CHAPTER – I

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Indian Philosophy is one of the most ancient philosophical traditions. Some would say it is the most ancient one, for we have only very rudimentary records of the philosophical legacy of ancient Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations which rather preceded Indian and Chinese civilizational paradigms. Chinese philosophy is as ancient as the Indian philosophy. However, Chinese philosophical interpretations were more anchored on ethical, political and social issue rather than on theological, cosmological, eschatological and teleological concerns. Indian philosophical tradition has been, historically speaking, an ongoing enterprise and it continues to be a live and vibrant approach to such abiding philosophical issues as God, Universe and Man.

Indian philosophy is multi-dimensional and multi-versional. It is both religious and secular, theistic and atheistic, materialistic and idealistic, pro-Vedic and anti-Vedic or Astik and Nastik. We cannot tabulate or summarize a set of problems as representing the entire philosophical body corpus of India. However, by way of illustration we can say that such issues as God, Universe, Man, Matter, Mind, Consciousness, Spirit, Reality, Values, Knowledge, Beauty, Karma, Casualty, Space, Time etc. have always been at the heart of Indian Philosophical discourse. The earliest philosophical speculations have been registered in Vedic Texts such as Rig Veda, Sama Veda Yajur Veda, and Atharva Veda. These earliest scriptures of India have determined or oriented the subsequent intellectual and cultural evolution of Indian peninsula. The Hindus of India have been believing these scriptures to be the Ultimate repository of Truth. They are believed to be revelations vouchsafed to ancient seers called rishis. They embody the perennial beliefs and values of life and most importantly they lead to liberation of man from the cycle of birth and rebirth; the sumnum bonum according to Indian ethical or teleological standpoint.
Vedas polarized Indian philosophical systems into what is known as Astik and Nastik or orthodox and heterodox schools of thought. The six orthodox systems believing in the authority of Vedas are: (1) Mimamsa, (2) Vedanta (3) Samkhya, (4) Yoga (5) Nyaya and (6) Vaishesika. Even out of these six schools, only Mimamsa and Vedanta have faithfully and authentically developed the ritualistic and speculative aspects of the Vedas respectively. The Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya and Vaishesika schools of thought have based themselves on independent grounds. However, they have not radically and expressly rejected the authority of the Vedas. Therefore, they are included among the six orthodox schools of Indian philosophy. Three of the major Indian philosophical schools of thought who have categorically rejected the authority of the Vedas are Charvaka, Jainism and Buddhism. These heterodox schools of Indian philosophy have out rightly grounded themselves on non-Vedic philosophical orientations and predilections.

However, barring Charvaka, all schools of Indian philosophy, orthodox and heterodox, have grounded themselves on what may be called ‘Law of Karma’, popularly encapsulated in the statement, “As you sow, so shall you reap”. This law signifies what may be called a ‘Moral Order’. The seers of the Rig-Veda call this inviolable moral order ‘Rta’. In general, the Law of Karma (action) means that all actions good or bad produce their consequences. There is no loss of the effect of work done and there is no happening of events to a person except as the result of his own work. The word ‘Karma’ also means the force generated in an action and having the potency of bearing fruit.

Another common view held by almost all Indian schools of thought is that ignorance of reality is the cause of our bondage and suffering. Conversely, if we want to achieve liberation, we have to appropriate the knowledge of reality vis-à-vis God, Man and Universe. The process of birth and rebirth is a bondage and liberation signifies an end of this process. Liberation or Moksa, which according to some Indian schools of philosophy can be achieved here and now, is a state of perfection and real happiness. However, this state of
perfection or liberation (*Nirvana*) cannot be achieved merely by knowledge of truth or Reality.

The seeker has to engage himself in continuous meditation on the accepted truths and also lead a practical life of self-control. Yoga philosophy has laid greatest emphasis on both mediation and self-control. However, Buddhism, Jainism, Samkhya, Vedanta and even Nyaya and Vaishesika schools of thought have also laid deep emphasis on practice of mediation and ethics of self-control. All these schools of philosophy were extremely dedicated to espousal and attainment of *Nirvana* (liberation), deemed by all to be the highest end of life.

The orthodox schools of Indian philosophy have had their advocates and followers across Indian peninsula throughout millennia and they continue to flourish till date. Amongst non-orthodox or heterodox schools of Indian philosophy, Charvaka, Jainism and Buddhism have had greatest impact on the intellectual and cultural evolution of India. The Charvaka never became technically speaking, an organized or institutionized school of philosophy. Charvaka constituted a skeptical-critical trend across the historical development of Indian philosophy. They did not offer any serious or well-reasoned system of their own. They were more interested in deconstructing or demolishing the established philosophical and theological orthodoxies. Jainas, on the other hand, offered a very serious yet radical heterodox school of metaphysics and ethics. Their basic ontological position is known as ‘Anekantavada’ a hyper-pluralistic philosophy that deems all philosophical interpretations to be representing some aspects or dimensions of Reality. However, Jainas have advanced a highly radical renuciatory ethic of self-control with a view to appropriating liberation or release from *Samsara*. In comparison to Jainism, which has largely remained confined to some northern and western parts of India, Buddhism has had a pan-Indian predominance for centuries and its subsequent decline in India has been indirectly proportional to its rising fortunes on the international plane. Before the post-colonial expansion
of Christianity, Buddhism remained the largest religion throughout the globe for two thousand years. Most importantly, Gautama Buddha posed a radical challenge to the establishmentarian Hindu philosophy-theology-mythology complex.

Firstly, he did not accept the authority of the Vedas. He also did not accept the philosophical or theological beliefs and social, political and ethical values of classical Hinduism. However, he could not help accepting the universal law of *Karma* as well as liberation or Moksa or what he called ‘Nirvana’ as the highest end of life. On his own, Buddha was shaken to his foundations by the sight of old age, disease and death and the universal and perennial presence of suffering across the spectrum of life. It became the supremely consuming passion of Buddha to go in for some strategy or programme or plan of action leading to cessation of suffering. Following the traditional mystical path of India, Buddha set out on a long renunciatory mission of ‘meditation’ and ‘self-control.’ For more than six years, he remained, almost with superhuman determination, engrossed in deep meditation and longdrawn-out exercises in self-control. At last, Buddha appropriated his Moment of Enlightenment under a tree near Gaya in Modern Bihar. His Enlightenment was crystallized into what are known as Four Noble Truths. These Four Noble Truths are encapsulated as hereunder:

1. Life in the world is full of suffering
2. There is a cause of this suffering.
3. It is possible to stop this suffering.
4. There is a path, which leads to the cessation of suffering.

Let us give a brief account of these Four Noble Truths:

**Life is full of suffering:**

Young Siddhartha (Gauthama Buddha) was extremely upset with the sights of suffering such as diseases, old age and death. On attaining Enlightenment Buddha was convinced that the very essential conditions of life
were fraught with misery. Life is full of sorrow, grief, unrequited wishes, frustrations, depressions, despair, hopelessness and misery. Even the so-called pleasures are really fraught with pain. What we love and do not get is suffering; what we get and do not love is suffering. Human life is perennially characterized by poverty, disease, old age, greed, anger, hatred, selfishness, meanness, bickering, conflict and exploitation.

**It is Possible to Stop Suffering:**

Buddha gives the glad tiding that suffering can be removed. Everything arises on some causes and conditions and if these conditions are removed, misery would cease. If we remove the cause, the effect will cease to exist. Everything is conditional and relative and everything is necessarily momentary. Therefore, everything has to perish. Birth implies death and production implies destruction. Suffering being conditional must cease to exist if the conditions leading to its sustenance and continuance are removed. The good news of the elimination of suffering is the Third Noble truth of Buddha.

**There is a Path Leading to Cessation of Suffering**

The Fourth Noble Truth lays down that there is a path- which Buddha followed and others can similarly follow-to reach a state free from suffering. The path recommended by Buddha consists of Eight Steps or Rules and is therefore, called Eight Fold Noble Path. The Noble Path consists in following these Eight Steps:

1. Right Views (2) Right Resolve (3) Right Speech (4) Right conduct (5) Right Livelihood (6) Right Effort (7) Right Mindfulness and (8) Right concentration. Buddha advises us all to authentically appropriate all these eight steps with a view to achieving final liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.

**There is a Cause of Suffering**

The Second Noble Truth, an explication, analysis and evaluation of which Truth is the **objective and subject-matter of the present thesis**,
addresses itself to the exploration and investigation of the cause of suffering. This Noble Truth brings out the causal diagnosis of the phenomenon or fact of suffering. The sum and substance of this Noble Truth is that there is a cause of suffering for any thing and everything has a cause. The existence of every event depends upon its causes and conditions. Anything that is out in this world is caught into the vortex of conditions, relations and limitations. Accordingly, the fact of suffering must also be causally linked to some conditions or depending upon certain conditions. “This being there, that arises”. Buddha explains the origin of suffering in the light of this special conception of natural causation known as pratityasamutpada. According to this doctrine of causation, nothing in this world is unconditional for everything depends on some conditions. Our suffering or misery must also be linked to certain conditions. Accordingly, Buddha presents his famous doctrine of Dependent Origination or Causation comprising of twelve links. Life’s suffering is there because there is birth; birth is there for there is the will to become, the will to be come is there because there is our mental clinging to grasping the objects of the world; the clinging is again due to our thirst or craving for enjoyments of sights, sounds etc.; the thirst is there because of the previous sense-experiences tinged with some pleasant feelings; the sense-experiences are there because of the contact of sense-organs with the objects; the contact is there because of the six organs of cognition (five senses and mind); the six organs of cognition are there because there is mind-body organism; the organism is there because of the consciousness; the consciousness is there because of the effect of the impressions of our past-existence; these impressions which make for rebirth are due to ignorance of Truth. Therefore, ignorance is the root-cause of impressions or tendencies that cause rebirth.

These twelve links in the chain of causation or the Causal Wheel of Dependent Origination are cumulatively known as Pratitayasamutpada. These links may again be tabulated as hereunder:
(1) Ignorance (avidya).
(2) Impressions or karmic forces (samskara).
(3) Initial consciousness of the embryo (vijnana).
(4) Psycho-physical organism (nama-rupa).
(5) Six sense-organs including mind (sadayatana).
(6) Sense-object-contact (sparsha).
(7) Sense-experience (vedana).
(8) Thirst for sense-enjoyment (trsna).
(9) Clinging to this enjoyment (upadana).
(10) Will to be born (bhava).
(11) Birth or rebirth (jati).
(12) Old age and death (jara-marana).

The doctrine of Dependent origination or Pratitayasamutpada is central to Buddhist philosophy especially with regard to its teleology, axiology and sortoriology. By recourse to this second Noble Truth of Dependent origination or Causation, Buddha exhorts to us that liberation from the cycle of rebirth is possible if we can understand the conditional character of suffering and try to break the causal nexus of twelve links. An explication of this doctrine of Causality is the main aim and objective of the present thesis.

The present thesis is based on the conviction that the doctrine of Causality is central to Buddhism. The theory of Karma, Impermanence or momentariness and later development of Buddhist philosophy of Hinayana and Mahayana all are the outcome of this theory of causation. The doctrine of Causation is pivotal. It is the starting point of the whole development of Buddhist thought as well. It is the route towards its goal i.e., Nirvana. In fact, the Buddhist philosophy centers around the theory of Causation. Such theories as ‘Law of Karma’, Rebirth, theory of Impermanence or momentariness etc.
are directly related to Theory of Causation. The Buddhist scholars, almost all have, emphasized that Four Noble Truths constitute the core of Buddhism. However, my feeling is that Buddhist Theory of Causation constitutes the central doctrine of Buddhist world-view and value system.

In the preparation of this thesis, I have benefited from various sources. The main sources are outlined as hereunder:

A. PRIMARY SOURCE

I. Pali Literature:

II. Sanskrit Literature:


B. SECONDARY SOURCES:


All the above sources constitute a significant contribution to the explication and clarification of various aspects of Buddhist Philosophy. These sources have elaborated upon important problems of Buddhist philosophy. I have enlightened myself from them while outlining my thesis on Buddhist Causality. I cannot give a detailed account of all these works. I just take up one of these books for the purpose of illustration. The book is titled Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism, by David J. Kalupahana, (The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, USA, 1975).

The book has given a very good outline of pre-Buddhist theories of causation. Firstly, it brings out the theories of Causation advanced by schools of Indian Philosophy who follow the Vedic tradition. Secondly, the pre-Buddhist theories of Causation advanced by Non-Vedic Schools have also been dealt with. Subsequently the book brings out the Buddhist Conception of Dharma. It also brings out the Casual Principle of Buddhism, and outlines the causal explanation of entire existence. It also embodies the historical developments of Buddhism summarizing the causal co-relations of Buddhist Philosophy. Subsequently it gives a conclusion of the study followed by notes and a general index. This is an excellent piece of research and the author has substantiated his findings by appropriate methodology as well as elaborate reference work.

My thesis too is an analysis and explication of Buddhist Doctrine of Causation. However, I have given an elaborate account of Western theories of Causality as well as Indian theories of Causality advanced both by orthodox and Heterodox schools. Thus, my thesis may be said to be a fine contribution to
comparative philosophy and it is important that Eastern and Western Philosophical theories be compared with a view to enhancing inter-cultural understanding.

The task, however, is a gigantic one. I cannot claim that I have carried out a detailed research project on Buddhist Doctrine of Causality in comparison to Western theories of causality. I hope that I can carry on the implications and ramifications of this comparative research project in my upcoming academic pursuits. I also hope that other students of Buddhist Philosophy will undertake this comparative study in a more detailed manner. My only humble claim is that I have initiated a comparative study on the Philosophy of Causality which problem is so central and significant from onto-cosmological, teleological, axiological and epistemological points of view.