

# Jainism

These notes are your ultimate revision weapon to revise Jainism history. We've distilled years of previous exam questions (PYQs) into one powerful, concise resource. Everything you need to know, nothing you don't.

- **PYQs, Decoded:** All key concepts from past exams, organized and simplified.
- **Revise in Record Time:** Short, precise, and designed for last-minute review.
- **Focus on What Matters:** Master high-probability topics and boost your confidence.

## I. Tirthankaras (Founders & Liberated Souls)

### A. Definition & Role

- A spiritual teacher who has achieved liberation and shows the path to others.
- The concept is specific to the Jain religion.
- There are 24 Tirthankaras in total.

### B. Chronological Order & Key Figures

- **1st: Rishabhdev (Adinath)**
  - Symbol: Bull
  - Nirvana Site: Ashtapad, near Mount Kailash
- **4th: Abhinandanana**
  - Symbol: Monkey
- **6th: Padmaprabha**
  - Symbol: Lotus
- **12th: Vasupujya**
  - Nirvana Site: Champapuri
- **13th: Vimalanatha**
  - Symbol: Boar

- **16th: Shantinatha**
  - Symbol: Deer
- **19th: Mallinatha**
  - Symbol: Water Jar
- **20th: Munisuvrata**
  - Symbol: Tortoise
- **23rd: Parshvanath**
  - Symbol: Snake
  - Birthplace: Varanasi
  - Kevala Jnana Site: Near Varanasi
  - Nirvana Site: Sammed Shikhar
- **24th: Mahavira Swami**
  - Symbol: Lion
  - Birthplace: Kundagram (near Vaishali)
  - Nirvana Site: Pavapuri

## II. Core Concepts & Terminology

### A. The Path to Liberation



- **Tiratna (Three Jewels):**
  - Samyak Darshana (Right Faith)
  - Samyak Jnana (Right Knowledge)
  - Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct)
- **Vows:**
  - **Mahavratas:** The five great vows for ascetics (non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, non-possessiveness).
  - **Anuvratas:** Lesser versions of the vows for lay followers (householders).

### B. Key States & Goals

- **Kaivalya:** The term for "Complete Knowledge" or "Enlightenment." Mahavira is known as a **Kevalin** for attaining it.
- **Nirvana/Moksha:** Liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

## C. Philosophical Doctrines

- **Anekantavada (Non-Absolutism):** The core philosophy; the doctrine of multiple viewpoints stating reality is complex.
- **Syadvada (Saptabhangi Naya):** The theory of conditional predication ("maybe"); the method of expressing Anekantavada.
- **Concept of the Universe:** The world is **not created by a supreme God** but by a **Universal Law**. The universe is eternal and undergoes constant change. Jainism rejects the concept of the 'final annihilation of the world'.

## D. Nature of the Soul & Karma

- Every object possesses a soul (jiva).
- Karma is an invisible force that binds to the soul and obscures its true nature.
- The goal is to end the cycle of karma through penance (nirjara).
- **Samadhi Maran / Sallekhana:** A religious vow of voluntarily fasting to death when facing inevitable death.

## III. Sects and Sub-Sects

### A. Major Schism (c. 300 BCE)

- The division solidified due to a famine and a migration south led by **Bhadrabahu**.
- **Digambara ("Sky-clad"):** Monks do not wear clothes. Followers of Bhadrabahu who migrated south.
- **Shvetambara ("White-clad"):** Monks wear white clothes. Those who remained in the north under **Sthulabhadra**.

### B. Other Sects

- **Sthanakvasi:** A Shvetambara reformist sect (began 1653 AD) that rejects idol worship and uses prayer halls (*sthanakas*).
- **Yapaniya:** An ancient sect with mixed Digambara and Shvetambara practices; monks worshipped idols without clothes.

## IV. Sacred Literature & History

### A. Sacred Texts

- **Earliest Texts:** The **Fourteen Purvas** were the earliest scriptures. **Bhadrabahu** and **Sambhutavijaya** were the last monks with full knowledge of them.
- **Language:** The earliest literature was compiled in **Ardha-Magadhi Prakrit**.
- **Shvetambara Canon:** Compiled into **12 Angas**.
  - Finalized at the **Vallabhi Council**.
  - An earlier council was held at **Pataliputra** (c. 300 BCE) during the Chandragupta period to preserve teachings after the famine.
- **Non-Jain Text:** The *Therigatha* (verses by Buddhist nuns) is part of Buddhist, not Jain, literature.

### B. Important Historical Figures

- **Mahavira's Family:** 
  - Son of King **Siddhartha** and Queen **Trishala**.
  - Trishala was the sister of **King Chetaka** of the Lichchhavis, making Mahavira royalty.
- **First Disciple:** **Jamali**, Mahavira's son-in-law.
- **Royal Patron:** **King Kharavela** of Kalinga (1st century BC) was a famous patron.
- **Builder:** Chavundaraya, a minister of the Western Ganga dynasty, commissioned the Gommateshwara statue.

## V. Pilgrimage & Historical Sites

- **Ashtapad:** Where Rishabhdev (1st Tirthankara) attained Nirvana.
- **Pavapuri:** Where Mahavira (24th Tirthankara) attained Nirvana.
- **Sammed Shikhar (Parasnath Hill):** A major site where many Tirthankaras, including Parshvanath (23rd), attained Nirvana.
- **Champapuri:** Where Vasupujya (12th Tirthankara) attained Nirvana.

- **Prabhasgiri (Kaushambi):** A pilgrimage site associated with the 6th Tirthankara, Padmaprabha. A site for both Buddhists and Jains.
- **Shravanabelagola:** A major *tirtha* known for the monolithic statue of **Gommateshwara (Bahubali)**. Site of the **Mahamastakabhisheka** ceremony every 12 years.

## VI. Contemporary & Rival Sects

### The Ajivaka Sect

- **Founder: Makkhali Gosala** (initially a follower of Mahavira).
- **Core Belief: Niyativada (Fatalism)** – the belief that everything is pre-determined and human effort is powerless.
- **Patronage:** Emperor Ashoka and his grandson Dasaratha dedicated cave dwellings in the **Barabar and Nagarjuni hills** to them.
- **Evidence: Barabar Hill Caves** contain Mauryan-era inscriptions (3rd century BC) from Ashoka to the Ajivakas.

## VII. Patronage of Religions (Context)

- **Pala Rulers (Eastern India):** Famous patrons of Buddhism.
- **Ikshvaku Rulers (Southern India):** Followed Vedic religion but were not antagonistic and provided support to Buddhism.
- **Key Figures in Other Traditions:**
  - **Nagarjuna:** Associated with the Buddhist *Sunyavada* philosophy.
  - **Lakulisa:** Founder of the Pasupata Shaivism sect.

### Know More about Jainism:

- [Jainism One Liner Questions & Answers](#)
- [Jainism – Old Year Questions and Answers](#)