosophical, which a layperson could not understand.
- Slavery, caste system, gender discrimination also contributed to the new awakening.

Origin of Jainism

- Jainism is one of the world’s oldest living religions.
- Jainism grounds itself in 24 Tirthankaras.
- A ‘Tirthankara’, is the one who revealed religious truth at different times.
- The first Tirthankara was Rishabha and the last one was Mahavira.
- Jainism gained prominence under the aegis of Mahavira, during the sixth century BC (BCE).



Original name	- Vardhamana
Place of Birth	- Kundhagrama near Vaishali, Bihar
Parents	- Siddharth, Trishala
Place of Death	- Pavapuri, Bihar

Mahavira (The Great Hero)

- Vardhamana, meaning 'prosperous', was a kshatriya prince.
- However, at the age of 30, he renounced his princely status to adopt an ascetic life.
- He undertook intense meditation.
- After twelve and a half years of rigorous penance, Vardhamana attained omniscience or supreme knowledge, known as Kevala.
- Thereafter, he became Jina meaning 'one who conquered worldly pleasure and attachment'. His followers are called Jains.
- Mahavira reviewed the ancient Sramanic traditions and came up with new doctrines.
- Therefore he is believed to be the real founder of Jainism.

Unique Teachings of Jainism

- Jainism denies God as the creator of Universe.
- Basic philosophy of Jainism is Ahimsa or 'non –Violence'.
- Ultimate aim of Jainism is attaining moksha or ending the cycle of birth – death – rebirth.
- Jains reject the belief in Last judgement, where God, a supreme being, decides who goes to heaven or hell.
- Jainism advocates that the goodness or quality of one's life is determined by one's karma.

Tri – rathnas or Three Jewels

Learning Leads To Ruling

- Mahavira exhorted the three – fold path for the attainment of moksha and for the liberation from Karma.
- They are:
 - Right Faith
 - Right Knowledge
 - Right Action

Jain code of Conduct

- Mahavira asked his followers to live a virtuous life. In order to live a life filled with sound morals, he preached five major principles to follow.
- They are:
 - Ahimsa - not to injure any living beings
 - Satya - to speak truth
 - Asteya - not to steal
 - Aparigraha - not to own property
 - Brahmacharya - Celibacy

Digambaras and Svetambaras

- Jainism split into two sects.

Digambaras

- Digambaras are orthodox and conservative followers.
- Monks of the digambara sect, do not wear any clothing and live naked. They are forbidden to have any kind of possessions.
- Digambaras believe that women cannot achieve nirvana or liberation directly.

Svetambaras

- The Svetambaras are considered progressive.
- Monks of Svetambaras sect, wear white robes. They are permitted to have Rajoharana (broom with wollen threads), begging bowl and book.
- Svetambaras believe that women are equally capable of achieving liberation as men.



Reasons for the Spread of Jainism

- The following are the main reasons for the wide acceptance of Jainism in India

- Use of people's language.
- Intelligible teachings.
- Support from rulers and traders.
- Perseverance of Jain monks.

Influence of Jainism (Samanam) in Tamil Nadu

- In ancient Tamil literature, Jainism is referred to as Samanam.
- There is a Samanar Hill or Samanar Malai in Keelakuyilkudi village, 15 km away from Madurai. The images of Tirthankaras created by Jain monks are found in the hill. It is a protected monument of Archaeological Survey of India.
- In Arittapatti, a small village 25 km from Madurai, on one side of Kalinjamalai hill there are Jain caves called Pandavar Padukkai. Pandavar Padukkai is the bed of Jain saints.
- There is a reference to Aravor Palli, place of living for Jain monks, in Manimegalai.
- According to Silapathikaram, when Kovalan and Kannagi were on their way to Madurai, Gownthiyadigal a female jain monk blessed the couple and accompanied them.
- Puhar, Uraiyur, Madurai, Vanchi (Karuvur), Kanchi all had Jain monasteries.
- **Jina Kanchi** – Thiruparthikundram, a village in Kanchipuram, has two ancient Jain temples. This village was once called Jina Kanchi.



Thiruparthikundram



Sittannavasal



Chitharalmalai temple

Buddhism

Gautama Buddha

- Gautama Buddha was the founder of Buddhism.
- His real name was Siddhartha.
- Like Mahavira, he was also a Kshatriya prince belonging to the ruling Sakya clan.
- When Siddhartha was only seven days old his mother died.
- So he was raised by his step mother Gautami.

Four Great Sights

- At the age of 29, Siddhartha saw four sorrowful sights. They were:

- An uncared old man in rags with his bent back.
- An sick man suffering from an incurable disease.
- A man's corpse being carried to the burial ground by weeping relatives.
- An ascetic



Enlightenment

- Buddha, the Awakened or Enlightened One, realised that the human life was full of misery and unhappiness.
- So at the age of 29 he left his palace and became a hermit. He sacrificed six years of his life towards penance.
- Nonetheless deciding that self-mortification was not a path to salvation, Buddha sat under a Pipal tree and undertook a deep meditation near Gaya.
- On the 49th day he finally attained enlightenment. From that moment onwards, he was called Buddha or the Enlightened One.
- He was also known as Sakya Muni or Sage of Sakya clan.
- Buddha delivered his first sermon at Deer Park in Sarnath, near Benaras.
- This was called "Dharma Chakra Pravartana" or the Turning of the Wheel of Law.

Buddha's Four Noble Truths

- Life is full of sorrow and misery.
- Desire is the cause of misery.
- Sorrows and sufferings can be removed by giving up one's desire.
- The desire can be overcome by following the right path (Noble eight-fold path)

Eight Fold Path

- Right view
- Right Thought
- Right Speech
- Right Action
- Right Livelihood
- Right Effort
- Right Knowledge
- Right Meditation
- The teachings of Lord Buddha were simple and taught in a language which people used for communication.
- Since the teachings addressed the everyday concern of the people, they could relate to them. He was opposed to rituals and sacrifices.

Teachings of Buddha

- Buddha's teachings are referred to as dhamma.
- Buddhism accepted the Theory of Karma – meaning that the quality of man's life depends on his deed.
- Buddha neither accepted nor denied the existence of God, but believed in the laws of universe.
- Buddha asserted that attaining nirvana is the ultimate aim of life.
- Buddha advocated ahimsa or non-violence.
- Buddha had rejected the caste system.
- **The Wheel of life** – represents the Buddhist view of the world.

Buddhist Sangha

- Buddha laid foundation for a missionary organization called Sangha, meaning 'association' for the propagation of his faith.
- The members were called bhikshus (monks). They led a life of austerity.

Buddhist Sects

Hinayana	Mahayana
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not worship idols or images of Buddha. Practiced austerity. Believed that Salvation of the individual as its goal. Used Prakrit language. Hinayana is also known as Theravada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worshipped images of Buddha. Observed elaborate rituals Believed that salvation of all beings as its objective Used Sanskrit language Spread to Central Asia, Ceylon, Burma, Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, where middle path was accepted.

Causes for the Spread of Buddhism

- Simplicity of the teachings of Buddha in local language appealed to people.
- Buddhism rejected elaborate religious customs whereas the practice of orthodox Vedic religion insisted on expensive rituals and sacrifices.
- Buddha's emphasis was on observance of Dhamma.
- Buddhist Sanghas played an important role in spreading the messages of Buddha.
- Royal patronage under Ashoka, Kanishka and Harsha also helped the causes of Buddhism.
- Viharas or the Buddhist monasteries became great centres of education. One such centre was Nalanda, where Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim, studied for many years.

Jainism and Buddhism- Similarities and Dissimilarities

Similarities	Dissimilarities	
	JAINISM	BUDDHISM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both Mahavira and Buddha hailed from royal families. Yet they renounced royal privileges and chose to adopt an ascetic life. Denied the authority of Vedas. Taught in the language of the common people. Admitted disciples from all the castes and from both the genders Opposed blood sacrifices. Believed in the doctrine of Karma. Emphasized on right conduct and right knowledge instead of performing religious ceremonies and rituals as the means to achieve salvation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It followed extreme path. It remained in India only. It does not believe in the existence of god, but believes life in every living being. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It followed middle path. It spread across many parts of the world. It emphasises on ANATMA (no eternal soul) and ANITYA (impermanence).

Influence of Buddhism in Tamilnadu

- Buddhism spread to Tamil Nadu much later than Jainism.
- Manimekalai, one of the epics of the post-Sangam age is a Buddhist literature.
- There is an elaborate description about Kanchipuram in classical epic Manimegalai. Kanchipuram was a famous Buddhist Centre, from where Dinnaga, the famous Buddhist logician, and Dharmapala, a great scholar of Nalanda University hailed.
- Hieun Tsang who visited Kanchipuram in the seventh century A.D(CE). noticed the presence of 100 feet stupa built by Ashoka there.



Buddha statue at Nagapattinam



Buddha statue found at pallur near Kanchipuram

More to Know

- The word **Jain** derives from the Sanskrit word Jina, which means conquering self and the external world.
- Omniscience** – It is the ability to know everything or be infinitely wise.

- **What is Karma?** - The belief that a person's actions in this life determine the quality of his or her later part of the current life and the next incarnation.
- **Moksha** - Liberation from the cycle of birth and death
- **Gautama Swami**, a chief disciple of Mahavira, compiled the teachings of Mahavira, called Agama sidhantha.
- **Chaitya** – A Buddhist shrine or a meditation hall.
- **Viharas** – Monastries/living quarters for monks.
- **Stupas** – Built over the remains of Buddha's body, they are monuments of great artistic value.
- **Frescoes (paintings)** - Frescoes on the ceilings and walls of the Ajanta caves in Aurangabad, Maharashtra – depict the Jataka Tales.
- **Middle path** – It refers to neither indulging in extreme attachment to worldly pleasure nor committing severe penance.
- **Buddhist Councils**
 - First – Rajagriha
 - Second – Vaishali
 - Third – Pataliputra
 - Fourth – Kashmir