



## Comparison Of Spiritual Evolution Of Hinduism And Jainism: Samsara, Moksha, And Kalchakra

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### ARTICLE INFO

### ABSTRACT

One of the most ancient and ethical religions of the world is Jainism. It is also a religion that is born in India and considering India (Jambudvīpa) as its holy land. On the other hand, though the Brahmanical religion-Hinduism born in India, but still it was developed by Aryans, whose origin were rooted from central Asia. Yet, Hinduism covers most of the majority population even from the nooks and corners of India by amalgamating local deities and demigods in to itself. Though Jainism is way older than Hinduism, in certain circumstances, the both religions were considered contemporaries, most vivid to say, rivals to one another. Even today, most people wrongly presume that the unique concept in Hinduism such as Karma, Samsara, Athma, and Moksha were the own philosophies of Hinduism. But the reality is, all these philosophical as well as meta-physical characteristics were taken from Jainism. Once Jains were the most sub- continent, later their ideologies, concepts 2nd philosophies were borrowed by other religious groups.

**Key words:** Soul – Liberation – Karmic Bonds – Time Cycle – Metaphysics

### Objective:

This article is formulated to discuss

- The concept of Samsara, Soul and Moksha in the Hinduism and Jainism.
- To describe the Yuga and Kalchakra of Hinduism and Jainism.

### The cycle of Rebirth and Moksha in Hinduism

The canonical view of Hinduism in an individual's 'evolution' centers on the journey of the Athma (soul) through countless life forms until it attains Moksha (liberation). The birth of a soul in human form is considered as the highest stage, granting the soul, the capacity for ethical action and ultimate self- realization that ultimately leads to Moksha.

### Samsara and Human Birth:

The process of rebirth is governed by the law of Karma. It is the main purpose of the soul to end the cycle of Samsara (rebirth).<sup>1</sup>

# Karma - The Path of Action:

In Hinduism, the ultimate purpose of human life in to overcome Samsara by obtaining good Karmic bonds that leads to the utmost goal of a soul – Moksha.

The bond of Karma and Samsara was explained in Bhagavan Krishna in his epic as stated below,

"The soul, encompassed by the subtle body, goes to another world and return to this world taking with it the subtle elements of the senses, just as a flower's fragrance is carried by the wind ".<sup>2</sup>

### The cycle of Yugas in Hinduism:

The Hindu cosmology defines time as cyclical, progressing through four ages, called Yugas, during which human morality, lifespan, and knowledge decline gradually. As per the Hindu calendar we are in the last of the Yugas namely Kali Yuga.

#### **i) Krita Yuga:**

It is also called Satya Yuga where the cow of dharma walks on four legs freely and steadily. This Yuga is characterized by extreme asceticism, long life, and universal virtue. The focus is on Dhyana (meditation) simply by meditation, one can attain his Moksha.

#### **ii) Treta Yuga:**

It is the second supreme Yuga and in this Yuga, the cow of dharma walks on three legs which metaphorically indicates the lack of virtues in this world during this Yuga. The primary religious practice shifts from meditation to yajnas (elaborate rituals) and offerings.

#### **iii) Dvapara Yuga:**

In this Yuga, the Righteousness declines further, where the cow of dharma walks with two legs. Hence, the people become subject to passion, disease, and desires. Their religious focus shifts to murti Puja (temple/idol worship).

#### **iv) Kali Yuga:**

Kali Yuga, the current Yuga, is the age of vice, conflict, and hypocrisy. Here, the cow of Dharma struggles to move with a single leg. In this Yuga the human lifespan and physical strength are at their minimum.<sup>3</sup>

Hence the Mahabharata states that "In the Krita Yuga, the chief virtue is austerity; in the Treta Yuga, knowledge in that virtue; in the Dvapara Yuga, sacrifice in virtue; and in the Kali Yuga, charity alone saves the soul".<sup>4 5</sup>

#### **Soul and Liberation in Hinduism:**

As per Hindu Philosophy, 'the whole universe is pervaded by God' it further describes it as with form and without form, that which perishes and that which does not, the static and dynamic, things that are seen as well as things we can't see.

In Hinduism, Atma is the central understanding of Moksha. Moksha is the ultimate goal of human life.

The religion also teaches that the path to Moksha is emphasized by various practices such as

- Bhakthi yoga (devotion)
- Karma yoga (selfless action)
- Jnana yoga (knowledge, wisdom)
- Raja yoga (meditation)

Each of the above shows a unique way to achieve Moksha. Here, the concept of Moksha is not static; it evolves with the understanding of the soul and the universe, reflecting the diverse interpretation within Hinduism.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Jain Kalachakra:**

In Jainism, the cycle of Time (kalachakra) is an eternal, cosmic wheel divided into two halves: Utsarpini and Avasarpini. Each half with six Aras, changing human condition, happiness, and morality.<sup>7</sup>

To be precise, during the Utsarpini the lives of people are improving from worst to best, and during Avasarpini, the lives of people keep worsening from good to worst.<sup>8</sup>

It also started that it is difficult but possible to attain liberation till the fifth Ara of Avasarpini but not possible during the sixth Ara of Avasarpini. But, in the Avasarpini, during 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> Era, soul will not attain Kevalya Gyana at any mean.

# The six periods of Time were,

- i. Susam – Susam (kotikoti<sup>9</sup> sagaropama<sup>10</sup>)
- ii. Susam - (3 kotikoti sagaropama)
- iii. Susam –Dusam (2 kotikoti sagaropama)
- iv. Dusam –Susama (1 kotikoti sagaropama minus 42,000 years)
- v. Dusam - (21,000 years)
- vi. Dusam – Dusam (21,000 years)<sup>11</sup>

Sagaropama –a colossal unit of time:

It is a derivative unit used to measure a vast period of time. It is simply defined as the time taken to empty a giant cube of 1 yojana long, wide, and depth by removing one tiny speck of dust at every 100 years. However, one yojana is roughly measured as 8 -10 miles or 12 -16 km.<sup>12</sup>

#### **Soul and Liberation in Jainism:**

A conscious substance that undergoes changes in to various states is typically considered Jiva (soul) in Jainism. To attain Moksha i.e., Liberation, a soul should have liberated from the cycle of rebirth (samsara), also it should

be liberated from the bondage of karma as well. Moksha/ Liberation in the utmost brimful state of a soul when it got released from all of its Karmic bonds, both good and bad.

A soul should come across the path of three Jewels to attain Moksha, that three Jewels are

- i. Right conduct
- ii. Right knowledge
- iii. Right faith

As the three Jewels are interconnected to each other, one could not gain perfection in any one of the Jewels alone, simply it's impossible because of these Jewels are inseparably linked to each other. One should follow the three staunchly to attain perfection.<sup>13</sup>

In conclusion, while both traditions seek the soul's emancipation from the cycle of rebirth, they offer distinct blue prints for the journey: Jainism in a Path of ascetic self-conquest, where the individual soul relies on its own discipline to shed material Karma and reach a state of solitary perfection. Hinduism, conversely, is a path of spiritual realization and union, often emphasizing the soul's connection to a higher divine reality or universal consciousness. Ultimately, both serve as profound framework for achieving inner peace and fair justice for the spirit, encouraging a life of non-violence and ethical integrity.

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