

Religious Trends in Ancient India

Chapter 5: Religious Trends in Ancient India · Topic 1

Key Concept

Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) around the 6th century BCE, teaching the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

Jainism, associated with Mahavira around the same period, emphasised non-violence (ahimsa) and self-discipline for spiritual liberation.

These movements arose partly as a reaction to rigid rituals and the varna system, offering alternative paths to spiritual understanding.

Buddhism and Jainism significantly influenced Indian philosophy, ethics, and culture, and Buddhism spread to many parts of Asia.

Quick Revision Notes

- Buddhism founded by Buddha, ~6th century BCE.
- Teaches Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path.
- Jainism associated with Mahavira, same period.
- Emphasises non-violence (ahimsa).
- Also self-discipline for liberation.
- Both arose reacting to rigid rituals.
- They influenced Indian philosophy, ethics.
- Buddhism spread across Asia.

Practice Questions

- 1 Research the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism.
- 2 Discuss the concept of ahimsa in Jainism.
- 3 Compare Buddhism and Jainism.
- 4 Discuss why these movements arose.
- 5 Research how Buddhism spread to other countries.
- 6 Discuss the influence of these religions on Indian culture.