CHAPTER - II

Chapter Two

BUDDHISM, JAINISM & HINDUISM

As we pass to the younger religions which have developed in the train of Brahmanism, the first of these which presents itself to us is Buddhism, not because it has been proved to be the most ancient, but because it attained a separate independent existence before any other. Buddhism presents, in fact, a twofold aspect. On the one hand, it is a Hindu phenomenon, a natural product, so to speak, of the age and social circle that witnessed its birth. When we attempt to reconstruct its primitive doctrine and early history, we come upon something so akin to what we meet in the most ancient Upanishads and in the legends of Brahmanism, that it is not always easy to determine what features belong peculiarly to it. On the other hand, it asserts itself from the first as an independent religion, in which a new spirit breathes, and on which the mighty personality of its founder has left an indelible impress. In this sense, Buddhism is the work of Buddha, just as Christianity is the work of Jesus, and Islam that of Mahomed. From the date of the death of the Master, we feel ourselves face to face with a body of doctrines, and an institution with a life of their own, and an institution with a life of their own, and the history of which is connected with that of the contemporary religions only in an indirect and quite external way.[1]

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1. Will Durant. Our Oriental Heritage pp, 56 - 62

We have only legendary data, deeply infected with mythical elements, in regard to the life of the remarkable man who, towards the close of the sixth century before our era, laid the foundations of a religious system which, under a form more or less altered, constitutes, even in our own day, the faith of more than a third of the inhabitants of the globe. He belonged to the family of the Gautamas, who were, it is said, the line royal of the Cakyas, a Rajpoot clan, which was settled at the time on the banks of the Rohini, a small affluent of the Gogra, about I37 miles to the north of Benares. When twenty-nine years of age, he quitted his parents, his young wife, and an only son, who had just been born to him, and became a sannyasin. After seven years of meditation and internal struggles, he announced himself as in possession of the perfect truth, and assumed the title of Buddha, the awakened, the enlightened. During forty-four years more, he preached his doctrine on both banks of the Ganges, in the province of Benares and in Behar, and entered Nirvana at the advanced age of eighty. The date of his death, which is differently reported in the different traditions of Buddhism, and by all inaccurately, has been determined with a probability, little short of certainty, only in recent times, through the discovery of three new inscriptions of the Emperor Ashoka.

The doctrines of Buddha are better known to us than the details of his life, but they are far from being so in any exact manner. In the

documents in which there is on the whole, still the most chance of finding the echo of his word, in the Pali Suttas, these memorials, judging from what has been published on them till now, are so seriously altered by the lucubrations of an age of formalism and scholasticism, that, as regards the form at least, the instructions of the Master may be considered as lost. There are sparks in this monkish literature, but never flame; and it is certain that it was not by strange harangues like these that the "Lion of the Cakyas' carried captive men's souls. The basis of his teaching has doubtless held out better than the form.[2]

The two characteristics which strike us at once in primitive Buddhism, and which certainly belong to the teaching of the Master, are the absence of every theological element and a conspicuous aversion to pure speculation. Buddha does not deny the existence of certain beings called Indra, Agni, Varuna; but he thinks that he owes nothing to them, and that his business does not lie with them. Neither does he think of arraying himself against the revealed tradition; he passes it by. The Veda, which his Church will one day in terms reject, was summed up at this epoch in the practice of religious observances, and with these Cakyamuni, by

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2. Kumar Swami. Gospel Of Buddhism In India pp-27, 89.

embracing the life of an anchorite, naturally broke all connection. His position, then in reference to the established religion is not much different from that of many of his contemporaries. He seems to think, as they do, that it is an affair of the Brahmans to try and move the celestial powers by the ritual observances, and obtain from them benefits which he for his part does not value a rush. His work, for his part, is entirely a layman's; and as he recognises not a god upon whom man depends, his doctrine is absolutely atheistic. As for his metaphysics, it is pre-eminently negative. He does not busy himself with the origin of things : he takes them just as they are, or as they appear to him to be ; and the problem to which he incessantly returns in his conversations is not that of being in itself, but that of existence. Still more than in the Vedanta of the Upanishads, his doctrine is confined to the question of salvation.

The scheme of this doctrine is expounded in the "four noble truths." First, the existence of pain : to exist is to suffer. Second, the cause of the pain : this cause is to be found in desire, which increases with the gratification. Third, the cessation of pain : this cessation is possible : it is obtained by the suppression of desire. Fourth, the way which leads to this suppression : this way, which comprehends four stages or successive states of perfection, is the knowledge and observance of the "good law", the practice of the discipline of Buddhism and its admirable morality. The end of this is Nirvana, extinction the cessation of existence.

The conditions of existence are summed up in the theory of the Nidanas, or the twelve successive causes, each of which is conceived to be the consequence of the one which precedes. These are :- First, ignorance; second, the predispositions of mind which determine our acts, or more simply action, the karman; third, consciousness; fourth, individuality; fifth, sensibility; sixth, the contact of the senses with objects; seventh, sensation; eighth, desire or "thirst"; ninth, clinging of existence; tenth, existence; eleventh, birth; twelvth, old age and death, or suffering. These terms, of which, however, there have been various interpretations, simply answer to facts, states, or conditions of finite existence; they do not, in primitive Buddhism anyhow, represent substances or entities.

As regards the being which undergoes existence, it is viewed as a composite being, resulting from the skandhas, or the aggregates. These aggregates, which in the case of the human being amount to five (they are fewer in number for other beings), along with a hundred and ninety-three subdivisions, exhaust all the elements, all the material, intellectual, and moral properties and attributes of the individual. There exists nothing apart from these, either fixed principle, or soul, or simple or permanent substance of any kind. They unite and arrange themselves so as to form a several being, undergo incessant modification along with it, and dissolve at its

death; the individual, being throughout a compound of compounds, entirely perishes. The influence of its karman alone, of its acts, survives it, and through this the formation of a new group of skandhas is immediately effected; a new individual rises into existence in some other world, and continues in some degree the first.[3]

On the one hand, the Sanskrit books of the North appear to concede something permanent, an ego passing from one existence to another. On the other hand, one could hardly explain, it seems, how Buddhism, not content with having annihilation accepted as the sovereign good, should have from the first rendered its task more difficult still by in the end representing the pursuit of this good as a pure act of charity.

From the moment of death there will be no further formation of new skandhas, and the individual will have disappeared entirely and without return. Such is the dogmatic logical conclusion, which is not weakened by the fact that it is not always found expressed in all

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3. A. Bárth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India,

p. 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, pp, 115 - 118.

its severity, and that, in ordinary belief especially, it has been subjected to all sorts of processes of attenuation. The imagination even of an Asiatic has some difficulty in settling down to the idea of annihilation.[4]

This vanity of all existence would, even if it had not been reiterated so often by Buddha, follow logically from the simple theory of the Nidanas. The first of the twelve causes, viz., ignorance, which consists in taking for real that which is not, evidently implies the non-reality of the world, not as a substance - the thing in itself being outside the range of primitive Buddhism - but of the world such as it appears to us. The objects which we see have no proper reality, and, as we have just remarked, exactly the same is taught in the doctrine of the Pali Suttas respecting the subject which sees them. One's individuality is only a form, an empty appearance. Everything is only a flux of aggregates, which are interminably uniting and disuniting, an immense flood, of which we do not seek to know the beginning, and from which we can escape only by Nirvana. When once the system reached this point, only a negation remained to be formulated, but one of a purely ontological order,

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4. A. Barth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India,

pp, 128 - 132.

the negation, namely, of substance itself. This last step was taken in the school founded by Nagarjuna, about a century before our era, at a time when the doctrine of Cakyamuni, which was at first speculative only to a small extent, had given rise to a vast and complex labyrinth of metaphysical conceptions.

Two centuries and a half after the death of its founder, Buddhism became the official religion of Acoka the Maurya, the most powerful monarch in India, whose immediate authority extended from the valley of Cabul to the mouths of the Ganges, and from the Himalaya to the south of the Vindhya mountains; and by this time its missionaries had penetrated into the Marhatta and Dravidian countries, and taken root in Ceylon. This rapid progress was certainly not owing either to its dogmas, which were anything but attractive, and it bottom of no great originality, or even to the unquestionable superiority of its morality ; and if it had no other means of action, its success would be one of the most puzzling problems of history.[5]

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3. A. Barth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India,

p, 134,135.

Naturally a mission to convert implied the duty of watching over the work of conversion, of upholding 'he good doctrine, exhorting to good conduct, of stirring up piety, of coming to the help and support of weakness. Buddhism, then, had a cure of souls. The distinction between orthodoxy and heresy, painful instruction in correct opinions, the direction of consciences, the pastoral art, are of Buddhist creation; and perhaps this ought to ascribe the institution of a profession of faith and that of confession to the Master himself.

Nobody cannot trace the history of Buddhism without discovering, moreover, that its success was quite as much due to events that favoured it as to its own inherent aptitudes. The period of its extension coincides, in fact, with that of a profound change which came over the political condition of India.[6]

How are we to account for this total extinction of Buddhism in the country that witnessed its birth, and in which it flourished so long ? Although it is in general more difficult to account for the decay of religions than their rise and growth, the disappearance of this one

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6. A. Barth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India,

pp, 132 - 139.

appears to have been so rapid, and is, in fact, so complete, that nothing, one would think, should be easier than to determine the causes of it. Such, however, is the obscurity which still veils many phases of the past history of India, that we can on this matter form only conjectures, and of only a quite general character too. The cause, persecution viz., to which we are apt to assign the first place, is exactly the one which, in the existing state of our knowledge, appears the least probable. No evidence of any serious weight has as yet been adduced to prove that Buddhism has ever been, either before its triumph or in the days of its decline, the object of rigorous measures directed against it with any unanimity of purpose and on any considerable scale.

JAINISM

One of the least known among those which have performed an important part in the past of India - the religion of the Jainas.

Viewed as a whole, Jainism is so exact a reproduction of Buddhism that we have considerable difficulty in accounting for both their long-continued existence by each other's side and the cordial hatred which seems always to have separated them. The Jainas are the followers of Jina, the "victorious," as the Buddhas are of Buddha, the "awakened" one. A Jina (this term, which is common to the two sects, alongwith many others, being among the Buddhists one of the many synonyms of Buddha) is a sage who has reached omniscience, and who comes to re-establish the law in its purity when it has become corrupted among men. There have been twenty-four of these Jinas, the last Jina included, who was of the royal race of the Kasyapas.[7] As the Jainas maintain that Gautama Buddha was a disciple of their founder, this number exactly corresponds with that of the twenty-four predecessors of Buddha, the last of whom is a Kasyapa as well. These Jinas succeeded each other at immense

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7. A. Barth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India, pp, 140 - 143.

intervals of time, their stature and their term of life always decreasing from the first Rishabha, who was 3000 feet in height and lived eight million of years, until Vardhamana, the last, whose age and stature did not exceed those of actual humanity. These fancies, which, alongwith many others, we meet with in Buddhism, especially in that of the low epochs, with this difference, however, that their more mature elaboration and arrangement must almost always be credited to the side of the Jainas, go to prove that at a very late date the two religions still exercised a certain influence on one another. Like the Buddhas, the Jinas became veritable deities and the direct objects of worship. They have at their side the Casanadevis, goddesses, who execute their commands, and who remind us of the Caktis of the neo-Brahmanic religions, and the like of which we meet with also among the Buddhists of the North, in the persons of Tara and the other goddesses of the Sanskrit books of Nepal. Their images, which are at times colossal, especially in the Dekhan, are to be seen in great numbers in the sanctuaries of the sect, which has done a great deal in the way of building, and whose structures are almost all distinguished by a style of their own and of great elegance. Next to the Jinas rank their own and of great elegance. Next to the Jinas rank their immediate disciples, the Ganadharas, who receive homage in the character of guardian saints, and a great number of deities which the Jainas have borrowed one by one from the Hindu pantheon, but which have no

share in the regular cults. The cultus itself is pretty much akin to that of the Buddhists. There are the same offerings, the same acts of faith and homage; the use of little bells is common to both of them, and the women enjoy the same rights as the men. In both, confession is practiced, great importance is attached to pilgrimages, and four months in the year are more especially given up to fastings, the reading of sacred books, and spiritual meditations.[8]

The Jainas, like the Buddhists, reject the Veda of the Brahmans, which they pronounce apocryphal and corrupt, and to which they appose their own Angas, a constituting the true Veda. They are quite as little disposed to tolerate the existence of a sacerdotal casts, although at present the clergy, in some of their communities at least, are recruited from certain families in preference to others, and, it appears, from the Brahman caste itself. Besides, they observe the rules of caste among themselves as well as in their relations with those who dissent from them, but, like several Hindu sects, however, without attaching any religious significance to it.

Like the Buddhists, they are divided into a clerical body and a lay - into Yatis or ascetics, and into Cravakas or simple hearers ; but the

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8. A.Bárth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India, pp. 144 - 146

monastic system appears to have been developed to a less degree among them.[9] At present their Yatis form sorts of colleges, kept up at the expense of the communities, but the members of which no longer subsist on alms, and they no longer admit, as they formerly did, an order of women. They are divided into two principal sects - the Svetdmbaras, or "the white gowns," and the Digambaras, or those who are clothed in air," that is to say, who go naked- designations these which have passed from the clergy to the laity as well. The Svetambaras hold, in general, the first rank, but the Digambaras, who are also more specifically denominated the Nirgranthas, i.e., " those who have cast aside every tie," appear to be the more ancient ; at least this last title occurs already in the inscriptions of Acoka, and in all probability as a designation of the Jainas. Both sects are mentioned in certain inscriptions of Mysore, which go back as far probably as the sixth, perhaps the fifth, century ; and there is similar evidence of their presence at Canoje in the seventh. Their respective relations recall those subsisting between the Buddhist sects of the Great and the Little Vehicle; that is to say, in spite of considerable differences, they are rather rivals than declared enemies. To this division another, as among the Buddhists, has come to be added - that of the Jainas of the North

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9. A. Bǿrth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India,

pp, 144 - 146.

and the Jainas of the South - which, though simply geographical in its origin, has extended in the end to the doctrines taught, the question of the canon of scripture, and the entire body of the traditions and usages. The Digambaras Yatis no longer practise nudity nowadays, except during their meals, when they take these in common.[10]

But the attempt to trace the parallelism of the two religions becomes really perplexing when we pass to their traditions, to those especially which concern their respective founders. The legend of Vardhamana, or, to apply to him the name which is most in use, Mahavira, " the great hero", the Jina of the present age, presents so many and so peculiar points of contact with that of Gautama Buddha, that we are irresistibly led to conclude that one and the same person is the subject of both. Both are of royal birth ; the same names recur among their relatives and disciples ; they were born and they died in the same country and at the same period of time.[11] According to the accepted reports, the Nirvana of the Jina took place in 526 B.C., that of Buddha in 543 B.C.; and if we make allowances for the uncertainty inherent in these data (since we

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10 & 11. A. Barth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India, p. 146,147,148.

know that the real year of the death of Buddha fell between 482 and 472 B.C.), the two dates may be considered as identical. Coincidences quite similar occur in the course of the two traditions. Like the Buddhists, the Jainas claim to have been patronised by the Mayura princes. The former had Acoka for patron ; the latter speak of Sampati, his grandson, in the same connection, and even of his grandfather, Chandragupta, who, according to the traditions of the South, must have been Jaina ascetic. A district which is a holy land for the one is almost always a holy land for the other, and their sacred places adjoin each other in Bihar, in the peninsula of Gujarat, on Mount Abu in Rajastan as well as elsewhere. If we collate together all these correspondences in doctrine, organisation, religious observances and traditions, the inference seems inevitable that one of the two religions is a sect, and, in some degree, the copy of the other. When, in addition to this, we think of the manifold relations which there are between the legend of Buddha and the Brahmanical traditions, relations which are wanting in the legend of Mahavira.[12]

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12. A. Bárth, translation by Rev. J.Wood, The Religions Of India, pp, 149 - 152.

Renaissance of Hinduism

After experiencing the monotheism and philosophy of "Ahimsa" world saw a great renaissance era for Hinduism after declinement of Buddhism and Jainism from above 600 B.C. to 8th century AD. Hindu Scholars like Adhya Shankaracharya, giving up the heavy exploiting rituals, simplified the vedic philosophy, which engrossed immediately and rapidly over the continient.

Beneath this, renaissance and the era of reconstruction of Hinduism, one thing is sure that there was no serious change in Hindu Philosophy. The religious philosophy and its core meanings were unchanged whereas religious approaches remained as they were in early brahmanical period, towards politics, sociology, art and architecture.

So the stylization of architecture remained same with the natural growth of its general conceptualization and continued to be evolved through the centuries. The architectural activity never stopped under any region; and Hinduism was not quited out throughly, the dominance of Hindu philosophy with its Fluctuating existance, continued through out the Ancient and Medival Times. The dominance of Hinduism was then still laid over the mankind, through Buddhism and Jainism created their own cults.

The Hindu Renaissance era continued to flourish till the first invasion of Afgan Muslims in 8 th century A.D. After that, very slowly muslims grapped the spine of Hindu culture and at the end of 14 th century muslims created their own society here.