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**CHAPTER - NEW IDEAS AND RELIGIOUS QUESTION AND ANSWER**

**III. Answer the following questions in brief.**

**1.What are the Upanishads? Name three of them.**

Upanishads are a part of the Later Vedic literature (1000-600 BCE), but they show a shift in emphasis from gods and rituals to abstract concepts and mystical knowledge. The Upanishads were written between 1000 BCE and 400 BCE. There are about 200 Upanishads. The most famous among them are Isa, Katha, Aitareya, Chandogya. and Brihadaranyaka.

**2. Enumerate the teachings of Mahavira.**

Mahavira was the founder of Jainism. He taught his people to lead a simple and virtuous life. He believed that every object, even the smallest particle, possessed a soul. Therefore, one must follow the principle of non-violence and stop killing insects, animals or human beings.

**3.Why did the Buddha ask his followers to follow the Eight-fold Path?**

By following the Eight-fold Path, a person could attain enlightenment and truth. It was based on the Buddha's Middle Path, i.e., neither to give up all worldly possessions nor to live in luxury. This is why Buddha asked his followers to follow the Eight-Fold Path.

**4.Compare Buddhism and Jainism giving two similarities and two differences between the two religions.**

* Both Buddhism and Jainism laid stress on leading a simple life based on positive values and morals. Besides, they also instructed their followers to stick to the principles of truth and non-violence. Buddhism believed that following the Eight-fold Path led to Enlightenment and Truth while Jainism believed that the Three Jewels led to Moksha.
* Literature in Jainism was written down in the form of 14 Purvas. These were later arranged into 12 Angas, while Buddist literature consists of the Tripitaka or Three Baskets.

**5.What is meant by the Middle Path in Buddhism?**

The Middle Path means that the followers of Buddhism should neither give up all worldly possessions, nor live in luxury. Thus, they were not asked to lead the life of strict austerity, which would have little practical significance. At the same time, the followers were also asked to keep from leading a luxurious life as this might have a corrupting influence on their personalities and character.

**IV.Answer the following questions in detail.**

**1.What do you know about the Upanishads?**

In Sanskrit, the word 'upanishad' literally means 'at the feet of the guru or teacher. They came into existence as a result of the efforts made by thinkers, trying to find answers to various difficult questions about life after death, the universe, and the presence of an Eternal Being. The Upanishads were authored by learned Vedic seers and saints. The Upanishads are read even today. They have been translated into several languages such as Persian, English and French.

**2.Elaborate the reasons behind the rise of new religions.**

During the Later Vedic period, religious life came to be dominated by the brahmanas who advocated complex and elaborate rituals and sacrifices. Religion lost its appeal to the common people.

The rigid caste system led to inequalities and conflicts among people. Brahmanas who were priests and gurus claimed the highest status in the social order. Kshatriyas did not like this domination of the Brahmanas.

Most of the religious literature was in Sanskrit, whereas the languages of the common people were Pali and Prakrit. Therefore, they could not read the religious texts.

The increasing use of money and fading barter system saw the increase of commercialism and an ostentatious lifestyle. Many people disliked this change and looked for a religion that promoted simple living.

These circumstances led to the emergence of many new religious sects.

**3.Discuss the similarities and dissimilarities between the lives of Mahavira and Buddha, before they attained enlightenment**

Vardhamana (Mahavira) was born in 599 BCE at Kundagrama in the Muzzafarpur district of Bihar. His father, Siddhartha, was the head of the Jnatrikas, a Kshatriya clan. His mother was a Lichchhavi princess. The sufferings of people disturbed him, and he left home at the age of 30 to seek truth and enlightenment. He came to be called Jina, the Conqueror, that is, one who has conquered all feelings of sorrow and happiness. His followers came to be known as Jainas.

The founder of Buddhism was Siddhartha Gautama. He was a prince of the Sakya

clan. His father, Shuddhodana, was the king of Kapilavastu and his mother was queen

Maya. He was born in the Lumbini grove in Nepal in c. 566 BCE. It is said that from

the beginning. Siddhartha had little interest in worldly affairs and spent long hours

meditating. He left home at the age of 29 to seek answers to the problem of suffering.

He reached Rajagriha and became a disciple of two distinguished teachers. But, he was not satisfied. He then left them and undertook severe penances in jungles near Gaya for six years. He finally found answers to his questions and attained enlightenment under a pipal tree at modern Bodhgaya.

NOTE:( Mahavira was born in c. 599 BCE at Kundagrama near Vaishali in Bihar.)

**4.Write a note on Jaina and Buddhist literature.**

Buddhist literature consists of the Tripitakas or Three Baskets the Sutta Pitaka (a

book containing the Buddha's teachings), the Vinaya Pitaka (a book containing rules

for monks and nuns), and the Abhidhamma Pitaka (philosophical principles). Other important books of the Buddhists are Milinda Panhaand the Jatakas, which are actually part of the Sutta Pitaka. The teachings of Mahavira were first preserved through the oral tradition.They were later written down in the form of 14 Purvas. These were later arranged into 12 Angas. The Angas and the Purvas are the sacred texts of the Jainas.

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**4. Compare and contrast the teachings of Jainism and Buddhism.**

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5. The main teachings of the Buddha arise from the Four Noble Truths, which observe that:

a. There is suffering in this world.

b. Each suffering has a cause.

c. The cause is desire or thirst (tanha).

d. It is possible to put an end to sufferings if desire is removed by following the Eight- Fold Path.

According to the Buddha, the Eight-Fold Path or Ashtangika Marga consisted of the following:

a. Right View

b. Right Attitude

c. Right Speech

d. Right Action

e. Right Livelihood

f. Right Effort

g. Right Mindfulness

h. Right Concentration

Mahavira was against Vedic rituals and animal sacrifice. He believed that every object, even the smallest particle, possessed a soul. Therefore, one had to follow the principle of non-violence and stop killing insects, animals or human beings. He stressed that freedom from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth was moksha and this could be achieved by following the Three Jewels or triratnas of Jainism-right faith, right knowledge, and right conduct or action. He advocated a simple life and extreme penance to achieve the highest spiritual state.

a. Ahimsa: non-violence towards all beings

b. Satya: speaking the truth

Asteya: the practice of not stealing

d. Tyaga: not owning property, and leading a detached life

c. Brahmacharya: leading a life of celibacy.

**Skill focus**

We understand that we must never lose control of our temper and resort to screaming or violence, that any argument can be handled calmly and with a rational head, that resorting to anger and violence only causes us harm. We must lead our lives in a calm and composed manner and never let our anger or emotions get the better of us.