

4.4 Other Useful Literature of Jainism

Jain religion was indeed a very old religion. It was mainly concentrated in the eastern part of India - *Magada (Bihar)*; where it was known as *Sharma dharma*. When Aryans invaded India after conquering north India. They attacked the eastern part; and the *Sharma culture* was threatened by Aryan invasion. It was during this time that Sharma religion tried to revive itself to meet the threats of Aryans. It was perhaps during this time that "Sharma" religion tried to attract *Kshatriyas* in their religion against Brahmins of Aryans. "Any one, even *Kshatriya* can achieve Moksha by following *Sharma Path*" was a message passed as to *Kshatriyas*; and they liked it, became in Brahmin culture and Brahmins were eligible to get *Moksha*, and *Kashtriya* and a secondary position.

The *Sharma tradition* was a religion of strict asceticism founded by *Rikhavdev*, the 1st Tirthankara. The 23rd tirthankara *Pashvanath*, made some effort to bring back strict discipline by formalizing a code of conduct of ascetic behavior. He prescribed 4 basic vows - ***Ahinsa, Satya, Adattadan and Aparigraha*** (i.e. Non-violence, Truthfulness, Taking one that which is give and non-possession).

The Sharma Philosophy was further reformed. *Gosala* made an attempt to propagate "*Niyativad*". But his was a fatalistic approach.

During this period, *Lord Mahavir* came out with his '*Anekantvad*' approach. This approach could be applied as master-key to any doubts about any religious, spiritual moral, physical matters. He profounded the thought that gaining total control over the self is the greatest victory one can achieve.

Mahavir made modifications in *Parshvanath's* ascetic code, and added a new vow of celibacy (*व्रतव्रत*). All his 11 *Gandharas* propagated *Mahavir's* teachings. During this period a number of scriptures were constructed to accommodate *Mahavir's* teachings. *Indrabhuti Gautam, Sudharma Swami, Jambu Swami* and *Bhadrabahu Swami* were all very learned followers and preachers of *Mahavir's* principles. They created very useful literature with this purpose.

After many years, *Bhadrabahu* and *Sthulibhadra* went to different directions, and there were some differences in their practices. This was a beginning of a split in Jainism viz. *Swetambar* and *Digambar*, particularly in the interpretation of *Aparigraha* (non possession)

In 5th century, a conference of 500 monks was held at *Vallabhipur* and a very good attempt was made to reconcile the various versions of Jain scriptures and to produce written copies of Jain Canons. This was a mile stone in the history of Jain literature.

Jain *Acharya Hemchandracharya* (12th Century) was a great scholar and brought out great literature on Jainism. That was a golden period of Jain History.

Probhachandra wrote a book called *Prabhavaka Charitra* (Life stories of great Jain Masters). It contains a biography of 22 Jain *Acharya*-starting from *Vajraswami* (4th Century) to *Hemchandracharya* (12th Century). Whose Knowledge of Jain scriptures was passed. It also contained life-sketches of *Siddhsena Diwakal* (5th century) a great Jain Scholar, *Haibhadraswami*, who has written hundreds of volumes on Jain Philosophy (6th century), *Kalakacharya* (7th century), *Abhayadevisuri* (11th century) etc

Shrimad Rajchandra published a book called '*Mokshmala*' in Gujarati to explain the philosophy of Jainism to common men. It is not a translation nor a commentary, but 'spiritual experience' of self-realisation'. He later wrote a book '*Atma Siddhi Shastri*'.

A *Digambar Acharya Kunkund Shri* wrote a book called '*Samay Sar*' in which he propagated that right belief, knowledge and conduct are the path to liberation.