



## Mains Marathon

**Day 46:** Describe the contribution of Jain Literature and Architecture in the cultural history of India. (120 Words)

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### Approach / Explanation / Answer

- Briefly explain about Jainism.
- Describe the contribution of Jains literature.
- Discuss contribution of Jain's architecture.
- Conclude suitably.

### Answer:

Jainism is an ancient religion that is rooted in the philosophy that teaches the way to liberation and a path to spiritual purity and enlightenment through disciplined nonviolence to all living creatures. Jainism came to prominence in the 6th century B.C., when Lord Mahavira propagated the religion. There were 24 great teachers, the last of whom was Lord Mahavira. These twenty-four teachers were called Tirthankaras—people who had attained all knowledge (Moksha) while living and preached it to the people. The first Tirthankara was Rishabhatha. The word 'Jain' is derived from jina or jaina which means the 'Conqueror'.

### Contribution of Jain literature:

- **Propagation of Sarman culture:** It is quite evidence that right from the Vedic period two different currents of thought and ways of life known as (a) Brahman culture and (b) Sramana culture are prevalent in India. The Jainas were the first to propagate the Sramana culture. That is why from ancient times we have the Sramana literature besides the Brahmanic literature. The Sramana literature **disregards the system of castes and Asramas**; its heroes are, as a rule, not Gods and Rule, but kings or merchants or even Sudras.
- **Indian scientific and technical literature:** The most valuable contributions have been made by the Jainas to the Indian scientific and technical literature on various subjects like logic, philosophy, poetics, grammar, lexicography, astronomy, astrology, geography, mathematics and medicine. The Jainas have paid special attention to the arthasastra (or politics) which is considered to be "a worldly science" par excellence. Thus there is hardly any branch of science that has not been ably treated by the Jainas.
- **Preservation of Knowledge:** The Jainas alone utilized the prevailing languages of the different places, besides Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsha, for their religious propagation as well as for the preservation of knowledge. It is thus quite evident that the Jainas occupy an important position in the history of the literature and civilization of India.

- **Example: Non-agam Literature** are written in many languages such as Prakrit, Sanskrit, Old Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannad, Tamil, German, and English.
- **Agam Literature:** Lord Mahavir's preaching was methodically compiled by his followers into many texts. These texts are collectively known as Agams, the sacred books of the Jain religion. Agam literature is also divided into two groups:
  - **Ang-agama:** These texts contain the direct preaching of Lord Mahavir.

## Types of Jain Architecture:

- **Ellora Caves (Cave No. 30-35):** Maharashtra: Ellora caves is located nearly 100 Kms away from Ajanta caves in the Sahyadri ranges of Maharashtra. There are prominent sculptures of the 23rd Tirthankara, Parsvanatha, as well as the last and 24th Tirthankara, Mahavira. There are also 48 sculptures of Yakshas and Yakshinis who were considered the teachers of the Tirthankaras. Also of note is the statue of Bahubali, also called Gomateshwara, who was the son of the first Tirthankara.
- **Mangi Tungi Cave-Maharashtra:** Mangi Tungi are two hills belonging to the Sahayadri Hill Ranges in Maharashtra
  - The temple at Mangi Tungi is called 'Shri Mangitungi Digamber Jain ShiddaKsetra'. it is a Shri Adinath Bhagvan temple.
  - It is so significant that it has been called Sameed Shikarji of the south. 990 million Digamber Jain Saints, achieved salvation (Moksh) from these twin hills.
  - There are 6 caves on the Mangi hill and 2 caves on Tungi hill. There are more than 600 Jaina images of the tirthankaras in the padmasana and kayotsarga. Inscriptions on so many idols are not clear.
- **Udayagiri-Khandagiri Caves-Odisha:** Built somewhere around the 2nd century BC by King Kharavela of the Meghavahana dynasty.
  - The caves built on the Kumari Mountain range were built for the Jain monks and offered them a place to stay and meditate. Out of the one hundred and seventeen caves that were built originally only thirty-three survive till this day. Eighteen caves are located on the Udaygiri hill and fifteen on the Khandagiri hill.
  - The major attractions of the Udaygiri caves are
    - **Hathigumpha :** or the elephant cave as it's known bears the inscriptions of King Kharavela. The seventeen lines mention his many conquests and his way of governance.
    - **The Rani Gumpha :** or the Queen cave; is a double storeyed structure with beautiful carvings. Exquisite carvings apart, the cave is known for its acoustic characteristics.
    - **The Ganesh Gumpha :** the Ganesha Cave known for its carvings of Jain teerthankar's and other sculptures. The carving of Lord Ganesha and two elephants were added much later.
    - **The Vyaghara Gumpha :** or the Tiger cave is so called because the entrance is shaped like the head of the tiger and the door shaped like a tiger's throat
  - **The major caves of Khandagiri are**
    - **Barabhuji Gumpha** features the twelve-armed Sasana Devi's facing each other along with Tirthankar sculptures.
    - **Trushula Gumpha** - One can find the twenty-four Jain Teerthankar's carved on the walls of the cave. The sculpture of Tirthankar Rishab Dev stands out.
    - **Ambika Gumpha** - The Yaksha and Yakshini's of each Tirthankar is carved on the walls of the cave.