

## Being and Becoming: A Psychological Approach to the Concept of Self According to Buddhism and Bhagavadgita

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### *Abstract*

It is the fundamental right of all human beings to live a happy and successful life. Nevertheless, despite every effort to avoid it, suffering sets in. In fact, this suffering is the result of our failure to open to the vastness of life. We are debilitated by our limited knowledge and remain blind to things that are beyond our knowledge. In our quest for materialistic goals and ritualistic loftiness, human beings forget that life needs certain basic qualities to make the world a better place to live and evolve. Hinduism, represented by *Bhagavadgita*, and Buddhism are undoubtedly the two most outstanding philosophical and religious traditions of India. They still remain vibrant living religious traditions that played and continue to play significant roles in the lives of countless individuals by showing them the path towards better living and help them to evolve their selves to the highest extent possible. A blending of the vision of *Srimad Bhagavadgita* and the compassionate heart of the Buddhism can contribute immensely towards the achievement of this goal.

### **Introduction**

Ancient India had two philosophical streams of thought, the *Sramana* religion and the Vedic religion, parallel traditions that have existed side by side for thousands of years. Both Buddhism and Jainism are continuations of *Sramana* traditions, while Hinduism is a continuation of the Vedic tradition

(Svarghese, 2008). *Srimad Bhagavadgita*, which is a segment of the great epic the *Mahabharat*, is counted among the scriptural trio (the *Prasthan Traya*). The other two consist of the *Upanisads* and the *Brahma Sutra* (Ramsukhdas, 2014a). The *Upanisads* and *Brahma sutras* are often utilized and valued by the elite class of erudition and learning, meanwhile, the *Bhagavadgita* is for *everybody* (Ramsukhdas, 2014b). The Buddhism, which was founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C., had its proclaimed goals - the elimination of suffering and happiness for all sentient beings by putting an end to the cause of suffering. The Buddha showed the mankind through his life, the hidden potential and possibilities of human beings, which need to find expression for the exaltation of their personality.

### **Evolution of the Concept of Self:**

According to the Buddha, sentient beings may come in beauty or ugliness, smart or dumb, the principal Buddha Nature is the same for everyone (Brown, 2004). Through his life the Buddha proved that the supreme goal of liberation from the cycle of birth and death and the recurrent sufferings is within the reach of everybody provided one strives devoutly and makes strenuous single pointed and concentrated efforts to purify and transform his consciousness to attain the highest possible state of perfection and purity in life. According to the Buddha this purification and transformation of the 'will to become' is the sole key to salvation and not any grace of God or supernatural agencies. It is on account of this life affirming practicality that Buddhism is increasingly being sought after, not just as a religion, but as a system for understanding and promoting personal growth. It is seen as offering a much more positive idea of the nature of mental health, and a much richer repertoire of methods for attaining a sense of mental balance, well-being and personal fulfillment (Clarke, 1997, p.151).

Similarly, *Bhagavadgita* upholds the view that the very birth of a being (*jiva*) in human form is an invitation towards '*kalyana*' i.e., salvation. There are no conditions in the world, which makes human salvation impossible (Ramsukhdas, 2014c). In the *Bhagavadgita*, Lord *Krsna* motivates all beings to uplift themselves through their own effort: "Let a man emancipate himself by his own self; and not degrade himself; for he himself is his friend as well as his enemy" (B.G. Ch. VI,5). Therefore, both Buddhism as well as in *Bhagavadgita*, considers human beings responsible for their own exaltation and dilapidation. It is through their own efforts that they can evolve their personality and attain emancipation.

### **Theory of Impermanence and Selflessness:**

For the Buddha, the hallmarks of existence are *anicca* (impermanence), *anatta* (selflessness) and *dukkha* (suffering). The world that we create around us and all the sufferings we endure are due to our craving for sensual pleasures and

our attachments. They influence our attitude towards the sense objects. Not being conscious of the truth of *anicca* and *anatta* people wrongly assume and get attached to a false concept of individuality or self. To fulfill or satisfy this self, they indulge in all sorts of selfish actions. According to the Buddha the false notions of self ('I' and 'Mine') leads to clinging and craving. The resultant actions leads to suffering (Samutta Nikaya,45).

The Buddha reduces the supposed 'being' or 'self' as nothing but an aggregate or process of coming together of the five *skandhas* (heaps) of *rupa* (matter, body or form), *vedana* (sensations/feelings), *sanna* (perceptions), *sankhara* (volitions) and *vijnana* (consciousness). These five heaps are in a state of constant flux. However, without realizing the continually changing nature of the heaps, one gets attached to them and consequently when these heaps change, man suffers.

According to the Pali canons, the Buddha's analyses of personality as the sum of five aggregates, nothing is permanent and blissful. The Buddha has expounded his famous theory of *anatta* in his second discourse to the five *bhikkhus* in the following way:

The body (*rupa*), O *bhikkhu*, is not self (*rupam bhikkhave anattas*) i.e. it is self-less, no self behind it. If, O *bhikkhus*, there were in this a soul or self, then this body would not be subject to afflictions (ills) and it could be had of body: Let my body be thus; let my body be not thus (Ireland, 2006).

In the same way, *Bhagavadgita* speaks of the body as a cloth. As a person discards worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, so does the embodied soul casts off the old body and enters into others which are new (B.G. Ch.II, 22). According to the Buddha, this selflessness (*anatta*) is the liberating truth which sets one free. Even a trace of the idea of self remaining in the mind is bound to affect the purity of the holy life (Krishnan, 2004a, p.206). *Bhagavadgita* also speaks of the non-existence of the body and emphasizes the attainment of imperishable bliss by the submergence of 'I' with God. The body neither exists in the past, before birth, nor will it exist in the future after death. It is also perishing at present. Thus, actually it is non-existent (B.G, Ch.II, 16). It continues, "In unity with God, the feeling of 'I' does not exist, nor does there remain its least impression. Infinite bliss is the state in which a Yogi immerses in God and losses his identity (B.G. Ch.VI, 28). The whole predicament of human existence is on account of the ignorance of true knowledge of what is conducive to the sustenance of happy life and what is to be discarded that causes suffering. The *Gita* says: the pleasure which tastes like nectar at first turns out to be poison in the end (B.G.Ch.XVIII,37).

### Evolution of Consciousness:

The idea of self, 'I' according to the Buddha, is a false conceptual construct of the mind. There are only flows of experiences as continuous streams: experience of form, sensations, perceptions, volitions and consciousness. In the ultimate analysis, consciousness only is experiencing all these. The whole life is a continuous evolving and becoming of the consciousness. This becoming is because of our *Karma* (actions) (Krishnan, 2004b, p.207). As we delve deep within our being, we find nothing else except these streams of forms, sensations, perceptions, volitions and consciousness. What is called self or 'I' at this moment is this moment of consciousness. With every moment my consciousness changes, 'I' also changes along with it. The 'I' that now is, is not the identical 'I' that was yesterday, not even the same as was the previous moment (Wettimuny, 1962a).

Consciousness too is a '*becoming*' a becoming aware. It is not something, that is. It is a *becoming*. It becomes. And it is that particular process of becoming which carries with itself the knowledge of its becoming. It is a living experience of becoming or of grasping, or of nutrition; it is the going on of the life process in which the knowledge that is so goes, goes on along with it (Wethimuny, 1962b). Again, according to *Yogacara* Buddhism each conscious moment has to be aware of itself so that memory or recollection of that moment can be possible. In other words, aside from the aspects of the perceiving and the perceived, there has to be an awareness of this perception of the perceived so that this perception can be recollected (Jiang, 2006).

The world, according to the *Gita*, is kaleidoscopic. It changes every moment. So it cannot be seen in the same state the very next moment. The world is also perishing all the time. The *atma* (spirit or soul) remains constant (B.G.Ch. II,13). These changes will continue so long as beings have their affinity of 'I' and 'mine' with nature. So long as beings are attached to *Prakrti* (nature), they undergo different changes (B.G.Ch.IX,10). But great souls, who possess divine nature, are conscious of God as the sole cause of creation and worship Him with an undivided mind (B.G.Ch. IX,13).

### Theory of Causation:

In Buddhism what we call 'self' of the human being is nothing but a conglomerate of the five aggregates brought together and functioning together according to causes and conditions. This functioning together as a flow of life is basically 'becoming' or evolving of consciousness (*vijñana*) according to the Law of *Karma* (actions). There is no unchanging consciousness but only a continuous flow of mental thoughts. The apparent continuity of flow is mistaken for an unchanging consciousness, soul or *atma*. The Buddha directly attacks and rejects the concept of an immortal self or man as a permanent eternally existing

principle within the being as the inner controller and as blissful as described in *Upanisads* and *Bhagavadgita*. According to him, if an eternal immutable self exists within as the inner controller, then why are there impermanence and sufferings and why is the self not able to control and maintain the constituents (of which it is the self) to be permanent and blissful (Krishnan, 2004c, p.208). Here man is considered as a psycho-physical unit whose 'psyche' is not a changeless but a dynamic continuum that is always in flux and not limited to one span of life. The karmic force of each individual binds the psycho-physical elements together. This uninterrupted flux or continuity of psycho-physical phenomenon, which is conditioned by *Karma* and not limited only to the present life, but having its source in the beginningless past and its continuation in the future - is the Buddhist substitute for the immortal soul or self in the *Upanisadic* philosophy and philosophy of *Bhagavadgita* (Narada Thera, 1996, p. 223).

According to *Bhagavadgita*, *Ahamkara* (ego) is the sense of 'I' that unites the physical body, the ten senses, mind and intellect and identifies itself with them. This sense of 'I' is the one that separates itself from the rest of the universe and creates for itself an individual identity. This 'I' or self is unique to an individual and individuation is the process of realizing the self or becoming an indivisibly whole human being. According to Buddhism the fundamental 'blind will to live and to become' manifests itself in the three forms of insatiable thirsts: *Kama-tanha* (craving for sense-pleasures including sexual gratification), *bhava-tanha* (craving for self-preservation and selfish pursuits) and *vibhava-tanha* (craving for aggression, destruction and annihilation). The inherent tendencies (*anasuyas*) and the craving of (*tanhas*) have their roots in the basic instincts of self-preservation, self-gratification and self aggrandizement. Blinded by ignorance and delusion (*moha*), the individual does not see the true nature of these tendencies and cravings and develops false notions of individuality and becomes self driven by the hidden impulsive forces. Being subject to the *ditthi-anusaya* (wrong beliefs) and ego-illusions, the individual fails to realize the three truths of *anatta*, *anicca* and *dukkha*.

The Buddha emphasizes that the conceit of 'I' or self must be completely shaken off to attain the state of the absolute cessation of suffering. It is only by shaking off all conceit of 'I' in this conscious body as well as in the external objects that one becomes thoroughly free from all clinging and thereby attains unfettered salvation (Upadhyaya, 1998, p.313). In Buddhism, the consciousness has craving as its base because impelled by cravings and the resultant clinging it evolves and further 'becomes'. Consciousness, in fact, determines one's behavior. This is described in Twelve-Limbed wheel of Causation and Becoming or the theory of dependent origination as depicted in the *Mahanidana Sutta* (the great Discourse on Causes). Accordingly, ignorance

(*avijja*) has been described as the fundamental factor behind cravings causing *dukkha* and the rebirth, the root of *samsara*:

Dependent on ignorance (*avijja*) arise volitions/ karmic formations (*sankhara/samskara*)

Dependent on volitions in past life arises rebirth consciousness (*vinnana/vijnana*)

Dependent on rebirth consciousness arise mind-body complex (*nama-rupa*)

Dependent on mind-body complex arise the six senses (*salayatana*) i.e., the five sense organs and the mind.

Dependent on the six senses arises sense-contact (*phassa sparsa*)

Dependent on the sense-contact arises feeling (*vedana*)

Dependent on the feeling arises craving (*Tanha/Trsna*)

Dependent on the craving arises clinging (*upadana*)

Dependent on clinging arises becoming (*Bhava*)

Dependent on becoming and *karmic* formations in becoming arises rebirth (*Jati*).

Dependent on birth arise old age, death (*Jara-marana*) (Samyutta Nikaya II:12:1)

This theory of Causation and Becoming (*Bhavacakka*) states that the evolution of being or life is cyclical, with no beginning and no end. The rebirth consciousness, according to Buddha is nothing but a manifestation of the 'blind will energy' i.e. "the blind will to be born, to live and to become." Driven by its *karmic* forces this subtle energy descends into the mother's womb and develops into the body-mind organism. The mind-body organism evolves into the six organs of cognition, i.e. the five senses and the mind. Out of its contact with the external world the senses give rise to sensation or feelings. These sensations or feelings are classified as pleasant, unpleasant and neutral (indifferent). If the sensation is pleasant it leads to the craving for such pleasure-inducing objects. One develops dislike and hatred for unpleasant sensations and if the sensation is neutral one develops uncertainty and delusion. The Freudian Psychology also holds the view that a tendency to attachment lies in pleasant feeling, a tendency to hatred lies latent in painful feeling and tendency to ignorance lies latent in neutral feeling (Silva, 1992, p.58).

The sense objects which are associated with lust, desire and anger are also regarded as the cause of self-destruction by the Gita. By developing attachment for sense enjoyments, a man develops attachment for them (*vishayan pumsah sangas teshupajayate*). By developing attachment sense enjoyments, one has a desire to acquire and enjoy those sense objects (*sangat sanjayate kamah*). Gratification of desire misleads to greed and from the failure to fulfill the desire springs anger (*kamat krodho 'bhijayate*). From anger originates delusion

(*krodhad bhavati sammohah*) and from delusion arises confusion of memory (*sammohat smriti-vibhramah*). From confusion, arises loss of reason (*smriti-bhranShad buddhi-naSho*). In this state, man fails to discriminate between right and wrong. Loss of reason paves the way to self destruction (*buddhi-naShat pranaShyati*) (B.G.Ch. II, 62-63).

### **Law of Karma (action):**

*Karma* is a central part of Buddhist teachings. In Buddha's teaching, *karma* is a direct result of a person's word, thought and action in life (Keown, 2000). The pleasant feelings have the tendency to arouse the inherent latent potency to sensuous greed (*Kama raganusaya*) and the unpleasant or painful feelings the latent tendency to anger and hatred (*patighanusaya*). Out of these feeling arise three types of insatiable cravings: *Kamatanha*, *Bhavatanha* and *Vibhava-tanha*. Driven by craving and clinging, the so-called 'I' or 'self' engages in *karma*-producing volitional activities. All actions, according to Buddhism, are impelled by the will in the consciousness. These actions leave their imprints on the aggregate of consciousness in the form of new seeds which in due time will sprout and give fruits (*vipakas*). This law of *karma* continues leading the modified consciousness to act accordingly. This is the becoming or evolving of consciousness, the becoming or unfolding of life. The *karmic* formations (*sankhara*) in the aggregate of consciousness drive the wheel of becoming or the wheel of life. There are meritorious, de-meritorious and neutral *karma* formations which have the potentiality to bring the next birth. The rebirth consciousness is the 'blind will to become' as determined by ignorance (*avijja*) and *karmic* formations (*sankharas*) in the previous life (Smetham, 2015,p.323).

The concept of *sunya* (emptiness of self-nature) in Mahayana Buddhism also signifies this selflessness and emptiness of all things. The concept of *Nisvabhavata* in Madhyamika philosophy is also a denial of self in both the internal world of one's own self and the external world of objects. The *Yogacara* Buddhism defined it in terms of the non-existence of subject-object duality. The objective world of its creation is the one that results when it impinges in the external world and modifies it with its will to become and expand. This 'will energy' which is known as *vijnana* (consciousness) in early Buddhism, later termed as *alaya-vijnana* (seed or store consciousness) by *Yogacara* Buddhism. The *alayavijana* is the reservoir of all the mental states giving rise to the various mental and physical phenomena and their corresponding consciousness, i.e. all the desires, volitions, drive impulses, conscious as well as subconscious or unconscious. The *alaya* is the receptacle or store consciousness where all impressions (*vasana*) of past activities are deposited and preserved. At the same time the seed which matures according to the law of *karma* active in the

causal scheme of dependent origination and becomes the source of all future phenomena.

The *avyakta* in the *Bhagavadgita* corresponds to the ‘limb of becoming’, in the Buddhist philosophy. In the Buddhist philosophy, the *vijnana* is regarded as a packet of ‘will energy’ (the blind will to survive and become) that becomes and constitutes the being. Each unit of consciousness is a packet of will or mind energy and consists of three phases: genesis, development and dissolution (Krishnan, 2004d, p.179). One unit of consciousness perished only to give birth to another. The consciousness stream is modified according to the universal Law of Karma depending upon the moral content of its volitions (intentions). As against this, the *avyakta* in the *Bhagavadgita* is interpreted as the unaffected will or the *maya* of *Brahman*. This cosmic principle of *avyakta* or *maya sakti* of *Isvara* is, in the ultimate analysis, creation of the supreme Lord and the laws are subject to its will, because it is His deed (B.G.XIV.4). The entire universal process including the modification and evolution of the individual selves is attributed to His divine will.

*Anatta* or selflessness is the core and fundamental teaching on which Buddha’s whole philosophy is anchored. Later on Mahayana Buddhism calls this ultimate truth of selflessness ‘Suchness’ or ‘Thusness’. Buddha’s life after his enlightenment became an embodiment or incarnation of selflessness itself without any considerations of own-self and filled with only selflessness, love and compassion.

### **Selfless Action in the Bhagavadgita:**

Like Buddhism the *Bhagavadgita* also adopted selflessness as the ideal principal in its philosophy. But the *Bhagavadgita* has combined selflessness with its absolute concept of Lord *Krsna* as the Supreme God. The Absolute has no desire to be satiated, nor any want to be fulfilled. He has no wish fulfilling motive. He has nothing to gain by doing action or nothing to lose by abstaining from an action. Even though he has nothing to gain, the Lord engages himself in action solely for the welfare and upholding of the world (*loka-sangraham*). The Lord says:

O Partha, I have no duty nothing that I have not gained, and nothing that I have to gain in the three worlds; yet, I continue in action (B.G.III.22). If I did not work, these worlds would perish (B.G.III.24).

In his actions for *loka-sangraham*, Lord *Krsna* remains unattached and selfless. This selfless action of Lord *Krsna* can be compared to the dedicated actions of the Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings. Similarly *Bhagavadgita*’s teachings on selfless actions (*Niskama Karma*) are also influenced by Buddhism.

According to *Bhagavadgita* one should do actions without hankering for its fruits (B.G.II,47). The selfless actions are directed for the benefit of all sentient beings. Even *nirvana*, according to Buddhism, is nothing but eradication of all defilements and becoming an incarnation of selflessness. The ultimate goal in the *Bhagavadgita* has also been described as *moksa* or salvation which can be attained by surrendering oneself at the feet of the Lord by reducing oneself to emptiness or nothingness ((B.G.XVIII.66). The *Bhagavadgita* continues: “As ignorant men get attached to work, O’ Bharata, so should the wise-man act but unattached to it for the welfare, protection and guidance of the world” (B.G.III,26).

### **Transmigration of the Soul:**

In the theory of transmigration of the soul, the *Bhagavadgita* describes the soul as eternal and unchanging. It only carries the subtle body (comprising of the five subtle elements, the senses, the mind and the intellect), that alone has been modified according to the *karmic* formations, to a new gross body. The *Gita* compares this with the casting off of worn-out clothes and by donning others that are new (B.G.II.22). This eternal nature of the self transmigrating to a new body is not accepted in Buddhism. According to the Buddha, the consciousness is constantly changing, becoming and evolving. Each unit of consciousness is a packet of energy which is constantly changing and getting modified according to the law of *karma*. At death, with the disintegration of the body, the final consciousness becomes the re-linking (rebirth) consciousness driven by the *karmic* energy into an appropriate sperm ovum cell combination to give rise to a new existence, Here the *Bhagavadgita* recognizes a separate self or *atman* to carry the subtle body to a new existence whereas in Buddhism it is the innate *karmic* energy which drives the evolving consciousness into a new life (Krishnan, 2008, p.115).

In the Twelve-Limbed wheel of Causation and Becoming, the consciousness has craving as its base. The consciousness is constituted of the three inherited latent tendencies: self-preservation, self-gratification and self-aggrandizement. These basic impulses, with feeling as a condition, give rise to craving. These latent tendencies have been acquired and accumulated over innumerable previous births. These are inherited and they lie deep within as unconscious forces. These determine one’s behavior. The concept of consciousness closely resembles to the modern psychological theory of Sigmund Freud and others who have put forth the scientific theories of ‘libido’ and instincts driving the human personality. In his ‘Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud has stratified the mind into unconscious, preconscious and conscious (Jiang, 2006, p.130). Most of the human activities are guided by his unconscious wishes and dream is a fulfillment of man’s unrecognized wish. In his work *The Ego and the Id*, the mind is structured into id, ego and superego. Here the id is described as

“the dark inaccessible part of our personality, and can be described only as a contrast to the ego (Frued,1933). In contrast to the ego, the id is chaotic, instinctual and pleasure seeking.

The consciousness, according to Buddhism, is the basis for the growth, development and expansion of body-mind complex. It is also dependent on the other four *skandhas*: form, sensations, perceptions and volitions in its becoming and evolution. The *Bhagavadgita* describes the *triguna* theory as the fundamental forces giving rise to specific psychological abilities. The *gunas* as forces and energies give rise to body, senses, mind, ego and intellect as modifications of *Prakrti* which in turn exhibit the respective psychological qualities. The force of energy behind *Sattva* is purity, luminous etc. which exhibit qualities such as happiness, knowledge, freedom from evil etc. The force of energy behind *Rajas* is motion (activity) which gives rise to thirst and attachment. Darkness is the force behind *Tamas* which develops the quality of ignorance. As against the three *gunas*, the Buddhism analyzed the fundamental forces into seven kinds of *anusayas* (inherent latent tendencies) (Fuller, 2005,p.227). The seven *anusayas* are as follows:

1. *Kamaraga* (the *anusaya* of sensuous craving).
2. *Patigha* (the *anusaya* of hatred/anger)
3. *Mana* (the *anusaya* self-conceit)
4. *Ditthi* (the *anusaya* of false view of individuality and self)
5. *Vicikiccha* (doubt and skepticism)
6. *Bhavaraga* (instinctual drive for self-preservation and self-aggrandizement)
7. *Avijja* (ignorance)

Aroused by feeling, these *anusayas* give rise to three types of *tanha* (craving) viz. *Kama-tanha*, *Bhavatanha* and *Vibhava-tanha*. The *anusayas* and *tanhas* are ultimately traced to three immoral roots *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), *moha* (delusion) and three moral roots *alobha* or *caga* (liberty or charity), *adosa* or *metta* (kindness or good will), *amoha* or *panna* (knowledge/wisdom) in the consciousness stream. The development of moral roots in the consciousness stream or *alaya - vijnana* current, is opposed to the seven *anusayas* and three *tanhas*. This psychological analysis in Buddhism is very deep, comprehensive and thorough. This analysis is not suppressed even by modern scientific theories of psycho analysis based on clinical trials and examinations (Krishnan,2004e, p.98).

The destruction of the conceit of ‘I’-ness is regarded as *Nibbana* in Buddhism. The root cause of all our craving and consequent suffering

is ignorance. This ignorance consists in the lack of proper knowledge about the five aggregates and the consequent clinging to them which gives rise to the conceit of 'I'-ness and indulgence in immoral actions causing harm to others. This ignorance is the root cause of further becoming and sorrows. With the rise of proper knowledge about the self and about the impermanence of the five aggregates constituting the self, clinging to them is destroyed, conceit of 'I'-ness is destroyed and ignorance is destroyed. This is *Nibbana*.

Similarly in *Bhagavadgita* it is said that due to delusion, the mind (Self) identifies the Self with all that is not self and with ego, and fails to discriminate between truth and untruth and between right and wrong (B.G.II.52). This impediment should be crossed by gaining right knowledge. Knowledge destroys egoism (*ahamkara*), frees one from the notion of 'mine', and makes him fit for becoming Brahman. In other words 'Knowing (Brahman) is Becoming (Brahman) and Becoming is *Moksa* or salvation'.

*Nirvana* is also emptiness characterized by the cessation of anything and the absence of any self. The *Bhagavadgita* also compares its reality (conceived psychologically as self) with *akasa* (the sky) which is only the absence of anything, a vast emptiness. That man who lives devoid of longing, abandoning all desires, without the sense of 'I' and mine, he attains peace (B.G.II.71). The ultimate reality, according to *Bhagavadgita*, is a sort of permanent everlasting residence in the highest reality or union with the Supreme Reality after which there is no rebirth (B.G.VIII.18). *Nirvana* in Buddhism is the ultimate realization of selflessness. This concept of selflessness resembles to the concept of ultimate Reality - Brahman or Supreme God - *Krsna* in the *Bhagavadgita*. The *Bhagavadgita* presents its supreme God as a model of selflessness who acts for *lokasangraham*. The whole philosophy of a detached action flows from this concept. The noble eight fold path in Buddhism also inspires man to work in a disinterested spirit.

## Conclusion

The false notions of individuality and self are the breeding ground of all defilements and evils such as greed, hatred, pride, jealousy which in turn leads to worldly sorrows and sufferings. Realization of the ultimate truth of selflessness in one self and in all beings and actualization of this principle of selflessness in life's activities will result in a total

transformation of the consciousness (the blind will to become). This consciousness (*alayavinana*) is now selflessness personified and turned in to Buddha consciousness to reborn as a Buddha or *Bodhisatta* on death for the benefit of all sentient beings.

The *Bhagavadgita* says when one completely casts away all desires of the mind and remains satisfied in the realization of the self by his self, he is said to be a man of wisdom (*sthitaprajna*) (B.G.II.55). When one is satisfied in his own self, he feels an infinite bliss which transcends the senses and is perceived by the purified intellect. Having attained this state in self, he regards nothing superior to that. This is the end of suffering for him (B.G.VI.20-23). In metaphysical terms, this state is also called Brahman - become the infinite bliss of contact with Brahman (B.G.VI.27-28).

Thus both Buddhism and *Bhagavadgita* demarcate the false notion of individuality as the root cause of all evils and sufferings. While Buddhism emphasizes on transformation of this consciousness into Buddha consciousness for the benefit of all sentient beings, *Bhagavadgita* speaks of the attainment of a State of Supreme Bliss by becoming one with the Brahman. It is only by harmonizing the wonderful intellect of the *Bhagavadgita* with the compassionate heart of the Great Buddha that the whole theory of being and becoming can evolve. It is only by this harmonization that one's individuality can be transformed from ordinary mortals to extra ordinary immortals.

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