Chapter Five:

THE DOCTRINE OF ANĀTMANA AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIETY

The understanding of Anāmana is very crucial for this society because of the lack of comprehending the true nature of the inner life; impermanent (Anicca), suffering (Dukkha), and non-selfhood (Anattā) which always play as our possessions since we were born we have brought nothing but these Dharma into our life until death. As we are aware that, the world today faces many problems such as terrorism, the war of ideologies and an attempt to influence the developing countries by the developed countries or rich countries to poor countries as well. If we properly apprehend the nature of things we may confine ourselves to serve the purpose all Human beings only.

Furthermore, according to the Buddha’s teaching, the ideal of self is an imaginary, false belief which has no corresponding reality, and it produces harmful thoughts of ‘me’ ‘mine’, selfish desire, craving, attachment, hatred, ill will, conceit, pride, egoism, and other defilements, impurities and problems, it is the source of all the troubles in the world from personal conflicts to wars between nations. In short, to this false view can be traced all the evil in the society.

5.1.1 The Problem of Evil and Suffering in The Society

Suffering may be qualified as physical or mental. It may be come in all degree of intensity, from mild to intolerable. Factors of duration and frequency of occurrence usually compound that of intensity. In addition to such factors, people’s attitudes towards suffering may take into account how much it is, in their opinion, avoidable or unavoidable, useful or useless, derived or undeserved.

All sentient beings suffer during their lives, in diverse manners and often dramatically, as a result, many fields of human activity are concerned,
from their own points of view, with some aspects of suffering. These aspects may include its nature and processes of origin and courses, its meaning and significance, its related personal, social and cultural behaviors, its remedies management.

All of us encounter the problem of evil and suffering, which is almost as old as humankind is. Yet, it continues to draw the attention of philosophers, theologians, artists, novelists, and common men and women alike, because it touches all, ravages many, and perplexes thinking people. So everyone thinks and wonders about the existence of evil and suffering in the world, their-own lives, and the lives of their dear ones. Vanauken thinks it is the hardest subject in the world, which is the tears and groans of mankind, the existence of pain and suffering, the problem the mystery of suffering.354

The last five decades have seen an unprecedented amount of philosophical and theological work on this topic. Whitney published a bibliography of over 4, 200 philosophical and theological writings on the topic, which were published from 1960 to 1990, and one publication every two and a half days.355 This shows that the problem we are considering is a very serious and ever relevant one.

From the point of history of thought, it is important to mind that at the beginning Buddhism was revolutionary movement against theistic authority of Brahmanism in ancient time in India. So that Buddhist teaching is a religious one but it already contains progressive spirit about quality and non theistic authority which are sustainable factors even in modern time. According to the Buddha’s teaching one is equal in suffering. Suffering is neither special neither for any caste nor except any one. This idea was inherited from ancient Indian religions by Buddha but the revolutionary point in his teaching is to affirm that every one equal in ability of achieving enlightenment and on the

way to liberation; especially, the way to emancipation is not paved by any God or Supernatural one, but everyone must decide by himself, step up by himself and realize by himself… and only by passing over just the human life of oneself with his entire believe and morals.

In Buddhist teaching the theory of emancipation and ethics are not separated each other. It is taught that good or evil and right or wrong are attributives which are neither originally decided by birth nor created or determined by any God, but deeply rooted just in the realization of self or no-self. Because of ignorance sentient being attaches his mind to the self (atman), then arising his craving (karma) and forming his deeds through body action, speech and thought which would be stored and accumulated to be karma that consists of good, evil, right and wrong… and the more karma is accumulated the longer people is floating in the circle of birth and death with suffering (duhkka).

The Buddhist way for emancipation is closely combined with the way of moral. On this way, sentient being has to avoid the ignorance to be conscious of non-self by regular introspection. So that he should avoid the attachment of the self, latter, he consciously practices self-discipline of concentration to control his deed. So that he should change himself from wrong to right and good; finally, by regular meditation he should automatically avoid karma and reach the ultimate Enlightenment and turn him to be his own nature of no-self. It is the ultimate emancipation where there is no more good or bad, right or wrong, good or evil… and perfection become human’s no-self character. This way to liberation is at that same time the one to moral goal.

The core Buddha teaching is the Four Noble Truths that leads sentient being from suffering to emancipation, at the same time from wrong or evil to right and good. First, The Noble Truths of suffering teaches about all kinds of suffering, as mentioned above. Second, The Noble Truths of cause of suffering explains that the initial cause of pain of sentient being is the
ignorance which is always in chase of pleasure and lust, namely the craving for passion, for existence or non-existence…Third, The Noble Truths of Cassation of Suffering teaches about realization of the cessation of pain by non-attachment, abandonment, forsaking for that craving. Fourth, The Noble Truths of the Way that leads to the Cessation of suffering teaches about The Noble Eightfold Path, namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

It is obvious that Buddhist teaching focuses in the Fourth Noble Truth and the Noble Eightfold Path. They are eight methods of right cultivation for everyone to consciously develop oneself on the way to final emancipation, also called Nirvāṇa. In fact, in Indian tradition, Buddhism inherited the moral tradition of Hinduism in general, and techniques of introspection from Yoga in concrete. Then it was developed to be realizable model of self-cultivation and called Noble Eightfold Path. To practice the Eightfold Path man has to concentrate on the moral value of “right” when controlling himself in every conduct such as right view, right intention, right speech, right action, and right livelihood through right mindfulness and right concentration without cessation of right effort for the ultimate liberation (Nirvāṇa) with right wisdom (Prajñā). The construction of Buddhist teaching is the combination of three parts comprehensively: Commandment (Sīla) Meditation (Samādhi) Wisdom (Prajñā), or in other word, they can be called three sections of self-cultivation: Self-cultivation of conduct (by Sīla), Self-cultivation of consciousness (by Samādhi) and Self-cultivation of wisdom (Prajñā).

In Buddhist teaching, the final judgment of man’s deeds is the law of causes (karma) which acts secretly through lives not by any god’s decision. Happiness or unhappiness is the fruit caused by oneself good or bad conduct done in the past. The judgment as the law of causes admonishes people of being serious with every action (body, speech, thought) of oneself. Buddhist ideal examples are Buddha and Bodhisattvas who already enlightened the
essence of the no-self and not be led by any craving or passion... They are omniscient and free from mundane attachment that means the perfect emancipation from the circle of lives, namely Nirvāṇa.

Buddhism was founded in 6th century BC in India. According to Lalitavistara Sūtra, numberless forms of ascetic austerities were in vogue at time on Buddha. One of the Buddha’s teachers, Alāra Kalārna is an adept in Yoga. The Buddhist teachings on meditation are familiar with the Yoga methods of concentration. Four states of Dhyāna of Buddhism correspond roughly to the four stages of conscious concentration in the classical Yoga. Buddha himself practiced Raja-yoga\textsuperscript{356}.

Buddhism is a system that is centered on the problem of suffering, because it is based on Buddha’s answer to this problem. When he encountered suffering, he started wondering why people fall sick, grow old, and die. While thinking about the question what is the cause of all this suffering? He saw a Sanyasin and thought that he might unravel the mystery of suffering if he became a Sanyasin and became one. The he sat under a Bodhi tree determined to read the great riddle. After he came enlightened he annunciated his Four Noble Truths, which constitute the essence of Buddhism:

1. Life is suffering (dukkha) we are born in and live in suffering, and we die in suffering. Suffering is having what you wish you hadn’t and not having what you wish you had.
2. Suffering is caused by desire (taṇhā, greed or craving or selfishness). When there is a gap between desire and satisfaction, there is suffering (the gap itself).
3. The way to end suffering is to end desire. The state where you have ended desire is Nirvāṇa. We generally try to overcome suffering by increasing satisfaction. But Buddha’s solution is decreasing the desire to zero.

4. The means to reach the end of ending desire is the Noble Eightfold Path of ego reduction, a lifelong task of desire reduction to reach Nirvāṇa.

Buddhism suggests that we should eliminate the ‘I’ that desires and suffers. But are all the desires of the ‘I’ evil and hence undesirable? At least some of our desires are good. Not having some desires (like the desire to take care of your spouse and children, the desire to do work in the office, the desire to study if you are a student, etc.) and not doing something to fulfill those desires amounts to irresponsible behavior and failure in life. Buddha seems to be unaware of this aspect of desires and of the possibility of unselfish love or will or passion or self.

If there is a possibility of attaining an unselfish self, then we should aspire that, because that would certainly be a better solution than the Buddhist solution. This is what exactly the Christian Faith offers, as we will try and demonstrate a little later.

According to Pantheism there are no two realities all reality is one, Brahman. The Sanskrit statement Jag is Mithyā, Brahman Satyam means ‘the world is illusion, and Brahman is real. So the distinction between good and evil, pain and pleasure act is not real in the ultimate sense, and evil and suffering are illusory. Some say that we experience or feel evil and suffering to be real because of Māyā. Christian Science, a cult started by Mary Baker Eddy and the ancient Greek thinker’s like Parmenides and Zero also taught that evil and suffering are false perceptions or illusions. These systems fall under illusionism.

It does not explain, but simple explains the problem away. If evil and suffering are illusory, where did the illusion originate? If they are indeed illusion, why do we all experience evil and suffering from the moment of birth and think they are real? In fact, we could say that those who view evil and suffering as illusion are actually participating in an illusion themselves not the illusion are actually participating in an illusion that evil and suffering are not

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real. Those who believe that evil and the world are illusions do not live as if this were the case, because if one were to push them in front of a fast moving bus, they would quickly realize that both the bus and they are real. So our common sense, reason and experience seem to deny this view.  

According to Polytheism of different forms there are two or more finite and personal Gods in the world. Evil has its origin in the struggles between gods that are changing. There is a disharmonious hierarchy among them. They compete for power over one another and over no deities like human beings. This competition creates disharmony in the world. The individual gods have their own specific spheres of influence in the world. Sometimes conflict arises when a god tries to extend his influence over the sphere of another god and this affects the world processes for better or worse. Ultimately evil will not be defeated by gods. Thus there is no hope of freedom from evil and suffering. Finite god also comes to the same conclusion and there is no hope, because God is good but not powerful enough to tackle the problem.

The problem of evil is not unique to Christianity; this problem is ubiquitous around the world, affecting those specialized theistic systems where god is all-powerful and perfectly good. These systems answer the problem in various ways, and in the opinion of this author, all of them have deficiencies. Christians, too, have long struggled with three propositions, which taken as a hole, appear contrary to our experience in the world:

1. God is omnipotent
2. God is wholly good
3. Evil exists.

Down through the centuries of human many have asked:  

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361 Rabbi Harold Kushner moved from Theism to finite gods in his life and then wrote the bestselling book When Bad Things Happen to Good people because he had to understand the tragedy in his life.
364 Gale, Ref. 1, p. 100.
If God is so good and powerful, then why is there evil in the world

This ‘evil’ can be expressed in different forms, such as natural disasters in which people may greatly suffer, and through man’s sin against other people, that is, murder, rape, burglary, etc. Both of these have dramatic effect on man’s emotional state often causing terror, depression, or some other strong negative emotion. The presences of these ‘evil’ things and the emotional torment that it brings have caused many to enquire, whence these things came.

There is an urgent need in apologetics to present a consistent answer to this important problem before a skeptical world. The skeptic assumes that many reject Christianity because (he believes) our answer is contrary to reason and reality. This past century there have been two notable names that have considered the problem of evil and concluded that Christianity does not provide an adequate answer. Sir Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity for many reasons, one of which was the presence of evil in the world. Observe as his state:

The world, we are told, was created by a God who is both good and omnipotent. Before He created the world He foresaw all the pain and misery that it would contain; He is therefore responsible for all of it.  

It appears that Sir Bertrand Russell found any theistic answer, but particularly Christianity’s, lacking in credibility. A second person who rejected Christianity because of the problem of evil was Albert Einstein:

If this being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an almighty Being? In giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on

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Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him?\textsuperscript{366}

The basic idea of any form of evolution, theistic or not, would suggest that humanity is the culmination of a process involving pain and suffering. Thus, it is argued that this process God apparently ordained and used to create man in His image and likeness. This author will seek to demonstrate that theistic evolution and consistent Christian theology, as it relates to the problem of evil, do not mix.

The issue of suffering is fundamental to those who deal with the problem of evil. The fact that humans suffer physically is a terrible reality. All the example of physical suffering one need would be to watch a loved one die from cancer. Yet there is a suffering that far exceeds physical suffering; it is the emotional suffering that humans endure, often in association with physical affliction. It is because emotional suffering is so prevalent, even among believers, that there is a great rise in the number of psychologists. Humans try to cope with the emotional pain they experience, and so today the church tries to minister to hurting people. While many will grant, as a given, that humans do go through emotional suffering, they would question the validity of attributing emotional suffering to animals. There is a need to examine both the Scriptures and the world around us, to see if animals possess this same trait and when this trait might have been established. This task will be accomplished as four points are developed. First, what did God mean to communicate when He declared that His creation was ‘very good’? Second, when God made both humans and animals they were called ‘living creatures’, but how should we understand this? Third, once the biblical implications of ‘living creatures’ are established, how the interpreter harmonizes God’s Word with God’s world as he explores animal neurophysiology and neurochemistry, comparing these to what is found in humans? Fourth, how does assist the interpreter to present a consistent answer for the problem of evil?

To complain meaningfully that there is unjustified evil or suffering in
the world, one must suppose an ultimate standard or suffering in the world,
one must suppose an ultimate standard of justice beyond this world. If there
were no such standard, justice would become relativistic; there would not be
any basis for us to classify certain things as injustice and others as justice. To
affirm that there is unjustified evil one must smuggle in the concept of an
absolute and posit an absolute standard of justice. The standard has to come
from beyond nature, because otherwise we will be left with a relativistic
understanding of justice and morality. Such a view is not tenable or livable. If
one of us thinks killing is right and another thinks killing is not right and each
one of us is free to do what he or she thinks subjectively to be right, how can
we convince this person that killing is wrong?

Relativism leaves us in utter chaos and confusion; we cannot live
together harmoniously. But the naturalist cannot bring in such a standard,
because in his worldview, there is no reality beyond the nature, matter. There
is no mind that controls the molecules. If there is no mind beyond matter, how
can we bring in the concept of absolute morality to decide that something is
injustice or justice? Thus in the naturalistic worldview there is no ultimate
standard beyond this world and there are no deep moral values at all. The
naturalistic world, which has nothing but matter in motion is indifferent to
moral values, to injustice and justice, and to justified and unjustified suffering.

The simple judgment that there is evil or that the world is not what it
ought to be implies that there is some deep value (based on some non-natural
reality) that is being violated. To say that something is evil, bad, or wrong we
need an absolute standard that is outside of but connected to the world. But
Naturalism has no place for such non-natural values and non-material
realities. If there is evil there has to be an ultimate source of value. The use of
the word evil, if used meaningfully, implies that there is an objective standard
independent of what people think, which defines things as good or evil and
without which good and evil cannot be distinguished. Hence the atheists
cannot even start to discuss the problem of evil and suffering. This ultimate standard is God, the prescriber of the moral laws (impinging on all of us universally) against which we measure different things that we experience and say this is evil or bad, this is good or right, and this is how things ought to be or ought not to be. Thus the atheistic arguments turn out to be self-destructive. This is the built-in boomerang. In his attempt to press the case and disprove God by using the existence of evil in his arguments, the atheist must imply God that he wishes to deny. 367

It is important to say at the outset that when examining the question of suffering and evil we should have a proper degree of humility and realize that we are dealing with a profound mystery for which no one has an exhaustively satisfying answer. The human mind seeking to explain this mystery is like a harmonica interpreting Beethoven.

Further, it must be acknowledge that every religion and worldview must give an explanation for evil and suffering.

It could also be argued that the pantheistic explanation of evil and suffering does not make sense intellectually. Ravi Zacharias tells the humorous story of India’s leading philosopher, Shankar who had just finished lecturing the kind on the deception of the mind and its delusion of material reality when an elephant when on a rampage. Promptly, Shankar climbed up a tree to find safety. When the king asked him why they ran if the elephant was not real, Shankar, not to be outdone, said, “what the kind actually saw was a non-self me climbing up a non-self tree!” Zacharias offers this addendum: “one might add this as a non-real answer.” 368

The Buddhist way for emancipation is closely combined with the way of moral. On this way, firstly, sentient being has to avoid the ignorance to be conscious of non-self by regular introspection. So that he should avoid the attachment of the self; latter, he consciously practices self-discipline of

concentration to control his deed (body, speech and thought). So that he should change himself from wrong (even from evil) to right and good; finally, by regular meditation (Zen) he should automatically avoid karma and reach the ultimate enlightenment and turn himself to be his own nature of no-self. It is the ultimate emancipation where there is no more good or bad, right or wrong, good or evil... and perfection becomes human’s no self-character (the natural character). This way to liberation is at the same time the one to moral goal.369

Doctrine in Buddhism is one of the important impermanence, this term expresses that all the conditioned existence is not permanent or is in a constant state of flux. Everything that appears has to disappear and will not be everlasting. If we taken an example of plant, it starts from the seed it grows to the plant and then develops flowers or foods in it, then it gets old and starts to dry and dies. Everything in this planet or in the whole universe or the place we call world is just for some temporary time. Some last for short and some last for long but everything have to disappear at the end and nothing is permanent. Not only the things or materials, every single thing that exist will collapse one day. Like there is always uneven string of good times and bad times in life. There is not a single thing that we can say is permanent. Even the giant mountains and oceans change. Some lands form and some lands collapse. These cycles will continue because we are living in an impermanent world.

All religions face the challenge of explaining, in view of God's goodness, the existence of evil and suffering in the world. They must develop theories of the origin and the overcoming of evil and suffering. The explanations in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism of evil and suffering and their origin, as well as these world religions' theories of how to overcome evil and suffering, differ from one another, but are also similar in

many respects. The human person is always considered to be the origin of evil, and also to be the focus of aspirations to be able to overcome it. The conviction that evil and suffering are not original and can be overcome is characteristic of and common to the religions. The explanations of the origin of evil are closely related to the explanations of the continuation and propagation of evil in human persons, in nature, and in our technology and culture that have been developed in the religion in Christianity, for example, as the doctrine of original sin. Finally, the world religions are concerned with how to cope with suffering and offer guidance for overcoming evil and suffering. Leading scholars of five world religions, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism, have created with this volume a firsthand source of information, which enables the reader to gain a better understanding of these religions central teaching about the origin and the overcoming of evil and suffering.

The Buddha’s approach to the problem of suffering was quite methodical. He was not interested in finding speculative theories to solve the ubiquitous problem of human suffering. He was well aware of the temporary escapes, which people invent, under self induced illusions, in order to escape from the problem of suffering. He therefore looked for the original or the root cause, the evil of the evils, by finding which one would arrive at a permanent solution.

And he arrived at it right. The Buddha found craving to be the root cause of all suffering. He found craving as the central evil that reduced life into a bundle of painful despair. Craving leads to suffering and suffering continues because craving does not cease. The being is a captive in the hands of the other always. Even a negative desire, such as not wanting something, or wishing to stay away from something leads to suffering only.
5.1.2. Social Action And The Problem Of Suffering

All of us encounter the problem of evil and suffering, which is almost as old as humankind is. Yet, it continues to draw the attention of philosophers, theologians, artists, novelists, and common men and women alike, because it touches all, ravages many, and perplexes thinking people. So everyone thinks and wonders about the existence of evil and suffering in the world, their lives and the lives of their dear ones. Vanauken thinks it is the hardest subject in the world, which are the tears and groans of mankind, the existence of pain and suffering, and the problem the mystery of suffering.\textsuperscript{370}

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Buddhism is a system that is centered on the problem of suffering, because it is based on Buddha’s answer to this problem. When he encountered suffering, he started wondering why people fall sick, grow old, and die. While thinking about the question what is the Cause of all this Suffering? He saw a Sanyasin and thought that he might unravel the mystery of suffering if he became a Sanyasin and became one. Then he sat under a Bodhi tree determined to read the great riddle. After he became enlightened he announced his Four Noble Truths, which constitute the essence of Buddhism:

1. Life is suffering (\textit{dukkha}) we are born in and live in suffering, and we die in suffering. Suffering is ‘having what you wish you hadn’t and not having what you wish you had’.


\textsuperscript{371} Daniel Howard Snyder, Preface in Daniel Howard Snyder, Evidential Argument from Evil, Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1996, p.9.
2. Suffering is caused by desire (taṇhā, greed or craving or selfishness). When there is a gap between desire and satisfaction, there is suffering (the gap itself).

3. The way to end suffering is to end desire. The state where you have ended desire is Nirvana (extinction). We generally try to overcome suffering by increasing satisfaction. But Buddha’s solution is ‘decreasing the desire to zero’.

4. The means to reach the end of ‘ending desire’ is the Noble Eightfold Path of ‘ego-reduction,’ a life-long task of ‘desire-reduction’ to reach Nirvāṇa.

Buddha’s passion to read the riddle of suffering and his programmed to overcome the problem are awe-inspiring. Connecting the problem with the ‘I’ is certainly indisputable. However, when we think critically, we will realize that Buddha’s solution is not adequate and counter-intuitive. In a sense, it is not a solution at all. Nirvāṇa is like spiritual euthanasia, killing the patient (self or ego) to get rid of the disease (selfishness or egotism) or instead of curing the disease and saving the patient.

Buddha’s suggested solution is not achievable, because even if you work very hard and eliminate all the desires, you are still left with one final desire, the desire not to have any other desires. This is inescapable, because if you do not have this desire, you will end up having all other desires. This is the problem with the Buddhist solution; you cannot reach an absolutely desire less state.

Buddhism suggests that we should eliminate the ‘I’ that desires and suffers. But are all the desires of the ‘I’ evil and hence undesirable? At least some of our desires are good. Not having some desires (like the desire to take care of your spouse and children, the desire to do work in the office, the desire to study if you are a student, etc.) and not doing something to fulfill those desires amounts to irresponsible behavior and failure in life. Buddha seems to be unaware of this aspect of desires and of the possibility of unselfish love or will or passion or self.372 If there is a possibility of attaining an unselfish self, then we should aspire that, because that would certainly be a better solution than the


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Buddhist solution. This is what exactly the Christian Faith/Gospel offers, as we will try and demonstrate a little later. Let us now focus briefly on the pantheistic response.

According to Pantheism (Advaitha Vedanta) there are no two realities all reality is one, Brahman. The Sanskrit statement Jagam Midhya, Brahman Satyam means ‘the world is illusion and Brahman is real/true. So the distinction between good and evil, pain and pleasure etc. is not real in the ultimate sense, and evil and suffering are illusory. Some say that we experience or feel evil and suffering to be real because of Maya. Christian Science, a cult started by Mary Baker Eddy and the ancient Greek thinkers like Parmenides and Zeno also taught that evil and suffering are false perceptions or illusions. These systems fall under illusionism.373

It does not explain, but simply explains the problem away. If evil and suffering are illusory, where did the illusion originate? If they are indeed illusory, why do we all experience evil and suffering from the moment of birth and think they are real? In fact, we could say that those who view evil and suffering as illusion are actually participating in an illusion themselves not the illusory experience of evil and suffering, but the illusion that evil and suffering are not real. Those who believe that evil and the world are illusions do not live as if this were the case, because if one were to push them in front of a fast moving bus, they would quickly realize that both the bus and they are real. So our common sense, reason and experience seem to deny this view.374

According to Polytheism of different forms there are two or more finite and personal gods in the world. Evil has its origin in the struggles between gods that are changing. There is a disharmonious hierarchy among them. They compete for power over one another and over no deities like human beings. This competition creates disharmony in the world. The individual gods have their own specific spheres of influence in the world. Sometimes conflict arises when a god tries to extend his influence over the sphere of another god and this affects

the world processes for better or worse. Ultimately evil will not be defeated by
gods. Thus there is no hope of freedom from evil and suffering.\(^\text{375}\)

Atheists simply assume that ‘evil’ exists. They seem to refer to
wickedness (evil strictly so called), suffering and pain and anything else that
appears to be bad. Evil is just a conundrum or a brute fact for the atheists given
their worldview. They think evil cannot be further explained or analyzed and
that our intuitions help us to see what is evil or bad. But they can never come up
with a basis upon which they can define the term evil, because atheism lacks a
philosophical framework. To be able to offer any kind of explanation of the
problem of evil and suffering, we should first be able to define the term evil.
Atheists have no framework to define the term whereas the theists have. So in all
the theological evidential arguments there is a built-in boomerang.\(^\text{376}\)

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objective standard independent of what people think, which defines things as
good or evil and without which good and evil cannot be distinguished. Hence the
atheists cannot even start to discuss the problem of evil and suffering. This
ultimate standard is God, the prescriber of the moral laws (impinging on all of us
universally) against which we measure different things that we experience and
say this is evil or bad, this is good or right, and this is how things ought to be or
ought not to be. Thus the atheistic arguments turn out to be self-destructive. This
is the built-in boomerang, in his attempt to press the case and disprove God by
using the existence of evil in his arguments.

The Buddhist religion has been developed as a religious institution
in various countries for centuries. Buddhism influences major concepts in
welfare philosophy such as equality, philanthropy and its application in
most Asian societies, the origin of Buddhism with the emphasis on
Theravāda Buddhism, the expansion and the teaching of the Buddha (or
the Four Noble Truths consisting of Dukkha or suffering, Samuthaya, the
origin of suffering, Nirodha, the cessation of suffering and Marga, the


paths leading to the cessation of suffering). It also refers to Buddhist text in a few Sutras relevant to welfare philosophy in Buddhism such as Sigalovāda Sūtra.

After much effort, he discovered the Four Noble Truths and Nirvāṇa which can be accessed by anyone, no matter what caste or social standing they are. His teaching aimed at the salvation of individual through an individual’s personal struggle with reality and truth. Teachers could assist in this struggle, but it was up to the individual to achieve the indescribable Nirvāṇa. This key element in Buddhism became worldlier later on.377

There are two different interpretation of his teaching: Hinayāna Buddhism and later on it was called Theravāda Buddhism. Mahāyāna Buddhism stresses salvation to all people and holds the idea that embodies compassion emphasizes individual action and self-improvement.378

The teachings of Buddha, or the Four Noble Truths, are Dukkha or suffering, Samudaya, the origin of suffering, Nirodha, the cessation of suffering and maraga, and the paths leading to the cessation of suffering. The Buddha found that birth is the cause of suffering because of decay and death, and traced the unending cycle of rebirth and death. He contemplated the way in which ignorance gives rise to karmic formation. Under karmic law, a person goes through a chain of causation of birth and death. If the person does not pay attention to his or her action, he or she will be in the cycle of birth and death again and again. The Buddha views the cessation of birth as the cause of the cessation of suffering.379

The other fundamental concept is the Law of karma, as pointed out by Warren380, and Suniti Chatterji381, Karma refers to volitional action of which

378 Elizabeth Lyons and Heather Peters, Buddhism: History and Diversity of a Great Tradition.
380 Ibid., pp. 226-228.
there are two types: good (kusala) and bad (akusala). Good karma produces merit (punna or bun) for which there is favorable of pleasurable retribution while bad karma produces demerit (apunna) for which there is unfavorable or unpleasant retribution.

The Buddhist concept consists of the Four Noble Truths, karma, equality, reciprocity, mutual obligation, and the idea of how people in different position should perform their duties. All of these concepts have influenced social welfare in the Buddhist countries. Jo Anna Macy examines social action from the Buddhist perspective. Macy refers to the idea of welfare of all beings that has existed since the third century B.C.E. in the reign of King Asoka, he built hospitals and public wells and tree-lined roads for people. Historians recognize his efforts in the third century B.C.E. as the first public social service program in recorded history.

An example of the application of Buddhism to social welfare is Savodaya. Savodaya refers to the mutual efforts and cooperation's which everyone can contribute to the well-being in our society. Savodaya originated in Sri Lanka and it created cooperation among the villagers in Sri Lanka. The basic idea of Savodaya is Metta-kindness, Karuna compassion, Muttita loving-kindness, the pleasure you get when being in service to others, and Upekka equanimity, the idea to keep working despite the criticism and setbacks. Savodaya became influential when the Tamils of the North of Sri Lanka wanted to form their own nation. The central government defused the tension by introducing the new District Development Councils. This resulted in increasing political and economic stability. After District development Councils were established, the administrative work was carried out by the persons permanently residing in the outlying districts and contacted with local people. Savodaya demonstrates how

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383 Ibid., p. 173.
384 Ibid., pp. 176-178.
Buddhism influenced local administration in Sri Lanka.\textsuperscript{385}

Scholars trace the origin of Buddhism, the expansion and the teaching of the Buddha and how relates to welfare philosophy and it application. The selected Buddhist Texts such as Sigalovāda Sūtra and Madhura Sūtra, the Fourth Noble Truths (dukkha, Samudaya, nirodha, marga), the concept of equality in Theravāda Buddhism and the case of Savodaya highlight the relationship of Buddhism and welfare philosophy.

As one starts a survey of Buddhist thought, a significant difference is immediately noticeable. Many strands of Western tradition have sought to deny the reality of suffering (especially in treatments of the question of evil which claim that it is, in some way, not real) or to make it an exceptional case (either by denying that all suffer or by holding up some one person who has overcome a disability). Buddhism, however, is frank in its admission that suffering is a universal human experience. While a given kind of suffering has a specific cause, suffering as such is common to all.\textsuperscript{386}

Suffering includes physical or psychological pain (dukkha-dukkhatā), as well as that which is part of general existence (saṅkhāra-dukkhatā), and change (vipariṇāma-dukkhatā).\textsuperscript{387} Any study of the role of disability in Buddhist thought needs to keep in mind both the universality and variety of suffering.

The specific cause of suffering, which is of great concern in relation to disability, is Patīcca-samuppāda, or Dependent Origination, which leads to the chain of cause and effect. It begins with ignorance, and leads to suffering as a result of craving for sensual phenomena. It is ongoing, producing results in

\textsuperscript{386} In an emerging parallel, recent Christian theology of disability claim that living in the fallen body is always a disability; for example, Nancy Eiesland, The Disabled God Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994, p 115.
accordance with what has gone on before. 388 This product is the karmic cycle; whole pattern is stated by Gautama as:

These being, on account of misconduct of body, speech, or thought, or disparaging the Noble Ones, have wrong view and will suffer the karma fate of wrong view. At the breaking-up of the body after death they are reborn in a lower, a bad destination, a state of suffering. 389

It is also wrong nothing that good and bad qualities are scattered indiscriminately. Every person, no matter what their social status, may have good or bad attributes. No one is completely free of suffering, and no one stands absolutely condemned. In a similar vein, another Buddhist text presents a discussion between the Buddhist Nāgasena and the Greek king Menander. The king asks why people are different, such as some weak and some strong. Nāgasena asks why plants are also diverse, to which the king replies that they originate from different seeds. Nāgasena replies that it is the same with people, because of karma. 390 Karma is a source of diversity. It produces different qualities, but as with plants, we understand that they all have varying roles. These sayings undermine the social effects of karma. Its reality cannot be denied, but the differences it produces are causes of diversity, not stratification.

Many of the sutras deal with the nature of true wisdom. Ambaţţha thought he was wise because he was well-educated. But as the various discourses continue, we come to understand that wisdom is far more than learning. We are told that “wisdom is purified by morality, and morality is purified by wisdom.” 391

In our imagined karma eschatology I proposed that good and bad moral action will have consequences for the after-death fate of an individual. The model postulates that if this logic is carried thought, the Samanic notion of karma will emerge. Once one has a definition of existence based on ethical

388 Bowker, op. cit., p. 248
390 Milindapanha, In Debary, op. cit. p. 25.
391 DN 4. 21, p. 131
causality of this sort, there seems on the face of it little freedom to maneuver for individual religious teachers, according to the logic of the karma eschatology illustrated in figure. Expressing it rather differently, one might say that a strict determinism of karma rewards and punishments is an expectable inference from my model. Yet what is packable from an ideal scheme of things is never going to be replicated in empirical reality; even so, empirical reality cannot ignore karma determinism because karma makes no sense without such a notion. Thus the ideal model, as Max Weber recognized, can serve as a means for assessing deviations from it; or more reasonably, the ideal or utopian conditions postulated by the model might help us understand those complicating existential conditions that always occur in empirical reality.

Thus, although karma is deterministic, it is not exclusively so as far as human existence is concerned. In practice one can reconcile the karmic with the humeral by saying it is a person’s karmic condition that permitted the humors to affect his or her health. These qualifications do not affect the claim that karma will eventually have its way, as the following statements from three different texts indicate:

1. Possessed of my own deeds, I am the inheritor of deeds, kin to deeds, one who has deeds as refuge. Whatever deed I shall do, whether good or evil, I shall become the heir of it. This is to be contemplated by woman, and by man; by householder, and by him who has been taken into the order.392

2. Todeyya’s son Subha asks the Buddha: “Master Gotama, what is the cause and condition why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen to be short-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, uninfluential and influential, poor and wealthy, low-born, stupid and wise. What is the cause and condition, Master Gotama, why human beings are seen to be inferior and superior?

The Buddha replies: “Student, beings are owners of their actions, heirs of their actions, they originate from their actions, are bound to their actions, have as their refuge. It is action that distinguishes beings as inferior and superior.”

3. The king said: “why is it, Nāgasena that all men are not alike, but some are short-lived, some sick and some healthy, some ugly and some beautiful, some without influence and some of great power, some poor and some wealthy, some low-born and some high-born, some stupid and some otherwise?” The Elder replied: “Why is it that all vegetables are not alike, but some sour and some salt, and some pungent and some acid, and some astringent and some sweet? “I fancy, sir, great King, are the differences you have mentioned among men to be explained.” For it has been said by the Blessed One: “Beings, O Brahman, have each their karma, are inheritors of karma belong to the tribe of karma, have each their own karma as their protecting overlord. It is karma that divides them into low and high and the like divisions.”

As in the preceding two forms of Early Buddhism, the whole conditioning of the stream is the result of the interplay between the action and its fruit. Both, cause and effect are momentary evens, and their connection may be compared to the arms of a balance, when one goes down the other goes up. The beginning of a deed is constituted by a particular volition, and the end is its retribution according to its merit. But the operating of this retribution is not proceeding as with the Theravadas or the Sarvāstivādins. For the Sarvāstivādins a motion issues in a physical and psychical act, which both have a manifest and unmanifest moment? The manifest bodily and action were called ‘signs’. But at the same time an invisible but material string of events was created, made of the great elements, which remains in existence and ripens. It constitutes a state of being retributable called ‘Avijnapti.’ The same was the case on the mental field. When an act is completed it creates in the series of which it is a part the appropriation of it. This transitory phenomenon is ever reproduced in the series

393 Cūlakammavibhānga Sūtra (The shorter exposition of action), in Nānamoli and Bodhi, Middle length Discourse, 1053; see also McDermott, Development, p 9.
394 Kahn, “Religion and Natural Philosophy in Empedocles’ Doctrine of the Soul,” in Mourelatos, The Pr-Socratics, p 429.
until it has ripened and the time has come for its retribution. The ideal behind this all is that a deed directly creates some force or seed, which follows its own development, and yields its fruit autonomously when the time has matured.

The interdependent relationship of all creatures requires one to exercise responsibility to relieve the suffering of any and all. Refusal to become engaged is a form of selfishness, a saw the sufferings of avoiding this responsibility. The earlier related story of how young Gautama ventured from his place, and saw the suffering of the world moved him to action. So today should suffering move us to action? One writer says that believing in Enlightenment without action is like keeping medicine in a bottle: it accomplishes nothing, until it is taken out of the bottle and placed into the body.

It would seem, that hilt the central point of the Buddha’s message is enlightenment, reaching, reaching that state is entwined with ethical practice. Furthermore, concern for others expressed in one’s praxis is not a consequence of Enlightenment, but a part of the path. This would also mean that such practices are for all followers, not only the accomplished. The goal of the way is not itself social reordering, but such recording will occur as the logical and inevitable result of right actions that are done on the path to Enlightenment. Personal renewal is primary in the Buddha’s teachings, but that renewal has direct consequences for one’s attitudes and actions. The principle of karma guarantees that there will be distinctions among people. While these might not be eliminated, the effect would be limited. As an example, an employer is instructed to take care of its employees when they are ill and to pay a living wage. The employer and employee would have their status as a result of the karmic cycle, but one is not above the other then it comes to providing human needs.

395 E Lammotte, L’Histories du Buddhism Indian, pp. 662, 672.
397 Sulak Sivaraks, Buddhism in a World of Change: Politics must be related to Religionin Eppsteiner, op. cit., pp 18-19.
400 DN 31-.32.p. 468.
This is positive for people with disabilities, as well as all who are oppressed. One contemporary Buddhist, Ken Jones, claims that the Buddha’s teachings were a force against social injustice, especially the oppression of women and discrimination of the caste system. Because social conditions have changed since then, one must study the implications of the Buddha’s teachings.\textsuperscript{401} I noted that disability issues have been largely ignored by most religious systems. This is also the case with modern Buddhist ethicists: although, as we have seen, there are many implications for disabled people, there has been no direct mention of such issues. Particularly disappointing is when Jones concludes by nothing that social practice arises out of the desire to end suffering. He then gives us a list of oppressed and suffering groups: ethnic minorities, homosexuals, women, poor, political dissidents, and religious minorities.\textsuperscript{402} There is, however, a long tradition of healing in Buddhism, which is documented by Raoul Birnbaum in The Healing Buddha. This book is uneven, but a critical reading of its historical material yields much information. Buddhist monks apparently became interested in medical arts out of the compassion for those they met in remote areas.\textsuperscript{403} The focus of this activity was not miraculous intervention, which is keeping with Gautama’s teachings, but aiding natural processes. The intent was to heal the body so that one could have a vehicle in which to reach Enlightenment.\textsuperscript{404} The most significant part of the book is its presentation of the Chinese tradition of Bhaisajya-guru, the healing Buddha. Because of his vows, anyone who hears his mane can be healed. The list of ailments includes most disabilities, as well as some interesting additions:

Bodies are inferior, whose sense organs are impaired, who are ugly, stupid, deaf, blind, mute, bent, and lame, hunchbacked, leprous, convulsive, insane, or who have all sorts of diseases and sufferings. Such beings when they hear my name shall obtain proper appearances and practical intelligence. All

\textsuperscript{402} Jones, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 71. 
\textsuperscript{404} Ibid., pp. 24-25, 142.
their senses will become perfect and they shall have neither sickness nor suffering.

In addition, the Healing Buddha will hear the cries of women who are weary of their status, and ensure that they are reborn as men.\textsuperscript{405} This tradition, despite Birnbaum’s attempts to trace it back to Gautama,\textsuperscript{406} indicates a major change in attitude. Medical practice is a form of compassion that relieves suffering in natural ways, but if miraculous healing whether of one’s inferior gender or disability is desirable, the attitudes implied in a disabled person’s reading of the \textit{Dīgha Nikāya and Dhammapada} have been reversed.

One such concept within the Buddhist framework that has been seen as inimical to the development of social critique is the notion of karma. Abe remarks that "karma means act or deed" and is primarily to be understood as "mental activity oriented by volition."\textsuperscript{407} The basic Buddhist idea is that each such act has further consequences for the individual based on the motives, disposition and character of the person who committed that act as well as the circumstances in which it was performed. The cumulative consequences are such that the karma effect of one's own actions determines one's future. Thus, following Padmasiri De Silva we can think of karma as a type of "moral causation" in which a person's future fate is determined on the basis of their past moral actions.\textsuperscript{408} In even simpler terms, DT. Suzuki states that "the principle of karma is 'whatever a man sows that he also reaps' and this governs the whole life of the Buddhist."\textsuperscript{409} We have then a core Buddhist notion that is essentially a moral notion, concerning the ethical status of one’s actions and the consequences that such actions have upon one’s life.

However, despite the fact that the traditional Buddhist notion of karma is essentially a moral concept concerning the effects of one's ethical behavior, its applicability to social ethics is mitigated by several factors. First, by thinking of

\textsuperscript{405} Ibid., Summary: 61-62, Sūtra: 152-156, repeated on 192-193; quote from 153.
\textsuperscript{406} Ibid., pp 27-34.
\textsuperscript{407} Masao Abe, \textit{Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata, in The Emptying God}, p 38.
karma as a type of causation in which an individual's present state is determined by their past moral actions, there is an obvious tendency to think of the present condition of persons, including their present social condition, as being the necessary result of their own previous actions. One introductory Zen Buddhist text thus states that "all states and conditions in this life are the direct result of previous actions and each action in the present determines the fate of the future.\textsuperscript{410}

The basic criticism is thus that the very notion of karma undermines the need for social critique since it entails that an individual's present situation, including their situation within society, is the inextricable result of their own past actions. Likewise, it can be argued that by taking karma as a type of moral causality Buddhists obviate the need to develop real social critique because they have a fail-safe ontological mechanism already build into their system that guarantees that good actions will be rewarded and bad ones punished. Winston King reflects this kind of criticism in remarking that:

Karma is justice incarnate. . . The mills of karma may grind slowly but they grind with absolute moral fineness. . . Hence in the Buddhist world there is no pressing need for human enforcement of the standards of right and wrong, or the imposition of "just" punishments upon the wicked.\textsuperscript{411}

If karma is the basic Buddhist moral concept, then we might ask; what is the Buddhist solution or response to the kind of moral issues embodied in their notion of \textit{karma}? The answer to this question is crucial, for the "supreme good or value in an ethical tradition . . . determines the nature of the total ethical structure in the final analysis.\textsuperscript{412}

Thus, in the Western monotheistic tradition it is ultimately the will of God that grounds the ethical behavior of the participants. In comparison, we can follow King in affirming that as to this ultimate good "there can be no doubt in Buddhism: its name is \textit{Nirvāṇa}.\textsuperscript{413} Abe himself has made following observation

\textsuperscript{410} Nyogen Senzaki and Ruth Mc Candless, \textit{Buddhism and Zen}, San Francisco: North Poida
\textsuperscript{411} Winston King, \textit{Self World Theory and Buddhist Ethics}, p. 23.
\textsuperscript{412} Ibid., p 16.
\textsuperscript{413} Ibid., 16
on the ultimate end of Buddhism.

The fundamental aim of Buddhism is to attain emancipation from all bondage arising from the quality of life and death. Another word for this is *Saṃsāra*, which is also linked to the dualities of right and wrong, good and evil, etc. Emancipation from *Saṃsāra* by transcending the duality of birth and death is called *Nirvāṇa*, the goal of Buddhist life.\(^{414}\)

According to Buddhism everything is part of a larger process of birth and decay, through which things come into being and then pass away. Likewise all distinctions, such as those between pleasure and pain or good and evil, are also always relative to a particular set of circumstances within this larger process. Thus in becoming attached to things, whether it is material things or emotional states like pleasure or even to the self, we end up substantializing them and taking their reality as absolute. But within the Buddhist framework such attachments will always lead to suffering in the end because ultimately all of these things are transitory and their absolute being illusory. Thus, Buddhism takes it that we must overcome these cravings and attachments that can never be satisfied, and in the *Mahāyāna* tradition *Nirvāṇa* is precisely this existential awakening to agelessness, from attachment to the dualistic view that distinguishes pleasure as something to be sought after and suffering as something to be avoided.\(^{415}\)

Further, once we begin with the notion the interdependence of all things, we can see that there is a collective aspect to karma. Because our lives and actions are also always interconnected with the lives and actions of others in dynamic interrelations it is impossible to disassociate our own actions and their effects from those of others. Karma is thus an intrinsically social concept, since it implies that we must recognize the manner in which all persons affect the lives of others due to the interconnectedness of all reality. The doctrine of

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415 Masao Abe, Suffering in the Light to Our Time, Our Time in the Light of Suffering, in *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*, pp 2-3.
karma would, on this reading, lead naturally to the development of a positive social philosophy since it highlights the manner in which all lives and actions are interconnected. Overcoming our ignorance of the true nature of reality would involve becoming clear about the specific ways in which the personal, political, social, and economical are related in a dynamic fashion. Nor could one take a deterministic view about the situation of individuals within society since the collective aspect of karma entails that we are all responsible for the situation of others due to this ultimate, underlying interdependence.

There are two ways in which we can see how interpreting Nirvāṇ and Šūnyatā the basis for Buddhist life and not its end leads to a more socially engaged form of Buddhism. First, we saw that interpreting the Nirvāṇ experience as the goal of the individual Buddhist's practice led away from Buddhist involvement in the Samsāric world of social reality. However, once nirvana is taken as the basis for Buddhist action and not its goal, we get a much different picture of the social implications of Nirvāṇ and Šūnyatā. The important thing to see here is that the existential experience of nirvana should not be taken as the end-point of Buddhist life, which after all would merely result in a substantial zing of nirvana itself, but is the awakening that allows the Buddhist to truly begin to act creatively in the world without becoming entangled in the duality of pleasure and suffering. The Buddhist point here would then be that as long as one is still caught up in self-attachments and the substantial zing of things one can never act truly constructively in the social sphere, for "this absolutization entails a serious problem, because in practice it always is accompanied by an emotional attachment to the event and the people involved." Only by completely freeing ourselves from such attachments can we offer social critique and work for social reform in a manner devoid of the kind of self-interest that is ultimately destructive of our attempts to alleviate social ills.

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416 Masao Abe. *Suffering in the Light of our Time*, Our time in the Light of Suffering, p. 3.
Similarly, when we take *Nirvāṇa* and *Śūnyatā* as the ground and not the end of Buddhist life, we come to see that the attainment of nirvana and the realization of *Śūnyatā* cannot represent an abandonment of the world of *Saṃsāra*, but instead entails a new form of involvement within the world of *Saṃsāra*. The world of *Saṃsāra* is not overcome, rather as Abe puts it, "everything without exception is realized as it is in its sickness . . . this does not, however, indicate that in *Śūnyatā* the distinctiveness of everything is eliminated."\(^{418}\) *Nirvāṇa* does not lead to a rejection of the everyday social world, but to a new way of viewing that world that allows one to act within it in transfigured ways. In terms of our theme of the possibility of a Buddhist social ethic this means that in experiencing nirvana we do not reject the everyday social world in which we live. Rather, in realizing its insubstantiality we come to see that any particular social configuration is merely a contingent state of affairs and by no means necessary.

However, even if following Abe we take *Nirvāṇa* and *Śūnyatā* as the ground and not the goal of Buddhist life and on that basis come to see that this allows for the possibility of a way of acting creatively in the world without self-interest and attachment, we still need to provide some criteria on which such activity can be carried out. Before we noted that in giving up all substantial distinctions, critics charged that Buddhists had no grounds on which to judge one state of affairs or type of action more valuable than any other. What we need to see is how Buddhists might provide social critique and work for social reform without depending upon the usual types of ethical criteria. This is perhaps the most crucial issue in the development of any Buddhist social ethic, and Abe provides what I think a suggestive and feasible response.

What criteria can the Buddhist provide for developing a positive social ethic? Abe notes that for the Buddhist *Śūnyatā* provides:

The ultimate criterion of value judgment, this judgment is to be made in terms of whether or not a thing or action in question does make . . . one's self and other awakened. If a thing or action accords with the vow and act realized in the

\(^{418}\) Ibid., p. 29.
dynamism of Śūnyatā it is regarded as valuable, whereas if it does not, as "ant valuable".\textsuperscript{419}

As one starts a survey of Buddhist thought, a significant difference is immediately noticeable. Many strands of Western tradition have sought to deny the reality of suffering (especially in treatments of the question of evil which claim that it is, in some way, not real) or to make it an exceptional case (either by denying that all suffer or by holding up some one person who has overcome a disability). Buddhism, however, is frank in its admission that suffering is a universal human experience. While a given kind of suffering has a specific cause, suffering as such is common to all.\textsuperscript{420} Suffering includes physical or psychological pain (dukkha-dukkhatā), as well as that which is part of general existence (sankhāra-dukkhatā), and change (vipariñāma-dukkhatā).\textsuperscript{421} Any study of the role of disability in Buddhist thought needs to keep in mind both the universality and variety of sufferings.

The specific cause of suffering, which is of great concern in relation to disability, is \textit{Paṭicca-Samuppāda}, or Dependent Origination, which leads to the chain of cause and effect. It begins with ignorance, and leads to suffering as a result of craving for sensual phenomena. It is ongoing, producing results in accordance with what has gone on before.\textsuperscript{422} This product is the karmic cycle, whose pattern is stated by Gautama as:

These beings, on account of misconduct of body, speech, or thought, or disparaging the Noble Ones, have wrong view and will suffer the Kammic fate of wrong view. At the breaking-up of the body after death they are reborn

\textsuperscript{419} Ibid., p. 58.

\textsuperscript{420} In an emerging parallel, recent Christian theologies of disability claim that living in the fallen body is always a disability; for example, Nancy Eiesland, \textit{The Disabled God}, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994, p. 115.


\textsuperscript{422} Bowker, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 248.

While such a view, in which a distressed or disadvantaged state of any kind is the just retribution for previous wrong-doing, would seem to justify widespread inequity, it is tempered by openness and compassion for suffering, as we recall, is universal. Because suffering is universal, there is no reason to deny its existence, and all are in need of relief. This openness is expressed in the ideals of the earliest strains of Buddhism, where everyone was believed to have the potential, and the need, for salvation.\footnote{424 Uma Chakravarti, \textit{The Social Dimensions of Early Buddhism}, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 1-31.} We may add to this that the teaching of the universality of suffering could reduce pressure to conform to some real or imagined ideal condition. This would result in more openness about themselves from people with disabling conditions.

Early Buddhists also seem to have understood that compassion required action in favor of the disadvantaged. Compassion may be seen most notably in the acts of the legendary king Aśoka, who established institutions for disabled persons in the third century B.C.E. These institutions are known to have existed until at least the fifth century C.E. (An unknown factor is whether these institutions were either warehouses or isolation units, but the idea that all should strive for Enlightenment would make it likely that there was some emphasis on development.) This practice continued, although there were changes. In the twelfth century, disabled persons were provided free food. However, by this time there were restrictions, such as social exclusions and sanctions against receiving inheritance. These changes were not limited to people with physical disabilities: at this time, being female was also regard as a limiting condition.\footnote{425 Disability in an Eastern Religious Context: Historical Perspectives, \textit{Disability and Society}, Pub. 1995, pp. 54-55.}

These changes have continued to widen their influence: in modern Japan, an emphasis on cause-and-effect (and diminution of the idea of...
universal suffering) has brought widespread forms of discrimination against people with disabilities, even to the point that some are disowned by their families. Thus we see an historical tendency to move from openness and compassion to restrictions of various kinds. As we shall see, modern Buddhist ethicists have sought to recover the meaning of that original openness and compassion for today’s society.

This work tells us that young Gautama’s life was a privileged one, and he could well have ignored the problems of suffering of others. His birth was accompanied by auspicious omens. As a result, he was shielded from all view of human suffering. The intention of this shielding was to insure that he would become an earthly ruler before retiring in search of salvation, instead of turning to the religious life first. One day, desiring to experience nature, he left the palace. All persons with illness or disabilities were cleared from his route. But the gods stepped in, and placed an old man in the path. A second excursion, with the same attempt at shielding, brought the interposition of one struck by disease. A similar third excursion brought a meeting with death, and a fourth, labor. These experiences wrought an initial response of revulsion, but after a time of meditation and then a meeting with a monk, Gautama resolved to seek Enlightenment. That Enlightenment came in the knowledge of how to break the chain of causation, and brought a response of compassion to all things.

One of these writers suggests that to appreciate the need for social action, a better understanding of attachment is needed. This understanding is from the effect of attachment, which is to create separate objects which are held. Such a held object is called a “near-enemy.” When compassion collides with attachment, one holds to a near-enemy of self-worth or self-sufficiency, which results in indifference. Therefore, indifference to suffering is an

427 Similar tendency is noted in relation to gender roles in Alan Sponger, Attitudes toward Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism, in Cabazon, op. cit., pp. 8-28.
428 BuddhaCarita, in Debary, op. cit., pp. 55-72.
expression of attachment to the world. Active compassion, manifested in relief of suffering, is compassion without attachment.\textsuperscript{429} There is also a fine line between compassion and attachment in one’s motive. Good deeds, in the Mahāyāna tradition, are to be done without expectation of return. However, the person who does them will receive a reward in accordance with the effects of karma.\textsuperscript{430}

The importance of not becoming too narrowly focused points to another justification for involvement in social issues: Enlightenment cannot be complete until all have reached it. The interdependent relationship of all creatures requires one to exercise responsibility to relieve the suffering of any and all. Refusal to become engaged is a form of selfishness, a way of avoiding this responsibility.\textsuperscript{431} The earlier-related story of how young Gautama ventured from his palace, and saw the sufferings of the world moved him to action. So today should suffering move us to action? One writer says that believing in Enlightenment without action is like keeping medicine in a bottle: it accomplishes nothing, until it is taken out of the bottle and placed into the body.\textsuperscript{432} It would seem, then that while the central point of the Buddha’s message is Enlightenment, reaching that state is entwined with ethical practice. Furthermore, concern for others expressed in one’s praxis is not a consequence of Enlightenment, but a part of the path. This would also mean that such practices are for all followers, not only the accomplished.\textsuperscript{433} The goal of the way is not itself social reordering, but such reordering will occur as the logical and inevitable result of right actions that are done on the path to Enlightenment. Personal renewal is primary in the Buddha’s teachings, but that renewal has direct consequences for one’s attitudes and actions. The

\textsuperscript{431} Kenneth Kraft, \textit{Engaged Buddhism: An Introduction}, in Eppsteiner, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. XII-XIV.
\textsuperscript{432} Sulak Sivaraksa, \textit{Buddhism in a World of Change: Politics Must be Related to Religion}, in Eppsteiner, \textit{op. cit.} pp. 9-10.
principle of karma guarantees that there will be distinctions among people. While these might not be eliminated, the effect would be limited.\textsuperscript{434} As an example, an employer is instructed to take care of his employees when they are ill and to pay a living wage.\textsuperscript{435}

From a Buddhist viewpoint, more is required, for the knowledge gained from such a study is not simply a collection of interesting ideas. Such an approach constitutes attachment. New understandings must move one along the path to Enlightenment. They also ought to be skillfully used to aid others in their path. This prevents one from focusing too narrowly on the matter at hand, making it a cause that is more important than the path to enlightenment. This interrelationship is a reminder that the concerns raised reach beyond only one issue. Disability issues are part of a larger whole. Disability is about all suffering.

\subsection*{5.1.3 Moral Development in The Society}

Buddhism is based on teachings of Gautama Buddha who lived 2500 years ago in ancient India. One of his key teachings is that suffering is caused by the way we perceive things and ourselves. Things appear to us as if they have the ability to provide us lasting happiness and comfort, so we become attached to them and we develop desire for them. But this craving is a result of ignorance about reality. The reality of things is that they are transient, impermanent, and therefore cannot produce the lasting happiness that we expect from them.

Buddhism does not reject matter and wealth as inherently evil, but considers them useful. First, material wealth prevents us from poverty and, second, it allows us to practice generosity; which causes ‘merit’ and a more happy society. Thus, “Right Livelihood” is one of the eight main requirements of the Buddha’s path, which has been defined as follows:

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\textsuperscript{434} Chakravarti, op. cit., p. 180.
\textsuperscript{435} \textit{Dīghanikāya}, 31.32, p. 468
\end{flushleft}
“One should abstain from making one’s living through a profession that brings harm to others, such as trading in arms and lethal weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals, cheating etc., and one should live by a profession which is honorable, blameless and innocent of harm to others.” 436

The moral development phase forms the core of the lay Buddhist’s religious practice. It directs control over one’s actions. Appropriate Speech teaches a person to refrain from gossip, from harming others words, from lying, and from speaking too quickly. Appropriate Livelihood draws a person’s attention to the means of earning a living: Does your work harm others; does it involve stealing, dishonesty, or exploitation? Appropriate action directs attention toward behavior, and here we are given a list of ten percepts, the ten casks: 1) Ahiṃṣā or not king living beings and by extension not interfering with them; 2) taking nothing that is not given; 3) keep matrimonial sanctity; 4) do not lie; 5) do not slander; 6) do not insult; 7) do not chatter; 8) do not greedy; 9) bear no malice; 10) harbor no skepticism.

Followers of the Mahāyāna in their more argumentative days criticized the Theravāda traditions for falling prey to externalism and formalism in that they did not practice these precepts on a deeper spiritual level, being aware of their own subjective motives for morality. 437 For the Mahāyāna philosophers, practitioners of Buddhism do not merely follow these precepts for their own attainment of enlightenment; rather they exercise them according to the cultural and environment context in order to assist in the Enlightenment of others. This is the bodhisattva’s project. Bodhisattva’s projects, Bodhisattvas are people who postpone their own Enlightenment or full entry into Nirvāṇa in order to assist all sentient beings in attaining Nirvāṇa. The Bodhisattva uses Upaya. This Upaya requires a command of the situation. In a sense Mahāyāna Buddhist morality is conceptualistic. D.T. Suzuki notes this deeper spiritual basis in the following description of Buddhist Ahiṃṣā: 438

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The Bodhisattva does not wish to be bound within the narrow circle of moral restriction. Aiming at a universal emancipation of mankind, he even ventures to violate the ten casks if necessary. The first cask, for instance, forbids the killing of any living being; but the Bodhisattva does not hesitate to go to war, in case the cause he espouses is right and beneficent to humanity at large.

This is to say that form rules cannot be blindly followed. The context and result must be considered. Will the actions help other attain enlightenment? A system of six perfections? The first moral perfection is donation, charity or gift giving. The second is Sila, following the moral precepts. The third is patience. The fourth is vigor in practice. The fifth is concentration or meditation, and sixth is wisdom. Like the Eightfold Path, the six perfections develop a person’s Way of good and moral life.

Buddhism is a religion well known for its teachings about love and compassion. The ultimate goal of a person treading the path of Buddhism is the attainment of perfect inner peace. Whatever the worth of a desired end may be, the Theravāda canonical scriptures considered to be the primary source of the Buddhist system of moral values of the Sinhala Buddhist Community of Sri Lanka, contains absolutely no instance in which violence is advocated as a means of achieving it. This is in clear contrast to Hindu scriptures like the Bhagavad-Gita that contain a concept of a righteous war. Buddhism considers war and conflict as evil and teaches how an individual could transcend the universal tendency to engage in conflicts, debates, disputes and wars. However, in the early periods of Sri Lanka history as well as in the ongoing ethnic conflict, those who profess to be Buddhists do not seem to have seen any contradiction in advocating war for the purpose of safeguarding Buddhism.

Concerning this apparent contradiction the opinion has been expressed that Sinhala Buddhist nationalism has transformed the character of Buddhism from being religions as moral practice to religion as a cultural and political
possession.\textsuperscript{439} It is argued that the original stereological function of Buddhism emphasizing the cultivation of moral virtues has been replaced by different social and political function conceived terms of parochial interest’s concerning racial and ethnic identity. Those who see the historical development of Buddhism in Sri Lanka in these terms believe that this transformation has been a great contributory factor to the present ethnic conflict. Tambiah observes that even in the case of Buddhist monk’s important tenets of the religion regarding detachment of mental impurities are subordinated and made less relevant to Sinhala religion nationalist and social reform goals.\textsuperscript{440}

The doctrine of the Buddha is such that one who lives in accordance with it succeeds in living in the world without coming into conflict with anyone.\textsuperscript{441} The Buddhist path of moral development is described as the noble and incomparable path of peace. The requirements of the Buddhist path are considered to be fulfilled when one’s mind attains perfect peace. \textit{Nirvāṇa}, the ultimate attainment can be described as the attainment of inner peace.

According to Buddhism, the foremost truth about the human condition is the existence of \textit{Dukkha}. The term \textit{Dukkha} connotes all disappointments, frustrations, discontents, unhappiness as well as the unsatisfactory state of affairs characteristic of the world of mental and physical nature. The persistence of \textit{Dukkha} in all its different forms is dependent on the activity of unwholesome mental processes referred to in Buddhism as influxes, latent evil and psychological defilements. All inner psychological conflicts as well as conflicts produced in society are traded in Buddhism to these psychological causes. All wars, according to the Buddhist view, originate in the minds of people of the large majority of living beings is determined by the mental processes referred to in Buddhism as unskilled or unwholesome. Conflict in society is therefore, attention to this as follows:

\textsuperscript{439} Tambiah, Buddhism Betrayed University of Chicago Press, 1992, p.59  
\textsuperscript{440} Ibid, p. 52.  
Devas, men, asuras, nagas, gandhabbas and whatever other different kinds of communalities are there, it occurs to them that they ought to live without mutual hatred, violence, enmity and malice. Yet for all they live with mutual hatred, violence and malice.\textsuperscript{442}

The intensity of the miseries produced when conflicts arise in human society is described in the \textit{Mahadukkhakkhandha Sūtra} as follows:

Having taken swords and shield, having girded on bow and quiver, both sides mass for battle and arrows are hurled and knives are hurled and swords are flashing. Those who wound with arrows and wound with knives and decapitate with their swords, these suffer dying then and pains like unto dying.\textsuperscript{443}

In several contexts including the above the Buddha explains the psychological origins of such conflict.\textsuperscript{444}

Much like today, the emergency of the idea of civil society in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the result of a crisis in social order and a breakdown of existing paradigms of the idea of order.\textsuperscript{445}

Civil society has become an urgent topic, unfortunately. We do not usually notice things until they are broken, and the increasing attention of public leaders and scholars\textsuperscript{446} is a sign that ours is in trouble. Everyone seems to agree that a strong civil society is essential for health democracy, which would unremarkable except for the fact that there is no agreement on what civil society actually is. The unsurprising consequence is that there is also little agreement about what must be done to reinvigorate it.

\textsuperscript{442} Didhanikāya PTP vol. II, pp. 276.
\textsuperscript{444} Kalahavivada Madhupindika and Mahanidana Suttas.
Civil society has thus been understood as another result of the secularization which began in the sixteenth century and culminated in the revolution of the eighteenth century, by enthroning our cherished beliefs in the rights of man and the integrity of individual persons. Elsewhere I have questioned this supposed secularization by arguing that the rapid development of nation states and corporate capitalism may also be understood in more religious terms, as a change of direction which did not so much supplant our spiritual concerns as pursuers them in a this worldly fashion.

The term lack here refers to what, from a Buddhist perspective, can be considered the main problem of our lives: Anattā, ‘no-self.’ The Buddhist teaching of Anattā implies that our most troublesome repression is not not sexual wishes, nor even death fears, but awareness of oneself the intuition that “I am not real” which we become conscious of as a sense of lack infecting our empty core. It is the deep feeling we all have that something is wrong with me,” that something is missing. The death repression emphasized by existential psychology transforms the oedipal complex into what Norman Brown calls an oedipal project.

Perhaps the most important point to be emphasized right now about this Buddhist approach is that such an understanding of lack straddles our usual distinction between sacred and secular. Their difference is reduced to where we look to resolve our sense of lack; but if that lack is a constant, and if religion is defined as the way we try to resolve it, we can never escape a religious interpretation of the world. Our basic problem is spiritual inasmuch as the sense-of-self’s lack of being compels it to seek being one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, whether in religious ways or in "secular" ones. What today we understand as secular projects is just as symptomatic of this spiritual need. Although our lack is a constant, how we

have understood it and tried to overcome it have varied greatly throughout history.\textsuperscript{448}

The importance of human action and will may be derived from the last sermon of the Buddha to his disciples whom he preached to take only themselves as their guide and light. Buddha says,

“‘You should be carried away in favors of a doctrine... neither by hearsay, nor by tradition, nor by scriptural authority nor by mere logic or argumentation, nor even by teacher's personal charm, and such other things. You should accept a doctrine only after employing your own reason and discretion, after having known it to your utter satisfaction and conviction.’”\textsuperscript{449}

Such views of Buddha led the Early Buddhists to adopt a consistently dynamic and analytic approach to personal identity. But Buddhists were not interested in understanding man's nature for its own sake. Their highest goal was \textit{Nirvāṇa}, which they characterized as the cessation of all sufferings. Being a thorough realist and empiricist, Buddha not only accepted the reality of man, he also did not rest content with the realization of the plight of man.

However, Buddhists view of man is an implication of their doctrine of 'self'. They used the word 'self' to denote two separate entities, one is metaphysical and another is psychological. The latter sense of self is identified with that of 'man'. Hence, the denial of self, in the former sense, does not mean the denial of man. The denial is restricted to a unitary, homogeneous, non-empirical substance called \textit{Attā}, 'self'. Either such a substance itself has been held illusory or the identification of empirical self

\textsuperscript{448} For more on lack, see my lack and Transcendence: \textit{The problem of Death and Life in Psychotherapy}, Existentialism and Buddhism Humanities Press, 1996.

with it has been questioned. This is signified by the Anattā (no-self) doctrine. But denial of unitary self is not denial of soul.\textsuperscript{450}

Additionally, in the Pāli Texts\textsuperscript{451} man is viewed as a union of body and consciousness (Rūpa). While consciousness denotes the mental aspect of man, body denotes the physical. Hence, personhood is ascribed as a composition of body, feelings, cognition, activities and consciousness. These five factors are supposed to be the base of the cosmos as well. Hence, man is microcosm of the macrocosm. Birth is explained as the unification of the said factors, and death as their breaking up which leads consciousness to move on to start a new person. The stream flows on a continual flux that still retains a distinct identity. Every link of the series influences the following links and the links that come later. All links belonging to the same chain automatically accept the responsibility for the deeds by the preceding link. The series or link of lives reaches a final end only when one succeeds in overpowering one's ignorance (inability to see the truth) and attachments which requires arduous mental and physical training and a special kind of intellectual ability. Realizing the peculiarity of human existence, Buddhists assert that man recognizes the distinction between what he is and what he is destined to be. Hence, what man is destined to be is not unconcerned with what man is. In other words, the goal is Enlightenment which is concerned with the spiritual aspect of life; it cannot be separated from the other aspects of life, such as social, political, psychological, cultural etc. Since all these are concerned with the ethical life of man, it is now appropriate to discuss Buddhist’s ethical viewpoint.

Emphasizing on human will and action, Buddhists assert that man is the ultimate architect of his own destiny. Besides, they put equal stress on wisdom and on the development of character towards moral excellence for the benefit of both individual and society. Buddha ascribes man with profound freedom.


Buddhists purport that towards the attainment of a higher state of existence this freedom should be exercised by anybody. Buddhism, however, is humanism in the sense that it rejoices in the possibility of a true freedom as something inherent in human nature. For Buddhism, the ultimate freedom is to achieve full release from the root causes of all suffering: greed, hatred and delusion, which clearly are also the root causes of all social evils.

It will not be an exaggeration to state that the Buddhist ethics fully rests on a rational basis rather than on theological basis as is found in early Vedic ethics. Hence, Buddhists enjoined a short list of responsibilities to individuals through the five precepts which were taught in the Buddhist world from the time of Buddha. The precepts are as follows:

I undertake the precept (1) to abstain from the taking of life; (2) not to take that which is not given; (3) to abstain from misconduct in sensual actions; (4) to abstain from false speech; (5) to abstain from liquor that causes Intoxication and indolence.\(^{452}\)

These precepts were applicable to each individual and, thereupon, to all sections of society. To weaken, and finally get rid of them in oneself, and, in society, is the basis of Buddhist ethics. And here Buddhist social action plays a predominant role.

In Buddhist social philosophy we find that the society was supposed to involve three divisions. These divisions were the Sangha i.e. the spiritual community, the society of the common people or householders and the state which was supposed to take care of the former. The three were conceived as interlinked and interdependent, as the well being of one depended upon the well-being of the other two.

As elsewhere has been discussed is elsewhere valuable\textsuperscript{453}. Every rational society tries to foster and encourage the highest possible development of all the capacities of personality in all of its members. The end is justice or right ordering of a society and is called social justice. It is a balance between individual rights and social control. It ensures the fulfillment of the legitimate expectations of the individual under the existing laws. It is also an assurance to provide him benefits and protection in case of any violation or encroachment of one’s rights. In other words, social justice is an integrative concept. Therefore, in order to ascertain social justice in Buddhist's perspective, it appears plausible to discuss it with equal stress on all the three aspects of it viz. legal justice, political justice and economic justice, as the Tripitakas do contain social, political and economic teachings.

Buddhism is the Middle Path between luxury and need; hence all people must have sufficient for health and well being, and in order to support efforts to fulfill higher needs. Inequality fuels resentment, anger and, ultimately, violence. In order to prevent violence there must be rough equity.

As the attitude of Buddhists was inclined towards ethical quests and psychological perfections, its philosophy did not provide any exclusive program for the economic betterment of the mass. If any person was economically thwarted then he could join the Samgha and, thus, escape the stigma and privations of the economic world. But there was no relief provided by Buddhism to him if he continued to remain in active social life.

At the time of Buddha economy was not industrial. The trade and commerce was in agricultural products and not in industrial commodities. There was no large scale manufacturing system prevalent at that time in spite of the mention of ‘sheathes.’ The prevailing economy of the time was rural.\textsuperscript{454}

\textsuperscript{453} Abha Singh, Varnadharma Though the Prism of Social Justice, Indian Philosophycal Quartely, Vol. XXVIII, No 2, April 2001, p. 169.
Lord Buddha opposed the Brahmanical social system, their dogmatism and superstition and priesthood. He taught people to exercise reason and not to be led like dumb-cattle. He brought about many-sided advance in the culture and civilization of different countries by his social order and his humanistic movement. Buddha did not limit himself to curing Indian society; his aim was to cure mankind as he sought to deliver man from his bondage. Important Buddhist contribution to Indian and world culture as well, is the idea of social and religious equality.

Buddha carried out a vigorous campaign against social discrimination. Throughout Buddhist literature, we find him leading debates and discussions with the Brahmanas, always maintaining equal claims of all classes to purity. He declared that the purity of a man does not depend upon his birth, but upon his actions. He destroyed the fundamental basis of the Brahman society. Buddha knew that if all men are equal in suffering, they ought also to be equal in deliverance. He endeavors to teach them to free themselves from disease, old age and death; and, as all beings are exposed to these necessary evils, they all have a right to the teaching, which by enlightening them is to free them. In presence of same type of suffering, he perceives no social distinction; the slave is for him as great as a king’s son. He is stuck, not so much by the abuses and the evils of the society in which he lives, as by those which are inseparable from humanity itself, and it is to the suppression of these that he devotes himself, the others appearing to him very insignificant in comparison.

Although Buddha was a spiritual and moral teacher, and reformer, social, economic political and legal implications do follow from his teachings. He construed every human individual as being divested with certain duties, and the excellence and salvation of individuals depend upon ideal performance of their given duties. In other words, individual rights and dignities are strongly intertwined with corresponding duties. Rather duty is more important than right, and the individual is responsible for the society as well as for himself. Therefore,

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one has to play one’s role well as one's internal change, personal perfection and spiritual excellence are primary. The foundation of Buddhist path is the understanding of one’s moral responsibilities towards other. Buddhists never entertained the possibility of limiting man to his physical frame and, thereupon, to one life. Buddha held that each and every man is a potential Buddha; therefore every one must enjoy equal rights and freedom. Only in a free society one can pursue one’s goal. As the goal is same for everyone, as far as the quest for the highest goal is concerned, all are equal. Thus, the concept of social justice is quite in tune of Buddhist Philosophy. Apparently taking a cue to it, the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty are the most important ideals and guidelines in the Constitution of most of the countries across the globe and people are striving to attain this ideal.

Buddhism has elements of all of these, but adds the further, and central, doctrine of causality which ties the others together and gives us moral efficacy. As for violence is cause, and cause more violence, depending on conditions. This understanding of not just the morality of non-violence but also of the world in general puts the question of morality on par with that of any other phenomena. The causality of violence is not something that can be supervened or suspended, is not limited to the victim, but also touches the perpetrator; thus the recognition of sympathy is not merely an altruistic act. The analysis of violence in Buddhism is of a piece with the rest of the Dhamma.

The reality that the Buddha realized is to be found in the Four Noble Truths. The first of these is that the world is suffering. Not surprisingly, then, the analysis of violence belongs to the second Noble Truth: there is a cause of suffering. The normative import of this analysis is found in the assertion that there is a way out of suffering, the third Noble Truth. Even without going into the fourth Noble Truth, the Eight- fold Path, we can see that if violence is truly a source of suffering, and exclusively so, then it must be renounced in the Eight-

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fold Path. This is to deny that violence can in some cases be the instrument of the cessation of violence, that even as the means of a noble intent it produces instead more suffering. And indeed this seems to be the Buddhist position. Even the successful use of violence does not escape from the production of more suffering:

The enmity that the concept generates through his own enmity toward his enemy, or even vice versa, results in the further production of enmity with the victory, in the discussion of war in the Samyutta Nikāya,\textsuperscript{457}

The basic of teachings of Buddhism are found in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Let us begin with the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is that there is pain and suffering in the world. Gautama realized that pain and suffering are omnipresent in all of nature and human life. To exist means we will all encounter suffering. Birth is pain and so is death. Sickness and old age are painful. Throughout life, all living things encounter suffering.

The Second Noble truth relates to the cause of suffering. Gautama believed the root cause of suffering is desire. It is the craving for wealth, happiness, and other forms of selfish enjoyment which cause suffering. These craving can never be satisfied for they are rooted in ignorance.

The Third Noble truth is the end of all suffering. Suffering will cease when a person can rid himself of all desires.

The fourth Noble Truths is the extinguishing of all desire by following the eightfold path. “The Eightfold Path is a system of therapy designed to develop habits which all release people from the restrictions cause by ignorance and craving.”\textsuperscript{458}

\textsuperscript{457} Pāli Text Society, Vol. 7, part 1, p. 109.
Evil is whatever frustrates or opposes goodness, and goodness is what is, or ought to be, desired by conscious rational agents. Suffering is thus one sort of evil, since no conscious rational agent would desire to suffer, just for its own sake. Other sorts of evil lie in the frustration of the aims and goals of rational agents (one might also include the aims of God, and some would include the aims and goals of any beings whatsoever, insofar as they could reasonably be said to have aims or goals), or in factors that restrict the normal activities and dispositions of rational or sentient agents.

The faith that most obviously takes the fact of evil as one of its basic starting points is Buddhism, whose first noble truth is that "all is suffering" (dukkha). This is not merely the view that there is much frustration and suffering in life. It is the view that material existence essentially involves suffering, so that no enduring happiness can be found in such existence. Not only is there the obvious suffering to be experienced in birth, disease, and death. There is the fact that pleasure is short-lived, misfortune is always possible, and the transitory nature of time itself means that the past is lost forever, the present cannot be held fast, and the future is always tinged with anxiety. The one who sees deeply into the nature of things will therefore see that only in the acceptance of total transience can any stability be found. All things are empty of enduring substantial existence, and there is not even an enduring substantial soul or self that remains the same throughout all change. All things are in perpetual flow, interdependent and perpetually perishing. Dukkha is the first noble truth of the Buddhist way, which sees suffering and evil as the basic human problem, which may, with some difficulty, be overcome.

Buddhists are not usually concerned with answering the question of how suffering arises. It is just there, a fact of existence. However, the cause of suffering is said to be the sort of desire that consists in attachment to finite things wishing to possess them, or bemoaning the lack of them. So it might be said that suffering is intrinsic to a world in which attachment and desire are possible. In addition, specific sufferings are caused by karma, by the accumulated
attachments of many past existences. So it might be held that souls "fall" into this world of the senses, of transience and time, because of desire, and they have to work out the consequences of their desires over many lives until they achieve liberation from the wheel of rebirth *Saṃsāra* and, all desire exhausted, never again experience rebirth.

Insofar as rebirth is essential to Buddhist belief, there needs to be a spiritual or mental part of human nature that is capable of rebirth. There needs to be a form of moral causality in nature, which ensures that actions have appropriate consequences in future lives. And there needs to be some form of correlation between practices of morality and meditation and the achievement of those higher mental states of mindfulness, compassion, and bliss, in which the practitioner approaches liberation, or *Nirvāṇa*.

*Nirvāṇa* is something which out rightly rejects the ego. *Nirvāṇa* is indefinite and space less. It is very difficult to enter *Nirvāṇa* because it is formless (*Aristaka*). To enter *Nirvāṇa*, we must also be as formless as *Nirvāṇa*. The entrance to *Nirvāṇa* is very narrow. It is as thin as hair feather, so thin that we cannot go through it, if we still carry our possessions with us, be it our body, our concept of the "I" and the "ego". The bigger our ego becomes, the further we will be away from *Nirvāṇa*. So it is ruled that ego will lead to *Saṃsāra*; non-ego to *Nirvāṇa*.459

The somewhat novel concept of Buddhist Economic can be seen as an attempt to relate economics to ethical issues taking into account the tradition Buddhist teachings that clearly seek to establish the economic aspect of social life on a firm ethical foundation. Schumacher observed that Buddhism contains an economic philosophy which is traditionally expressed in its teachings in terms of its concept of "Right Livelihood".460

It is true that universal agreement on ethical issues is difficult to obtain. This is due to the reason that there could be fundamental disagreement regarding the major premises which represent ethical principles adopted by different traditions. Philosophers have been perennially engaged in the search for reasonable normative principles for making valid ethical judgments. Despite the fact that no conclusive agreement has been reached in this search, philosophical discussions have at least made it possible to rule out some positions as not plausible and other as more acceptable. In every sphere of human living, Buddhist teachings seem to give priority to the ethical perspective of living, and in numerous contexts in which ethical values have been in traduced, certain basic principles have been stared which seem to accord ethical the common ethical sentiments of rational human beings. What human beings do, as well as the psychological roots of what they have the tendency to do have been characterized in the Buddhist teachings as being either Kusala (ethically wholesome) or Akusala (ethically unwholesome).\textsuperscript{461} According to the Buddhist teachings this distinction is to be determined by the consideration of common human experience of the long term consequences of actions upon individual agents as well as the rest of the society.\textsuperscript{462} Buddhism also appeals to what is commonly understood as the Golden Rule of morality which involves the regulation of our behavior in such a way that we do not do unto others what we do not want others to do ourselves.\textsuperscript{463} In the \textit{Kālāma Sūtra} it is pointed out that when human behavior is determined by excessive greed, hatred of confusion of mind, it does not conduce to well being but ill and harm.\textsuperscript{464} It is in light of this theoretical foundation of Buddhist ethics, which arguably appears to agree with the moral sentiments of at least a substantial section of humanity that we could enter into a meaningful discussion of the Buddhist perspective on the role of ethical in socio economic development.

\textsuperscript{462} Ibid, p. 415.
\textsuperscript{463} Samyuttanikāya Vol. V, Pali Text Society, p. 354.
\textsuperscript{464} Aṭṭhakathānātān Nikāya Vol. I, Pali Text Society, p. 189.
The concept of economic man that developed in the context of modern economics distinguishing him from the moral man created an unbridgeable gulf between economics and human values. Adam Smith, the father of economics denied that economic activities of humans can ever be regulated or modified by any moral values. The regulation and ordering of these activities were thought to be taken care of by the market economy working thought self interested impulses.\textsuperscript{465}

From the Buddhist perspective, a community entirely dedicated to the goal of ethical perfection, that has renounced all material possessions, and seeking the support of the lay community for their material sustenance is not to be seen as an economic burden on society. Such a community is recognized as a source of moral inspiration for the entire society, for they are considered to be the most suitable persons to provide moral direction to society. Real social development needs such moral direction. In the Buddhist canon there is mention of a Brahmin complaining to his daughter who was faithfully supporting the Buddhist community of monks engaged in the practice of the higher life, saying that she was supporting people who were economically unproductive, living lethargic lives and renouncing all commitment to industry and work.\textsuperscript{466} The daughter’s response aptly presents the Buddhist perspective on social and moral values. She points out the recluses she supported were industrious and energetic people performing the noblest of work involving the liberation of their minds from greed and hatred. It is in terms of this perspective that in Buddhist community laypersons considers the higher and more venerated community of the Sangha as an incomparable field of merit. The material support provided by the layperson to the Sangha is considered in the Buddhist tradition as a great act merit, such provision of the attainment of the higher spiritual ends of life. In return such facilitation is expected to be reciprocated by the members of the Sangha with appropriate moral guidance for the layperson to lead a satisfactory

\textsuperscript{465} Hewavitharana, \textit{The Role of morality in Economic}, P No 1, Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, pp. 1-2.

\textsuperscript{466} Rohini Therīgāthā
and well balanced lay life. This relationship was considered from the time of the Buddha as one to be carefully encouraged and fostered for the greater well being of the society. The *Sigālovāda Sūtra* which presents a Buddhist model for socio-economic development grounded on ethics considers the spiritual community as playing an important role in the scheme of social relationships conducive to social well-being. This traditional relationship between the lay and spiritual community appears to be rapidly disappearing as a consequence of the modern social trends characterized by the single minded pursuit of material wealth.

Buddhist teachings neither disapprove of material riches nor consider poverty as a value. Buddhism associates poverty either suffering, and hence poverty in society ought to be overcome. However human concern with acquisition of material wealth alone is considered as an attitude which expresses blindness with respect to one aspect of human living, if people neither engage in the pursuit of material wealth nor in the pursuit of moral development that are comparable to people who are totally blind. If they engage only in the pursuit of material wealth ignoring moral development they are comparable to persons lacking vision in one eye. The same Buddhist standpoint is expressed when human happiness or well being is conceived both in economic and moral terms. It is pointed out that compared with the happiness or well being a person achieves as a consequence of moral development achievements in the purely economic pursuit of life are far inferior to the former in value.

Such a frenzy of greed ultimately results in frustration and disappointment when they find that they do not have the financial means to achieve what they crave for. The external conditions produced by the so called developed economic order do not permit people to practice what Buddhism values as a balanced life style which involves the extremes of self denial as well as sense indulgence. Schumacher observed many decades ago that:

An attitude to life which seeks fulfillment in the single-minded pursuit of wealth in short, materialism does not fit into this world, because it contains within itself no limiting principle, while the environment in which it is placed is strictly limited. Already, the environment is trying to tell us that certain stresses are becoming excessive.\textsuperscript{471}

Morality in Buddhism is essentially practical in that it is only a means leading to the final goal of ultimate happiness. On the Buddhist path to Emancipation, each individual is considered responsible for his own fortunes and misfortunes. Each individual is expected to work his own deliverance by his understanding and effort. Buddhist salvation is the result of one's own moral development and can neither be imposed nor granted to one by some external agent. The Buddha's mission was to enlighten men as to the nature of existence and to advise them how best to act for their own happiness and for the benefit of others. Consequently, Buddhist ethics are not founded on any commandments which men are compelled to follow. The Buddha advised men on the conditions which were most wholesome and conducive to long term benefit for self and others. Rather than addressing sinners with such words as 'shameful', 'wicked', 'wretched', 'unworthy', and 'blasphemous' He would merely say, 'You are unwise in acting in such a way since this will bring sorrow upon yourselves and others.'

The theory of Buddhist ethics finds its practical expression in the various precepts. These precepts or disciplines are nothing but general guides to show the direction in which the Buddhist ought to turn to on his way to final salvation. Although many of these precepts are expressed in a negative form, we must not think that Buddhist morality consists of abstaining from evil without the complement of doing well.

\textsuperscript{471} Small is Beautiful, p. 17.
The morality found in all the precepts can be summarized in three simple principles?To avoid evil to do well to purify the mind this is the advice given by all the Buddha.\textsuperscript{472}

In Buddhism, the distinction between what is good and what is bad is very simple: all actions that have their roots in greed, hatred, and delusion that spring from selfishness foster the harmful delusion of selfhood. These actions are demeritrious or unskillful or bad. They are called Akusala Kamma. All those actions which are rooted in the virtues of generosity, love and wisdom, are meritorious Kusala Kamma. The criteria of good and bad apply whether the actions are of thought word or deed.

\textquote{Kamma is volition,' says the Buddha. Action themselves are considered as neither good nor bad but 'only the intention and thought makes them so.' Yet Buddhist ethics does not maintain that a person may commit what are conventionally regarded as 'sins' provided that he does so with the best of intentions. Had this been its position, Buddhism would have confined itself to questions of psychology and left the uninteresting task of drawing up lists of ethical rules and framing codes of conducts to less emancipated teachings. The connection between thoughts and deeds, between mental and material action is an extension of thought. It is not possible to commit murder with a good heart because taking of life is simply the outward expression of a state of mind dominated by hate or greed. Deeds are condensations of thoughts just as rain is a condensation of vapor. Deeds proclaim from the rooftops of action only what has already been committed in the silent and secret chambers of the heart.

A person who commits an immoral act thereby declares that he is not free from unwholesome states of mind. Also, a person who has a purified and radiant mind, who has a mind empty of all defiled thoughts and feelings, is incapable of committing immoral actions.

\textsuperscript{472} Dhammapada, p. 183.
Buddhist ethics also recognizes the objectivity of moral value. In other words, the karma consequences of actions occur in accordance with natural karma law, regardless of the attitude of the individual or regardless of social attitudes toward the act. For example, drunkenness has karma consequences; it is evil since it promotes one's own unhappiness as well as the unhappiness of others. The karma effects of drunkenness exist despite what the drunkard or his society may think about the habit of drinking. The prevailing opinions and attitudes do not in the least detract from the fact that drunkenness is objectively evil. The consequences psychological, social, and karma make actions moral or immoral, regardless of the mental attitudes of those judging the act. Thus while ethical relativism is recognized, it is not considered as undermining the objectivity of values.

In the Buddha's teaching, it is said that the spiritual development of man is more important than the development of material welfare. History has taught us that we cannot expect to gain both worldly happiness and everlasting Happiness at the same time.

The lives of most people are generally regulated by spiritual values and moral principles which only religion can effectively provide. The governmental interference in the lives of people is made comparatively unnecessary if men and women can be made to realize the value of devotion and can practice the ideals of truth, justice and service.

Virtue is necessary to attain salvation, but virtue alone is not enough. Virtue must be combined with wisdom. Virtue and wisdom are like the pair of wings of a bird. Wisdom can also be compared to the eyes of a man; virtue, to his feet. Virtue can be likened to a vehicle that brings man up to the gate of salvation. But wisdom is the actually key that opens the gate. Virtue is a part of the technique of skillful and noble living. Without any ethical discipline, there cannot be a purification of the defilements of sentient existence.
Buddhism is not mere mumbo-jumbo, a myth told to entertain the human mind or to satisfy the human emotion, but a liberal and noble method for those who sincerely want to understand and experience the reality of life.