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Indian Ethics the Concept of Brahma-Viharas & Brahmanic and Sramanic Traditions for Competitive Exams

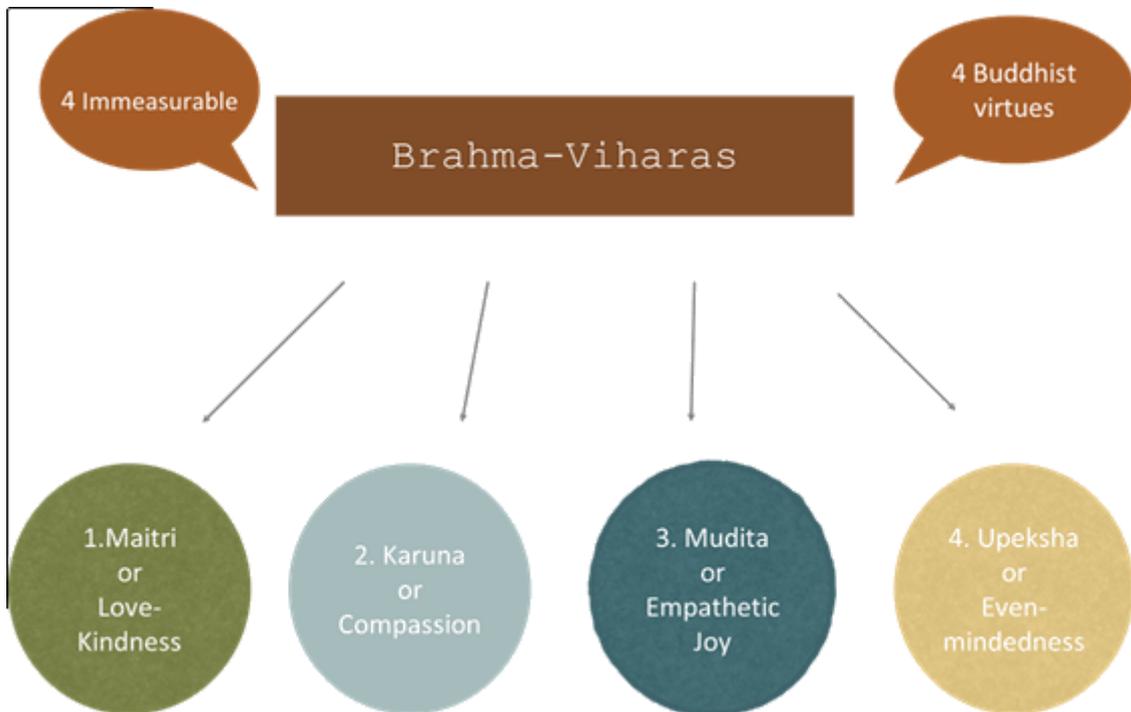
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Brahmaviharas

- Brahma-vihara is a concept of Buddhism.
- Etymologically speaking, Brahma means divine and Viharas means abode/place.
- According to Buddhism, brahma-vihara or abodes of Brahma is a series of four Buddhist virtues.
- They are also known as the Four-Immeasurable or Apramana.
- They are called so because these virtues are considered to be boundless, infinite, etc.
- In Pali, they are called cattāri brahmavihārā.
- These four virtues according to Buddhism require meditation and conduct practices and the Brahma-viharas are the result of them.
- According to Metta Sutta, the four Brahma-viharas have the power and this power helps the practitioner to have rebirth into a higher realm or the Brahma realm.
- The Brahma-Viharas are found to exist in pre-Buddhism literature and also in Post-Buddha Vedic and Sramanic literature (for instance, Yoga-sutras by Patanjali) .
- Indian philosophy consists of two trends;
 - Brahmanic tradition
 - Sramanic tradition
- **Brahmanic tradition:** Brahminic tradition or the vedic tradition accepts the authority of the Vedas and the Vedic literature. For example, Samkhya, Mimamsa, Yoga, Vedanta, etc.
- **Sramanic tradition:** *Sramanic* tradition includes schools like Buddhism, Jainism, Carvaka, etc.
- They are called so because they do not accept the authority of the Vedas and the Vedic literature.
- Rather, they accept the authority of their own canons and canonical literature and accept the authority of their authors alone.

- For example, Carvaka accept Brhaspati sutra, Jainism accepts the authority of their own twenty-four Tirthankaras (or the founders of the faith) and they accept their own literature which is called the *Agamas*.
- The *Agamas* are the canonical texts of Jainism based on the teachings of Lord Mahavira, and Buddhism accepts the authority of Buddha and some of the names of their accepted literatures are *Gandaran*, *Lankavatarasutra*, *Visuddhimagga*, etc.



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- The four *Brahma-Viharas* which come under Buddhist ethics and are accepted by both Hinayana and Mahayana traditions of Buddhism are;

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Maitri

- It is called metta in Pali.
- It means love-kindness.
- It a universal virtue of love and kindness which should be within all the sentient beings.
- It also means an active goodwill towards all the beings or benevolence.

Karuna

- It is called karunā in Pali.
- It means compassion.
- It means a virtue of compassion or hope towards all.
- It also means attaining a happy present life.

Mudita

- It is called mudita in Pali.
- It means empathetic joy.
- It means showing sympathetic joy where one person is happy because of other's happiness, success or well-being.
- This empathetic joy is totally disconnected with one's self-interest.
- It is also called appreciative joy.

Upeksha

- It is called upekkha in Pali.
- It means even-mindedness, serenity and treating everyone around impartially.
- It basically aims at maintaining equality amongst all, where no one is favoured more than the others.
- The concept of Brahma-vihara is also found in Jainism with a slight variation. Jainism accepts the four virtues of 1. Maitri or love and kindness, 2. Pramoda or appreciation, 3. Karuna or compassion and Madhyastha or Equanimity towards all.

#BrahmaViharas

#Buddhist

#Virtues

#Four

