CHAPTER – 5
CONCEPT OF NON-VIOLENCE IN
BUDDHISM AND MORAL VIRTUE

It is a well known fact that the ultimate aim of the Buddhist teaching is to mount peaceful co-existence on earth and for the attainment of permanent happiness with eliminating all kinds of suffering. Attainment of happiness would not be possible without peace. It is possible only when there is no violence of any form. According to the Buddha, there is no happiness, if there is no peace. Where there is violence, there is no peace and happiness. The Buddha said there is no other happiness superior than peace. Non-violence is only the means to achieve peace as it is constructive in nature. Non-violence is the central focus of ethics in Buddhism and Jainism. Both the traditions give more weight than other religious sects and widely known as the two religions, which regards peace and non-violence as its cardinal virtues. For Buddhism, non-violence is an essential practice, to be followed in order to lead a peaceful life. Non-violence is the most important ethical concept of Buddhism. It gives a far greater preeminence to its code of morality corresponding to its theory of karma. It is based on the basic principles of well being of all.

The practice of non-violence is the very core and essence of Buddhism. However, “The Buddha’s teaching of non-violence rests upon three cardinal premises – first, that emancipation or redemption can be only personal and individual; secondly, that the feeling of compassion is the source of spiritual transcendence which means sympathetic participation in the sufferings of others; thirdly, that any active interest even in ethical actions would lead to formation of the ‘will to live’, and thereby multiply misery and suffering. Therefore, the principle of life-negation should be the guiding ethics of life. The emphasis in Buddhism is thus on a subjective recognition of the ethics of non-violence which could lead to an inner transcendence of human beings and their final deliverance” (Unnithan and Singh, 1973: 66).
5.1 VIOLENCE AS A NATURAL HUMAN’S INSTINCT

By nature human being involves in violence for survival. It is a part of human life. There is also a great necessity for non-violence to be followed generally. Even though, at some situations or critical circumstances, it can be justified. However, Buddhism condemned the employment of violent act by killing other lives, considering it an obligation, as a part of sacrifice in the performance of ritual. The Buddhism implicitly suggested to remain away from violent acts, as it may cause undesired consequences. It is widely accepted that man’s instinct for violence has erupted with the start of life itself and it continues to persist by taking ever improving more and more deadly in numerous forms. It has somehow remained as inseparable part of the human life in one way or another. The basal instinct has extracted a great cost over the millennia. A little problem caused due to conflict of self interest pertaining to family, caste, religion, race, region, community and culture can turn man violent leading bloodsheds. So, it can be said that there is a lack of humane nature in our society and it degrades the process of human civilization.

This does not mean that the efforts to wean man away from violence are not made. From the very beginning with the eruption, the efforts to discourage man from violent activities are being made at large. Man is at times turns violent and at other time non-violent. The phenomenon of violence and non-violence have co-existed. Human nature and social conditions influence his behavior and instinct for violence. There is a history of violence in human life such as wars, bloodshed, killing, torture and sufferings at various levels occur in between families, religious groups, castes, states or nations. On the other hand there is also a glorious history of harmony, peace, cooperation, brotherhood, friendship and unity among the widely different people and regions. Peace and non-violence are the main pillars of Buddhist moral philosophy. It is known that the twentieth century is termed as the century of many crises, conflicts and tensions. It had witnessed the extreme limit of violence with the outbursts of two world wars, use of nuclear destructive weapons, terrorist activities and insurgency, riots due to religious influence and suppressions of human rights in one form or another. The new and scientifically developed weapons, which are capable of mass
destruction have aided in the increase of violence which is now in its advanced form. The advanced forms of violence are deadly and destructive than anybody can think about. The speedily increasing insurgence of violence is required to be controlled for the sake of human mutual existence, considering it as our moral responsibility. It is essential to adopt social order and sanity, in order to sustain human existence without undue cost of bloodshed and killings.

The time has come to pay enormous attention for evolving a universal social order based on non-violence. There is a need to find new and more effective and useful non-violent methods for resolving differences and disputes among different people and nations. “Already the human civilizations, in its stride, has reached the level of resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful and non-violent means liked negotiations, dialogue, discussion, persuasion, debate, exchange of views, opinion etc. The other examples of non-violent means of dissent are strikes, dharnas, gheraos, boycott, tool down, pen down, fasting, satyagrah, economic sanction, disarmament effort, green peace and so on. In all these forms, there is an inherent presupposition and preparedness for suffering, sacrifice and understanding. The idea is to appeal to the noble and good qualities inherent in all human beings” (Vyas, 2000: 40). With this efforts are made to bring forth the noble and good qualities of human being. For bringing a reasonable solution to the problems of violence and crisis, the moral chords of inherent human nature is to be employed. The emergence of good in man will suppress the human instinct of violence. The purpose of non-violent methods of solving problems is to make the person realize his mistakes and feel guilty and to soften the hardened feelings, attitudes and sentiments in the adversaries. As violence cannot be curbed, it only produces more violence in many forms, so non-violent methods should be relied upon to conquer the violence. Man can appropriately deal with the basic instincts of violence by bringing forth his spiritual nature and sentiments. The best and divine forms of human nature can be brought forward by reconstructing the man socially and culturally. More emphasis is to be stressed in controlling and continuous assessment of human tendencies of
committing violent actions. Non-violence and peace results the unity of mankind and in turn it helps in maintaining peace among the entire world.

5.2 SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF NON-VIOLENCE IN BUDDHISM

The concept of non-violence is closely associated with the fundamental concepts and practice of Buddhism. It has been the highest virtue of Buddhist moral philosophy. The morality of non-violence is clearly enunciated in Buddhist ethics. It is the most important concept of the Buddhist tradition for attaining peace, which forms the understanding of nirvāṇa. Buddhism is indeed widely known for its regard of peace and non-violence as its cardinal virtue. Buddhism on track became to rise as an ethical movement, a practical and effortless approach to the problem of salvation and deliverance from the suffering of life. Buddhism is conspicuous for the praise of non-violence as one of the most commendable moral virtues. It condemns injury to life of all. Buddhism made its strong opposition against the Vedic tradition, which was responsible for the prescription of rituals involving animal sacrifice. The chief mode of worship was sacrifice. Sacrifice has become so important as to develop into a very involved and elaborate ritual. The great animal sacrifices involved the slaughter of hundreds of animals (Ghoshal, 1959: 24-5). The Buddha discouraged this cruelty fashion of animal killing on the sacrificial ground, instead he teaches to lead to the concept of non-violence. The general affirmation of Buddhism involved repudiation of Vedic authority including that of the cult of sacrifice. It expressed the all-importance to follow the ideals of non-violence and introduced humanistic considerations insisting against the obligatoriness of the performance of rituals involving the slaughter of animals. The concept of non-violence appears to be a reaction to the wanton and wide-spread slaughter in the Vedic time for sacrifices. During the time of the rise of Buddhism in India, the sixth century B. C. the ideal of the concept of non-violence had rapidly widened in its scope and implication, and becomes a vital force for human progress and intellectual life (Gokhale, 1961: 174).

However, it is to be understood that the concept of non-violence in Buddhism was not just a negative response to the cult of violence or killing as manifested in the
ritual sacrifice. Buddhism gives more accent to the importance of the qualities of non-hatred (*avērā*) and compassion (*karunā*), which form the philosophical foundations of the concept of non-violence (Gokhale, 1961: 181) in its moral sphere. Buddhism also put emphasis on the positive significance of the concept of non-violence in the form of an entire gamut of excellent virtues of unsurpassable humanistic quality of benevolence towards all creation (*maitri*), joy at others' happiness (*muditā*) and indifference towards others' faults (*upeksā*) (Banerjee, 1974: 293). “Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time, but it ceases by love only, it is its nature” (Jain, 1983: 39). Non-violence is the absence of hatred but sympathy, love and kindness. Absence of hatred promotes love, which is the source of unification of different individuals. The absence of hatred or non-hate is the culture of human nobility, and is considered as non-violence. It is impossible to attain *nirvāṇa* without non-violence. In Buddhism, non-violence is asserted from the perspective of the view of compassion, love and kindness towards all living beings. At the same time, it is also maintained from the perspective of a penitent and a feeling of shame, because of the cruelty involved in killing living creatures. Death is the most fearsome and terrifying thing for every living being. Every living being want to live. Taking life of others means frightening other that lives. It refers to the striking and killing of living beings. One should himself abstain from taking life of other living beings, the intention to kill and also should not be inspired others for doing so.

Considering it as a moral virtue, non-violence is supposed to be followed with respect to all living being as every living being want to live and fear violence. Understanding it traditionally abstaining from killing, “The Buddhist concept of non-violence is not limited to human beings only but includes all living beings. Its basis is compassion, sympathy and pity, as well as the feeling of shame on the cruelty of killing and injuring life. Thus, non-violence is united with compassion as well as with the consciousness of shame. Where there is compassion in the heart, it is expressed in an outward act of non-violence. When non-violence is practiced, one comes to know the true feeling of love and attains happiness, and the happiness in turn leads to *nirvāṇa* and, further, this happiness is also said to be spiritually a highly exalted state”
Compassion to all living being is necessary. The will to destroy or cause to be destroyed any life at or sanction the acts of those, who do so, should be avoided. “Buddhism arose with its basic principles of well-being of all. It is natural to think that when Buddha thought of eliminating the sufferings of all, he had well wishes for all the beings. There was no question of injury or harming even an animal. Therefore, the very idea of well-being of all gives rise to ahimsā. Thus, the concept of ahimsā can be defined as the sublime mental state of well being of all irrespective of any consideration (Ghosh, 1988: 59). The desire for the good and well being of all creatures ultimately leads to supreme happiness. For Buddhism, the importance of non-violence is based on equality of all creatures, not in the sense of mere abstinence from injury but also in the sense of feeling of love for all living creature. Every living being want to free from any kind of disturbance in order to enjoy life and to make it to the full. The Buddhist concept of non-violence concerns the avoidance of the vain destruction of animal life and it also shows the necessity to regard the life and well being of all animals.

Like Jainism, in Buddhism also, love and kindness constitute the basis as well as the positive significance of the concept of non-violence. The practice of non-violence in the positive way is to love, be kind to, others and to feel compassion for the troubled. Moral values originate from the very psychological make-up in which a predominant place is occupied by love (Jain, 1983: 75). Love and kindness have given special favour in Buddhism. As the moral element entered into the Buddhist tradition, for Buddhism, love is a feeling which is transphysical and is about any being, human or non-human, in the society. The Middle path theory of Buddhism in this sense has made a more realistic approach to life, which defines that “... in any manner of extravagance in making use of the idea of ahimsā and tried to appreciate its true spirit, lest its inherently humanistic significance should be lost in the ferment of fanaticism. This is evident from Buddha’s preference for, and his own pursuit of, the middle path” (Banerjee, 1974: 293). For those who are in distress, as the first noble truth points out, compassion is needed to be cultivated. Thus, the positive aspect of non-violence in terms of compassion, sympathy, friendliness occurs in a
very high degree in Buddhism. It is emphasized that such a type of love, compassion, sympathy, friendliness should be developed with a boundless heart and mind for all the creatures. It also stresses in the Buddhist concept of non-violence that one should try to disentangle oneself from ill-will and enmity as to follow the path of non-violence. The sense of goodwill, compassion and friendliness express the expanded sentiment of amity to all living beings. The Buddhist preaching of friendliness and compassion have a universal appeal. These feelings and attitudes are deemed as nobility as there is no harm to any living being. Friendliness is that kind of moral conduct, which serves as a remedy to hatred or aversion.

It is largely accepted by Jainism and Buddhism that injury, hurt or the cause to harm, which include in violence, is possible in three different i.e., thought, speech and body. As thought is a mental process, body and speech fail to function without the involvement of mind. They are continually interacting in an infinite number of ways. The strength of will to do something is prepared at mental level first or a consciousness of doing this or that appears in the mind first. It further finds its expression through different doers and accordingly named as physical action and verbal action. Thus, an action is nothing but the name of the consciousness in volition. Refraining from injury is an action. Therefore, non-violence is the name of volition of not doing any harm to any one in any form. It can be said that violent and non-violent actions are the mental actions. They affect our life directly. Not only our life, it affects all sentient being. As it is so, it is necessary to purify our mind to follow the ideal principle of non-violence. Mind influence one’s behaviour and instigate the instinct of violence. As the mind being the prototype of verbal and physical action, Buddhism lays great stress on the activity of mind. The Buddhist concept of non-violence is not confine only in abstention from killing. For Buddhism, injurious deed of the mind is more condemnable. One who cultivates a friendly mind and who is sympathetic to the welfare of all beings purifies his or her mind from the taint of ill-will. Buddhism lays great stress on the activity of the mind. Buddha preached that in order to achieve the social welfare, one should get purge of the feelings of harming others in way that is, bodily or even verbally.
The path that the Buddha preached was well within the bounds of pure reason. The way of his preaching was in fact independent of dogma and priesthood, sacrifice and sacraments. He was a man of reason. He wanted man to purify their hearts and give up violence; he propagated compassion and love. The Buddha revolutionized the concept of non-violence by his rational approach. He laid exclusive emphasis on purity of motive. The Buddha insisted upon the necessity of cleansing the mind of base instincts and impulses. He wanted man to be free from greed, anger and self-glorification. He enriched and elevated the concept of non-violence by making it the outcome of love and compassion. It becomes a positive virtue and not a negative attitude. As such, the Buddha reiterates the concept of non-violence in its genuine connotation (Rao, 1978: 27).

Causing hurt to others whether by means of body, mind and harsh languages is considered as violence. Taking life of others or killing others is that kind of bodily injury. Such kind of action or injury is understood as violence by everybody with no doubt. Thinking to cause harm to others is also counted as violence in Buddhism. Using harsh languages causes hurt to others mentally or in other way. Hence, according to Buddhism, it is considered as committing violence. One to be non-violent should not involve in harming others by physical actions; he should even think of harming others. His mind should be purified and free from impurities. Thinking in such a way in order to get benefit from others causing harm to others is a crime of committing violence. A person lose his peace of mind, he starts thinking of harming other. Before causing harm the other, he first get disturbed and in this way he is violent to himself first. A society is impossible to progress and maintain peace when this type of impure human thought persists in the society. Instead, it will distract the social harmony, which is the necessity of a peaceful co-existence.

5.3 NON-VIOLENCE AND PANCHASILA

The path that leads to nirvāna is a definite course for the guidance of the human mind. The human mind is to be disciplined. To attain the stage of mental concentration an adept must be firmly established in moral precept called sila. It is a
moral habit, a virtuous behaviour, an ethical practice and conduct (Pathak, 1988: 48). In Buddhism, *Panchasila* means five basic tenets of morality and the entire moral code is based on these principles. *Panch* means five and *sila* stands for morality or good conduct. *Sila* also means slab that constitute the base for raising super-structure. Here, the demand is that of a sound moral base. The Buddha advised to follow these Five Precepts (Holmes, 1949: 84):

1) **Not to kill and refraining from causing hurt to living beings:** This precept refers to the abstinence from destruction of life. This first precept applies to all living being, not just human. It indicates the moral obligation to respect the right of others to live. It corresponds to the concept of non-violence and call upon to control the passion of anger. Intentionally taking the life and killing of other living creatures is thoroughly condemned, according to this precept in Buddhism. Again, killing due to manifestation of anger is not permissible even in self-defence. This injunction of non-killing in Buddhist monistic practices has been adhered almost to an extreme. It would be quite unreasonable to deduce that the Buddhist concept of non-killing is a mere negative or abortive principle, that emphasizes refraining from the elimination of animal life, when, on the other hand, every Buddhist is morally bound to look after for the well-being of animal world. This emphasis, moreover, is not only on non-killing, the perpetual practice of love and kindness to all living beings by way of positive counterpart, is also recommended and worked out in convincing manner. Buddhist has usually extended their respect for sentient life to include measures to prevent the slaughter or sacrifice of animals. As it has already mentioned, that sacrifice of animals was a common practice at the time of the Buddha. The practice of killing of animals was in profusion. The precept discourages the destroying of the life of any creature. Buddhism takes the scheme to establish or strengthen the relation to other living being by giving them importance and respect of their life. Establishing such kind of relation with others means the
establishment of love and compassion with others inside and outside the human society. However, "Depriving a living being of its existence, knowingly amount to killing, that constitutes an immoral physical act. Volitional activity arising at any of the three doors e.g., body, speech and mind, for the destruction of life-force, is thus killing in true sense of the term" (Sobti, 1985: 42-3). Today, as the world faces to discourage the breeding of animals for consumption would not only be compassionate towards animals, but also towards the humans who will need the grains now fed to livestock in the future. There is enough food in the world now to feed us all adequately. Hunger is caused by the unequal economic and power structure which do not allow food to go where it is needed, even when those who are in need are the food producers. Interlocked with these unequal structures are the economic burdens of the arms races of the superpowers and industrializing nations. These structures are as much responsible for murder. Regarding to resolve internal or external conflicts, it is mentioned that "This first precept concerning killing would naturally apply to the settling of internal or external conflicts through non-violent means and renouncing the production and use of weapons, in particular nuclear weapons, which violate all human ethics by threatening life on earth" (Sivarksa, 1991: 203).

2) **Not to steal and refraining from taking which is not given**: This precept means the abstinence from taking away property of other which is not given without consent. This precept is intrinsically interrelated with the first precept. It refers to practice charity and generosity. It co-ordinates to respect the right of ownership to things that belong to others. Taking which is not given is the immoral act of stealing. Stealing is the influence of impure mind. It comes under violence. It is against the principle of non-violence. Buddhism does not inculcate the philosophic contempt for wealth. As, there is nothing wrong with the wealth as such, only, one should refrain from clinging to it. Stealing other property or wealth
encourages violent crime and the sense of civilization declines dramatically. It is must for everybody to live on right livelihood by fair means. Earning one's livelihood by underweight, fraudulence, bribery, ingratitude, crookedness, mutilation, persecution, confinement and oppression are suggested to be outlawed. The key note of this injunction of stealing is to refrain from covetousness, not to covert those things of other. One should not content with other own possessions. As S. Sivaraksa writes “Economic justice is bound up with right livelihood. Not taking responsibility for the theft involved in one’s economic system is just as serious as being a thief or murderer. To live truly a life of right livelihood and voluntary simplicity, out of compassion for all beings, and to renounce fame, profit, and power as life goals, is to set oneself against the structural violence of the oppressive status quo. The establishment of an international economic order is a necessary and interdependent part of the building of a peaceful world. Violence, in all its forms, imperialist, civil, and interpersonal, is underpinned by collective drives for economic resources and political power” (Sivaraksa, 1991: 204).

3) **Not to tell lie and refraining from falsehood:** This precept concerns about truthfulness and abstinence from telling lies. In Buddhism, there is no room for falsehood. It demands absolute truth, absolute purity. Speaking false to other is highly suggested to be avoided. One should speak the truth and nothing but the only truth. This precept covers slander as well as speech which are not favorable for well being of other. It refers to practice sincerity and honesty. There should be harmony between one's action and his words. All sort of untruth should be avoided in order to avoid hurting other and to establish the highest moral standard and spiritual austerity. Truthfulness is the final standard of Buddhist morality. It also includes the prohibition of using harsh words and frivolous talks. Besides, our thought, speech and action should be made parallel with the truthfulness. A person can be freed from covetousness and is equipped
strength when there is close attachment with truth. “Lying is an abdominal vice, whereas, truthfulness is a great virtue that everybody aspires. One has to cultivate the habit of telling truth and that costs. Moreover, truth is only discovered; it is not created. It is the falsehood that needs to be created. So, the truth is what it is” (Sobti, 1985: 51). According to S. Sivaraksa, the precept to speak the truth has a tremendous significance for the movement for peace. The movement for peace characterizes its role as speaking truth to power. Peace cannot be possible with falsehood. The forces of violence and domination in the world create ideologies, patterns of information, desires, and values, which condition our understanding of the world. We can only perceive, and break free of, the systematic lying of the status quo if we undertake truth-speaking collectively. Out of the networking of the global peace, justice, and human rights movements arises a radical discourse, a pluralistic, insurgent understanding, a dynamic truth which threatens the power of the forces of violence, greed, and ignorance (Sivaraksa, 1991: 206).

Truth is ultimately unknowable and inexpressible. All religious practitioners who have held to this humble admission have been able to undercut their own dogmatism, racism, and nationalism. Being in touch with the truth for the Buddhist is being grounded in a deep, critical doubt about beliefs and prejudices. Having seen in the practice of meditation the process of the arising of illusion, one holds all views more loosely. The greatest wisdom for the greatest number can only be achieved through the free and open exercise of the critical intellect, grounded in the open, tolerant recognition that truth is ultimately unknowable and inexpressible.

4) Not to live immorally and refraining from wrong conduct for the satisfaction of sense-desires: The important manifestation that calls for our close attention, in this precept, is to abstain from any overindulgence in any sensual pleasure such as gluttony as well as misconduct of a sexual nature. This precept is often misinterpreted as relating only to sexual
misconduct and illegal sexual relationship. It covers the entire range of sensual activities and refers to immoral dispositions pertaining to sensual activities. This precept refers to practice chastity and self-control. One should guard himself against lust, trespassing through the door of sense-organs. Involving in immoral sexual activities can make possible to avoid by practicing mindfulness, which makes oneself vigilant against the perpetual assault of sense-desires. Right conduct with regard to sexual life is the area under discussion of this precept. One should remain faithful and loyal to his or her life companion in the matter of sexual life. This precept highlights the necessity to sustain the respect for personal relationships. It means the important of self respect and trust within a society in order to build a place to live peacefully and respectfully. Any case of forced or coercive sexual union comes under violence and it constitutes a transgression. Having unlawful sexual relation causes hurt to others. The essential purpose, according to Buddhist ethics, is to prevent sexual relations which are hurtful to others. When mature independent people, though unmarried, enter into a sexual relation through free consent, so long as no other person is intentionally harmed, no beach of the training factor is involved (Bodhi, 1999: 55).

The Buddhist sexual ethics must address the global structures of male domination and explanation of woman. Violence against woman is, of course, interlocked with woman’s economic position in society, insofar as they are members of oppressed group and caste. But there is also a system of oppression distinct from racism and capitalism which objectifies woman’s bodies, making them into merchandise in the market. This patriarchal ideology manifests in violence against and hatred for woman. Rape, pornography, and prostitution are becoming common phenomena in some parts of the world. Despite the fact, these women are mistreated, with no regard for their basic human rights whatsoever. The collective, historical action of male dominance limits man’s abilities to achieve
spiritual liberation as much as it does women's. The emerging understanding of Buddhist practice points towards the developing of full human beings, free from the socially learned masculine and feminine patterns of thought, speech and behaviour.

5) Not to partake intoxicants and refraining from drinks and drugs and from those things that causes confusion and heedlessness: This fifth precept refers to turn down and refrain from having intoxicants that is, abstinence from drinking spirituous, strong, maddening liquors, which are the roots of torpidity. The main purpose of this precept is to make understand that taking any intoxicant liquor is the cause of torpidity or sluggishness (Pathak, 1988: 28) and it also causes disturbance, evil and harm to others in one way or many. In Buddhism, "The principle underlying the precepts is the necessity for perfect mental, moral and physical control, and any stimulant when taken to excess will make control more difficult. Whether the drugs are taken in a powerful form or in the milder guise of coffee, tea or nicotine, the tendency will be the same. It is for each man, having understood the principle, to apply it constantly with sincerity and common sense" (Humphreys, 1954: 114). Consumption of liquor affects the mental stability, causing the distortion of mental vision that can hardly be allowed in the interest of maintaining sanity and vigilance. One behaves abnormally under the influence of liquor and probably infected with all the dark passions that in the long run generate mental and physical sluggishness and stupidity (Sobti, 1985: 52).

The above mentioned five moral code of Panchasila convey the importance of the relationship of the individual with other fellow beings. However, "Through the understanding of the impossible position of an isolated ego arises naturally the comprehension of its relationships. These are conceived as rights and duties. Buddhism is essentially a teaching of relationships, not of absolutes" (Malalasekera, 1996: 98). Any individual cannot be isolated or away from his group of community and society. So, the responsibility of an individual and his social responsibility cannot
be considered as separate entities. This relation exists between the individual and society is of immense important to be maintained. It is conceived in Buddhism as right and duties. As it is concerned in Buddhist ethics, the right of living means not only the self living and self improvement but also involves the duty to respect of other’s lives. All are dear to life and fear death. All seeks happiness and averse to pain.

The concept of non-violence in Buddhism does not mean the prohibition of killing human being or other creatures, nor does it mean to observe the first precept. It is closely coupled with all the moral code of Panchasila. Non-violence is the basic thing to be followed for social and spiritual upliftment. In order to practice the immense principle of non-violence for the social, personal and spiritual upliftment, all the evil activities and felling such as harming others, killing, lying and deceiving, taking intoxicating drinks, given to hatred, passion are to avoided. The Buddhist concept of non-violence embraces ethical conduct in all its boundlessness.

5.4 NON-VIOLENCE AND FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

For the Buddhism the main problem that begins with is the problem of human suffering (Duhkha). It is stated that, “For the very first statement which is at the root of all the Buddha’s thought is this – life is suffering” (Devasthan, 2000:7). The misery of the world left a sting on his sensitive nature. Individual instances of suffering to the Buddha were illustrated of a universal problem (Radhakrishnan, 1927: 347-8). According to the Buddha, there is nothing at all but suffering in the world (Grimm, 1957: 37). The Buddha was totally preoccupied with the question of how and why life is doomed to be filled with suffering. Life’s path led the Buddha to further experiences that deepened his concerned about human suffering. It appears natural that the problem of suffering in human life occupies a major leading role in Buddhism. It can be said that Buddhism is concerned with some problems of human life and aims to find out the means to escape cordially from these problems.

The Buddha was deeply engaged with problem to get rid of the human suffering. According to Hiriyanna, the Buddhistic thought regarding the chief characteristic of
life is pessimistic. “The whole teaching of Buddha, as shown by its implied comparison of life to a disease, is based upon a pessimistic view, betokening monkish influence. But even in this later form of the doctrine, evil is not to be taken as the final fact in life. Its pessimism means that life is full of pain and suffering, not in itself, but only as it is ordinarily lived, for the doctrine holds out the hope that they can be completely overcome in the stage of nirvāṇa which can be reached here and now, if one so wills” (Hiriyanna, 1995: 75). Every body hopes for a peaceful and happiness life. However, “Evil or the misery of samsāra is most real and the foremost aim of man is to effect an escape from it. When we describe Buddha’s teaching as pessimistic, it must not be taken to be a creed of despair. It does not indeed promise joy on earth or in a world to come as some other doctrines do. But it admits the possibility of attaining peace here and now, whereby man instead of being the victim of misery will become its victor. It no doubt emphasizes the dark side of life; but the emphasis merely shows that life as it is commonly led is marred by sorrow and suffering and not that they are its inalienable features” (Hiriyanna, 1973: 136).

Suffering is the first facet of the Four Noble Truths, concerns in Buddhism. Buddhism reveals that suffering is universal fact in the world. “The universality of duḥkha means that the human being in his full and comprehensive dimension, in terms of his dynamic relational structures, usually cannot keep up orderly and consistently with the flow of its own ontological being. In this sense, suffering or duḥkha is not limited strictly to the physical or the mental or the psychological. Buddhism focused on the only natural basis for suffering, the ontological basis. It is only in and by ontology that a common basis, a common ground of discourse on all forms of duḥkha is possible” (Inada, 1968: 42). It has been mentioned in Buddhism that the condition that make an individual rise to suffering is the thirst for existence, passion for life, bondage to the passion and blinded by lust. It is true that we live by our passions. We are born in this world with basic desires for life.

The Buddha recognized Four Noble Truths about human existence. “The Four Noble Truths, the programmatic formulation of the Buddha’s doctrine, begin with an analysis of the symptoms of suffering, followed by an investigation into its causes”
The first Noble truth is the comprehension of suffering. It concerns the nature of suffering and the fundamental feature of all existence. “The first Noble Truth is merely a descriptive analysis of existence. To existence in this world is to suffer” (Love, 1965: 308). It is the recognition of suffering. There is suffering. This is a basic insight. The insight is simply the acknowledgement of that there is this suffering without it making personal. That acknowledgement is an important insight; just looking at mental anguish or physical pain. “Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, to be united to the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering; in short, the fivefold clinging to the earth is suffering” (Rahula, 1959: 53). Life is connected with and constantly threatened by pain or suffering and is inexorably, sooner or later, ended by death. Buddhism gives more notable concern over the fear of death, which defeats all men. Man is terrorized every moment by death. Broadly speaking, the truth of suffering concerned in Buddhism can be viewed into two forms as physical and mental suffering. We usually just react, but with understanding we can really look at suffering. Hence, suffering should be understood. Here physical sufferings are referred to the suffering of birth, old age, sickness and death. Mental sufferings are referred to the suffering of separation from our loves ones, suffering of being contact with those whom we dislike or unloved, suffering of the wound of affection, and suffering of frustrated desires. Both the forms of suffering are woven into the fabric of our existence.

It is a fact that our existence is suffering. “Birth and death, suffering and love are universal facts. They are signs of a lack of harmony, of a state of discord. Conflict is at root of man’s misery, of his spiritual disease. It is a pervasive feature of all empirical existence, which is impermanent and transitory; and escapes from it can, and must, be found” (Radhakrishnan, 1950: 16). This shows that at the core of human life lies suffering. Suffering is the common bond we all share. In course of life
everybody suffers. "All activities of will are suffering, or, since we already know the nature of everything existing to consist in volition: Everything is full of suffering, just because of its nature. Suffering only arises where something arises, suffering only vanishes where something vanishes" (Grimm, 1957: 37).

The analysis of suffering in Buddhism includes deeper ideas such as imperfection, pain, impermanence, disharmony, discomfort, irritation, or awareness of incompleteness and insufficiency. During the moment of joy and happiness, there is suffering because these moments are all impermanent states and will pass away when conditions change. Therefore, the recognition of suffering encompasses the whole existence, in our happiness and sorrow, in every aspect of our lives. However, it should be understand that the truth of suffering does not mean that there is no happiness, enjoyment and pleasure in life. There is, and the Buddha has taught various methods with which we can gain permanent happiness in our life. He said, "All happiness a man can enjoy in life is dependent on the satisfaction of desire. A desire is preceded by the feeling of want which is definitely painful. The removal of this painful feeling is regarded as happiness" (Suda, 1978: 162).

In analyzing the problem of suffering in Buddhism, it comes to the point of birth. As birth has already taken placed, there can be no suffering without it. The elation of birth is flawed by subsequent ill-health and in many cases by premature death. In course of time and condition change, a person is liable to old age, sickness and death. Birth is the source of all other sufferings. Birth cannot be dissociated from other occurrences of physical suffering such as old age, sickness and death. However, "Every moment man is threatened by the depth of death, although he is generally not conscious of it" (Nakamura, 1975: 36). There is no at least a possibility of escaping from death. Death is conditioned by the very law of nature. Old age, sickness and death are the terrible powers of destruction which hover over life. So, life is suffering, existence is pain. Happiness is an ephemeral and transient phenomenon; it is not stable and enduring. It cannot endure because it is usually made possible by the contact of our sense organs with external objects, which contact itself transient. In other words, what changes the pleasures of life into suffering is their impermanence,
their emptiness and insubstantiality. Human suffering includes both physical and mental pain (Suda, 1978:162). The recognition of suffering that is the first Noble Truth reveals the pessimistic characteristic of the Buddhist ethics.

The second Noble Truth is concerned with the cause of suffering. The dictum everything has a cause and results its effect is the basis of this Noble Truth. Everything is conditional; the existence of everything depends on some conditions. As the existence of every event depends on some conditions, there must be something behind the suffering, which causes into existence. Going to define the cause of suffering, "The Buddha realized that all life is subject to suffering because in some way it has been estranged from reality, and the only way to overcome it is to remove this estrangement. According to him the root of this estrangement lies in the sense of 'I-ness' which every human being has" (Suda, 1978: 165). The passionate sense of self is the basis of suffering. It makes a person blind to the reality of others. The cause of suffering is the attachment of the mind to worldly objects or desires. A chain of causes of suffering is elaborated in the chain of causation with the theory of Dependent Origination. The theory of Dependent Origination is commonly supposed to explain the causes of suffering. The desire to live is the sole cause of suffering and egoism, and this is all due to ignorance. As long as the desire to live continues subject to suffering; so as the termination of suffering is not possible. If the craving for passion, existence, birth, rebirth and pleasure is the source of evil, the removal of evil can occur through the extinction of craving. In this context, Radhakrishna mentioned that "Ignorance is the main cause out of which false desire springs. When knowledge is attained, suffering is at an end. Ignorance and false desire are the theoretical and the practical sides of the one fact. The empty abstract form of false will is ignorance, the concrete realization of ignorance is false will" (Radhakrishnan, 1927: 367). Again he says, "The rise of ignorance marks a rapture with life, a violation of its organic integrity. It shows itself in an exaggerated individualism, self-isolation, rebellion against the harmony of the world. Ignorance is destroyed by intuition, desire by ethical striving" (Radhakrishnan, 1950; 16-17). It is clear that suffering is linked to ignorance. Indeed one might almost equate ignorance and suffering; for in the
Buddhist view the one is never found without the other. The ignorance is fundamentally ignorance of the constitution of the universe, and less formidably expressed, ignorance of the basic truth that there is no phenomena which is permanent. Nothing abides. Impermanence, in the Buddhist view, inheres in all existence. Ignorant of that truth, his proclivities (habitual thirst for objects and experiences) nurtured accordingly, a man lives out of harmony with his fellows and his world. He suffers (Welbon, 1966: 301).

Every activity is motivated by desire. To satisfy desire, animals prey upon one another, and human beings fight, kill, cheat, lie, and performed various forms of unwholesome deeds. Therefore, “It has been said repeatedly that the cause of suffering is thirst for existence, passions or desires for life, bondage to the passions, blinded by lust, entangled in the garments of desires, flooded by desires, clinging to existence” (Inada, 1968: 42). Craving is the root cause of human suffering, which is a powerful mental attitude present in all forms of life. It is the creative power of all suffering. It is this craving that leads to repeated births in cycle of existence. “Suffering is a result not of chance but specifiable causes” (Bishop, 1975: 117). Craving is the desire to pull apart from the rest of life and seek fulfillment through those bottled up segments of being, we call ourselves. (Rahula, 1959: 53). The desire for life, the desire to continue and to accumulate more and more give rise to unhappiness and suffering. When the sense of ‘I-ness’ disappears, idea of ‘mine’ and ‘self-centredness also disappear; there would be no suffering. Sympathy with all sentient beings follows and develops the idea of non-violence. The extremes of ‘I am’, the arrogance of ‘I have to extend the Me’ underlines terrorism and violence. This noble truth concerning the causes of suffering moves towards the positivistic approach of life.

The third Noble Truth is concerned with the cessation of suffering. To be freed from suffering, is to be removed the causes of suffering. Buddhism aims at the cessation of suffering. For the removal of suffering, it is essential to follow a strict morality through constant endeavour, spiritual discipline and righteous living. It is a natural result that the removal of the conditions that cause the existence of suffering
would cease the suffering. The third Noble Truth is a simple deduction from the previous two Noble Truths. As it is mentioned in the second Noble Truth that craving is the cause of suffering, it follows that the cessation of suffering must lie in the eradication of craving. Therefore, “The path of right is essentially a discipline to extinguish craving which is the cause of suffering. It is a way of self-deliverance, carried on in recognition of the law of karma, the law that good and evil deeds have their corresponding and inevitable fruits” (Hamilton, 1950: 146). If one can overcome the egoistic desire for separate existence, one would free oneself from suffering of every kind. If one wishes to escape suffering and if the desire is the cause of suffering, the removal of desire is one’s goal. One must overcome the attachment of the mind to worldly objects or desires. This is to formulate the solution negatively. The positive formulation is one must attain to nirvāṇa, which is the perfect state of existence. Nirvāṇa is the absence, the destruction, of suffering. It involves the eradication of ignorance through the attainment of wisdom. For Buddhism, nirvāṇa is the unity of the individual self with the universal self, and that this unity is actually experienced by the aspirant who, having attained that state in the life, in consequence begins to love all living creatures. As Prof. N J Vyas writes, “For Buddha, it is a radical and enlightened state of existence which is beyond any theorizing and investigation. For here there is a complex extinction of desire and hence results a total emancipation from the cycle of birth and death. This ecstatic state of highest meditation is imbued with saturating compassion for all being. Thus, all human behaviour must be subdued and guided by this latent and genuine self. One should be earnest in performing the duties in accordance with this true self” (Vyas, 2000: 45). The designations considered equivalent to nirvāṇa means anything at all to identify the goal of Buddhism as annihilation of suffering and violence. Nirvāṇa is the state of final liberation and peace.

The fourth Noble Truth is concerned with the way that leads to the cessation of suffering. It is the Middle Path, which avoids extreme views about the way of life. It is the teaching of the Buddha for deliverance through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path. It has been precisely mentioned that, “Deliverance from pain and evil
was his one concern and he neither found time nor need to unravel metaphysical subtleties" (Hiriyanna, 1973: 137). It is way of life consisting of eight factors – right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. By following the way to this path, it will bring an end to suffering. It is an ethical and spiritual approach to reach a state free from all kinds of suffering. Embracing every aspect of life, this Noble Truth serves as the most excellent feasible code for leading perfect wisdom, perfect goodness and perfect equanimity and nirvāṇa attained. The fourth Noble Truth constitutes the way to attained nirvāṇa, a state of complete relief of suffering. It involves wisdom, morality and mental culture. The Noble Eightfold Path constitutes the entire Buddhist scheme of ethical and spiritual training. It was this Path which the Buddha expounded for his followers in order that they might experience enlightenment.

The Buddhist teaching is based on the four Noble truths. Suffering is not the expression of the world-tiredness of an aged civilization. It is the fundamental thesis of a world embracing thought, because there exists no experience which is equally universal. Not all sentient beings are thinking beings, and not all thinking being reach the stage in which this faculty conceives its own nature and importance; but all sentient beings endure suffering, because all are subject to old age, decay and death. It is this experience that forms the connecting link between beings who otherwise might have little in common, it is the bridge that unites the human and the animal kingdom. It is the foundation of a universal brotherhood. The idea one should recognize oneself in the pain of others is also expressed. All being are afraid of pain, all being are afraid of death. Recognizing oneself in others, one should neither kill nor cause to kill (Govinda, 1961: 48). The feeling of love, compassion and friendliness has been given special favour in Buddhism. The Middle Path theory of Buddhism in this sense has made a more realistic approach to life. For those who are in distress, as the first noble truth points out, compassion is needed to be cultivated. Thus, the positive aspect of non-violence in terms of compassion, sympathy, friendliness occurs in a very high degree in Buddhism. (Jain, 1983: 75).
Buddhism is about to solve problem; the problem of suffering. The moral theory here is not meant to articulate a set of imperatives, nor to establish a calculus of utility through which to assess actions, nor to assign responsibility, praise or blame, but rather to solve a problem. The problem is that life on this earth is pervaded by unwanted suffering. The diagnosis of the cause of the problem sets the agenda for its solution. Suffering depends upon confusion, violence, attraction and aversion; it can be eliminated by eradicating these causing factors. The Noble Eightfold Path identifies not a set of rights or duties, nor a set of virtues, but a set of areas of concern or of dimensions of conduct. The Path indicates the complexity of human moral life and the complexity of the sources of suffering. To lead a life conducive to the solution of the problem of suffering is to pay close heed to many dimensions of conduct. The ultimate goal that matters is to get liberation from suffering, not some particular set of mundane experiences. Suffering is both caused and constituted by fundamental states of character, including pre-eminently egocentric attraction, egocentric aversion and confusion regarding the nature of reality. Hence, the cultivation of virtues that undermine these vices is morally desirable. Suffering is perpetuated by our intentions, acts and their consequences. Hence, attention to all of these is necessary for its eradication. Our own happiness and suffering are intimately bound up with that of others. Therefore, we are responsible for other and obligated to take their interests into account. Violence to other or hurting other’s sentiment will cause suffering and it also obstruct in attaining nirvāṇa.

In Buddhism, all killing is evil; not only is there no just war theory but also the precept against killing extends to all forms of life. It is necessary to employ the practice of Sila in order to make other interests into account and to eliminate violence. Strictly speaking, Sila means the basis of morality itself, the ability not to exploit oneself or others fellow beings. The elimination of violence is not only direct violence such as killing, but also its generation in the mind, the elimination of all five factors involved in killing: life, the perception of life, the thought of murder, carrying it out and the actual death. Violence is also one of the factors that causes to suffering. Violence arises out of greed, hate, anger and ignorance. It is one of the immoral
actions committed by human being. The ideal of Buddhism is nirvāṇa, a total liberation from suffering. Nirvāṇa is the cessation of all immoral activities. To attain liberation is to be followed the Noble Eightfold Path. Nirvāṇa is the destruction of greed, the destruction of hate, the destruction of ignorance. In order to liberate from violence and oppression, it is the essential of a Buddhist to understand the Four Noble Truth meaningfully and to confront greed, hatred and ignorance, not only in the individual level but in social and structural dimensions also. The Buddhist must develop the Right mindfulness that allows to deal the issues of violence arises out of greed, hatred and ignorance. Right mindfulness and Right concentration, indeed bring liberation from the mental suffering caused by greed, hatred and ignorance. The mental suffering thus caused, corrupt the mind and cause people to commit all forms of evil and more violence. Mindfulness can be employed at any moment of life. Mindfulness and concentration brings peace and happiness within the mind and can be shared with others. Violence is really and basically a mental act and intentional violence is started within the mind only. Mindfulness is a prevailing weapon against all forms of suffering both within oneself and within the environment. The approach of Buddhism is rational and ethical. It emphasized that each individual has to attain the highest by his own moral effort. Whosoever attains purity nirvāṇa, it is the birth right of every human being. The main intention of the Buddha is to purify our hearts and give up violence and propagating compassion and love for all.

5.5 TRANSCENDENTAL STATES OF NON-VIOLENCE IN BUDDHISM

For the establishment of the relation of mutual amenity between man and his fellow being E. Conze writes, “Buddhism does not believe that our relations to others can safely be entrusted to rather chance or metaphysical insight. If they were left to chance, the weeds of the malice natural to the human race would soon choke the frail wheat of a hard-won benevolence. If they were governed by metaphysical insight, complete aloofness would ensue. For, as we saw, ultimately, as far as true reality is concerned, it is quite impossible to enter into a real relation with other individuals, for the simple reason that separate or individuals do not really exist” (Conze, 1983: 81). To enter into a real relation with other needs mental development. It is one’s duty to
establish a real relation with his fellow beings. It can be possible through the cultivation of the ethics of non-violence. The ethics of non-violence in Buddhism is support within the framework of Love (Metta), Compassion (Karuna). The cultivation of these two states of mental development is the most effective means for establishing a harmonious life of all in this world.

1) **Love (Metta):** In order to draw the mutual relationship of people and an atmosphere of friendliness, Buddhism emphasis the essential of universal and all-embracing love which is known as Mettā. The literal meaning is closely associated with the term friendliness. It is love without a desire to possess but with a desire to help, to sacrifice self-interest for the welfare and well-being of humanity. It is much deeper than good will. It is nevertheless useful as an antidote to hatred. Hatred is regarded as the most cursed hindrance to Buddhist culture. Mettā can make cease of hatred through its power of kindness and good actions. Hatred can not be ceased by hatred itself; it can only be ceased by love. According to Buddhism, it has a far wider significance and a much more extensive implication than generous mindedness, loving-kindness, sending out thoughts of love towards others. It means to direct to a quite unworldly spiritual essence, and is equally intense in respect of all. It is not merely a feeling but a principle; it is not merely the radiating of benevolent thoughts but it is also doing charitable actions. Kindness, harmlessness and sympathy are associated in estimating the significance value of Mettā. It is active benevolence, a love which is expressed and fulfilled in active ministry for uplifting of fellow beings. Universal love goes hand-in-hand with helpfulness and a willingness to forego self-interest in order to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind (Ghosh, 1988: 94). Love consists in bestowing welfare of others and for all mutual relationship. It is based on the ability to see the pleasant side of other and result in removing ill-will and malice. It works as toward off pain and suffering from other beings. Therefore, we ought not to hurt mentally and physically our fellow creatures as well as our fellowmen but to love and to
protect them. Thus, love (*Metta*) forms a part of harmonious progressive on Buddhist ethics as a high moral virtue.

In Buddhism, loving heart is extended over all living being without any distinction but it does treat *Mettā* not simply as brotherly feeling. It is a practical virtue in Buddhism. It is unselfish embodying feeling of benevolence towards others. Life is dear, for instance, to all. As we are scared of death, so are other beings. There is the necessity to cultivate loving heart within us, as the Buddhist mentioned. *Mettā* in Buddhism is the fundamental bases of social life and basis of social progress.

Buddhism regards *Mettā* as comprising all virtues as the root and basis of all virtuous conduct. However, "*Mettā* attempts to break all the barriers separating one from another. There is no reason to keep aloof from others merely because they belong to another religious persuasion or nationality. The true Buddhist exercises *Mettā* – universal love – towards every living creature and identifies himself with all, making no distinction whatsoever with regard to caste, colour, class or sex. It is the outcome of the understanding that all living beings including animals are subject to the same law and conditions of existence" (Ghosh, 1988: 94-5). "In the process of making friendliness unlimited, one should think, as I myself wish to be happy and have an aversion to suffering, as I wish to live and do not wish to die, so also do other beings wish for the same, and one should desire for others exactly the same happiness one desires for oneself" (Conze, 1983: 82). This indicates that love saturate friendliness wholeheartedly and with all one’s self. One should identify himself with his own self, without making the distinction they belong to other beings or groups. "Love for oneself is thus held to indicate the level to which the love for others should be raised, and to constitute the measure and pattern of our love for others" (Conze, 1983: 82). Love is a kind of sublime attitude and a natural behaviour, which operate on the plane of true reality and selfless, directing towards the upliftment of all in the society.
2) **Compassion (Karunā):** The greatest importance of compassion is achieved in Buddhism as a transcendental state of non-violence. Compassion is expanded as the term that which moves a good man’s heart at the sight of suffering of other people. Its main characteristic is the desire to remove suffering from people; its chief function being the overcoming or discarding of cruelty. By cultivating the principle of compassion we can overcome cruelty, in the course which we cultivate wisdom, and perfect wisdom is the crown of compassion. The compassion at issue is not a passive emotional response, and not a mere desire. Instead it is a genuine commitment manifested in thought, speech and physical action to act for the welfare of all sentient beings. It is kindness towards others. Compassion is a positive virtue, which is inseparable from unselfish love and uproots the will to harm others. To fail to take other’s suffering seriously as a motivation for action is itself a form of suffering and is irrational. Compassion hence is the wellspring of the motivation for the development of all perfections, and the most reliable motivation for morally decent actions. Compassion is also, on this view, the direct result of a genuine appreciation of the emptiness and interdependence of all sentient beings. Once one sees oneself as non-substantial and existing only in interdependence, and once one sees that the happiness and suffering of all sentient beings is entirely causally conditioned, egoism ceases even to be motivated, and the only rational attitude one can adopt to others is a compassionate one. Compassion is the ground of the perfections, and the enabler of the pursuit of the path. It is fundamental to the Buddhist ethics that one cannot adequately cultivate the perfections or pursue the path successfully without a foundation in compassion. All men should develop an attitude of compassion. However, “True wisdom consists not in metaphysical sophistication but in practical knowledge which is expressed in the attitude of compassion as this is a fundamental principle in our social life” (Ghosh, 1988: 104). When the feeling of compassion or love for other prevails in the society, there is no violence around and everyone lives and works for the well-being of others and thus the society gets harmonized by itself. A peaceful environment and an atmosphere
of happiness can be established in the society for removing the suffering of humanity. We come upon the central and pervasive motive in compassion.

Compassion becomes the moving power and directive factor of a new and higher life. By compassion one practices virtues, purifies his dispositions, undertakes disciplines and cultivates the thought of self drops away and fearlessness that go with self seeking for the good deeds of others through reflection on the transitoriness and sufferings of life, on the ignorance, misery and folly in the world, on the ingratitude, violence, strife, falsehood and cunning, on the passions that blind and wrong ideas which mislead. In the heart of the one predisposed arise the feelings of pity, mercy, love and compassion which inspire the altruistic thought of seeking enlightenment, supreme wisdom for the sake of saving all suffering creatures. Compassion leads up to share and participate in the sorrows and sufferings of others. “Redeeming the person in the feeling of compassion is a sympathetic participation in the suffering of others” (Vyas, 2000: 46). It is the mental projection synthesizing the sufferings of others. Compassion makes the heart treble and quiver at the sight and thought of the sufferings of other beings. It consists in that, unable to bear the suffering of others, one strives to lead them away from ill, and is based on seeing the helplessness of those overcome by suffering, and results in abstention from harming others. In this sense, it is to acknowledge of the ethics of non-violence. We suffer with other people, and unable to endure their suffering; make efforts to make them more happy. Compassion makes people so sensitive to the suffering of others and causes them to make these suffering so much their own that they do not wish to further increase them. The compassionate feels that the harm done to others is harm done to himself. And that is naturally avoided. Left to itself, however, the virtue of compassion may easily degenerate into the vice of gloom. To contemplate so much pain and affliction as this world actually and manifestly contains is bound to depress the mind. It seems quite a hopeless task to remove this vast mass of suffering, and helpless despair threatens to paralyse
the will to help. Once we start identifying ourselves with all the pain of this world, with all its frustrations, miseries, calamities and horrors, we are indeed threatened with irremediable melancholia. The professed motive underlying the rational inquiry is pity for the world wandering in its ignorance and error (Conze, 1983: 86).

Through compassion the feeling of pity and mercy thus become as a mechanism for salvation of all beings. The non-violence is the highest means of a selfless devotion to universal good and function to the fullest extent for all to eradicate the wish to harm others. “The compassion (karunā) is a mental property (caitasika) by which ahimsā can be actualized and practiced. The Buddha believed that when the feeling of pity wells up in one’s mind, one does not kill or capture living creatures and thereby he construed that compassion is ahimsā as mental power” (Ghosh, 1988: 105). The main purpose is to save all sentient beings from suffering and to bring them to ultimate happiness. The idea of compassion is as wide in its sweep as the realm of all sentient being. It is indicative of a charity which reaches even beyond the bounds of justice and aims to relieve all suffering of the world due to whatever cause. Through all circumstances and change, the idea of the great compassion remained a constant directive factor in all-embracing dimensions (Hamilton, 1950:150-1). The highest value cherished and manifestation of compassion is to show the path leading to end of suffering and harmlessness to all living beings.

5.6 NON-VIOLENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN BUDDHISM

Buddhism responds to the new “dilemmic” situation of contemporary environmental destruction and our responsibility to do something about it. The causes of disturbing our environment begin from destructive patterns of human behaviour. People need to adopt the resolve to reverse their harm and make appropriate changes. It is necessary to embrace a positive replacement of acquisitive, objectifying tendencies with compassion for other people, other life forms, and the earth itself.
The application of karmic theory of Buddhism provides an appropriate moral platform from which an environmental ethics may be launched. The basic Buddhist philosophy of karmic causality and dependent origination stresses interdependence of all sentient beings. Buddhism is ecocentric rather than anthropocentric since it views humans as an integral part of nature (Sandell, 1987: 32). “With interdependence as a core understanding, an environmental ethics becomes a practice in recognizing and supporting relationships with all beings” (Kaza, 1990: 24). Human being can not be separate from nature. They are inseparable (Eppsteiner, 1988: 41). There is an effect of man on environment as part of conditioned arising both through purely physical and the moral and immoral aspects of action committed. Karmic effects sometimes catch up with people via their environment. There is bad effect on our environment according to our unrighteous actions, and good effect according to our righteous actions. Man cannot ignore the effects of his actions on his environment. Nothing exist on its own, as everything depends on others to condition its arising and existence. (Sarao, 2003: 296-7). Thus, the relationship of all beings including man and environment, is interdependent. Just as human processes of action result in patterning that conditions future behaviour, so also processes of human production, consumption, and waste leave a legacy that affects later generations. The further degradation of environment can be averted by seeing the earth from the perspective of intimacy and compassion. “This reenchantment with the earth as a living reality is the condition for our rescue of the earth from the impending destruction that we are imposing upon it. To carry this out effectively, we must now, in a sense, reinvent the human species within the community of life species . . . Within this context we can recognize ourselves not simply as a human community, but as genetically related to the entire community of living beings, since all species are descended from a single origin” (Berry, 1988: 21). This tends to promote the conservation of all species diversity within the surrounding ecosystem. “The doctrine of karma can be very helpful for the development of an environmental ethics. It emphasizes consequences and causality. It is not a fatalistic. It does not surrender the future to the control of God, whether transcendent, angry, or beneficent. Human must take responsibility for their own situation. Once human recognize the painful results of environmental
degradation, they can take concrete steps to correct past errors and chart a new course" (Chapple, 1998: 151). Buddhism offers a comprehensive orthopraxy that can be readily transformed into an environmentally friendly lifestyle. Mindfulness can help one keep in mind the need to live on the earth lightly. Buddhist culture that encourages vegetarianism can be reinterpreted as environmentally sound. The concept which the Buddhist affirms that the equal right of all life forms to continue in existence and to flourish leads to reverse for and respectful treatment of the totality.

The Buddhism takes an assertive position in the development of protective attitudes of our environment and fellow beings. It is of great importance to pursue a detailed and compassionate understanding of our fellow beings around us both plants and animals kingdoms as to point out how they live and how they experience pain and suffering. In the wake of the alarming degradation of the environment and destruction of a large number of species of animals it has become imperative for humankind to re-evaluate its attitude towards environment and animals. Thousands of living species are extinct today and many are endangered because of our greed for material comfort and personal enjoyment for only a little span of time. The appeal to deep-rooted human instincts like search for material safety and greed for wealth and comfort causes to environmental destruction. “Buddhism sees egoism and greed as the main cause of misery and harm. There is no doubt that environment disaster is to a great extent due to the insatiable greed of humans. Buddhism on the whole, though, does not mind wealth and prosperity, but they have to be acquired and used in full accord with the ethical norms, among which not to kill or injure living beings, and – so one may add – not to destroy their habitat, is the first” (Sarao, 2003: 301). For bringing our own prosperity and to acquire more wealth, taking lives of others and destroying our nature which is essential for our own survival involves immoral activities. Such activities show our greediness for material possession and self-interest. The greediness has commoditized and manipulated our nature causing to destruction, hence resulted to the disturbance of our very existence. Only searching for material safety and greed for wealth and comfort destroy precisely the basis of human’s life with nature. It can be stated that “Greed is no doubt one of the foremost
causes of environmental destruction, especially greed for consumer goods or objects of social prestige, but also greed for sexual pleasures or propagation if it leads to an excessive growth of human population. Hence, there can be no doubt that the elimination and even diminution of greed is ecologically beneficial" (Schmithausen, 1997: 14). Many difficult problems come to exist in our present life due to interference with nature. We have witnessed the degradation of our environment to a considerable degree. It is incumbent upon us to understand the full implications of this degradation. In the wake of alarming degradation of the environment, the problem that lies before us is to re-evaluate our attitude towards our surroundings. Killing or exploiting other forms of life in order to live will cause threaten to our own life itself. This is the indication of our narrow and deep-rooted human selfish instinct. Many species become extinct and the earth itself is having global warming. "It is quite depressing when one thinks of the atrocities perpetrated by human against ecology and the tremendous loss of natural beauty and diversity. The destruction and debasement of the ecology has been constantly occurring through cruel methods of hunting, fishing, butchering, deforesting, overmining, industrialization, excessive use of pesticides, and pollution in various forms" (Sarao, 2003: 293). There is doubtless to confer here that scientific knowledge has been rapidly advanced due to the marvels of science and technology. Though there is scientific lag that may accrue to cause a disruption in our lives due to man's depletion and destruction of our natural resources. The real nature of the involvement of man with his surrounding is shading. Harming living beings in the environment directly and intentionally is against the Buddhist ethics.

In describing man's place in the environment, we should not treat man and environment as independent of each other. The ecological ethics is based on the conviction that man is responsible for preservation of his environment and nature. It is the necessity of man to live on nature. According to Buddhism, both animals and plants have no less right to existence than man. The intrinsic value of natural beauty and diversity is to be preserved.
The environmental ethics of Buddhism helps us in living in harmony with nature by caring our environment. "The day to day maintenance of our life support system is dependent on the functional interaction of countless interdependent biotic and physiochemical factors. Since the inherent value of life is a core value in Buddhist ethical codes, the notion of reciprocity and interdependence fits in with the Buddhist notion of a causal nexus, and has no essence of its own. Reciprocity also conveys the idea of mutual obligation between nature and humanity, and between people" (de Silva, 1990: 18). Buddhism has its foundation in all sort of practical and compassionate instructions for well-being of all. Our cruel attitude of harming or injuring other living beings including plants and animals, which is of unconcern for preservation of environmental equilibrium, causes serious nuisance and threat to our very survival. Buddhism has extended advocation of reverence and compassion for all life. "In Buddhist tradition, the term karunā, compassion, is a supreme cosmic power. Thus, we find a pervasive intimacy and compassionate quality in the very structure of the universe and of the earth itself" (Berry, 1988: 20). A commitment to protect and honour nature is the characteristic of the Buddhist environmental ethics. It can be achieved through compassion for all life. Through the traditional ethics of non-killing any living being and of compassion and benevolence, it is possible the protection and restoration of nature. It is concerned in Buddhism the interdependence of man and all other forms of life in terms of co-operation with nature, not domination. So, it is suggested in Buddhism to act and live so as to be in a less destructive and self-undermining relationship with nature. Compassion can balance the mutuality of man and environment leading to the establishment of an ethical basis for existence, for lowering the deteriorating conditions. "The Buddhist ethical code springs from karunā. And it touches each and every form of existence. It therefore provides a solid basis for ecological concerns. Instinctive love and respect for and protection of nature and environmental awareness have been deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition as a part of general Indian tradition. Similarly the flow of karunā is not confined to human beings alone and has to be extended to all creatures" (Bhatt, 2003: 201). Buddhism is against the destruction of even the lowest form of life. All life is sacred, carry equal weight and valuable. There is intrinsic value for every existence. Therefore, due
reverence and honour should be paid. Love, friendliness, compassion and absence of
greed are the hallmarks of a fine social structure. A polluted and cruel mind is the
basis of environmental hazards. In Buddhism, there is an importance of enlightening a
mental attitude of love or friendliness towards all living beings. The Compassionate
attitude is above all directed towards feeble and suffering creatures. Buddhism and
Jainism are very emphatic on the ethics of non-harming. In fact, when we harm any
being or injure our environment, we harm ourselves for no living creature likes to be
harmed. It is said that all beings fear death for all value life. Refraining from harming
the living beings is the fundamental principle of maintaining harmony with our
environment. It is basic to every solution of environmental crises and its hazards
caused due to cruel destruction on it. The cultivation of this virtue of non-harming
develops an attitude of caring and nurturing concern for our environment. (Samtani,
1999-2000: 257-8). Non-violence is a way of protecting oneself from the vengeance
of injured animals, plants and small creatures around our surrounding. It is also
probably from the vengeance of their congeners in this very life.

Thus, there is the necessity for man to live with animals, plants and the elements.
The exploitation destroys precisely this basis of man’s life. The Buddhism talks about
harmlessness to the plants and animal kingdom. This may be interpreted as an
extension of the principle of non-injury. “A consequence of this insistence is that
animals and plants are to be respected and such respect arises naturally from the
insight, provided by Buddhist cosmology, that all sentient beings are intimately
interrelated” (Sarao, 2003: 294). Buddhism is more unequivocally positive in its
concern of non-violence for maintaining of its natural environmental balance. In
Buddhism, emphasis is on the necessity of harmony with nature. All life forms have a
natural right to existence as functional components of the ecosystem. “Buddhism
considers the intrinsic value of both humans and nature as providing a more
meaningful way of living” (Kabilsingh, 1987: 11). Buddhism encourages the
cultivation of environmental understanding as well as the practice of environmental
ethics as a basis for a non-violent ecology. (Sponsel et al, 2001). The Buddhist attitude
towards environment is quite positive evaluation of preserving all forms of life and
deserves as a supplement to the Buddhist ethics of non-killing. It is indeed an important element of the present day need to maintain environment balance. Its forms the moral values to indicate that environment should not be over-exploited. The interdependence of human and all forms of life in a finely balanced chain of being has always been a fundamental Buddhist belief. Man is the part of whole universe and hence has his responsibility to preserve environment avoiding destructive activities. For Buddhism, killing or injuring all form of life is included in the actions of unwholesome and immoral, which it is a bad karma entailing evil consequences. The attitudes like benevolence, compassion and abstention from killing or injuring animate beings is considered as the right constructive attitude towards our environment. “The Buddhist attitudes non-violence (ahimsā), benevolence and compassion entail an ecological behavior as these attitudes are not limited to human beings alone but also include other living beings. Since the rise of technology and science, nature has been commoditized and manipulated. Our comfort have been gained at great expense to all life forms: countless people have been displaced by its advances; countless species become extinct each year; the earth itself is burning and groaning. To use up non-renewable goods, a possibility in the near future unless something definite is done can be the ultimate form of violence” (Sarao, 2003: 302). The ideal of non-violence towards the preservation of environment would be realized through its actions towards all forms of life around us. All life is sacred, meaningful and valuable. Buddhism not only makes conform human conduct in relation with other fellow human being but also regulate human conduct in relation to all living beings and natural environment (Bhatt, 2003: 201). Thus, the environmental ethics of Buddhism stands for a value schema of love, respect and care for all.

5.7 NON-VIOLENCE AND PEACE IN BUDDHISM

Non-violence and Peace have both constitutive and regulative aspects in Buddhism. Both non-violence and peace forms the understanding of preventing the destructive approach that causes threat to human survival. Non-violence and peace have been the main spheres of Buddhist moral philosophy. Prof. N J Vyas observes the present challenges against peace of the humankind as “Through the mastery of
scientific and technological specialized methods and result-oriented techniques, man has made great advances in all spheres of life. These achievements have bridged the physical distances and made the world look as one externally. International friendships, co-operation, charities, cultural exchanges, aids, disaster managements and philanthropic activities in general do take place in a great measure. Despite the intense modern quest for attaining the twin goals of rationalistic humanism and egalitarian social order, the entire humanity is gripped in all kinds of pathos of deepening frustration. The human society is locked in its own horns. On one hand, it continues to scale newer heights of scientific and technological advances to generate unheard mass of material wealths. And on the other hand, the hope of good life for all, peaceful coexistence and just global order are receding in oblivion like a desert mirage. Newer and subtle forms of totalitarianism, dominance and deprivations in socio-economic, cultural and political realms continue to persist and rise. The most common problem of all of us is effective security and decent survival for one and all. The existing mechanisms for redressal of grievances are so superficial and compartmentalized that they do not seem to take us far as the existing grievances of humanity are deep and widespread. The crisis is total as it concerns man in all aspects of his life. Therefore, without an integral philosophy of man-king and practical experience of non-violence to guide, all efforts are ineffective and relative” (Vyas, 2000: 41).

Today, the existence of entire mankind is threatened by the ever-increasing violence and destructive capacities in the world. The average man still shuns violence. By nature man is both violent and non-violent but impulses of violence in man need to be tamed. It may be that his understanding is feeble as selfish and fanatic leaders of various shades who thrive easily sway him on his ignorance. Moreover, groupism in the form of group action is passed on as a virtue of communitarianism and collective communal concern, which does greater harm to immediate as well as wider society as a whole. The partisan interests often resort towards, violence, hatred, suspicion and intolerance of the other. It doubtfully promises to attain peace, prosperity and unity, for it narrowly mobilizes collective interest. Hence, the main
problem that stands out is whether we should place our individual and collective
feature as well in the hand of such forces. The contemporary modern man is caught in
the vicious circle of living an actual life of fragmented and truncated existence, while
continuing to cherish and crave for peace and harmony along the line of an integral
philosophy of life. The most agonizing fact is that the general human response to ills
and warnings of the world has been one of the apathy and inaction.

In Buddhism, the principle of non-violence projects an ideal of universal peace,
which can be expanded to include the notion of peaceful mind. The logic of the
Buddhist doctrine in fact places the mind first religious striving for cosmic order and
harmony takes place in the mind. It is highly encouraging that attention is paid to
evolving of a global social order that is based on non-violence. More effective and
useful non-violent methods of resolving disputes and differences among people and
religions have to be evolved. Already the human civilization, in its stride, has reached
the level of resolving disputes and conflicts through peaceful and non-violent means
like negotiations, dialogue, discussions, persuasion, and exchange of views and
opinions. The idea is to appeal to the noble and good qualities inherent in all human
beings. The moral chords should be stirred to bring about amicable settlement in a
peaceful way. The purpose of non-violence forms of resolving dispute is to soften the
hardened feelings, attitudes and sentiments in the adversaries. For, violence begets
violence. It is only the higher spiritual resources of man, which can appropriately deal
with the basal instinct for violence. Man has to be civilizationally and culturally
remade to bring out the best and divine from within. Such man-making processes
have to be accorded due primary and continuous vigilance needs to be kept. Unity
and mutually understanding among different individuals and groups can be
established from such a persistent non-violent course.

Most of the nations and educated people talk about equality, democracy,
individual rights, human rights and so forth; unless and until we could establish the
supremacy or the necessity of non-violence action at all levels – at the level of
individuals, at the level of groups, and at the level of nations, continents and
countries, we can never materialize or implement any kind of right in reality.
Everybody may talk about it very eloquently but that would be a total hypocrisy, a total lie. Buddhism stresses great importance to responsibilities and duties than the importance of rights. Everybody has to look after one's own responsibilities and duties towards others and particularly towards the entire universe. The essence of responsibility according Buddhism is a kind of feeling for universal responsibility. If we ignore that kind of universal responsibility you will not be able to establish or protect any kind of rights. In the absence of responsibility of oneself, it is not possible to impose the rights of others (www.institute-for-nonviolence.com).

According to the Buddhist teaching, non-violence is to be practiced at all levels. The practice of non-violence is the essence of Buddhist teaching. Literally, violence is mostly defined in the realm of individual actions and direct actions of violence. Any kind of action which is initiated by an intention of hatredness, of greed is one resulting in acts of violence. Today, violence is expressed in many forms, violence in the form of discrimination between nations, violence in the form of war and destruction and terrorism that is quite obvious. There are also a lot of other kinds of indirect violence which presents a great deal of difficulty to humanity such as violence in the form of economic disparity, violence in the form of political and social domination, violence in the form of exploitation i.e., socially, economically, politically, violence in the form of competition. Moreover, a lot of diplomatic relations between nations or countries or governments comprises a great deal of violence. Even in simple relations between friends, between family members, between parents and children, between teachers and students, there is violence. There are also some other kinds of violence like unfaithfulness and unfairness in our relationships (www.institute-for-nonviolence.com). There are several dimensions within the causes of violence. The fundamental cause of suffering is ignorance. In this view, ignorance comes from forgetting ultimate reality (emptiness), due to clinging to one's own self. The ignorance can cause greed on the level of living beings, including humans, because has a blind will to maintain and grow itself. Suffering from violence is rooted in self-centered and excessive desire (greed) on a personal level. The cause of hindering peace lies in this self-centered desire (greed). The self-centered desire
(greed) is the cause of disharmony even on the level of social and international relations. The fundamental idea for bringing about true peace on this planet lies in people changing their hearts, releasing themselves from greed and transforming themselves into gentle, broad-minded people who don't act out in violence (Shinozaki, 2001: 19). When we are governed by our lower self, we are selfish, self-centered and materialistic, but insofar as we follow the promptings of higher self we will see things realistically and find harmony within ourselves and others (Kautz, 1990: 168-9).

All human endeavours for peace have to include the pursuit of mutual cooperation in order to realize a meaningful life of worth living. "Buddhism refused to be misled by the false pretence in question and whole-heartedly espoused the cause of peace based on the sole foundation of the principle of non-violence" (Banerjee, 1974: 292). The understanding of non-violence provides a center of life, an orientation to the world by means of which one gains a sense of direction towards peace (Earhart, 1987: 66). In Buddhism, the attitudes of non-violence include reverence for the nature of those who are seen as wicked, such as one's enemies. Compassion and non-violence have been illustrated as being far more powerful than the combination of hatred and violence. To establish peace on this planet, it is the need to have a way to cut the chain of hatred among individuals, races and nations. In order to overcome the forces of hatred, violence and greed, it is our responsibility to make shift society's focus to develop the qualities of compassion, non-violence and self control. The power of non-violence is a force which can overcome the power of destruction. Humanity faces a host of global issues of unrest including nuclear destructive weapons, terrorism, and war. These issues directly manifest on the individual level, as blatant self-centeredness, violence and greed and a general weakening and division of the spirit of humanity within the human race. The violence that the people is facing, disturbing to our peaceful life is not only direct violence but also structural and cultural violence. It affects not only the individual mind but also it affects society, race, nation as well as humanity as a whole (www.iop.or.jp/0414/kawada.pdf).
The principle of respect for life, non-violence, provides a prolific basis from which to seek problem solutions. Buddhism can contribute to liberation from suffering of all humankind. The Buddhist approach to disarmament is based upon the principle that we should not kill or cause others to kill. According to the principle of right livelihood we should not engage in occupations to kill, make weapons to kill, or sell weapons to kill. Since, the origin of killing and armaments is in our minds (greed, hatred and ignorance), disarmament efforts must effectively change them and this can be achieved when we develop a calm and tranquil mind within ourselves and then persuade others to abandon violence through a dialogue that combines feelings of respect for life with reason (Paige, 2001: 163-4). The establishment of a prospect for the elimination nuclear weapons and to resolve the threat of nuclear war which would change drastically the entire planet bringing about devastating consequences would make possible through the spirit of non-violence and the compassion of Buddhism.

Man being in need of each other, should learn to love each other and bear one another’s burdens. This mutual dependence is a perpetual call on humanity, for we are bound alike by the bonds of humanity. The Buddhist idea of harmony unites people and encourages people to develop a common sense of solidarity. Every people have sincerity and good will. People can behave appropriately according to the situation, time and place. A state of harmony and unity which goes beyond conflict can be definitely realized. However, this kind of harmony and unity cannot be realized simply by having everyone follow some common principles or basic rules. Though, it can be realized by purifying our hearts with the understanding of the ethics of non-violence. The path of non-violence leads to social harmony. Non-violence radiates love and compassion to make us feel solidarity with the current nature which is beyond humanity. Peace, which people regards as urgent need of today’s world of conflicts, has the meaning of harmony. In Buddhism, it is compassion. It cannot be achieved merely by making changes in social institutions. The establishment of a peaceful world depends on the efforts of human beings and to understand the suffering of the other people. With the eradication of egoism, human can be in with social harmony. Thus, the egoistic desires of human beings are the problem for
harmony. It becomes interrupted in achieving peace. Therefore, such desires must be extinguished with the practice of non-violence. When the human desires are restricted and put under control, the human minds is purified and become accustomed with the harmonious rhythm of nature.

To protect peace is to respect and protect life and that is to put into application of the first moral precept of Buddhist ethics. Buddhism is against all expansionist wars, which always include annexation of territory and wealth and interference into the internal affairs of other counties and nations. This is the violation of the two precepts of the Buddhist ethics-not to kill and not to take which is not given. Buddhism advocates any collective or individual endeavour which aims to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding, trust and respect among people, nations and human beings. Buddhism discourages to involve in those activities which are destructive to human dignity and human values (Chau, 2001: 93). In order to change humanity’s direction from that of violence and war to non-violence and peace and from that of stimulation of evil to the expansion of good, unceasing efforts must be made on all levels and in all. Aggression and hostility cannot bring peace at all. For a peaceful harmonious life and to have a sustainable spiritual development in future, one has to follow the path of non-violence to transform violence and delusion into well-being for all. The concept of non-violence and its ethics acquires substantial relevance.