

# Ecological Perspectives in Buddhism

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## *Abstract*

*Ecological perspective of humanity is ecological perspective of Buddhism. Buddhism is SELF-MANAGEMENT and thus maintenance of ecology. It is management of self has led to crisis at all levels. Life principle is based on LIVING PRINCIPLE. It is Pessimistic in as far as the cry of the child at the birth is concerned but grows with all zeal to know one self.*

*Karma theory and the transmigration of life after death is based on two postulates of science. Law of Uniformity of Nature i.e. under similar conditions same cause repeats the same effect and Law of causation which states every event has a cause and no effect is uncaused and it is as scientific as Sequential causation theory of Hume's and law of conservation of energy. Cause is sum of Positive and Negative Conditions. Buddhism analyses this progressively for every common man under Environment and Man, Not Man and Environment. Because Environment - Man = Environment only .But Man + Environment has led to crisis, Man - Environment certainly leads to Crisis. Need is not ruled out in Buddhism. But it is Insatiate Need is ruled out because it leads to greed. This approach of Buddhism if analyzed with urge for truth, neutral to values, Passion for reality which makes scientific attitude, it contributes to ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE AND RESOLVE THE CRISIS WHICH MAN HAS BEEN CRUELLY VENTURING.*

## **Introduction**

“Once upon a time, six men lost their way in a forest. They tried to find their way out but failed. Hunger made them realize that finding food was their most immediate need. They came upon a tree whose boughs were heavy with fruits. One of the men, whom we'll just call number six said, “Let us cut down the tree and collect all the fruits. We may be stuck in the forest for a long time if we fail to find our way. So we'll need food.” Number five broke in, “No, we'll just cut down all the branches which bear fruits.” Number four said, “No, no. We'll just break off the twigs with fruits.” Number three said, “No let us just pluck out all the fruits.” Number two said, “Let us just pluck only the ripe fruits.” And then number one spoke up: “Let us collect the fruits, which have fallen from the tree and are strewn all around it. They are enough to satisfy our hunger for now.”<sup>1</sup>

However number six overrode the rest of them and cut down the tree. The simple story above illustrates that indiscriminate exploitation of natural and human resources will inevitably result in crisis. Number six's example has been followed by innumerable people. And the consequence is for all of us to see — environmental crisis of monstrous magnitude that we are facing.

The need of the hour is protection and preservation of environment from further degradation. The focus of this paper is not to evaluate environmental components scientifically or technologically. Nor am I interested in elevating Buddhism in relation to other religions. Because the only inherent religion of

mankind is compassion, love and coexistence and any preaching or practice in the name of religion that does not include the above aspects is not a religion at all. Religion misunderstood in practice and misinterpreted in the pretext of scientific temper is what exists today. It is time we seriously reflect on the words of Albert Einstein: “Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind! Science can denature plutonium but it cannot denature the evil in the heart of man”<sup>2</sup> in resolving the relationship between environment and man, and the environmental crisis.

The relationship between man and environment has bewildered and fascinated mankind from times immemorial. Man has in turn, attempted to comprehend it through various means. Primitive man attributed supernatural qualities to elements of nature and thus raised superstitions that basically defined his relationship with his surroundings. In fact, superstitions, religion, science and philosophy have all come into being to grasp and explain the natural phenomena happening around man; furthermore these streams try to fathom and articulate man’s relationship with his surroundings.

What is science and how does it contribute to our knowledge of the environment? Science is neither searching for a single coordinating factor nor probing the material structure of the universe using tools of chemical analysis or mathematics. Science is a systematic knowledge of reality that is deep, accurate and comprehensive. Science is the study of nature of reality as it is and not as one comprehends it to be. However it states that while nature is indestructible, it is capable of modification — whether this is for the better or worse depends on the attitude and activities of man.

Religion is not just a bundle of rituals or priest-temples or the respective heads of the religious organizations or rather Religion is the basic principle of consciousness to live and let live. As the historian, Lynn White, observed “what people do about their ecology depends on what they think of themselves in relation to things around them.”<sup>3</sup> “Religion plays a significant role in ecological awareness and our attitude towards our surroundings”<sup>4</sup> as stated by White. So, “one of the greatest challenges to religions in the contemporary situation is, how to respond to environmental crisis. A crisis, which many believe we perpetuated by taking the erroneous roads of unrestrained materialism, secularism and industrialization in contemporary societies, especially those arising in or influenced by the modern West. Indeed, the very division of religion from secular life, in the superficial sense, is the major cause for crisis.”<sup>5</sup>

“Some medieval historians and Lynn White have cited religion’s negative role also in the crisis. White felt that the emphasis in Judaism and Christianity is on the transcendence of God above nature that leads to the devaluing of the natural world and a subsequent destruction of its resources for utilitarian ends. While the particulars of this argument have been vehemently debated, it is increasingly clear that the environmental crisis and its perpetuation is due to industrialization, secularizations and ethical indifference, which present a serious challenge to world’s religions.”<sup>6</sup>

“It is crucial that we introspect on how to adapt religious teachings to the task of revaluing nature so as to prevent its destruction; such an application highlights a significant new phase in religious thoughts.”<sup>7</sup> As Thomas Berry has aptly pointed out, “what is necessary is the comprehensive re-evaluation of human-earth relation, if the human is to continue as a viable species on an increasingly degraded planet.”<sup>8</sup> “In addition to major economic and political changes, the situation calls for an examination of views and ethics of world’s religions that differ from those of industrialized societies, which regard nature as a commodity to be utilised.”<sup>9</sup>

Let us introspect on the prognoses of Lovelock and Mahatma Gandhi. “We don’t pose much of a threat to the planet our threat is to our own civilisation, livestock and food crop that accompany it.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly replacements of need by greed made Gandhiji caution the society: “The wealth of the world is sufficient to meet the need of every single man, but not enough to meet the greed of a single person.”<sup>11</sup>

We clearly need to explore such comprehensive cosmological perspectives and communitarian environmental ethics as motivating factors in saving the natural world from further destruction. Natural world comprises man, his fellow beings and matter. But the advent of man on earth was much later to flora, fauna and matter. Till then, harmony and coexistence was the law of nature. Unity in diversity was the principle of harmony; everything had a right to live and allowing others to live was the intrinsic principle of coexistence.

Even just the advent of man on earth did not bring on a crisis; rather in the name of civilization, modernization and more so scientific advancement and economic liberalization, man has led the world to the brink of crisis. “The scientific revolution at first moved in a different direction, exercising the demonic powers from nature in order to reclaim it as an icon of divine reason manifest in natural law.”<sup>12</sup>

“In western society the application of science to technological control over nature marched side by side with colonialism. From the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Western Europeans would appropriate the lands of the Americas, Asia, and Africa, and reduce their human populations to servitude. The wealth accrued by this vast expropriation of land and labour would fuel new levels of technological revolution, transforming material resources into new forms of energy and mechanical work, control of disease, increasing speed of communication, and travel. Western elites grew increasingly optimistic; imagining that this technological way of life gradually would conquer all problems of material scarcity and even push back the limits of human mortality. The Christian dream of immortal blessedness, freed from finite limits, was translated into scientific technological terms.”<sup>14</sup>

“The medical conquest of disease, lessening infant mortality, and doubling the lifespan of the affluent, insufficiently matched by birth limitation, especially among the poor, has created a population explosion that is rapidly outrunning the food supply. Every year ten million children die of malnutrition.”<sup>15</sup> “The gap between the rich and poor, between the wealthy elites

of the industrialized sector and the impoverished masses, especially in the colonized continents of Latin America, Asia, and Africa,”<sup>16</sup> grow ever wider.

“In order to preserve the unjust monopoly on material resources from the growing protests of the poor, the world must become more and more militarized. Most nations are using the lion’s share of their state budgets for weapons, both to guard against each other and to control their own poor. Weapons also become one of the major exports of the wealthy nations to poor nations. Poor grow increasingly indebted to wealthy nations while buying weapons to repress their own impoverished masses. Population explosion, exhaustion of natural resources, pollution, and states violence is the four horsemen of the new global apocalypse.

The critical question of both justice and survival is how to pull back from this disastrous course and remake our relation with each other and with the Earth.”<sup>17</sup>

Human values and principles of coexistence and harmony have been replaced by dishonesty, selfishness, greed and lust. His violent and materialistic self superseded his cognitive characteristics with the result the man, crown of creation has become the crown of destruction, the most corrupt and polluted creature on the earth. His physical world is polluted, social life is destructive, moral life is disastrous and ironically even spiritual life is in crisis. In a world with man as the crown of evolution and thus creation, environmental crisis has soared sky-high. Why did this happen? Have we failed to appreciate what environment, ecology and eco-system is to man or vice-versa? We have to ponder upon which takes precedence — whether it is environment and man or man and environment. Earlier, all that surrounded man was environment; today it is MAN who is surrounding everything resulting in all kinds of crisis.

To resolve the crisis, today, we do have innumerable policies, projects, laws and regulations to protect our environment and society. But as these laws and regulations increase, so does violence and pollution, because we are erring in our approach to the solution for the problems. Without targeting self-purity, no environmental sanctity can be achieved to restore harmony, coexistence and peace. And to realise this, we need religion of non-violence, compassion and peaceful coexistence and growing awareness in this direction is ecological awareness, and if such awareness had to be promoted, such perception is required, if such perspective had to be extended such vision and mission is required. And if any religion should have the principle of scientific vision and spiritual mission of LIVE AND LIVE WITH conscience, it is Buddhism. Before comprehending this let me brief what are.

### **Environment, Ecology and Ecosystem**

“Long ago, there was a large forest fire, and all the animals of the forest fled and gathered around a lake, including elephants, deer, rabbits, squirrels, etc. For hours the animals crowded together in their small refuge, cowering from the fire. The leader of the elephant herd got an itch, and raised the leg to scratch him. A tiny rabbit quickly occupied the space vacated by the elephant’s foot. The elephant, out of an overwhelming desire not to hurt the rabbit, stood on three legs for more than three days until the fire died down and the rabbit scampered off. By then, his leg was numb and he toppled over. Still retaining a pure mind and heart, the elephant died.”<sup>18</sup>

This is parable that exemplifies that even animals, which are on a lower level of evolution than man, exhibit qualities of compassion for fellow beings and concern for environment. Man, despite his superior brain, is lacking in wisdom exhibited by animals. However primitive man did not look upon nature with indifference and arrogance. That is a modern attitude that developed gradually as man became more socialized and knowledgeable. The more civilized he became, the more selfish he grew. He exploited natural and human resources to satisfy his wants and hence qualities like violence, hatred, lust, acquisitiveness, etc began to replace humanitarian values like coexistence, compassion and non-violence.

The logical result of this erroneous attitude is evident in the environmental crisis of mind boggling magnitude we are facing at all levels today — physical, economic, psychological, social, political, religious and spiritual. All these are integrated and interwoven parts of a system and should be studied in relation to each other.

Physical crisis is reflected in ozone depletion, drying up of lakes, scarcity of clean drinking water, deforestation, pollution, increase in the occurrence of natural calamities, global warming, spread of epidemic diseases, increase of non-cultivable lands, AIDS, soil erosion, etc. This is due to overexploitation of nature and man, by man.

On the socio-economic level, crisis is reflected as population explosion, economic and social inequalities, poverty, unemployment, unfair trade practices, discrimination based on caste, creed, gender, etc. These differences and conflicts arise due to adherence to false system of values that teach unhealthy competition and not coexistence. People are pursuing wealth, power, fame, etc at the cost of their fellow beings.

Psychologically, the rising number of suicides, chronic anxiety, depression, stress, mental illnesses, rising insecurities, etc are indications of the crisis. Individual dissatisfactions are collectively leading to wars, religious differences, etc.

Power struggles, corruption among leaders of the country, lack of concern for the welfare of the public, international border disputes, red tapism, bribery, terrorism, etc are indications of political crisis. Politicians and bureaucrats, who have to serve the people, are channeling public’s money for

their personal uses. The richer nations are exploiting the vulnerabilities of weaker nations and their resources to gain more profits.

Religion, which is supposed to guide people on the right path, is being misinterpreted and has become a cause for wars and massacres. There are fights among the mankind over the differences in religions. Anti-nature rituals, performed in the name of religion and God, are causing pollution and damage to the ecology. Worst of all is corruption, exploitation and inhuman attitude in the basic area of health, education and judiciary, is very unfortunate.

Man, who is ceaselessly pursuing materialistic goals is on the verge of a spiritual crisis. He is realizing wealth, fame, power, lust, etc without realizing that he has to exist for his environment, and not vice-versa.

All evidence points to one thing — lack of environmental awareness. If so, what is environment?

### **Environment**

Amos H. Hawley defines environment as, “Whatever is external to and potentially or actually influential on a phenomenon under investigation, has no fixed content and must be defined anew for each different object of investigation.”<sup>19</sup>

Marston Bates in his book, *The Human Environment*, has defined environment as “the aggregate of all the external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of an organism.”<sup>20</sup>

Marson Bates has captured the essence of the interaction between man and his environment: “When we look at the human environment, the continuing interaction between organism and surroundings is very evident. It is often said that man far more than any other animal, has developed the ability to modify environment and thus to live under a wide range of physical and biological conditions. In fact man has created a new ‘biome’ on ecological formation. Man altered landscape, which is rapidly replacing other terrestrial landscapes as forests are cleared, grasslands ploughed, and deserts irrigated. Man, assuming ecological dominance within this biome, has affected directly or indirectly all other organisms living there; he has become a new geological force.”<sup>22</sup>

We have to introspect seriously on Berry’s bleak questions: “Is the human a viable species on an endangered planet, along with the disturbing question, is the earth a viable planet with humans present? Man has reduced the world to this distressful state through his insatiable greed and non-coexistent approach. Berry alarms that the rescue of the Earth must be the key organising principle of civilisation from here on.”<sup>25</sup>

If protection and preservation of the environment from further degradation by man has to be arrested, a thorough knowledge of relation between

man and environment is a must to check the crisis. Understanding ecology and ecosystems gains significance in this context. Vv

## **Ecology**

“The term ecology, which has its root in the Greek word oikos (house hold or living place) came into use in the latter part of Nineteenth Century in the works of zoologists and botanists to describe the study of the ways in which organisms live in their environment. Ecology is the science that studies the inter-relationships of organisms with their environment. It is the management of the household of nature that embraces cultural, scientific, philosophical, theological and spiritual concerns. It should be understood as an inter-disciplinary science having an integral vision of nature, which is respected as the mother of all beings; its foundation is earth and its atmosphere.”<sup>26</sup>

“Though ecology is primarily a biological system in as much as it deals with the inter-relationships of organisms with their environment, in recent years, it has been contributing largely to the socio-economic and political policies of the world. We often come across the term ecology in socio-economic writings, newspapers and media. It plays an important role in understanding agriculture, conservation of soil, animals and plants, forests, water sources, etc. Ecology thus plays a vital role in human welfare. Consequently, ecological perspectives can provide answers to innumerable human problems.”<sup>27</sup>

Relation between natural environment and man cannot be studied in isolation, without reference to social, scientific and religious aspects. To maintain and promote harmony between man and nature, religious and scientific perspectives are inevitable. One may wonder what has got Buddhism to say about Ecology, and with what philosophical perspective it can contribute to resolve the ecological crisis of today?

This paper is not only a sincere attempt to answer this question but also should it awaken us to the philosophy of Buddha’s SELF-PURITY is ENVIRONMENTAL SANCTITY, certainly it can dictate to the Humanity at large prevention from further crisis and considerably to resolve the crisis prevailing already. It is not a religion of faith rather it is the scientific directive principles of Management from Mis-management of SELF, which is scientific in vision and spiritual in mission in as for as living the reality of Self-management. Ecology as we understand appears to be the recent term which is in usage in the field of science to address the Biological and Social aspects. But if we are open to, comprehend the reality as it is, it goes almost from the day man started living with his cognitive sense. If so what then is ecology?

“Concern for ecology is not a new development. Concern for ecology and fellow-beings are the leitmotifs of all religions. Though religions may differ with each other on finer points, no religion advocates realization in isolation, rather

through nature and fellow-beings. Every religion has and must deal with man in relation to his ecological existence.

Buddhism brings the three aspects, man, nature and environment, under the umbrella of self-management and thus reflects harmony and co-existence. The need to understand the living philosophy under Buddhism is that human life is directly or indirectly related to ecology and thus, human problems are varied in nature. But the key to these problems, according to Buddhism lies in spiritual mission of environmental awareness. Man gets awakened to self only in the back drop of his surroundings. But that cannot help him to seek for solution either in exclusive solitude or in an extensive environment. Man should

“Buddhism preaches compassionate empathy for all forms of life, particularly for all sentient species. The Dhammapada’s ethical injunction preaches not to do evil but to do well. Buddhism advocates the non-violent alleviation of suffering, an ideal embodied in the prayer of universal loving-kindness that concludes many Buddhist rituals: “May all beings be free from enmity; may all beings be free from injury; may all beings be free from suffering; may all beings be happy.” Out of concern for the total living environment, Buddha extended loving-kindness and compassion beyond people and animals to include plants and the earth itself. Buddhism has a great relevance to the protection of animal rights.” (38)

### **Primarily let us reflect on the pre state of enlightenment**

The time of emergence of Buddha, the enlightened is very important in relation to the ecological perspective. Because born into a Hindu Kshatriya royal family was inducted to Hinduism right from childhood but as only the thanks giver for God for all that he showered on Buddha as Siddhartha in wealthy environment. So where man has to live with his environment of fellow beings and things as exists was totally conditioned and controlled for selfish and self centered nature of the family. If the family has to forcibly do away with their son at 29 years who could have been an able heir, the ruler, it is nothing other than their passion for kingdom and power which made them to be rigid with their son and in the process as cause of that effect they had to sacrifice their son, but later to the humanity at large. This, very clearly indicates that either religion or philosophy never promoted man as man rather as just selfish being. At this juncture Siddharth not just awakened himself rather awakened to the truth of existence in relation to cause and effect of one’s own deeds and misdeeds. “Easy to do are things that are bad and not beneficial to self; But very hard to do indeed is that which is beneficial and good” (Dhammapada,5,163) 88888888 There are two factors from which a man wanting to lead a spiritual life must keep aloof. One is the life of pleasure, given to delights and enjoyment. It is low, without mobility, contrary to the spirit, unworthy and vain. The other is the life of mortification; it is melancholy, unworthy pain, vain. From these two, the perfect man keeps aloof. Then he sees the Middle Path—which leads to tranquility of



mind, to illumination, to Nirvana” Gautama thus realized the Highest Truth and attained ‘bodhi’, Enlightenment. He became Buddha, the Illumined.

This illumined in his thought and primarily he reduced substances, Souls, monads, things to forces, movements, sequences and processes, and adopts a dynamic conception of reality. Life is nothing but a series of manifestations of becoming and extinctions. It is a stream of becoming. The world of sense and science is from moment to moment.

Though the flame maintains itself unchanged in appearance, every moment it is another and not the same flame. The stream is sustained in its flow by ever new waters. The becoming of all that is, is the central fact of Buddhism. Absolute reality is not the property of anything on earth. Moreover the great scientific truth he realized for the mankind is “Whatever is subject to origination is subject also to destruction.” This realization was pronounced with all spiritual voice, while the spiritual environment was in great constraint.

The exuberant fancy of the metaphysically minded thus sported with time, space and eternity, and vulgarized the noble art of philosophy. Great truths were hidden away in the fogs of misty metaphysics. It is those who do not see the truth that strike out in the paths of fiction. Buddha was struck by the clashing enthusiasms, the discordant systems, the ebb and flow of belief, and drew from it all his own lesson of the soul does not depend on minute distinctions of metaphysical conceits, or the habit of restless questioning, or the refinement of reason by the subtle disputes of sects. The indecision of thought, thought it may not be taxing to the intellect of man, was injurious to his ethical interests. Anarchy in thought was leading to anarchy in morals. Therefore Buddha wished to steer clear of profitless metaphysical discussions. Whatever metaphysics we have in Buddhism is not the original Dhamma but added to it (abhidhamma). Buddhism is essentially psychology, logic and ethics, and not metaphysics.

Every sin is a violation of God’s law, and the only way to please Him is by repentance and rolling in the dust Sin is an offence against God, who alone has to be satisfied. People were indifferent to the natural consequences of sin, though lip allegiance was paid to the law of karma. Over all men’s activities there hung the thundercloud of an angry God. The result was that religion was distinguished from life, and God and the world were opposed.

Buddha, like Lucretius, felt that the world would be better for the triumph of natural law over supernaturalism. By announcing a religion which proclaimed that each man could gain salvation for himself without the mediation of priests or reference to gods, he would increase the respect for human nature and raise the tone of morality. “It is a foolish idea to suppose that another can cause us happiness or misery.” After Buddha did his work, the belief in the permanence and universality of natural law became almost an instinct of the Indian mind.

We shall see later that the world of experience according to Buddha does not require for its explanation any God. The law of karma will do. There is the implication of the existence of the highest, but it is not a matter of logical demonstration. Buddha endorses the Upanishad hypothesis and anticipates St. Paul's judgment: "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and his ways past finding out." The Upanishads were a sealed book to the people at large. Their teaching was lost in a jumbled chaos of puerile superstition. There were people who advocated tapas to bend the gods to their will.

In the collapse of creeds and the disintegration of systems, it was the task of Buddha to provide a firm foundation for morality. As in the Greek world the larger and more comprehensive metaphysical systems of Plato and Aristotle were followed by the ethical speculations of the Stoics and the Epicureans, so it happened in ancient India. When the foundations of philosophy became shaken, the principles of conduct attracted the attention of thinkers. If ethics is made to rest on the shifting sands of metaphysics or theology, it has an uncertain tenure. Buddha wished to build it on the rock of facts. Ancient Buddhism resembles positivism in its attempt to shift the centre from the worship of God to the service of man.

According to him, "If a man sees things as they really are, he will cease to pursue shadows and cleave to the great reality of goodness." Laying aside metaphysical speculations, he traces out the reign of law and order in the world of experience. Understanding, according to him, is to be limited to the field of experience the laws of which it can explore.

To the thinking, the unutterable sadness of transience and the pitiful ineffectualness of virtue are the striking facts. Kant in his article on the "Failure of Every philosophical Attempt in theodicy" (1791), refuting the optimism of Leibniz, asks: "would any man of sound understanding who has lived long enough and has meditated on the worth of human existence care to go again through life's poor play, I do not say on the same conditions, but on any conditions whatever?" The gloominess and grief of the great philosophers are perhaps the products of their thought. Those who feel but do not think have a better lot.

We cannot help feeling that Buddha overemphasizes the dark side of things. The Buddhist view of life seems to be lacking in courage and confidence. Its emphasis on sorrow, if not false, is not true. The predominance of pain over pleasure is an assumption. Nietzsche had Buddha in mind when he said, "they meet an invalid, or an old man, or a corpse, and immediately they say, life is refuted." After all, the value of life seems to rise with its evanescence. If the beauty of youth and the dignity of age are transient, so are the travail of birth and the agony of death. There is a tendency in Buddhism to blacken what is dark and darken what is grey. The outlook is restricted on principle to all that is sharp, bitter and painful in life. Before introspecting this a brief **A Critical Survey of**

**Indian Philosophy about the self would go very practical to comprehend the concept of existence realized by Buddha for humanity.**

**Of the Self of the Follower of the Upanishads:** The Advaitins who follow the Upanishads maintain that one eternal consciousness is the only reality which illusorily appears as subject and as object. Shantaraksita says that this view contains only a very slight error and that error is that this Pure Self which is pure consciousness is regarded as **eternal**. We perceive only changing cognitions and so, apart from them there is no eternal cognition. If there were only one eternal consciousness, then how can the diverse cognitions be explained? They too will have to be cognized all at once. If ultimate reality is one eternal consciousness, then all distinction between wrong and right knowledge, between bondage and liberation will be wiped off. And all yogic practices for right knowledge and consequent liberation will be useless.

**Of the Self of Nyaya-Vaisheshika:** This school maintains that our ideas must have a self which knows them and in which all our desires, feeling and ideas inhere. Shantaraksita and Kamalashila point out that knowledge does not require a knower for its illumination, nor do desires, feelings and ideas require a receptacle like material things, for they are regarded as immobile by the opponents. Consciousness itself when associated with the notion of the Ego is called the Self. It has only phenomenal reality. Ultimately it denotes nothing. Desires, feeling and ideas momentary and arise in succession like the material seed sprout and creeper etc. they do not need any permanent self to inhere.

**Of the Self of Mimamsa:-** Kumarila maintains that just as a snake remains a snake, though sometimes it may assume a coiled and sometimes a straight posture, similarly the self is essentially of the nature of eternal and pure Consciousness, though it may pass through many phases of feelings, volitions and thoughts. Self-consciousness proves the existence of the Self and the fact of recognition repudiates the No-soul theory. To this the Buddhists object that if the Self is regarded as one eternal Consciousness, then all cognitions will have to be regarded as one and eternal. Kumarila replies that the diversity of cognitions is due to the diversity of objects. Just as fire which has the nature of burning burns only those combustible objects which are presented to it or just as a mirror or a crystal, though it has the power to reflect, reflects only those objects which are put before it, similarly the Self, though it is of the nature of eternal consciousness, apprehends only those sense data which are presented to it by sense-organs. The Buddhists retort that if cognitions are influenced by the changing functions of the sense-organs and the sense-objects, they cannot be regarded as one and eternal. Moreover, the diversity of cognitions in dreams and hallucinations where there is no objective counterpart will not be explained. Again, if fire burns all combustible objects, then the whole world will be at once reduced to ashes. Again, a mirror or a crystal which is itself momentary is only an apparatus to produce an illusory image. Again, if the changing feeling, volitions and thoughts etc. are identical with the Self, then the self will not be permanent; and if they are different from the Self, then how can their change affect the Self? Again, the

simile of the snake is also wrong. The snake becomes coiled etc. because it is itself momentary. Had it been permanent like the Self it could have never changed. In fact the Self or the ego-notion is due to beginning less ignorance. There is no apprehended of the notion of the 'I'. Hence there is no knower. Recognition is based on the false notion of memory and it cannot prove the existence of the Self.

**Of the Self of Sankhya :-** Sankhya also maintain that the Self is pure and eternal consciousness and is different from buddhi or the faculty of cognition, Against this view it is urged by the Buddhists that if the Self only enjoys what is reflected in buddhi, then are these reflections identical with or different from the self? If identical, then the Self should also change with the reflection; if not then the self cannot enjoy them. Again, if actions belong to buddhi while fruits belong to the Self, then the change of vicarious suffering stands. Again, if it is said that Prakrti and Purusa work together like the blind and the lame, and that Prakrti gives fruits to Purusa according to his desires, then how is it that many times an intense desire for a thing is felt but the desires for a thing is felt but the desired thing is absent? Again, at the time of enjoyment, if there is modification in the Purusa, he is not eternal; and if there is no modification in him, he cannot be the enjoyer and Prakrti can be of no help to him. Moreover, if Prakrti brings about this diverse creation in accordance with the Self's 'desire to see', then how can Prakrti be called Unconscious? To hold that Prakrti only knows to prepare delicious dishes but does not know to eat them is highly absurd.

Indeed intellect, volition, consciousness, knowledge, sentience are all synonyms. There is no harm if consciousness is described as the Self. We only object to its being called **eternal**.

**Of the Self of the Jainas: -** The Jainas like the Mimamsakas maintains that the self is consciousness. But they regard it as an Identity-and –difference.

Now we can understand that man was seeking the solution for all his questions which represents problems beyond the life, ignoring the living. If we are true to our consciousness certainly no man is peaceful in the state of mundane existence. One need to have scientific attitude to accept this reality as Buddha had. No-peace state is due to Ignorance about the reality that nobody can help a self other than oneself, Even if there is a creator God were to be there, he would help those help themselves. Ruling out the eternal self, the creator God and the Ignorance as the cause for all that misery man has created for himself, Buddha has tackled, the crisis is the creation of self, and it has to be resolved by the self alone. It is as scientific as the definition of cause given by J.S.Mill i.e. Cause is unconditional, immediate invariable antecedent which is equal and reciprocal.

This is supplemented with Hume's sequence view of causal theory and not Aristotle's theory of causation which focuses on Final cause. His analysis comes very practical to be comprehended by every single person in resolving the crisis created by the man. He gives three stages of removal of crisis which helps

man to know that nothing is permanent. It is not a negative approach rather progressive approach I would state. Let me examine the stages

1. *The origin of suffering*: - That suffering originates follows from the belief that whatever is, must have had a cause. Buddha found this cause to be ignorance in the last resort, as we have just stated. His foremost aim was to discover how it brings about evil; for if we once know the process, he said, we are on the highway to get of the result it leads to. The stages of this process were set forth in a somewhat elaborate form which may be described as the special causal formal as distinguished from the general one to which we alluded in the previous section. It consists of a dozen links (nidana)—Ignorance (avidya), action (samskara), consciousness (vijñana), name and form (nama-ropa), the six field, viz. the five senses and the objects (sadayatana), contact between the senses and the objects (sparsa), sensation (vedana), desire (trsnā), clinging to existence (upadana), being (bhava), re-birth (jati) and pain or, literally, old age and death (jara-marana). This ‘chain’ alludes not to the present life only, but includes a reference to the previous and the coming ones also. It exhibits the life that now is in its relation to the past as well as the future and stands for a sample of samsara or the ever-recurring series of births and deaths. Without entering into a discussion of the details of this formula, about whose interpretation there has been a good deal of controversy, we may say that the first two of the links are retrospective. They refer to the life immediately preceding this one and hit off its sequel, ‘action’. It means that it is the activity of the past life promoted by ignorance that directly gives rise to the present. The course of the latter is traced in the next eight links, the earlier ones among which allude to the evolution of the organism, suitably equipped for the experiences and of life and the later describe the nature of those experiences and their results. The last two links refer prospectively to the birth and suffering that will necessarily follow from the activities of the present life. Confining ourselves to the broadest features of this explanation, we may say that there is, first of all, ignorance which is the root-cause of the individual’s existence. From ignorance proceeds desire; desire leading to activity, brings in its turn rebirth with its fresh desires. This is the vicious circle of samsara—the bhava-cakra or ‘wheel of existence’ as it is sometimes called. BP P.105
2. *Removal of suffering*:-Just as it follows from the Buddhist view of causation that suffering to exist must have been caused, it follows from the same that it must admit of being destroyed. According to the principle underlying the view, the removal of the cause removes the effect. So when ignorance is dispelled by right knowledge, the succeeding links of the chain snap one after another automatically. The process which gives rise to suffering, no doubt, involves a

necessity; but the necessity, as we have stated already, is not absolute.

3. *The way to remove suffering*:-The path of self-discipline which leads man to the desired goal is eight –fold: right faith, right resolve, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right thought, right concentration. It will suffice to refer here to a simple scheme which also is found in old Buddhistic works See Oldenberg: op.cit.,P.288; BP . p 115 and which may be said to consist of the essence of the more elaborate one. According to this scheme, prajna or right knowledge of the four-fold truth is the basis of the whole discipline. But if it is to result in a sense of freedom, it should be more than mere intellectual conviction, however strong it may be. It should be knowledge that has been transformed into our own experience and prajna more strictly means this intuitive experience. Buddha insists that his hearers should not borrow their views from him, but should make them their own. He often declares that we must accept only what we ourselves have realized to be right. ‘Then, monks, what you have just said is only what *you yourselves* have recognized, what *you yourselves* have comprehended, what *you yourselves* ave understood; is it not so?’ ‘It is even so, Lord.’ (Majjhima-nikaya, 38<sup>th</sup> Discourse.) In other words, every man should win his own salvation. It is salvation through self-reliance, not by the grace of God or under the guidance of any external authority. Even the guru can only show the way. For knowledge to become an internal certainty, sila and Samadhi are necessary. There can be no perception of truth without control of thought and veracity, contentment, and non-injury or ahimsa. Samadhi is meditation upon the four verities. It is an aid in securing tranquility of mind and in gaining a clear insight into the truth that has been learnt from others. This part of the training includes, as in the Upanishads, diverse forms of yogic exercises, the details of which it is not necessary to consider here. These three together sufficiently indicate the scope of Buddhistic discipline. It is prajna in the sense of insight or intuition, the outcome of the whole training that will bring deliverance. While the same, in the sense of knowledge accepted on trust, marks the beginning of the discipline leading to it.

What is meant by right living differs somewhat in the case of a monk and a layman, and either mode of life may be followed, according to the capacity and inclination of the individual; but ultimate release is normally to be attained only after one becomes a monk.1 ( Bp.P.131; Prof. Poussin: The way to nirvana, pp.114 and 150-1.) Even in the monk’s life, there is not that extreme severity of discipline characterizing some of the Indian creeds, notably Jainism. We have already seen that Buddha’s theory strikes a mean between two extreme courses, e.g. believing neither in being nor in non-being, but in becoming; believing neither in chance nor in necessity exclusively, but in conditioned happening. The

same spirit is reflected in his ethical teaching also. It is neither self-indulgence, which is itself pain. Success lies in a middle course. True Spiritual life is compared to a lute which emits melodious sounds only when its strings are stretched neither too loose nor too tight. In his very first discourse-the celebrated Sermon at Benares-Buddha said: 'There are two extremes, O monks, from which he who leads a religious life must abstain. What are those two extremes? One is a life of pleasure, devoted to desire and enjoyment: That is base, ignoble, unspiritual, unworthy, unreal. The other is a life of mortification: it is gloomy, unworthy, unreal. The perfect one, O monks, is removed from both these, the middle way which enlightens the eyes, enlightens the mind, which leads to rest, to knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nirvana.' (Oldenberg: op. cit., p.127) The object to be attained by following this discipline is designated nirvana. The word literally means 'blowing out' (p.114) or 'becoming cool': and signifies annihilation-the 'heaven of nothingness' as it has been described. When it is reached, the constant procession of the five-fold aggregate disappears once for all. This of course is the view which accords best with the theoretical position of Buddhism, and salvation then becomes literally 'the unmaking of ourselves.' (IP .Vol .i.p.418.) But the extremely negative character of such an ideal unfits it to serve as an incentive to man for pursuing the course of discipline recommended for its attainment, and thus appears to defeat the very purpose of Buddha's teaching. So other interpretations have been suggested. (See e.g. Oldenberg: op. cit., pp.267-285; Prof. Poussin; op. cit., pp.115-18.) Some have flatly denied that nirvana can be annihilation, and represented it as everlasting being or eternal felicity-an ideal hardly different from the Upanishadic moksha. Others again have taken it as a condition of which nothing whatsoever can be predicated-not even whether it is or is not. All that the term means, according to them, is freedom from suffering; and positive descriptions of it-whether the speculative interest attaching to them-are irrelevant from the practical standpoint. But it does not seem necessary to resort to such explanations to that nirvana as conceived in Buddhism is worth striving for, because it does not really signify, as seems to be commonly taken for granted, any state following death. It represents rather the condition which results after perfection is reached and while yet the 'individual' continues to live. This would correspond to jivan-mukti, which, as we know, had been well recognized in India by Buddha's time. It is a state when the passions and the limited interests of common life have been extinguished and the person leads a life of perfect peace and equanimity. It cultivating it is known as an arhant, which means 'worthy' or 'holy'. It is this perfect life that the Buddhist *aims at* and means by nirvana, although as stated an arhant after the dissolution of his body and mind may come to nothing. The idea of nirvana understood in the latter sense (pari-nirvana) need not stultify the teaching, for the goal which it presents as worthy of attainment is not annihilation but the state which precedes it. Annihilation is only a further consequence, not the motive of the training which Buddhism prescribes. That is nirvana in the sense of 'blowing out' while the state of the arhant, which marks the transition from common life to it, corresponds to the other meaning of the word, viz. 'becoming cool.'

There is one other point to which attention should be drawn before we conclude. The Buddhist believes in transmigration, but the belief seems to be inconsistent with his denial of an enduring self. Some have, therefore, characterized the doctrine as self-contradictory. Deussen, for instance, writes in *Indian Antiquary* (1900), p.398). 'This *karman* must have in every case an individual bearer and that is what the Upanishads call the atman and what the Buddhists inconsistently deny.' But there seems to be no justification for such a criticism. The belief in the karma doctrine really presents no new difficulty to Buddhism; for if there can be action without a transmigrating agent. Further, we have to remember that according to Buddhist there is transmigration, or, more precisely, rebirth, not only at the end of this life as in other Indian beliefs, but at every instant. It is not merely when one lamp is lit from another that there is a transmission of light and heat. They are transmitted every moment; only in the former case a new series of flames is started. Similarly, the karma belonging to an 'individual' may transmit itself at death as it does during life; and, though the dead person does not revive, another with the same disposition may be born in his stead. If so, it is character, as Rhys Davids has put it that transmigrates, not any soul or self. When a person dies, his character lives after him, and by its forces brings into existence a being that, though possessing a different form, is entirely influenced by it. And this process will go on until the person in question has completely overcome his thirst for being. If we take this explanation along with what has already been stated that the self is here recognized as a continuity, though not as a unity, we see that there need be no inconsistency in Buddhism upholding the karma doctrine, viz. that nothing that we do disappears without leaving its results behind and that the good or evil so resulting recoils upon the doer. Buddha, however, rationalized recoils upon to a considerable extent. For one thing, he dissociated it from all supernatural and materialistic appanages. In the traditional Hindu view, the allotment of pain or pleasure according to one's past actions was in the hands of divine or some other transcendental power; and in Jainism karma, as we shall see, was taken to be subtle matter adhering to and pulling down the soul from its natural spiritual height. Buddha discarded both these views, and conceived of karma as an impersonal law in the sphere of morality working according to its nature and by itself. (page no.148 to 154)

**ALBERT EINSTEIN—THE HUMANIST [1879-1955] ON HUMAN SORROW: On 26<sup>th</sup> April 1945, Einstein wrote this letter of condolence to a medical doctor and his wife who had lost their only child. The doctor had been active in helping refugees from Nazi Germany:**

Albert Einstein "I am profoundly shocked by the news of the terrible blow that has so suddenly and unexpectedly befallen you both. This is the most grievous thing that can happen to older people and it is no consolation that untold thousands are similarly affected. I would not dare presume to try to comfort you but I do want to tell you how deeply and with what sorrow I sympathize with you, as do all others who came to know the kindness of your heart. For the most part we, human beings, live with the false impression of security and a feeling of being at home in a seemingly familiar and trustworthy physical



and human environment. But when the expected course of everyday life is interrupted, we realize that we are like shipwrecked people trying to keep their balance on a miserable plank in the open sea, having forgotten where they came from and not knowing whether they are drifting. But once we fully accept this, life becomes easier and there is no longer any disappointment”.

**ON THE GREATNESS OF ORIENTAL SAGES AND SAINTS:**

Delivering a lecture in the Princeton University in December 1950, Einstein said

“We all feel that it is indeed very reasonable and important to ask ourselves how we should try to conduct our lives. The answer, in my humble opinion is: Satisfaction and contentment of our needs and desires and the achievement of harmony in human relationships. It is undeniable that the enlightened Greeks and the Oriental sages and saints had achieved a higher level in this all important field than what is alive today in our schools and colleges”

**REGRETTING THE ATOM BOMB:** After Physics, Universal Peace became Einstein’s most important concern. Having moved to United States in 1933 to escape the Nazis, Einstein reluctantly set aside his pacifist views and wrote to President Roosevelt in 1939 urging America to develop an atomic bomb before Germany did. His opinion contributed to Roosevelt’s decision to go ahead accordingly. When the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Einstein hoped that it would intimidate the human race into bringing order into its international affairs, which without the pressure of fear, it would not do. He later considered his letter as one of the greatest mistakes in his life. One of his last acts, just a week before his death in April 1955 was an agreement that his name should head a manifesto urging all nations to give up nuclear weapons on the firm conviction that the solution to universal peace and harmony lies, not in threat, but in the heart of mankind.

Vivekananda on Buddha, in his lecture on the ABSOLUTE and MANIFESTATION delivered in London in 1896” In Buddha, we had the great universal heart and infinite patience, making religion practical, and bringing it to every one’s door. In science we see tremendous intellectual power, throwing the scorching light of reason on everything. And he declared that we want the bright sun of intellectuality joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful infinite heart of love and mercy. This will be the religion of future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and all people.’ But I would like to stress here BUDDHA HAD PROGRESSIVE APPROACH OF SELF FOR LIFE AND NOT JUST FOR LIVING, from his life. Which himself experienced reflected, interrogated and introspected on the basis of sequential order of theory of causation and the changing reality as we have later seen in scientific Law of conservation of energy and arrived at. Goethe says” knowledge for the sake of knowledge is indeed a great ideal, but it needs to be supplemented by the newer ideal that all knowledge is for the service of man.” “He who knows a why of living, surmounts almost every How”-Nietzsche. The love of anything is the fruit of our knowledge of it, and grows as our knowledge becomes more certain- Leonardo da Vinci.

Man never wondered about his blunders in living nor reflected what his role in the creation is? How should it be his participation with his surroundings? These questions amount to ecological concern. But overlooking this we have been struggling to comprehend the transcendental state of existence. Buddha reflected on this practical and progressive empirical living which should give the state of transcendental.

But man was wondering only at what creation is, who is the creator, Where man has come from and where is he going unto, what was before and what is beyond etc., and more so with moksha which is transcendental, except the empirical living which is the basis for comprehending any pursuit man is up to.

“When this is, that is; this arising that arises; when this is not, that is not; this ceasing that ceases.”

The scientific vision of Buddha is know the reality of existence as it is and not as one wants to be. But living the reality as ought to be and not as one wishes to be.

Buddha's spiritual mission has nothing to do with realization of the Soul of being or the God the creator omnipotent, omnipresent, all pervasive etc. Buddha was awakened to himself only in ecological awareness. Born in a royal Kshatriya family, with a beautiful wife, a handsome child, a kingdom to be ruled and people to be commanded to the servitude of the king, what went wrong? Or what went right? Is it the sight of the sick, old age, or a dead body?

It was ignorance in which he lived went wrong and awakening him to this, went right. Did he get awakened to the sufferings of the world? No. awakened to the reality of sufferings. This is the awakening to the environment in which one lives and this is the ecological perspective which is in need of in today's crises stricken society. The wealth, health, youth, or the richness is all transient and not permanent riches of life for which one should get entangled. This realization for, as Siddhartha is true to the reality of existence itself and not for one's existence alone. It was not personal salvation he sought after rather salvation for humanity. He pronounced to the world that all sufferings are due to the IGNORANCE. It is the beginning of the suffering and removal of ignorance is the end of suffering. What has beginning has an end. Because nothing comes out of nothing. Something comes out of something only. That something is practically traced to cause of ignorance and nothing beyond ignorance of clinging to non-transient existence resulting in misery, sorrowful state and thus chaos.

Where do we place growth and development in view of this? Is there a place for such progress if we resort to this philosophy of Buddha? The answer is why not?

The growth is not ruled out, it should be need based and not greed. Greed is insatiate need. To realize the need Self –purity is the only way out for mankind to reach the peaceful existence. Whatever you sow you reap. So. sow seeds of crop and not weeds. And further sowing only crop is also ruled out for there is no place for extremities in Buddha's living Dictionary. Finally, deathlessness is also so practical and progressive that “destruction of passion, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion” (Samyutta-Nikaya.5.8)