ABSTRACT

The ancient Indian civilization claims to be one of the oldest enduring civilizations in the world. The majority of these civilizations hold the concepts which concern the cycle of rebirth (Pāli. samsāra or Skt. samsāra) and the Enlightenment (Pāli. mokkha or Skt. mokṣa). Particularly, Buddhism and Hinduism still play their significant roles in the modern society in this regard.

According to Buddhism, Enlightenment is attained through the realization of the Dependent Co-origination (Pāli. paṭiccasamuppāda or Skt. pratīyāsamutpāda) and the Four Noble Truths (Pāli. cattāri ariyasaṅga or Skt. catvāri āryasatya) and development for this is the Noble Eightfold Path (Pāli. ariya atthangika-magga or Skt. āryaśāṅga-mārga). Especially, the discourses describe this ancient path (Pāli. purīṇa magga or Skt. purāṇa mārga) followed by all the previous Buddhas. By the accomplishment of these steps, one attains mokṣa, which is the cessation of suffering (Pāli. dukkhanirodha-ariyasaṅca or Skt. dukkhanirodha-āryasatya) in the world and most importantly the liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Thus, by attaining freedom the Gautama Buddha consequently attained Enlightenment and reached His final destination, summum bonum of Buddhism, Nibbāna (Skt. nirvāṇa).

In Hinduism, Enlightenment can also be realized through the liberation of samsāra. Though Hindus do not have a single system for attaining liberation, they have several Yoga-s. Specially, the Eightfold Path (Skt. astāṅga-yoga) is used for its achievement. By practice of the Astāṅga-Yoga, a yogi has to understand the Four Realities (Skt. catur-vyūha) because the theistic Yoga refers to the Causality of the Effect Pre-Existence (Skt. satkāryavāda) and connects it with the Three Characteristics of Essence (Skt. triguna) or the Three Eternal Attributes (Skt. tirmūla), then end of the Five Hindrances (Skt. pañcakleśa) and Isolation (Skt. kaivalyam) of Pure Consciousness or Eternal Soul as Ātma, and attain the Unification of Ātma with Brahma (Pāli. brahmasahavyatā or Skt. brahmāimāikyam), which is final salvation.

However, according to the Astāṅga-Yoga, soul is united with the Omniscient God as final emancipation. Nevertheless, Buddhism is absolutely not so. Therefore, this research will attempt through a comparative study to conduct a comprehensive investigation and analysis of the Noble Eightfold Path in Buddhism and the Astāṅga-Yoga in the Yoga system in order to interpret similarities and dissimilarities.