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## THE HUMAN PERSON FROM 'SRAMANA PERSPECTIVES

### INTRODUCTION

'*Sramana* perspectives are different from and, at times opposed to, Vedic and Brahmana perspectives. '*Sramana*' means austerity and it can also imply an attitude of equanimity (*samatá bháva*)! '*Sramanas* are those whose views and life-style pertain to an ascetic ethos (*Nivrttimáraga*) where renunciation, detachment, moral discipline etc.<sup>1</sup> play an important role, while Vedic and the Brahmanic views on life are more affirming and liberal.<sup>2</sup> The '*Sramana* history reveals their link with Mohanjodaro and Harappa cultures and the Indus valley civilization. The ascetic practices of the '*Sramanas* are indicated in the seals discovered in those areas. The references to '*Sisnadevah* in the Vedas bring out the then existing religious symbols of worship ('nude deities' referring to the Tirthankaras of the Jains). Some Vedic prayers refer to those people who were anti-vedic and against ritual sacrifices. Indra is sought for protection from them.<sup>3</sup> The existing '*Sramana* religions such as Jainism and Buddhism have been, from their very beginning of inception, maintaining an anti-vedic trend in their philosophic

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1. Some illustrations from the canonical texts of Jainism will suffice to prove to us the renunciatory and ascetic spirit of the sramanas:

'What avails riches for the practice of Religion, what a family, what pleasures; we shall become sramanas possessed of many virtues, and wander about, collecting alms' (*Uttaradhyayana Sutra*, 14:16-17). 'Happy are we, happy live we who call nothing our own...' (*Ibid* 9:14).

Pleasures will bring only a moment's happiness, but suffering for a long time.. they are an obstacle to the liberation from existence and are a very mine of evils' (*Ibid* 14:12-13). 'Leaving his wealth, sons, relations and property leaving sorrow that never ceases, (a monk) should wander about without any worldly interests' (*Sátrakránga* 1.9.7).

2. Rg Veda i.1.3. It is a prayer to Agni for prosperity, for wealth and for glorious and most abounding in heroes; i.1.7 prayer to Agni illumination and to dispell gloom; ii 12 prayer to India implicitly affirming and praying for valour, strong sons, etc.

3. Rg Veda v.1. 100-108 and vii. 22. 5.

and religious ideals and goals. What we today call *Hinduism* is a mixture of these two distinct traditions.

There has been an attempt to reconcile these two trends of thought in Indian Sacred Literature such as the Bhagavad Gita. The *Jñāna marga* (or the *Nivṛttimārga*) flows from the upanishadic tradition whose roots are shared by the 'Sramanas'. The Karma mārga (or *samvṛttimārga*) comes from the Vedic as well as Bráhmanic (Bráhmanas) sources. The deep enquiry into the self has been a revolutionary change from the then existing popular trend of Sacrificial ritualism and its heavenly fruits.<sup>4</sup> Buddhism does not explicitly deny a soul but it only affirms in-permanency to any reality. Both Jainism and Buddhism acknowledge sacrificial rituals as only means (*plava eva* = 'frail boats' to cross the river of life) and not as ends.<sup>5</sup> Even bad as well as good deeds result in karma formation and hence they have to be transcended. Heavenly abodes are only a 'better' resting place for the time being and not for ever the end. The end is total liberation from *Samsāra sāgara* for which ascetic practices and moral discipline are a must. These brief reflections in a way indicate the nature of 'Sramana' thinking.

To the 'Sramana' the human person is only one entity in the totality of living and non-living entities. To a Jain, the human person is only one among the *sad jivas* (or six living beings)

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4. Buddhism is opposed to any outward and non-moral conception of purity (*Dhammapada* ch. 26, on what it means to be a true Brahman). It has rather condemned 'austerity' measures for purification (*Samyutta Nikāya* i. 103); 'fire rituals' for purification (Sam. N. i-169, also *tapas* of the five fires, *Digha Nikāya* i. 165 f), 'water ablutions' for purification (Sam. N. i. 183 also *Majjhima Nikāya* i. 39).

Buddha advocates ethical purity unaided by external symbols and emphasised the inward purifying fire (see *Dhammapada*, 'path of purity').

5. Sacrifices could not do any more than secure temporary happiness in higher forms of existence and not completely free people from the cycle of existence (*Chāndogya Upanisad* ch. 8, *Mundaka Upanisad* 1.2). Vedic and allied knowledge and all existing knowledge was clearly recognized as insufficient for the attainment of salvation. (Chand.Up. 7.10; Br. Up. Vi. 2; Kath Up. I, ii. 23) Brahmins go to Ksatriyas to learn about the nature of atman. (Aśvapati Kaikeya, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol 1.pp, 85-91; Chand. Up. V. 11.24; V.3.7; Br. Up. ii. 1)

Incidentally, Jainism and Buddhism are known as Ksatriya Religions.

from one sense to six senses. All that pertains to a Jiva, its qualities and the like, are shared by all living organisms in different intensities. To a Buddhist, the human person is like any one of the passing phenomena. The nature and significance of a human person in these two traditions are founded on their understanding of reality.

In both these traditions human birth is held high. It is only through human existence a Jiva can work for its own salvation or total liberation. The Jaina tradition affirms the innate strength of a Jiva, the capacity for full growth in a metaphysical and religious sense. Any outside helper such as time, nature, fate, accident, God or Isvara, etc., are only superficial.<sup>6</sup> The idea of karma and its efficacy can explain the whole of life.<sup>7</sup> It is not in a fatalistic sense that karma has been described as the root of Samsāra but in the sense of self-determination.<sup>8</sup> It is for this reason that 'Sramana religions are called religions of Self-Help.<sup>9</sup> The following pages will explain what these religious systems mean by human person, how the person is linked to the other realities and vice-versa, its destiny, etc.

6. *Svetasvatara Upanisad* gives the summary of schools of thought giving prominence to either one or the other of these factors responsible for the cause of universe, misery, etc. Jaina thinkers are 'kriyavadins' who believe that misery is produced by one's own works, not by those of somebody else namely fate, creator etc. (*Sutrakrtanga* 1-12.11)

Syadvadamanjari and Saddarsana samucchaya bring out a refutation of the existence of an eternal, omniscient God (Syad. man. p 29f; Sad, sam. 45f). The doctrine of a personal God who created the universe 'exnihilo' is not found in Buddhism, such a being is neither explicitly affirmed nor denied: 'Inconceivable, O Monks, said Buddha, is this samsara; not to be discovered is any first beginning of beings'.

7. The conditions of living beings arise from karman (*Acaranga Sutra* 1.3.1.4, 1.3.2.3, 1.4.3.1; *Sutrakrtanga* 1.2.1.4, 1.2.3.18).
8. 'Misery is produced by one's own works, not by those of somebody else' (Sut. Kr. 1.12.11); Mother, father, daughter-in-law, brother, wife and sons will not be able to help me when I suffer from my own deeds . . . (Sut. Kr. 1.9.5, Utt. Sutra 6.31) because the doer of the acts must suffer for them (Sut. kr. 1-9.4); 'No one can escape the effects of their own actions' (Utt. Sutra 4.3) 'Karman follows the doer' (Utt. Sutra 13.23).
9. 'Man, thou art thy own friend, why wishest thou for a friend beyond thyself?' (*Acaranga Sutra* 1.8.3.4).

## JAINA THEORY OF PERSON

Samayasàra, one of the foremost revered Digambara Jain religious texts, describes the nature of Jíva in general and we can draw the implications from it what the human person is in particular. It makes a clear distinction between the empirical and the transcendental self. From the empirical point of view, the self (Jíva) is associated with matter (non-self), becomes the agent of actions and experiences, pain and pleasure. From the transcendental point of view the self has nothing to do with matter.<sup>10</sup> What distinguishes the self (Jíva) from the non-self (ajíva) is the quality of consciousness.<sup>11</sup> Matter, composed of atoms, forms the basis of body, speech, mind and vital airs<sup>12</sup> and worldly enjoyment, pain, life, death are also caused by matter.<sup>13</sup> Any living organism is called a Jíva. There are innumerable Jívas in the world (*lokákáśa*) both fettered (*bandha Jíva*) and unfettered or liberated (*mukta Jíva*). The liberated beings have nothing to do with the world where only the fettered beings live. That which fetters a Jíva is called karma which is conceived in a materialistic sense.<sup>14</sup> Karma is subtle matter particle (*súksma pudgala*) which prevails all over the world. This matter particle flows into the Jíva as it experiences passions (*Kasáya*). According to the intensity of these emotional experiences Karma is analogous to the combination of water and milk, earth and ores.<sup>15</sup> It is because of such a link that a person is both constant as well as changing (*Tattvārtha Sūtra*, 5. 29-31, 37). *Svabháva paryáya* in a person is in a constant change due to its own nature, *rága* and *dvesa*, and *vibháva paryáya* is due to the contact with the universe, environment etc. Any fettered being was at no time liberated.

10. *Samayasara*, 2, 150 *Samayasara* explains Jiva in its real sense. For an understanding of person according to Samayasara of Acarya Kundakunda see article of the author in *Jain Journal*, Jain Bhavan Publication, Calcutta, Vol 25, Jan. 1991, pp. 110-108.

11. *Dravyasangraha*, 3.

12. *Tattvartha Sutra*, 5. 19.

13. *Ibid.*, 5. 20.

14. The Upanisadic and Patanjali's description of Karma suggest that some 'thing' is left behind by one's actions as a 'substance'. This material nature of karman was fully developed by the Jain thinkers from ancient times.

15. Gunaratna's Commentary on *Saddarsana samucchaya*, p. 181, as quoted in D. M. Datta, *Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, p. 103.

The Karmic bond has been from time immemorial<sup>16</sup> and the fettered Jīva must have had several lives in the four states of existence, namely, *Deva*, *Naraka*, *Manusya* and *Tiryak gati*, that is as gods, hellish beings, human persons and animal/vegetable kingdom. One interesting, logical anecdote is that in 'Sramana' tradition even these gods are not spared.<sup>17</sup> They are fettered beings and as such they too have the long way towards full enlightenment or total liberation. Hence the vedic concept of Gods and their abodes are only milestones on the journey of a Jīva towards fuller freedom.

The *bandha Jīvas* or the fettered beings experience their bondage because of and in the presence of other realities in the world, be the other Jīvas or Ajīva or non-living beings such as the material world, the dynamic forces of rest and activity ('adharmā' and 'dharma', concepts found only in the Jaina philosophical system) space and time.<sup>18</sup> The very presence of the *lokākāśa* wherein we find the above-said five elements evoke different emotions in a Jīva and subsequently the process of bondage takes place.<sup>19</sup> It is explained in a dramatic way like the formation of a sticky substance<sup>20</sup> in all the place (technically known as *pradesa* or space) of Jīva and a consequent sticking of the inflowing subtle *Karma* matter particles.

This whole process of the presence of Jīva-Ajīva, the consequent changes occurring in a Jīva and the subsequent bondage are generally compared to the rise of waves in the ocean on the day of full moon,<sup>21</sup> or oil-smearing body/mirror attracting dusts, or a

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16. *Pancadhyāyini*, 2.35 ref.D.N. Bhargava, *Jaina Ethics*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi: 1968, p. 53, n. 1.
  17. For a detailed study of gods and goddesses in Jainism see article of the author in *Jinamanjari*, Bramhi Society Publications, Canada, Vol V, No. 11, Oct. 1992, pp 51-59, "Jaina Religious Consciousness".
  18. *Tattvartha Sutra*, 5. 29.
  19. *Idid*. 6. 1-2,5; *Samayasara*, 23. *Acaranga Sutra* says that for the sake of the splendour, honour, glory of this life, for the sake of birth, death and final liberation, for the removal of pain man acts sinfully towards earth, or causes others to act so or allows other to act so. This deprives him of happiness and perfect wisdom (Acar. sut. I. 1.2.3).
  20. *Tat. sut.* 2.6.
  21. Gunaratna's Commentary on Haribhadra's *Saddarsana Samucchaya*, p. 181, as quoted in S.N. Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 194.

magnet attracting the iron particles. No other philosophical system has worked so much on the concept of *Karma*, the process of bondage, and the subsequent results as the Jaina system. All Jaina *Karma* granthas or Jaina texts on *Karma theory* have enumerated the varieties of *karma* and their results in a meticulous way.<sup>22</sup> Jaina psycho-analysis brings out an interesting notion called *lesya* or 'soul-colouring'.<sup>23</sup> Depending on the intensity of Karma formation each Jiva gets a particular colour-tinge just as the person's body bit by a poisonous snake turns blue. Thus, on the basis of soul-colouring, the Jivas are divided into six. This soul-colouring indicates the antique nature of a philosophical tradition whose animistic theory dates back to the far end of stone-age. Incidentally, Jainism is not an offshoot, of Hinduism as in the case of Buddhism. (Buddha, 540 B.C.). The Jains celebrate a series of 24 Tirthankaras, the last being Lord Mahāvira, a senior contemporary of Lord Buddha (Mahāvira 550 B.C.). Rsabhadeva, the first Tirthankara, known as the Adinatha, is believed to be the first law-giver, the one who taught the art of living, writing, ect., to humanity.

The human person with six senses (mind included) shares the lot of all other living organisms, namely, Karmic bondage and the innate energy of release from such a bondage. Jain philosophy says that Jiva in its pure or unfettered sense is *ananta Jñāna*, *ananta darsana*, *ananta vīrya* and *ananta sukha*, i.e., perfect knowledge, perfect vision, perfect strength and perfect bliss.<sup>24</sup> A liberated being is described only in this way. What obscures this perfection is the karmic dust smeared on the Jiva. It is this dust that has formed the karma sarīra and which is the cause for the varieties in organic life in all its dimensions, such as intellect, physique, emotions, family, state of existence and the like. Hence the cause for one's state of existence is not traced to nature, fate, accident, Gods, etc., but to the karmic residue of a Jiva. Though circumstances and other reasons might add to reasons for one's

22. *Tattvartha Sutra* ch. 6.

23. *Sutrakrtanga*, I. 8.13, *Acaranga Sutra*, I. 15.16 The classification of living beings in terms of six colours may be traced in Parsva's (23rd Tirthankara) doctrine of six Jiva Nikayas (*Acaranga Sutra*, 11.15.16) The Jaina religious efforts are directed towards the acquisition of pure (white) *lesya* (*Sutrakrtanga*, 1.10.15).

24. *Sarvarthasiddhi* (a commentary on *Tattvartha Sutra* by Pujyapada) X, 4.

being what it is yet in an 'absolute sense' it is karma that is the deciding factor.

What prevents a human person to achieve its pure ideal of *ananta catustaya*, namely, the above-mentioned four-fold perfections (such as perfect knowledge) is the 'inflow' of karmic particles into the spaces of Jíva due to various reasons<sup>25</sup> like perversity of outlook or improper vision (*Mityatva*), absence of determinism or vowlessness (*avirati*), indifference to higher values of life or negligence (*pramáda*), intense passions (*kasáya*) and the three kinds of activity of speech, mind and body (*yoga*). Due to such an inflow of karma a human person (for that matter any living being) is far from '*samyaktva*' or the Rightness of knowledge, vision and conduct.

Incidentally, Jaina soteriology points out an ethics in the form of a 'Tripple Jewel', *Samyag Jñána, Samyag Darsana and Samyag Cáritra*<sup>26</sup> (Right knowledge, Right vision and Right conduct), an 'integral vision' of life and mission. The Jaina metaphysics is closely linked to ethics. The objective of a Jíva, including a human person, namely the complete shedding up of karma,<sup>27</sup> cannot be realized without an ethical way of life.

*Samvara and Nirjará* are two of the seven Jaina metaphysical principles which give the foundation for Jaina Ethics. *Samvara* refers to the 'stopping' of the karmic inflow just as in the case of cleaning up of a tank with muddy water. First one needs to put a stop to the inflow of muddy water into the tank and then clean up the tank. Similarly *Samvara* refers to certain activities like diligent practice of the vows such as protection, preservation and promotion of life, non-acquisitiveness and accumulativeness, right attitude of mind, impassionate dealings, control of senses/passions and '*ayoga*'.<sup>28</sup> One need not speak much about these virtues which are so necessary as to build up a loving and just community and

25. *Tattvartha Sutra*, 8. 1.

26. *Samayasara*, 7, 10.

27. Liberation or Moksa is a state free from all karmas due to shedding of the karmas (*Tattvartha Sutra*, 10. 2-3).

28. 'He who does not undertake new acts does not acquire karmas sinful acts are got rid of by him who does not undertake any new acts' (*Sutrakrtanga*, 1. 15. 6-8) 'Those who engage in works (karma) and are held in worldly bondage, do not know the law which leads to Liberation' (*Sutrakrtanga*, 1. 10.10).

nation. The Asian spiritual heritage is still to impress the globe at large which is strife-ridden and possessive. No mission will be worth its name which does not take into account the rich spiritual traditions of the East. The last one 'ayoga' refers to 'inactivity'. Jaina meditational postures such as *Kayotsarga* (standing posture) implies an 'arresting of movement', i.e., inactivity.

Jaina ethics points out that one has to transcend *both* good as well as bad activities (*subha* and *asubha karma*) in order to attain 'purity' of actions (*suddha*).<sup>29</sup> This mental purity does not accrue karmic encrustations. Both Lord Mahāvira and Lord Buddha are believed to have carried out their mission in this world with such an attitude. Transcending passions in three modes of act (body, mind, and speech) implies *Samata bhāva* or equanimity (and hence the word 'Sramana/Samana). The Bhagavad Gīta (Gīta 4. 19, 23), in its effort to reconcile the Vedic/Brāhmanic and 'Sramanic' traditions, substitutes '*Niskāma Karma*' (passionless act) to inactivity'. Both *niskāma* of *Gīta* and *Suddha* of the Jains are inter-changeable.

The great ideal of life, namely Moksa, demands further 'purification' of the living being and this is not possible without 'austerity' (*tapasā nirjarāśca*' is the dictum: Complete annihilation of karma is possible only by *tapas* or austerity). Jaina ethics enumerates internal and external austerity measures<sup>30</sup> such as silence, study, reflection, meditation, etc. A human person has to engage in listening to the word of the Tīrthankaras, reflect upon them and meditate. Certain themes for reflection (*anupreksās*) are given: they are the basic reflections on life and reality: For instance, the impermanency of the world, the 'aloneness' of the soul (i.e., the soul in its true nature is not identified with emotions, activity, material elements etc.), Karmic inflow and bondage, the method of release, etc.

Thus the Jaina concept of a human person is understood in the context of the 'Sramana' perspective on life and Reality. The negative and gloomy view on life and reality presents a theory of Karma samsāra and moksa marga, Bondage and Release. The human person in an 'absolute' and 'real' sense is God (to put it theistica-

29. *Samayasara*, 270.

30. *Tattvartha Sutra*, 9. 19-20.



lly) but looks and behaves as a 'God' who tries to climb the ladder of perfectron.<sup>31</sup> The Jaina philosophical system explains this journey of the human soul towards achieving such an ultimate religious identity, namely the Tírthankarahood.

### BUDDHIST THEORY OF PERSON

While Lord Mahāvira gave a definite answer to many metaphysical questions pertaining to the body, the soul, the world, etc., Lord Buddha did not care to reply to any such question. (He only said that they were not useful for the ultimate purpose of life, namely attaining Nirvana). The silence of the Buddha was taken as 'Avyákṛta', in-expressible. Buddha and Mahavira, though they were contemporary 'Sramana thinkers, differed from each other regarding the fundamental question on Atman.

Buddha after he took up mendicancy visited the Bráhmanic teachers Alara Kalama and others in order to discuss with them the prevalent belief in Atman. Buddha was not convinced by their arguments and his personal experience was different. He thought that the world sought to pacify itself insatiably because of the belief in the theory of Atman (Buddha identified realization of Atman with egoism). Moreover the experience of dis-satisfaction caused by the sight of a man suffering from extreme old age, a sick man and a corpse being carried out to the burning ghat, brought Buddha to the realization that 'desire to be' has to be curbed in order to be freed from all forms of dukkha.

His first preaching at the Deerpark of Benares to certain ascetics who had formerly been his companions contains some of the fundamental principles of early Buddhist thought and practice. This discourse indicated in the *Dhamma akkappavattana sutta of Sutta Nipáta* (V. 420) enumerates the Four Noble Truths regarding *Dukka, Dukka samudaya, Dukka Nirodha and Dukka Nirodha Márga*. (the cause and origin of pain and its extinction) and the Eightfold path of ethical, mental and bodily discipline to attain the End.<sup>32</sup> Buddha spent nearly six

31. Jaina ethics speaks about a ladder of 14 stages of perfection known as the Gunasthanas (*Tattvartha Sutra* ch.6).

32. The reason for Buddha's avoidance and condemnation of extreme ascetic practices (like self-inflicted pain) was that, instead of achieving the purpose or the end, they increased pain and hence they were considered 'Dukkha'.

years in extreme ascetic practices, got disillusioned by it and he then sat down for meditation at the foot of the Bodhi tree at Uruvela beside the river Nerenjara. The only enlightenment he received was that there is no reality that is permanent and everything is passing. This impermanence is the root cause for dissatisfaction. Creatures desire to fill themselves up to make up for the loss but in turn they are caught up in a whirlpool of continued existences which further get sustained by desire and the like. The foremost thing a person has to realize is his/her own impermanency. Buddha construes that this realization will surely bring persons to non-attachment to things and to persons.

The logic is beautifully summarized in the Buddhist triple principle (*ti-lakkhana*) of *Anicca, anatta and Dukkha*: Transitoriness, non substantiality and pain/evil. Impermanence (*Anicca*) is a feature of all mundane existence. It is empirically observable at the physical levels in human body, whose constituent elements are in constant flux quite apart from the more obvious bodily impermanence observable in difference between infancy, childhood, youth, maturity and old age. Even more impermanent is the human mind, or consciousness which arises and ceases from moment to moment (S.II:94-95) though it is not readily observable empirically. It has to be discerned: 'The characteristic of impermanence does not become apparent because, when rise and fall are not given attention, it is concealed by continuity ... However, when continuity is disrupted by discerning rise and fall, the characteristic of impermanence becomes apparent in its true nature' (*Visuddhimagga*, XXI.3).

Each moment of consciousness is regarded as being formed from cause and condition and as being unstable, and therefore immediately dissolving. The Analogy of the sound of a lute is used: "this does not come from any 'store' of sounds, nor does it go anywhere when it has ceased; rather, from not having been, it is brought into existence by the lute and the player's effort, and then having been, it vanishes" (S.IV.197). So with all material and mental events: they came to be, and having been, vanish. *Anicca* provides subject matter for contemplation for Buddhists.

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(Majjima Nikaya, ii. 93, 212; i. 237). 'Not by this better cause of painful hardship shall I arrive at that separate and supreme vision of all-suffering, noble (arya) knowledge, passing humen ken. Might there be another path of enlightenment?' (Majjima Nikaya, 1. 307).

*Anatta* is the Doctrine that there is no (*an-*) permanent self (*-atta*) within each individual being. This concept is entirely peculiar to Buddhism, distinguishing it from all other religious and philosophical schools of ancient India. Instead, the individual is seen as a temporary collection of five *Khandhas*, or groups of constituent factors. The simile of the *chariot* is used to explain a human being.<sup>33</sup> The *Khandhas* themselves are not enduring, but are series of momentary events. While there is a flux of constantly changing factors in any given 'individual', there is also a 'continuity' in the process - sufficient to give the appearance, both at physical and psychological levels of that individual. It is this continuity that helps one to give names and terms to individuals and things. What we mean by substance (including a human person) is *only name and form*; there is no chariot except that it is made of parts - no substance apart from its qualities, no matter beyond sense data, and no soul beyond the separate mental data. Buddha says that these are worldly usages, worldly language, worldly terms of communication, worldly description by which a Tathagatha communicates without misapprehending them (D.I. 195f). But in the course of Buddhist history the idea of an individual self was re-introduced and affirmed by the *Pudgalavádins* whose views were not accepted as true by other Buddhist schools.

What is commonly regarded as a human '*individual*' is analysed into five *khandhas*: the first group of factors is *rúpa* (form), i.e., the physical or corporeal and the second group of factors is *nama* (name) which included the other four *khandhas*, namely, sensation or feeling (*vedana*), perception (*samjñā*), volition or formative principle (*samskāra*) and consciousness (*viññāna*). Each of these is a group, aggregate or bundle of elements of that type which are continually in flux. The whole process constituted by the five groups is the human individual at any given moment of his/her lifehistory.

The ultimate elements of psycho-physical existence are the '*dhammas*',<sup>34</sup> These are the atoms of which the *khandhas* are groups.

33. Warren, H.C. *Buddhism In Translations*, Cambridge: Mass. Pub. by Harvard University, 1906, p. 251 Stcherbatsky, *Soul Theory of the Buddhists*, p. 836.

34. The shortest statement of the essence and spirit of Buddhism is declared in the *Mahavagga*: Buddha discovered the elements (*dhamma*) of existence, their casual connexion, and a method to suppress their efficiency for ever (*Nirodha*)

or aggregates. The dhammas are of momentary existence only. They are thus as it were flashes of reality. They co-operate among themselves according to the laws of causation.<sup>35</sup> The analogy of the 'light burning through the night' is used to explain how elements of being join one another in serial succession.<sup>36</sup> The motivating or the generating 'forces' that operate in each dhamma, whether material or mental, primarily account for the 'movement' in the potential as well as in the actual stage, although the dhammas themselves do not move nor mix with one another. The appearance of each dhamma in a constant flow bears the resultant characteristics of all the previous dhammas. Their effect becomes the seed for future dhammas.

This is being supported by the Buddhist doctrine of 'Dependent Origination' (*Paticca-samuppáda*):<sup>37</sup> this theory explains that all physical and psychical phenomena are conditioned (law of causation) by antecedent physical and psychical factors, and the whole of existence (including human existence) can be shown to be an uninterrupted flux of phenomena. This doctrine implicitly rejects any idea of permanently existing entity or ego, human or animal/vegetable kingdom. *Samyutta Nikáya* (11, 7) expounds the 12 link formula: Take, for instance, in the case of a human person, old age and death (*Jananamarana*) are due to antecedent rebirth (*Játi*); rebirth is due to antecedent process of becoming (*bháva*); becoming is due to clinging (to life) (*upádána*); clinging is due to craving (*tanhá*). Craving is due to feeling (*vedana*); feeling is due to sense-impression (*Phassa*); sense impression is due to the six bases of sense (*áyatana*) the

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(*Mahavagga* i. 23 as quoted by Stcherbatsky, *Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word Dharma*, Prize publication Fund, Vol. VII of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, 1923, p. 3).

35. Warren, H.C. op. cit. p. 166. This is known as the middle doctrine between 'that things have being' and 'that things have no being'.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 149

37. The understanding that the ultimate constituent of existence (dhamma) has no substance, that it is evanescent, that it is a beginningless state of come motion and unrest, that it can be brought to rest only in the complete suppression etc. gives the real meaning of Dukkha (Warren, H. C., op. cit., p. 84, 86) Through the Doctrine of Dependent Origination the Blessed One enunciates how the entire aggregation of misery arises and ceases. The dependency or the conditioning in the total unrest of elements is misery (*Ibid.*, pp. 368-369).

six bases are due to corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*); corporeality is due to consciousness (*Viññāna*); consciousness is due to Karma-formation (*Sankhāra*); and karma-formation is due to ignorance (*avijjā*). In all these stages dhammas experience 'unrest' due to ignorance.<sup>38</sup>

These twelve factors may have their logical links to one another, but 'craving' is considered the root cause of all suffering in mortal existence. Craving is closely linked, in Buddhist analysis, with ignorance (*Avijjā*) and Karma, as forces which perpetuate sorrowful existence, i.e., continued cycle of births and deaths.<sup>39</sup> Hence in Buddha's first sermon (SN. V) it is proclaimed that craving must be got rid of, if nibbāna or enlightenment is to be attained. Buddhist ethics relate the characteristic condition of humanity (suffering, unease, ill, etc, caused by the basic evil of desire) to the recognized goal of Buddhist endeavours, namely complete enlightenment and nirvāna. Buddhist ethics thus favour those attitudes and kinds of behaviours which help humanity towards ultimate goal of transcendental enlightenment.

Such attitudes and behaviour are set in the eight-fold path (*atthāngika-magga*), a schematic description of the Buddhist life. In earlier texts (S.N. and *Mahāparinibbana Sutta* (I. 12) give a three fold scheme of life: wisdom (*Prajñā or panna*),<sup>40</sup> morality (*Sīla*) and concentration or meditation<sup>41</sup> (*Samadh*): "great is the fruit, great the advantage or meditation, when surrounded by morality; great the advantage, great the fruit of wisdom, when surrounded by meditation." Each of these aspects are sub-divided: the initial faith which

38. Ibid. pp. 266-267. This unrest or agitation is beautifully portrayed in the verse: 'while eagerly man calls life's flowers, with all his faculties intent, of pleasure still insatiate - death comes and overpowereth him'. The Tathagatha exclaims, 'when will men ever get freed from misery!'. The final liberation is the suppression of all dhammas, an Absolute Calm.

39. It is by the dominating influence of Emotions that karman is able to present a new life. Emotions are the root of the fact of continued existence. Where emotions are exhausted, the world ceases to exist.

40. The unrest of dhammas are resolved through Prajna or Wisdom. An ordinary man and a saint are two representatives of two distinct combination of dhammas, the former of Avidya and the latter of Prajna.

41. *Atthasalini* (iii. 282) defines concentration as 'absence of distraction' (*avisahara*), 'non-confusedness' (*avikkhepa*) and 'non-dividedness' (*avisahatamanasata*) because concentration scatters and reverses the agitative and uncertainty processes and leads the whole attitude towards pointedness. Guenther, *Philosophy and psychology in the Abhidharma*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1974, p. 60.

ultimately becomes wisdom, into right understanding and right thought; morality into right speech, right bodily action and right livelihood; meditation into right (spiritual) effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The outcome of practice of this eight fold way is held to be the attainment of state of wisdom, a state when right understanding and right mental attitudes become direct and immediate, where formerly they were based on faith (*Saddha*) (understanding the world and human existence in terms of the four Noble Truths derived from Buddha). Thus the tiniest germ of right understanding can grow eventually to highest state of enlightenment. This state of enlightenment, called Nirvána, literally means 'blowing off'. It refers to blowing off passions, a passionless state, when a person has put an end to Kilesa or defilements, i. e., morally defiling passions such as greed.

## CONCLUSION

Both Jaina and Buddhist traditions speak about the growth of human persons more in a soteriological and religious sense, a growth towards Moksa or Enlightenment. An ordinary human being grows into a 'super man' who is severally described as the wise, the enlightened, the sage, the learned, the noble, etc. His/her relation to the world and his/her duty and responsibility towards society are spoken about more in a 'practical' sense (*vyavahára naya*) than in a 'real' sense (*niscaya naya*). But none of these founders have neglected to speak about the human person as a social being: *Sigálovada Sutta* known as the *gihivinaya* or the Buddhist householder's discipline enjoins *Sigála*, a young householder of *Rájagrha*, with a better form of devotion: Social duties towards the six directions - parents, teachers, wife and children, friends, working-people or servants and religious teachers. The missionary zeal in both these religious traditions, following the foot steps of their founders, their contribution to literature, art and architecture, their involvement in society through a variety of service structures, business, etc., challenge the age-old views on their life-negating philosophy.

But we cannot deny that both these religions belong to a renouncer' tradition. Both encourage renunciation of money, things, cattle, even wife and children and call for a mendicant way of

life.<sup>42</sup> Both these religions believe that it is this form of life that is much suited and easier to attain their religious ideal.<sup>43</sup> It is only on the basis of the religious ideal that people are differentiated and not on the basis of birth or status in society (in contrast to Vedic/Brahmanic traditions). An arya (noble) is the one who has proved himself/herself through moral conduct. Thus we find a hierarchy of beings with low or high profile. Such an ideal of moral hierarchy goes hand-in-hand with their understanding of Jīva or life-being from one-sensed upto six sensed.

42. 'Perceiving the truth from a desire of (a pious) end they choose religious life' (Acaranga Sutra, I. 5. 5. 1) Even a casual glance over the pages of the Buddhist as well as Jaina sutras will sufficiently demonstrate the world's craving for wealth and power. Buddha says, 'I behold the rich in the world; of the goods they have acquired, in their folly they give nothing to others; they eagerly heap riches together and further they go in their pursuit of enjoyment... If these acts thus restlessly swimming in the stream of impermanence carried along with greed and carnal desire, who then can walk on earth in peace?' (Oldenberg, H., *Buddha*, Calcutta, 1972, reprint, Delhi, 1971, 9:64). Mahavira says: 'He who longs for the qualities (by this term greed and carnal desire are meant), is overcome by great pain, and he is careless. (For he thinks) I have to provide for a mother, for a father, for a sister, for a wife, for sons, for daughters, for a daughter-in-law, for my friends, for near and remote relations, for my acquaintances, for different kinds of property, profit, meals and clothes. Longing for these objects people are careless, suffer day and night, work in the right and wrong time, desire wealth and treasures, commit injurious and violent acts...' (Acaranga Sutra, I. 2. 1. 1). In the Dialogue between Sakra (Indra) and sage Nami, as we find in the *Uttaradhyayana Sutra* (IX. 18-62), we have a nice expression of the conflict between the ideals of class society and state power, on the one hand, and those of the simple undifferentiated life.
43. Both these traditions give different criteria for Brahmanhood: There are five requisites for being regarded as a Brahmana-Varna (ubhato sujato hoti), Jati (avikkitto anupakutto jativadena), Mantra (ajjhayako hoti mantradhara), Sila and Panditya. But what really makes a person Brahmana is conduct and learning (Dhammapada, ch. 26). Uttaradhyayana Sutra (25.31-32) says: One does not become a Sramana by tonsure, nor a Brahmana by the sacred syllable Om, nor a Muni by living in the woods, nor a tapasa by wearing clothes of kusa grass and a bark. One becomes a Sramana by equanimity, a Brahmana by chastity, a Muni by knowledge and a Tapasa by penance.