

# The Idea of Impermanence

*Prof. Madhao S. Ranadive*

According to Jainism, everything is impermanent<sup>1</sup> in the worldly existence. One who takes birth in any being, is necessarily destroyed, is the universal rule<sup>2</sup>. The handsome attractive body is impure and is the source of misery and severe suffering<sup>3</sup>. It becomes ugly by disease and old age<sup>4</sup>. The glorious youth is destroyed like the water dripping from the folded palms<sup>5</sup>. The Goddess of Wealth—*Lakṣmī*, like a faithless beloved, does not stay and stable even with meritorious powerful young monarch. She does not feel pleasure in the company of anybody. She only stays a couple of days and goes to another's house<sup>6</sup>. Wealth is seen as if in dream. All pleasures are destroyed in no time like the streak of lightening<sup>7</sup>. The sensual enjoyments are not satisfied. They only increase lust. Their result is very dangerous like the poisonous *Kimpaka* fruit<sup>8</sup>. The living being suffers death in its mother's womb, at the time of birth, in delicate childhood, in the prime of youth or in old age as if it is an unbaked earthen pot<sup>9</sup>. Thus life, youth, wealth, body and all other worldly things are fickle like the water sticking the petals of lotus.<sup>10</sup>

We find the characteristic of impermanence (*Aniccāṇuvekkhā* or *Addhuvāṇuvekkhā*) of Jainism is similar to the reflection of fickleness (*Aniccalakkhaṇā*) of Buddhism.

According to Buddhism, nothing is everlasting. Everything is momentary and liable to destruction. There is birth and death, growth and decay, union and separation. The worldly pleasures are temporary like the swings. The lives are as fickle as the waves in ocean. The body is similar to the mirage. One's charm, youth, wealth and the union with dear persons are as fickle as the streak of lightening<sup>11</sup>. The mighty lordly elephant, namely cruel Death, without showing pity towards those who are suffering from severe diseases, those who are overpowered by unbearable old age, those who are young delicate maids and youths, those who are small boys and girls, who are yet given to play, incessantly destroys the whole world like the forest conflagration, that burns the entire forest without any break.<sup>12</sup>

Though a man sees everything, is impermanent, still he hankers after pleasures, wealth and power. Being lustful towards them, he commits sinful deeds. He has to suffer misery for his inauspicious *Karmas*. He has no escape from suffering misery for his *Karmas*<sup>13</sup>. Nobody ( i.e., his mother, father, son, friend etc.) shares his lot or saves him from suffering misery<sup>14</sup>.

Human life is like a boat. It is wrecked in the ocean of momentary existence. In order to reach the other safer shore, namely liberation, he has to acquire excellent virtues. For the same he has to follow the best resort, namely religion by means of which he gets released from misery<sup>15</sup>.

A man, therefore, should lead a life of righteousness to get happiness without the sting of regret. He, who yearns for riches, should receive treasures that are eternal. Truth is wealth and life of truth is happiness. Bodies fall to dust, but the truth prevails. A man must learn to distinguish between self and truth. Self is the cause of selfishness and the source of evil. Truth cleaves to no self. It is universal and leads to justice and righteousness. So he has to take refuge in the truth that is established by the omniscient *Arhat* or the enlightened Buddha<sup>16</sup>.

Though we see much similarity in both *Aniccāṇuvekkhā* of Jainism and *Aniccalakkhaṇam* of Buddhism, there is difference in the main idea.

According to Buddhism, everything is impermanent. Buddhism, says that the duration of the life of a living being is exceedingly brief, lasting only while a thought lasts. As soon as the thought is ceased, the living being is said to have ceased. The being of a past moment of thought has lived; but does not live, nor will it live. The being of a future moment of thought will live; but has not lived, nor does it live. The being of the present moment of thought does live; but has not lived, nor will it live<sup>17</sup>.

But the Jaina theory of object is as follows :

Any object of knowledge that exists is called *Artha* which must be associated with substance (*Dravya* ), quality (*Guṇa* ) and modification ( *Paryāya* ). A substance exists in its own nature and has its own attributes and modifications. Moreover, it is united with origination ( *utpāda or sambhava* ), destruction ( *Vyaya or Nāśa* ) and permanence ( *Dhrauṇya or Sthiti* ), which are at one and the same time. One modification of a substance originates and other one vanishes; but the substance remains the same. In other words, the substance, it self changes from one quality to another and one form to another without losing its existence<sup>18</sup>.

The modern metaphysics has proved – "Nothing new is created, nothing is destroyed, only modifications appear. Nothing comes out of nothing, nothing altogether goes out of existence; but only substances are modified.

Unlike Buddhist view of a substance, Jaina view is real. As Jainism is a dynamic realism, its doctrine is similar to the views held by the philosophers in the West, especially those belonging to the Realistic School. The Jaina conception of *Dravya*, *Guṇa* and *Paryaya* is approximately similar to Spinoza's view of substance, attributes and modes. Hegel had a conception of reality similar to the Jaina conception of *Dravya*. *Sattā* and *Dravya* are one and the same as Hegel maintained. Thing in itself and experience are not absolutely distinct. *Dravyas* refer to facts of experience and *Satta* refers to existence or reality. The French philosopher Bergson also recognised substance as a permanent thing existing through change.

### References

1. "*Savvaṃ imam añiccam.*"  
( Ed. ) A. N. Upadhye '*Kuvalyamāla kahā* ( Udyotanasūri ), Singhi Jaina Shashtra Sikshapitha, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, 1959, Para 352.
2. "*Jāṃ kiñci vi uppaṇṇam tassa viṇāsa havei ñiyameṇa.*"  
( Ed. ) Dr. A. N. Upadhye, *Kārttikeyānuprekṣā* ( Svami Kumar ), Verse 4, Parama Shruta Prabhavaka Mandal, Srimad Rajcandra Ashrama, Agasa, 11nd edn., 1978.
3. *Imaṃ sarīraṃ añiccam asuiṃ asuisambhavaṃ.*  
*Asāsavayāvāsamiṇaṃ Dukkha-kesāṇa bhāyaṇaṃ.*  
( Ed. ) Sādhvi Candanā, *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*, Virayatana Publication, Agra. 2, 1972, 19/12.
4. *Taṇu layaṇṇu vaṇṇu khaṇi khijjai.*  
*Kālalu mayarandu va pijjai.*  
( Ed. ) Dr. P. L. Vaidya, *Mahāpurāṇa* ( Puṣpadanta ), Bharatiya Jnanapitha Publication ( Murtidevi, S. No. 15 ), New Delhi, 1979, VII-19.
5. *Viyalai jovvaṇu ṇaṃ karayalajalu. Ibid.*
6. *Jā sāsāda ṇa lacchi cakkdharāṇaṃ pi puṇṇavantāṇaṃ.*  
*Sā kiṃ bandhadi raidiṃ iyarajaṇāṇaṃ Apuṇṇāṇaṃ.*  
*Kattha vi na ramadi lacchi kuliṇa dhīre vi pandiyesūre.*  
*Kārttikeyānuprekṣā* ( Agasa ), Verse - 10, 11.

7. *Riddhio savvāo siviṇayasamdasāṇasamāo.*  
*Vijju va cancalāim diṭṭhapaṇaṭṭha savvasokkhāim.*  
 Ed. Pt. Kailash Chandra Siddhantashastri, *Bhagavati Ārāḍhanā* (Śivārya )  
*anītyānuprekṣā*, Jain Sanrakshaka Sangh, Sholapur, 1978.
8. *Jaha kimpaga phalāṇam pariṇāmo na sundaro.*  
*Evaṃ bhuttāṇa bhogāṇam pariṇāmo na sundaro.*  
*Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* ( Agra ), XIX/18.
9. *Gabbhe jamme balattāṇe, tassaṇṇe therattaṇammi.*  
*Jīvā samsāre vihadanti, Amamahina bhaṇḍam va.*  
*Devendragani, Karkaṇḍacariyam.*
10. *Calu jīviu juvvaṇu dhaṇu sariru, jimva kamal dalalaggavilaggu nīru.*  
 Ed. Muni Jinavijaya, *Kumarpāla-pratibodha* ( Somaprabha ), Central Library,  
 Baroda, 1920, p. 311.  
 For the above footnotes, please also see  
 ( i ) *Kārttikeyānuprekṣā* ( Agas ), 4. 22.  
 ( ii ) *Kuvalayamālā* ( Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan ), Para 352.  
 ( iii ) *Mahāpurāṇa* ( Jnanapitha Publication ).  
 ( iv ) *Kumārapāla-pratibodha* ( Baroda ), pp. 311-312.
11. *Telakaṭāha, gāthā, Aniccalakkhaṇam*, Verses 29 to 43.
12. *Telakaṭāha*, Verse 22.
13. *Kaḍāṇa kammāṇa ṇa mokkha atthi.*  
*Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* ( Virayatana ), 4/3.
14. *"Māyā piyā ṇhusā bhāyā bhajjā puttā ya orasā.*  
*Nālaṃ te mama tāṇāya luppantassa sakammuṇā."* *Ibid*, 6/3.
15. *Telakaṭāha gāthā*, 30-3, 4; 32, 33-34.
16. *Kārttikeyānuprekṣā* ( Agas ), Verses 302 to 489.
17. Ed. Dharmanand Kausambi, *Visuddhimagga*, Part one, Buddhaghosa, Bharatiya  
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18. ( i ) *Tam pariyāṇāhi davvu tuhum jam guṇa-pajjaya juttu.*  
*Saha-bhuva jāṇāhi tāhaṃ guṇa kama-bhuva pajjau vuttu.*  
 Ed. Dr. A. N. Upadhye, *Paramātma-prakāśa* ( Yogindu ), Shrimad  
 RajchandraAshrama, Agas, 1915, I. 57.

- ( ii ) *Davvam sallakkhaṇiyam uppādavvaya dhuvatta sañjuttam.  
guṇapajjāyāsayaṃ vā jaṃ taṃ bhaṇṇanti savvaṇū.*

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Prabhavaka Mandal, Srimad Rajchandra Ashram, Agasa, III, 1969,  
Gatha 10.

- ( iii ) *"Attho khalu davvamao davvāṇi guṇappagāṇi bhaṇidāni." 2/93*

*"Apariccattasahāveṇuppadavvaya dhuvatta sambodhanam  
guṇavam ca sapajjayam jaṃ taṃ davvam ti vuccanti." 2/95*

*"Sabbhāvo hi sahāvo guṇehim saha pajjayahim cittehim.  
davvassa savvakālam uppādavvayadhuvattehim." 2/96*

*"Sadavaṭṭhidam sahavē davvam davvassa ja hi pariṇāmo.  
attessu so sahāvo ṭhidisambhavaṇā sasambaddho." 2/99*

*"Ṇa bhavo bhaṅgavihiṇo bhaṅgo vā ṇatthi sambhavavihiṇo.  
uppāda vi ya bhaṅgo ṇa viṇā dhavveṇa aṭṭheṇa." 2/100*

*"Uppāda ṭhidibhaṅgā vijjante pajjaesu pajjāya.  
pavvam hi santi niyadam tamhā davvam havadi savvam." 2/101*

*"Samavedam khalu davvam sambhavāṭhidi ṇāsa saṇṇi daṭṭhehim.  
ekkammi ceva samaya tamhā davvam khu tattidayam." 2/102*

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**\*57, Ravivara Peth ( Gita Building )**  
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