CHAPTER II

BUDDHIST TEACHINGS ON THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN LIFE

With the scope of research works the investigator will analytically study the Evolution of Human Life in Theravāda Buddhism. So researcher will briefly mention the background of Theravāda Buddhism as follows:

2.1 The Background of Theravāda Buddhism.

Buddhism is a very old religion, more than 2500 years old, founded by the Lord Buddha who lived in India in the Sixth century B.C. India is known as the birth place of Buddhism, because it was there that Buddhism arose and from there it spread to other parts of the world. India is the land of many great religions.

It would be useful to search the cause of the beginning of Buddhism. Why could it take place in a society which abounded in various scholars of thought? It may be useful to investigate the Buddhist method which appears in the Pāli scripture of Theravāda Buddhism.

Before and during the time of the Buddha, the philosophical atmosphere of India was clouded with many metaphysical theories. Generally, it belongs to two extreme attitudes such as Externalism and Annihilationist. While the Upanisadic tradition denied change and impermanence as being illusory and upheld the reality of a permanent “Self”, the materialist tradition considered matter to be ultimately real, there is no after life.10

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It may be noted that the people at that time were highly bent on philosophy and abstract thinking. Thus there were several schools of thought, which may be summed up, with regard to birth and death, happiness and suffering, into two categories via, the doctrine of survival and that of annihilation. Of the former, there were some who maintained that the hereafter was permanent; whereas others held that it was still subject to change. Of the latter, some believed that the annihilation was total, but others thought that it was only partial. Regarding happiness and suffering, there were the thoughts that both were accidental or produced by change, and that both were produced by causes. The latter group were again sub-divided, there being those who confirmed that the causes were outward such as the blessings of angels, and others who relied upon the inward such as i.e. one’s own Karma or accumulation of good and evil. Thus, each individual and group clung to the idea preferred and tried to teach others to follow their particular systems.\(^{11}\)

The foundation of beliefs in Indian Society before the time of the Buddha, however, can be summed up into 3 main points as follow:

1. Belief in the Varnāsrama (caste-system).
2. Belief in the power and destiny of deity.
3. Having several opinions towards the world and life according to their teacher’s doctrine.\(^{12}\)

**In the first point:** According to Buddhism, the Buddha made no distinction of Varna or caste, clan or class when communicating the Dhamma. Men and women from different worlds of life-the poor and the needy, the lowliest and the lost, the literate and the illiterate, aristocrats,

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Brahmins and outcasts, princes and paupers, saints and criminals—listened to him who showed the path to peace and enlightenment.\textsuperscript{13}

The Buddha freely admitted into the order people from all castes and classes, when he know that they were fit to live the holy life, and some of them later distinguished themselves in the order. The Buddha was the only contemporary teacher who endeavored to blend in mutual tolerance and concord those who hitherto had been rent asunder by differences of caste and class. As the Buddha said:

\textit{“Not by birth one becomes depraved or noble, through one’ deeds one becomes good or bad”}\textsuperscript{14}

\textbf{In the second point:} The Buddha taught his disciples that deliverance is what one must secure of oneself. None can grant deliverance to another who merely begs for it. Each individual should make the appropriate effort and break the shackles that have kept him in bondage, winning freedom from the bonds of existence by perseverance, self-exertion and insight, and not through prayers and petitions to a supreme being.

Buddhism emphasizes the Law of \textit{Karma}. It teaches man to rely on himself for his rise or fall. He must, therefore, know the good. He must realize that he can raise himself by his moral deeds alone. As the Buddha declared that,

\textit{“Purity or impurity is of doer, nobody can make other one to purity”}\textsuperscript{15}

(Pāli):

\begin{quote}
\textit{Imasmin Sati idam hoti. Imassa uppādā idam uppajjati.}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{13} Piyadassi Thera, 1984, \textit{Buddhism – A Living Message}, p. 15.

\textsuperscript{14} Kh.S. p. 352.

\textsuperscript{15} M.III. p. 63.
Imasmim asati idam na hoti; Imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhati.”

The doctrine of Paticcasamuppāda is the process of birth and death in Buddhism. It deals with the cause of rebirth and suffering with a view to helping men to get rid of the ills of life. Having denied the Creator-God or the theory of first-cause, the Buddha proclaimed the theory of the Dependent Origination (Paticcasamuppāda) as the way to explain the origin and the process of men. Dependent Origination is nothing more than the law of nature. It shows that every element, though appearing only for a single moment, is a despondently originating element because its arising depends upon all which has gone before it.

The Buddha’s Teachings (Tipitaka)

The Buddha revealed the Dhamma to all human beings for forty-five years in the Pāli language. The Buddha’s teachings have been collected and classified into three main groups, which thereof came to be known as the “Tipitaka”. The term “piṭaka” literally means “basket” with a metaphorical meaning of “collection”. Just as a basket or other similar type of container collects articles, so also each piṭaka collects each major item of the Buddha’s teachings, namely,

I). Vinaya Piṭaka – disciplinary code

II). Sutta Piṭaka – conventional teaching or the discourse, and


The Vinaya Piṭaka (The Disciplinary Code)

The Vinaya Piṭaka mainly deals with the rules and regulations of the Order of monks (Bhikkhus) and nuns (Bhikkhunīs). It describes, in detail, the gradual development of the Sāsana (Dispensation). It also gives an account of the life and ministry of the Buddha. Indirectly it reveals some useful information about ancient history, Indian customs,
arts, sciences etc. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* consists of the five following books. There are:

The *Pārājika* (Major Offences)

The *Pacittiya* (Minor Offences)

The *Mahāvagga* (Greater Section)

The *Cāllavagga* (Smaller Section)

The *Parivāra* (Epitome of the Vinaya).  

The *Pārājika* deals with the first nineteen training rules within the *Pāṭimokka* (major monastic rules) for monks which contain the four rules of Defeat (*Pārajika*), the thirteen rules entailing Initial and Subsequent Meeting of the *Saṅgha* (*Sanghādisesa*), and the two Indefinites (*Aniyata*).

The *Pacittiya* deals with the rest of the monks’ *Pāṭimokkha* training rules, which is concerned with minor offences such as: the thirty rules entailing Expiation with Forfeiture (*Nissagiyapācittiya*), the ninety-two rules of Expiation (*Pācittiya*), the four rules of Confession (*Pāṭidesaniya*), the seventy-five rules of Training (*Sekhiya*), and seven rules of Legal Questions (*Adhikaranasamathādhammā*). There are totally two hundred and twenty-seven rules. The *Mahāvagga* deals with the training rules outside the *Pāṭimokkha*, i.e. the general regulations on the monks’ ways of living and administration of monastic affairs.

The *Cāllavagga* deals with minor or latter portion of the training rules outside the *Pāṭimokkha* that deals with formal censure, rules for reinstatement of a monk and so on.

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The Parivāra deals with a manual for reviewing knowledge in the Discipline (Vinaya).\(^{17}\)

**The Sutta Piṭaka (The Discourse)**

The Sutta Piṭaka consists chiefly of discourses delivered by the Buddha himself on various occasions. There are also a few discourses delivered by some of his distinguished disciples, such as Sarīputta, Ānanda, Moggallāna and others. It is like a book of prescriptions, as the sermons embodied therein are expounded to suit the different occasions and the temperaments of various persons. There may be seemingly contradictory statements, but they should not be misconstrued as they were opportunely uttered by the Buddha to suit a particular purpose.

The Sutta Piṭaka is divided into five Nikāyas or collections,

There are:

- The Dīgha Nikāya (Collection of Long Discourses)
- The Majjhima Nikāya (Collection of Middle-length Discourses)
- The Saṁyutta Nikāya (Collection of Kindred Sayings)
- (iv) The Aṅguttara Nikāya (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with number)
- (v) The Khuddaka Nikāya (Smaller Collection).\(^{18}\)

The Dīgha Nikāya deals with the collection of the long discourses which consisted of three Vaggas (sections), namely,

- (i) Sīlakkhandhavagga containing thirteen long discourses,
- (ii) Mahāvagga containing ten long discourses, and
- (iii) Pāṭikavagge containing eleven long discourses.

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\(^{17}\) U. Ko Lay (Former Vice-Chancellor Mandalay University), 1990, *Guide to Tipitaka*, pp. 5-18.

The *Majjhima Nikāya* deals with the collection of middle length discourses. It is classified into three divisions namely,

(i) *Mūlapannāsaka* (the first batch of fifty discourses) containing fifty discourses,

(ii) *Majjhimapannāsaka* (the middle batch of fifty discourses) containing fifty discourses, and

(iii) *Uparipannāsaka* (the last batch of fifty discourses) containing fifty-two discourses.

The *Samyutta Nikāya* deals with the collection of kindred sayings. It is divided into fifty-six groups (*saṁyutta*) of seven thousand seven hundred and sixty-two discourses.

The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* contains Discourses arranged in accordance with number: it is a collection of nine thousand five hundred and fifty-seven discourses within eleven divisions (*nipāta*) and stated from groups of single items, followed by groups of two and so on, to groups of eleven.

The *Khuddaka Nikāya* has smaller discourses; it is a collection of discourses, verses, explanations, and miscellaneous subjects that cannot fit into the first four collections mentioned above. There are fifteen scriptures, namely:

1. Khuddakapāṭha (Shorter Texts),
2. Dhammapāda (The Way of Truth),
3. Udāna (Pecans of joy),
4. Iti Vuttaka ("Thus said" Discourses),
5. Sutta Nipāta (Collected Discourses),
6. *Vimāna Vatthu* (Stories of Celestial Mansions),
7. *Peta Vatthu* (Stories of Departed),
8. *Theragāthā* (Verses of the Elders),
9. *Therīgāthā* (Verses of the Women Elders),
10. *Jātaka* (Birth Stories),
11. *Niddesa* (Expositions),
12. *Patisambhidāmagga* (Way of Analysis),
13. *Apadāna* (Lives of Saints),
14. *Buddhavaṁsa* (The History of Buddha),
15. *Cariya Piṭaka* (Modes of Conduct).¹⁹

**The Abhidhamma Piṭaka** (Ultimate Doctrine)

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is a compilation of the Buddha’s teachings that deals with the quintessence of the doctrine in purely academic terms, without reference to particular individuals and events. It is meant to analyze and explain everything in detail, and deals with the four ultimate things (*paramattha*). They are *Citta* (Consciousness), *Cetasika* (Mental-Consciousness), *Rūpa* (Matter), and *Nibbāna* (A State of Eternal Bliss). The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is divided into seven books, namely,

3. *Dhātukathā* (Discussion with Reference to the Elements).

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²⁰ U. Ko Lay (Former Vice-Chancellor Mandalay University), 1990, *Guide to Tipitaka*, pp. 139-153
2.2 The Origin of Human Life.

Rebirth, which Buddhists do not regard as a mere theory but as a fact verifiable by evidence, forms a fundamental tenet of Buddhism; this is a remarkable truth that Nibbāna is attainable in this life itself. The Bodhisattva ideal and the correlative doctrine of freedom to attain utter perfection are based on this doctrine of rebirth. The Buddhists doctrine of rebirth should be differentiated from the theory of transmigration of other systems, because Buddhism denies the existence of a transmigrating permanent soul, created by God, or emanating from a Paramātma (Divine Essence).

It is Kamma that conditions rebirth. Past Kamma conditions the present birth; and present Kamma, in combination with past Kamma, conditions the future. The present is the offspring of the past, and becomes, in turn, the present of the future. The actuality of the present needs no proof as it is self evident. That of the past is bases on memory and report, and that of the future on forethought and inference.\textsuperscript{21}

According to Buddhism, we are born from the matrix of action (Kammayoni). Present merely provide us with a material layer. Therefore, being proceeds being. At the moment of conception, it is Kamma that conditions the initial consciousness that vitalizes the fetus. It is this invisible karmic energy, generated from the past birth that produces mental phenomena and the phenomena of life in an already extant physical phenomenon, to complete the trio that constitutes man. Dealing with the conception of beings, the Buddha states:\textsuperscript{22}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21} Narada Mahathera, 1988, \textit{The Buddha and His Teaching}, p. 260.
\textsuperscript{22} Narada Mahathera, 1988, \textit{The Buddha and His Teaching}, p. 261.
\end{flushright}
“Where three are found in combination, there a germ of life is planted. If mother and father, but it is not the mother’s fertile period, and the “being-to-be-born” (gandhabba) is not present, then no germ of life is planted. If mother and father come together, and it is the mother’s fertile period, but the “being-to-be-born” is not present then again no germ of life is planned. If mother and father come together and it is the mother’s fertile period, and the “being-to-be-born” is present, then by the conjunction of these three, a germ of life is there planted.”

Here, Gandabbha (gantabba) does not mean “a class of divas said to preside over the process of conception” but refers to a suitable being ready to be born in that particular womb. This term is used only in this particular connection, and must not be mistaken for a permanent soul.

For a being to be born here, somewhere a being must die. The birth of a being, which strictly means the arising of the Aggregate (khandhānam pātubhāvo), or psycho-physical phenomena in this present life, corresponds to the death of a being in a past life; just as, in conventional terms, the rising of the sun in one place means the setting of the sun in another place. This enigmatic statement may be better understood by imagining life as a wave and do not as a straight line. Birth and death are only two phases of the same process. Birth precedes death, and death, on the other hand, precedes birth. This constant succession of birth and death connection with each individual life-flux constitutes what is technically known as Saṁsāra recurrent wandering.

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23 Majjhima Nikāya, Mahātanhāsaṁkhaya Sutta, No. 38.
The Buddha positively declares: “Without, cognizable beginning is this *Saṁsāra*. The earliest point of beings that, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, wander and fare on, is not to be perceived.”

This life-stream flows *ad infinitum*, as long as it is fed with the muddy waters of ignorance and craving. When these two are completely cut off, then only does the life-stream cease to flow; rebirth ends, as in the case of *Buddhas* and *Arhats*. A first beginning of this life-stream cannot be determined, as a stage cannot be perceived when this life force was not fraught with ignorance and craving. It should be understood that the Buddha has here referred merely to the beginning of the life-stream of living beings. It is left to scientists to speculate on the origin and the evolution of the universe.

The Buddha recognized four truths about human existence. These truths are articulation of his wisdom or insight (*Paññā*). They are:

1. Suffering (*dukkha*),
2. The arising of suffering (*dukkhasamudaya*),
3. The ceasing of suffering (*dukkhaniroda*), and
4. The path leading to the ceasing of suffering (*dukkhanirodagaminipatipadā*).  

The Buddha was reluctant to present suffering as a universal or all inclusive truth. “All or everything is suffering” (*sabbamdukkhā*) is a statement that is conspicuously absent in the early discourses attributed to the Buddha.

A general statement about suffering is always concretized by the use of the relative pronoun “this” (*idam*). Thus the most general statement

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24 MN. III. p. 105  
one can find in the discourses reads, “all this is suffering” (sabbamidam-dukkham). This allows the Buddha to specify and elaborate on the conception of suffering. The whole human life is as unmixed evil and suffering according to Buddhism. This concrete explanation of the truth of suffering occurs in his very first discourse, popularly known as the Dhammacakkappavattana-sutta:

“This, O Monks, is the sacred truth of suffering: Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, not to obtain what one desires is suffering. In brief, clinging to the five aggregates of the personality—body, feeling, perception, disposition, and consciousness—as possessions of “myself” is suffering.”

The whole train of human suffering is due to his Avijjā, caused by the jīvas themselves in their past life. They alone are responsible for the evil and are advised to remove suffering by their own efforts. Buddhism is essentially atheistic and does not recommend to seek divine power for removing either Avijjā or suffering.

The condition of a human being in this life is determined by its good or bad actions in its previous life. Man is whatever he makes himself; he the creator himself. Strictly speaking, the independent and autonomous law of karma accepted to be the cosmic law of cause and effect as well as the impersonal law of morality is really established as a part of Paticcasamuppāda, as it admits that everything that comes into existence must have a cause. Actually, the discussion in this connection

deals with and aspect of āyatanas as the part of performing with the world through body, speech and mind, otherwise called the practical aspect of sankhārak-khandha.  

The law of karma in its moral aspect is concerned with the theory of rebirth, which is its corollary and proof. The belief in the origin of the doctrine of karma and rebirth can be traced back to the passages in the Vedas, the Brāhmanas and the Upanisads. But the doctrine of karma and rebirth as based on Anattavāda, Paṭiccasamuppāda and Vipassanābhāvanā is taught only in Buddhism, because it was fully enunciated by the Buddha at the night of his Enlightenment.

According to Buddhism, all volitional actions involving body, word and mind are called karma. Except those of the Buddha and the Arhats, all other actions cannot be called freedom in the ultimate sense, because they are based on desire and ignorance. Therefore, volition is treated as a food that sustains human life to take birth in the beginning less saṁsara. The either good or bad, is accumulated by consciousness, which in turn becomes the inducement to the present activity and originates the psycho-physical personality. Suffering has it is own use. It shocks man into his pitiful existence. Man is kicked into his awareness for realizing his own authentic existence. Once awakened, and he not only works out his own salvation, but out of compassion for others, who are unmindful of their pitiful lives, he lights the lamp for them. The working out of the usefulness of suffering has been thus outlined by Rhys David’s:

30 Phrarajvaramuni, 1982, Buddha-Dhamma, pp. 33-34.
32 MN, I. p. 183.
33 AN, VI. p. 63.
i) The realization of the fact of suffering gives rise to a quest and faith

ii) Faith gives rise to joy

iii) Joy ripens into rapture

iv) Rapture in due course gives way to serenity

v) Serenity paves the way for happiness

vi) Happiness gives way to concentration

vii) Concentration yields knowledge and insight leading to Nirvāṇa.\(^{34}\)

### 2.3 The Evolution of Human Life in Buddhism

At the end, we come to the Buddhism regarding the concept of life. Besides this, the birth-process, value of life, aim of human life and path to the attainment of aim of human life according to Buddhism will be discussed.

As a religion, Buddhism has a number of different aspects such as truth, art, culture, philosophy and so on just as the same mountain when viewed from different directions presents different appearances. But of all the various aspects, what is most important is the “Buddhism as a religion, it is concerned with the human sufferings and their solution.” As Buddha says “Buddhism is a religion, based on intelligence, science and knowledge, the purpose of which is the destruction of suffering,”\(^{35}\) From the aspect of morality, Buddhism is a religion of action and not of mere

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\(^{34}\) AN, VI, p. 226.

belief. It can be measured only by experience and not by any argument. The chief purpose of Buddhism is to know things as they are.

Although it is difficult to summarize the teachings of the Buddha who was mainly an ethical teacher and a mystic rather than a metaphysician and who preached only orally, yet a fairly good account of his teachings can be gleaned. It may be said to be threefold:

1. The four noble Truths,
2. The Nobile Eight fold path,
3. Doctrine of Dependent Origination.

From a point of view of ethical mode, “Buddhism is not a system of metaphysics but rather a collection of facts discovered by the Buddha his enlightenment is not a kind of mystic experience, but a gradual mode of action and conduct”.

Buddhism has been against the caste system as it is the most corrupting element in human society. Buddha did not abolish the old rigid idea of caste system. But it gave a new meaning and importance. For instance, Hinduism holds that a person can be a Brahmin only by birth, but the Buddha says him to be Brahmin only by Karma.

The Buddha said that self-realization cannot be attained by performing sacrifices, or Vedic rites and rituals, but it is possible only through renunciation. Everyone, irrespective of one’s caste, color, creed, and sex is capable of self realization by becoming monk and nuns in the monastic order were thus abrogated.

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37 M.N. II, p. 196.
In Buddhism, “Life” etymologically means the state of being or the moments of continued existence.\(^{38}\) Life is the collected unit of all life factors which we can find as described in *Suttantapiṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

### 2.3.1 The Evolution of Human Life in *Suttanta piṭaka*

Life consists of five *Khandhas*, viz. *Rūpa*, *Vedanā*, *Saññā*, *Saṅkhāra* and *Viññāṇa*.\(^ {39}\) Five aggregates (*Khandhas*) are described as the components of living beings. It analyzes life into five factors.\(^ {40}\)

(1) *Material Properties or Attributes (Rūpa)* are twenty-eighth in number:

- Four elements: earth, water, fire, air,
- Five organs of wanes: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body,
- Five attributes of matter: form, sound, smell, taste, substance,
- Two distinctions of sex: male, female,
- Three essential conditions: thought, vitality, space,
- Two means of communication: gesture, speech
- Seven qualities of living bodies: buoyancy, elasticity, power of adaptation, power of aggregation, duration, decay, change.

(2) *The Sensations (Vedanā) (feeling)* are divided into six classes, according as they are received immediately by each of the five senses, or sixthly, by the mind (through memory): and further, into eighteen classes, as each of these six classes may be agreeable, disagreeable, or indifferent.

(3) *The Abstract Ideas (Saññā)* are divided into six classes corresponding to the six classes of sensations; for instance, the ideas

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\(^{39}\) S.N. pp. 3-5.

\(^{40}\) D.N. p. 234.
blue, a tree, are classed under sight; the idea of sweetness, under taste, and so on.

(4) The Tendencies or Potentialities Samkhāra (literally confections, sankhārā) are in fifty-two divisions, which are not, however, mutually exclusive. Some of these include, or are identical with, items in the previous classes; but whereas the previous groups are arranged as it were from an objective, this group is arranged as it were from a subjective point of view:

1. Contact (Phassa,
2. The resulting sensation (Vedanā)
3. Abstract ideas, formed on sensation (Saññā)
4. Thought, the regrouping of ideas (Cetanā)
5. Reflection, turning these groups over and over (Manasikāra)
6. Memory (Sati)
7. Vitality (Jivitindriya: also in Group I (1-6))
8. Individuality (Ekaggatā)
9. Attention (Vitakka, which may cause contact No.1)
10. Investigation (Vicāra: continued attention)
11. Effort (viriya, which assists all other faculties)
12. Steadfastness (Adhimokkha, continued effort)
13. Joy (Piti)
14. Impulse (Chanda)
15. Indifference (Majjhhatā)
16. 17. Sleep and torpor (Thina and Middha), the opposites of attention
18. 19. Stupidity and intelligence (Moha and Paññā)
20. 21. Covetousness and content (Lobha and alobha)
22, 23. Fear and rashness (Ottappa and Anotappa)
24, 25. Shame and shamelessness (Hiri and Ahirika)
26, 27. Hatred and affection (Dosa and Adosa)
29-29. Doubt, faith, and delusion (Vicikicchā, Saddhā, Diṭṭhi)
31, 32. Repose of body or mind (Pasiddhi)
33, 34. Lightness, activity: of body or mind (Lahutā)
35, 36. Softness: Elasticity of body or mind (Mudutā)
37, 38. Adaptability, pliancy: of body or mind (Kammaññatā)
39, 40. Dexterity: of body or mind (Pāguññatā)
41, 42. Straightness: of body or mind (Ujjukatā)
43-45. Propriety: of speech, action, or life (Sammā)
46. Pity: sorrow for the sorrow of others (Karunā)
47. Gladness: rejoicing in the joy of others (Muditā)
48. Envy: sorrow at the joy of others (Issā)
49. Selfishness: dislike to share one’s joy with others
   (Macchariyā)
50. Moroseness (Kukkucca)
51. Vanity (Uddhacca)
52. Pride (Māno)

(5) Thought, Reason (Viññāna), is the last skandha, and is really amplification from another point of view of the fourth of last group (sankhārā) which is inherent in all the others. It is divided from the point of view of the merit or demerit resulting from different thoughts into eighty-nine classes; a division which throws no light on the Buddhist scheme of the constituent elements of being, and does not, therefore,
concern us here.\textsuperscript{41}

The above-mentioned five aggregates that constitute life relatively depend on one another. \textit{Rūpakkhandha} is the component of body and the remaining four, viz. \textit{Vedanā}, \textit{Saññā}, \textit{Saṅkhāra} and \textit{Viññaṇa} compose mind which may be put under the category of \textit{Nāmakhandha}. Human being must possess a body and a mind for the continuation of life. Thus, life is the result of unification of these five aggregates. Life ends when these five aggregates separate.

\subsection*{2.3.2 The Evolution of Human Life in \textit{Abhidhamma Pitaka}.}

Life in \textit{Abhidhamma Pitaka} embodies three factors of absolute truth as the essential factors of human life. It aims at knowledge which shows the way of keeping the mind in good state. The three factors, according to the principle of nature called as \textit{Paramattha dhamma} (the ultimate truth), are \textit{Pūpa}, \textit{Citta} and \textit{Cetasika}. They are as below:

1. \textit{Rūpa} is constituted by four elements or \textit{Dhātus} known as \textit{Mahābhūta rūpas}. They are:
   1. \textit{Paṭhvīdhātu} (earth element) – pure matter, the substratum of various qualities like softness, hardness, etc. It is the nature of earth.
   2. \textit{Āpodhātu} (water element) – It is the nature of water, the principle of cohesion.
   3. \textit{Tejodhātu} (fire element) – It is the nature of fire.
   4. \textit{Vāyodhātū} (fire element) – It is the principle of motion.\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{41} T.W. Rhys Davids, 2000, \textit{Buddhism Being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama the Buddha}, p 90.
\textsuperscript{42} D.N. I. p. 214.
These four elements known as *Dhātus* are also called *Sahajāti dhammas*, as they exist with one another. They give rise to *Rūpa* or physical form.

(2) *Citta* means the nature of temperament, the state of consciousness, the thought and the mind. The *Citta* is transient and is changing every moment. The arising and dissolving of one mental state at each moment is said to be one *Citta*. It is the series of *Citta* (consciousness) that makes the life to move on. The Buddha classifies the arising and dissolving of *Citta* into three moments as:

1. *Upāda* – the moment of arising
2. *Thiti* – moment of remaining
3. *Bhaṁga* – the moment of decaying.\(^\text{43}\)

The cycle of three steps, i.e. the previous *Citta* arises, remains and dissolves giving rise to the new *Citta*, goes on continuously in a succession. This is called the continuity of consciousness (*Santati*) or a series of moments or stream of consciousness.

*Citta* has three characteristics (*Trilakkanā*) of impermanence, suffering and non-self. It has four particular states as:

1. Realization of object of consciousness.
2. Specific function to know through six senses.
3. Continuous changing mental states caused by function of *Citta*
4. Material objects, sense – fields and attention may be the immediate cause of activity of *Citta* and stimulate the function of *Citta* continuously.\(^\text{44}\)

(3) *Cetasika* represents the mental factors of the power which

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\(^{44}\) Phra Depvedi (P. A. Payutto), 1985, *Buddhadhamma*, p. 68.
enables *Citta* to perform various actions in various states. It is in concomitant with *Citta* and has four characteristics. They are;

1. Ekuppāda - arising simultaneously with *Citta*
2. Ekanirodha - extinguishing simultaneously with *Citta*
3. Ekālambana - sharing the same sense object with *Citta*
4. Ekavatthu - depending on the same material (i.e., same immediate cause).  

*Citta* having these above-mentioned four characteristics is called *Cetasika*. *Citta* clearly Knows the objects with the help of *Cetasika*. The functioning of *Cetasika* causes the state of seeing, hearing, thinking, loving, and the like.  

According to Buddhism, the main factors of human life are classified into two parts namely *body* and *mind* (*Kāya* and *Citta*). They are the essential components that constitute the life. Body cannot think, perceive or feel anything without mind. Body is the abode and the channel of expression of the activities of the *Citta* or the mind. If the body is no more, the mind cannot dwell in that body and as such life won’t move on. Therefore, body and mind have more or less equal importance. They are mutually dependent on each other.

Buddhism explains life as the nature, in accordance with the law of cause and effect, which is also called as the law of nature. Lord Buddha has brought in to light the two main principles of the law of nature, i.e. the three characteristics (Trilakkhana), and the law of cause and effect (Paticcasamuppāda). Both the laws confirm the impermanence of life. According to three characteristics, life as well as every object of this

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world is subject to impermanence, suffering and non-self. Law of cause and effect also strengthens the same principle by declaring that every object ceases after giving rise to the new one.

There is no God in the form of creator behind this vast creation. The continuity of this world and life depends on the kind of karma (action) that the beings do. Good (Kusala) deeds produce favorable results, like happiness and birth in a higher realm, whereas bad (Akusala) deeds yield unfavorable results, such as suffering and birth in a lower realm. Ignorance of the true nature of things and craving for worldly things cause continuity when knowledge arises and ignorance and craving cease with the cessation of continuity of birth and rebirth and finally the Nibbāna is attained.

2.3.3 The Evolution of Human Life in Agganna Sutta

Buddhism regards the human being as superior to all. The human being is entirely different from other animals in respect of mentality which is somewhat complicated. It is like dense forest that has no entrance and is difficult to penetrate, in comparison with the nature of an animal, which is much easier to understand. The Buddha realizes that man, while being tempted to perform evil actions, could be properly directed towards the performance of good actions (kusalakamma). According to Buddhism, there are three ‘immoral root’ (akusalamulā), namely, lust (lobha), hatred (dosa), and delusion (moha), which are regarded as the original cause of ignorance (avijjā). It is therefore, said

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47 Phra Depvedi (P. A. Payutto), 1985, Buddhadhamma, p. 65.
48 Vbh. p. 218.
49 A. II. p. 30.
51 DN, III. p. 275.
that the real nature of an ordinary man is always entangled with the impurities (*kilesas*) and worldly pleasures and he is always guided by ignorance. In the *Dhammapāda*, the Buddha said: “Oh wise man, it is true that not easy to control are evil things, do not let greed and weakness drag you to prolonged suffering.” The nature of man can be generally classified in accordance with for outstanding differences.

Firstly, there are those who, because of wrong teachings, practice austerities and cause themselves to suffer.

Secondly, there are those who, by cruelty, by stealing, by killing or by other unkind acts, cause others to suffer.

Thirdly, there are those who cause other to suffer along with themselves.

Lastly, there are those who do not suffer themselves and save others from suffering.

The last category is highly recommended by the Buddha as they do not give way to greed, anger or foolishness, but live peaceful life which is full of kindness and wisdom.\(^{52}\)

In this connection, the nature of man according to other philosophers, whose philosophical ideas regarding man are quite acceptable, should be brought into consideration in order to grasp that of the Buddha clearly. Thomas Hobbes, an English philosopher, whose thought is negative about man, speaks of man’s nature as selfish. He is interested only in justifying the selfish temperaments of human beings.\(^{53}\) John Locke (1632-1704 A.D.) believes that, man, by nature is a rational and social creature, and as such he is capable of recognizing and living in

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\(^{52}\) DN, III. p. 174.

a moral order. He feels sympathy, humanitarianism, and tenderness towards his fellow beings. Unlike Hobbes, Locke did not take a dark picture of human nature because in his time, the situations were peaceful and excellent. Rousseau (1712-1778) agrees with Plato in believing that human nature is essentially good. Nature has endowed man with two primal instincts, of which one is the instinct of self-love, and the other is the instinct of sympathy or mutual help. William Godwin believed that all minds at the time of birth represent a tabula rasa, but all men are born endowed with reason. Man stands, in the words of Julian Huxley, at the cross-roads of evolution, men are animals with a difference, that they are capable of reasoning and conceptual thought, creative imagination and communication by speech symbols. According to Darwin’s gradualism, man is a product of evolution.

In conclusion these philosophers picture the nature of man in a positive manner in the light of good will, and give a better picture of man than Hobbes, Freud, Marx and Machiavelli, who were of the view that men by nature were ungrateful, feeble, deceitful, cowardly and avaricious, fond of wealth; and envy are powerful emotions of human actions.

According to the Buddha, good or evil are to be considered as two aspects of human nature, and man usually performs either wholesome karma, because of the conflict of the two aspects as already mentioned.

Hence in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha classifies human beings into four kinds:

I) Some come from darkness but will only go to darkness

II) Some come from darkness but will go to light

III) Some come from light but will be go to darkness and

IV) Some come from light and but they will go to light.

The last one is appreciated by the Buddha as it signifies one of not only noble birth, but also of good conduct. Such a person will never suffer in this life and in the life to come. In support of doing good, avoiding evil and purifying one’s mind, the Buddha preached the Middle Path as the criterion of the best man. “The tamed is the best among men – *danto seṭṭho manusseso*.” The best man in Buddhism is identified by these five characteristics, namely, being not credulous, knowing the uncreated, having severed all ties, having put an end to opportunity and having removed all desires.

The first is that the best man ascertains everything before believing. Secondly, he knows *Nirvāṇa*. Thirdly, he destroys *Samsāra*. Fourthly, he has no chance to do both good and evil. Finally, he has no defilements to hope for anything. If one conquers just oneself, one is, indeed, the greatest victor. The Buddha with his clear insight understands the human nature and the conduct leading to be a perfect man. In short, man is defined by his actions –what he did, what he is doing, and what he will do; so his nature is conditioned by *karma*.

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57 AN. I. p. 93.
60 Dh., v. p. 97.
61 Dh., v. p. 103.
The correct Buddhist position for the existence of man

Strictly speaking, the correct Buddhist position with regard to the existence of man is based on the understanding of the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths, the main contents of which are about the idea of man. Actually, there are two domains of *dharma* enlightened by the Buddha, of which one is the law of *Paṭiccasamuppāda*, which includes the doctrine of *karma* and *Nirvana*, and the other one is the Four Noble Truths. These two doctrines are essentially one and the same, because the law of *Paṭiccasamuppāda* and *Nirvana* are really the essence of the Four Noble Truths. But these are regarded as pure teachings or natural elements, while the Four Noble Truths refer to all enlightened *Dharmas*, with appear in the light of the ordered process regard to the capacity of man’s understanding and making use of.

Just as the foot of every creature that walks on the earth will go into the elephant’s footprint, so are all right states of mind said to be included in the Four Noble Truths. The doctrine of the Four Noble Truths is, therefore, the essence as well as the destiny of man. The Buddha addressed his disciples at the *Simsapa* grove regarding the Four Noble Truths that he taught them by comparing them to the leaves in his hand, while the remaining *Dharmas* that he had known but did not teach them, and are like the leaves in the whole forest, because those *Dharmas* are not conducive to the termination of suffering.

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62 Dh., v. p. 200.
64 MN, I. p. 133.
65 SN, V. p. 437.
In the first sermon, the significance of the Four Noble Truths was made known by the Buddha. The Noble Truths are so-called because they dealt with reality and are realized by only the Noble ones such as the Buddha. These truths will lead us only to the highest wisdom. They constitute a progressive series, that is, each truth leads up to the next. The failure to understand these truths will result in long wandering in saṁsāra for all creatures. The Buddha himself exhorted his disciples to put forth their special desire, effort and attention for the understanding of these truths. It is mentioned in the Śaṁyutta-Nikaya that one can develop one’s spirituality by telling and hearing the Four Noble Truths among good friends (Kalyanamitta).

The explanation of man according to the Four Noble Truths should be brought into consideration here. Among the Four Noble Truths, the first truth called suffering is the nucleus around which the remaining truths assemble. The first truth implies all the problems of life comprising birth, old age, disease, death, despair and so on. In short, anything that exists, including the five Khandhas and twelve āyatanas, is suffering. Buddhism regards the five Khandhas themselves as suffering. To be is to suffer and the way out would consist in going out of the existence. Suffering is thus the essence as well as the destiny of man. The most important factor of the miserable condition is inherent impermanence (anicca) of man and things. When the existence is impermanent, then there is nothing called permanent soul or self, there is only becoming

66 Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta, SN, V. p. 420.
67 The Kindred Sayings, V. p. 356.
68 The Kindred Sayings, V. p. 356.
69 The Kindred Sayings, V. p. 372.
70 SN, V. p. 436.
(bhava). It is said that this replacement of the Upanisadic idea of being by that of becoming and the view of the universe as uninterrupted and un-unified stream of momentary particulars is the distinct contribution of Buddhism to Indian thought.71 The second truth affirms that there is a cause of suffering called ignorance (avijjā) that make man cling to the sense of his ego and through it to the world by not knowing things as they really are. This truth includes the law of cause and effect (Paṭiccasamuppāda) and the immutable law of Karma and rebirth. And by stopping the operation of the cause of suffering, it is possible, as affirmed by the third truth, to uproot suffering. This truth indicates the law of Paṭiccasamuppāda in the aspect of the Dependent Cessation, otherwise called Nirvāṇa. The fourth truth delineates the method one has to adopt in order to achieve complete freedom from suffering. When the ignorance is uprooted, one becomes a perfected man or Arhat. This truth suggests the way of life called the Middle Way (Majjimāpaṭipadā), comprising the eight constituents of the Noble Path. And they are further organized into the “Threefold Training” (Tisikkhā) as a short practical way.

“World” means the theory about the origin and nature of universe. There is lack of discourses of the Buddha on the topic of the origin of the universe in the whole Pitaka texts. Few descriptions concerned to the topic found in the texts are dealt with the principle of impermanence with its practical aim. The main Suttas which contain some details concerned to the topic of origin and evolution of the universe are Cakkavatti-Sīhanāda Sutta and Aggaṇña Sutta of Dīgha-Nikāya. The first one

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contains the evolution of human life-length, while the last contains the evolution of the world, man and society. After all, the Aggañña Sutta discourse seems to deal more with the heretical idea about the caste system than the world origin.⁷²

Concerning the origin of the universe, the dialogue of the Buddha given to young Brahmins Vāsetta and Bhāradvāja is as follows:

“Now there comes a time, Vāsettha, when, sooner or later, after the lapse of a long, long period, this world passes away. And when this happens, beings have mostly been reborn in the world of Radiance (Ābhassara); and there they dwell, made of mind, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, traversing the air, continuing in glory: and thus they remain for long, long period of time. There comes also a time, Vāsettja, when sooner or later this world begins to re-evolve. When this happens, beings that had deceased from the World of Radiance usually come to life as humans. And they become made of mind, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, traversing the air, continuing in glory, and remain thus for a long, long period of time.”

“Now at that time, all had become one world of water, dark, and of darkness that make blind. Neither moon nor sun appeared, no stars were seen, nor constellations, neither was night manifest nor day, neither months nor half-months, neither years nor seasons, neither female nor male. Beings were reckoned just as beings only. And to those being, Vāsetṭha, sooner or later after a long time, earth with its savor was spread out in the waters. Even as a scum forms on the surface of boiled milky rice that is cooking, so did the earth appear, it became endowed with colour, with odor, and with taste. Even as well-made ghee or pure

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butter, so was its colour: even as the flawless honey of the bee, so sweet as it.”

“Then, Vāsettha, some being of greedy disposition, said: Go now! What will this be? and tasted the savory earth with his finger. He thus, tasting, became suffused with the savor, and craving entered into him. And other beings, following his example, tasted the savory earth with their finger. They thus, tasting, became suffused with the savor, a craving entered into them. Then those beings began to feast on the savory earth, breaking off lumps of it with their hands. And from the doing thereof the self-luminance of those beings faded away. As their self-luminance faded away, the moon and the sun became manifest. Thereupon star-shapes and constellations became manifest. Thereupon night and day became manifest, months too and half-months, the seasons and years. Thus far then, Vāsettha, did the world evolve again.”73 The post-canonical works, in order to further explain the evolution of the universe, narrate the progress of the universe in addition to be above saying of the Buddha;

“After the great destruction of millions of universe by fire which burn the lowest plane of existence up to the realm of Appamānābha, the second Jhāna realm, the air becomes unit, then the configuration of the universe starts to shape is form. At that time, there is a great rain-cloud in which it rains through the whole area of destruction by fire. It rains for a long period of time until the water of rain fulfills the millions of universe burn by fire up to Ābhassara world. There happens the great wind blow under the whole water in order to house and keep water without letting it going away. The power of wind which blows strongly

will insert up through the water. It causes the water to be tight, dry and dwindled downward.”

“When the water dries and diminishes down to the level of Brahmloka, the Brahma-loka appears. When the water dries and decreases downward to the four higher realms of Kāmaloka: Paranimmitavasavatti, Nimmānarati, Tusita, and Yāma respectively, these realms form their situations as world, except the realm of Tāvatmaṣa and Cātummaḥarājika because these two diva-realms are situated on the Mt. Sineru. Mt. Sinneru connects the earth to the ground. If there is no earth ground, then Sinneru would not be able to stand.”

“When the water degenerates to some level, there happens strong wind blows around the water, fasten it without flowing some like the water in the battle, Later on, the water tightens, dwindles and sediments, The sediments combine together, and become the earth which floats on the surface of the water just a lotus leaf floating on the water’s surface or as “a scum forms on the surface of boiled milky rice that cooking. Some beings who were born in the World of Radiance, Ābhassara, at the time of destruction, had been exhausted their merits and reborn in the world with Opapātika mode of birth, the spontaneous birth.” Then the world system with its beings evolves as mentioned in discourse. “In the appearance of the sun and the moon, Mt. Sinneru, Cakkavāḷśsilā, Mt. Himavā and ocean are said to settle. It is dated at the full-moon day of the fourth month.”74

**Dissolution**

This is the explanation of evolution of a single world system and its beings in Buddhist tradition. This evolution happens after the

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dissolution by fire, water and wind.\textsuperscript{75} The progress of destruction by fire is narrated in the \textit{Suriya Sutta of Anguttara-Nikāya}.

According to the \textit{Sutta},\textsuperscript{76} there comes a time when for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years, there is no rain. All seed life and vegetation, all trees that yield medicine, palms and giants of the jungle become parched and dried up and are no more. After long, long period of time, when in some age, at the end of some vast period, a second sun appears. When the second sun appears, all the streams and the tarns become parched and dried up and are no more.

After a vast period of time, a third sun appears. When the third sun appears, all the great rivers: the Ganges, the \textit{Yamunā}, the \textit{Aciravatī}, the \textit{Sarabhū} and the \textit{Mahī} become parched and dried up and are no more. After a long, long vast period of time, a fourth sun appears. When the fourth sun appears, all the great lakes situated in \textit{Himavā}, whence those great rivers flow, become parched and dried up. After a long period of time, when comes a time, a fifth sun appears. When it appears, the water of great oceans recedes and dries up till it leaves water just as mere puddles in cow’s foot-prints.

At the end of some vast period, sixth sun in appears. When it appears, this earth and Sinner, king of mountains, emit smoke, disgorge smoke, and belch forth clouds of smoke. At the end of some vast period of time, a seventh sun appears, when the seventh sun appears, this earth and Sinner burst into flames, blaze up and become a single sheet of flame. And the fiery beam of the blaze and the burn of the great earth and

\textsuperscript{75} Ruwan Bandara Ashikari, \textit{Kalpa}, EB, VI, p. 91b: Vism. p. 414.

\textsuperscript{76} Gs.IV. pp. 65-67.
of Mt. Sineru, thrown up by the winds, reaches even to Brahamā’s world (the first Jhāna-Brahmā world). Just as out of blazing, burning ghee or oil neither cinder nor is ash found. Of the great earth and Mt. Sineru neither nether cinder nor ash is found.

The above whole progress of world origin needs a long, long period of time. A circle of world-evolution and destruction has been arranged into four stages of time or four kappa’s. “Kappa” (Kalpa; an aeon) is a fabulous period of time, an extremely long time which cannot be reckoned in years as so many hundreds of years, so many thousands of years and so many hundred thousands of years and so on.\(^77\)

**Duration of world dissolution and evolution**

The four stages of a world’s evolved and dissolved circle, according to Kappa Sutta, are:

1. *Saṃvatṭa-kappa:* The period during which the world gradually disintegrates,
2. *Saṃvatṭṭhāyī-kappa:* The period in which the world-disintegration remains in that state,
3. *Vivaṭṭa-kappa:* the period in which another new universe (cakkavāla) evolves,
4. *Vivaṭṭṭhāyī-kappa:* the period which the newly evolved universe remains in that state.\(^78\)

The long lapse of these four epochs of kappa is called as “Mahākappa” the great aeon.\(^79\) It is the age of a universe which is

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\(^77\) Ruwan Bandara Adhikari, “Kalpa”, EB, VI, p. 90a.

\(^78\) GS, II, p. 145; Vism.406; Ruwan Bandara Adhikari, “Kalpa”.VI, p. 91b.

incalculable. In explanation to the length of a kappa, the Buddha has in several similes forth this point.

**Duration of time**

In *Samyutta-Nīkāya*. The Buddha gives similes to explain the length of a kappa by saying;

“So suppose, Bhikkhus, there was a solid rock. One yeoman in height, one yojana in length and one yojana in breadth and a man were to just wipe that rock once every hundred years with a very fine piece of cloth. By this device, that rock would waste away some day, but one cannot exhaust the length of time of a kappa by that length of time.

Suppose, Bhikkhus, there were an iron box, one yojana in height, one yojana in length and one yojana in breadth, and filled to the brim with mustard seeds and a man were to remove from it just one mustard seed every one hundred years. By this device the box can be emptied some day, but one cannot exhaust the length of time of a kappa by that length of time.”

Out of the length of a long time dapper which is beyond calculation in years, one cannot count and exhaust the number of kappa’s that have gone by the past. It is just as one cannot count and exhaust the number of sand grains at the junction of the river Gang and the Sea.

**2.4 The Law of Action (Kamma) in Human Life**

The law of *Kamma* is the basic principle of Indian Philosophy. Although some scholars have taken it in the metaphysical as well as the ethical sense, we shall here confine ourselves to its ethical formulation only. Since it is acceptable to several schools of Metaphysics that are antagonistic with one another, it is beyond any doubt that the law of

KS. II, pp. 121-122.
kamma is more ethical than metaphysical to its nature. Jainism, Buddhism, Purva Mimamsa, Nyaya-Vaisesika, the various schools of Vedānta and the different schools of Saivism and Vaishnavism have their serious differences over the metaphysical nature of Kamma or Action and its process or modus operandi. Nevertheless, they have all accepted the law of kamma as the moral law and adjusted it to their metaphysical system. This shows the fact that the law of kamma does not entail any particular system of metaphysics.

Moral action is a unique class of action in that it has two distinctive effects: first, it is soteriologically transformative and modifies the spiritual status of the one who performs it, and second, it determines the good and bad fortune which a person experiences in life. Although a number of the Buddha’s contemporaries denied that moral action in itself has any intrinsic significance (as many do today), the Buddha rejected this idea and emphasized that the moral life was integral to the quest for salvation. The saint of early Buddhism display the highest standards of moral conduct in their lives, as did the Buddha himself, and the goal of Nibbāna is inconceivable for one whose behavior is not morally perfect.

Through understanding Kamma and Rebirth, man knows that his life is purposeful and meaningful. It is not created by chance, which would give him a purposeless being, only to perish, or at best vanish, without any purpose or trace. With regard to the above mentioned, Wasin Indasara says that

“With Right Views or understanding, the ups and downs of life can be accepted with a detached attitude of mind. This kind of detachment, besides being a real blessing to that mind itself, is also exemplary to others, who will be more or less encouraged thereby. It is because of
these benefits that religious preachers should stress this important aspect of the Buddha’s doctrine and strive to make people understand it with the right attitude of mind”.\footnote{Wasin Indasara. 1988, \textit{Theravāda Buddhist Principles}, pp. 2-3.}

The law of \textit{kamma} can be stated in the following propositions:

i) Good actions invariably produce good results and bad actions invariably bad result.

ii) The results of actions are double. Firstly, they are happiness and suffering, and secondly, they are impressions or tendencies (\textit{saṁskharas} or \textit{vasanas}). The happiness and suffering are exhausted or destroyed by their uses. But tendencies recoil on the agents and go to constitute their character and produce their result in the form of happiness and suffering in due course of time. They become invisible forces or energies that shape the future life of the agents.

iii) The present life of an agent is itself the fruition of his past action. In fact, \textit{kamma} is the cause of life form and life style. The law of \textit{kamma} is the extension of the principle of causation in the moral sphere.

iv) As a corollary from the above propositions (ii) and (iii), it can be deduced that every agent has lived before this life and will also live after this life comes to an end. This is known as the law of transmigration. There is a cycle of births and deaths that is called \textit{Saṁsāra}.

v) The agent can liberate himself from the \textit{saṁsāra} if he removes the root cause of all actions. This root cause is ultimately identified with ignorance (\textit{avijjā}).

vi) \textit{Avijjā} can be removed only by wisdom (\textit{paññā}). It cannot be removed by action, since every action reproduces further reaction or tendencies that further strengthen the enforcement of the law of karma.
In the present chapter, we will discuss kamma and rebirth as the law of existence (Samsāra) in more details. This chapter is divided into two parts. The first and second parts analyze the law of kamma and the rebirth respectively.

The origin of the theory of Kamma and rebirth can be traced back to the pages of the Veda, the Brahmanas and the Upanisads, where this doctrine is discussed in the light of heaven and hell, merit and demerit and so on. It means that this theory was formulated and propounded by Indian thinkers even before the rise of the Buddha. The inequalities amongst the human being can be solved by the theory of Kamma and rebirth. It is conditioned as is said by Poussin \(^82\) and C. Humphreys \(^83\).

Closely associated with the doctrine of Kamma is the doctrine of Samsāra (rebirth so transmigration), as one is incomplete without the other. All those differences and diversities that we find in this world are man-made or better to say action-made. Man is the builder of his own life. He can make it heaven or hell. All depends on his past as well as present Kamma. He creates his future life by means of his present action whereas his past actions determine his present existence. There is no doubt that the doctrine of Kamma and rebirth is of Indian origin, but it has captured the imagination of modern thinkers of other nations too.\(^84\)

Doctrine of Kamma, according to Buddhists, is universal and ancient as it does not belong to any religion in particular. According to K.

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\(^82\) Louis De La Vallee Poussin, 1959, “Karma” Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, pp.673-676.

\(^83\) Christmas Humphreys, 1984, ‘Karma and Rebirth’, p. 40.

Dhammananda, “Theory of Karma is an existing universal law which has
no religion label. All those who violate this law, have to face the
consequences irrespective of their religious beliefs, and those who live in
accordance with this law, experience peace and happiness in their life.”

The doctrine of Kamma, in fact, was not new, but was widely
known at the time of Sākyamunī and is found in the teaching of
Sākyamunī and in the history of Buddhist community. In short, it can
be said that the doctrine of Kamma and rebirth as based on Anattavāda,
Paticcasamuppāda, and Vipassanā bhāvanā is found peculiarly taught
only in Buddhism, as it was completely enlightened by the Buddha at the
night of his Enlightenment

2.4.1 The Meaning and Nature of Kamma

The word “Kamma (Pāli)” or “Karma (Sanskrit)” is derived from
the root “Kar”, to do, to make, to act, and thus means “deed, action”.
The ordinary meaning of “kamma or karma” is action. It means to do,
to commit or to perform. According to the Buddhist doctrine, not all

87 M.N. I, p. 183.
88 Nyannatiloka Mahathera, Karma and Rebirth, 1982, p. 16.
89 According to Aṅguttara Nikāya (A. III. 169), there are two kinds of actions: (1)
Actions performed under the influence of attachment (rāga), hatred (dosa) and
infatuation (moha), which produce bondage. (2) Actions performed without the
influence of attachment, hatred, and infatuation, which lead to emancipation.
Non-injury (ahiṁsā), non-stealing (asteya), and non-enjoyment (abhoga) are the
constituents of Right Action (sammākammanta), which is the fourth element in
the Ariya Atṭhaṅgikamagga.
actions are designated *kamma*.\(^{90}\) *Karma* is the universal law of cause and effect, as applied to the deeds of people. A good or bad deed leads a person’s destiny in the appropriate direction. The ripening of the deed may take more than one lifetime, tying the agent to the cycle of rebirth, or *Saṁsāra*: only deeds free from desire and delusion have no consequences for *karma*.\(^{91}\) According to the doctrine of *karma*, good conduct brings on a pleasant and happy result after death, while bad conduct brings on an evil result after death that is called *karma*.\(^{92}\) The conditions of birth are profoundly affected by one’s karmic “back account”. For all perspectives that accept the *kamma* and transmigration, the highest good includes escaping from *kamma*. The notion of transmigration or metempsychosis and that of *karma* appeared for the first time in the *Upaniṣads* and became overwhelmingly predominant in later Indian thought.\(^{93}\) *Kamma* is the law of moral causation. Rebirth is its corollary. Both the *kamma* and rebirth are interrelated fundamental doctrines which were prevalent in India before the advent of the Buddha.

Monima Chadha gives five meanings for *karma*. *Karma* is firstly understood as any act, being physical, mental, intentional, unintentional, moral or amoral etc. *Karma* can further be understood in a more restricted sense as any form of mental activity in any state of consciousness; this is not the action itself, but the intention of the action. The pivotal notion of the five meanings given by Chadha, is *karma* as all acts that have moral value. In the fourth sense, *karma* is understood as an imperceptible force

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or law shaping the destiny of all living beings. Lastly, *karma* is the accumulated result (residue) of all acts during one’s life.\(^94\)

In Buddhism, the word “*kamma*” or “*karma*” means action based on volition (*cetanā*).\(^95\) The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* defines *kamma* as deeds or actions that are associated with the mental state of volition (*cetanā*).\(^96\) All volitional actions involving body (*kāya*), word (*vācā*) or mentality (*mana*), are regarded as falling within the domain of *kamma*, which is constituted by good, bad or neither good nor bad actions. According to Buddhism, *kamma* without volition, namely, the instinctive actions such as sneezing, respiration and so on, is not regarded as *kamma* because it does not consist of a volitional consciousness, which is the most important factor in determining the nature of *kamma*. Volition (*cetanā*) is that which instigates and directs all human actions, both creative and destructive. Therefore, *kamma*, correctly speaking, denotes the wholesome and unwholesome volition.\(^97\) To quote the passage in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, the Buddha declares thus:

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\(^95\) The word “*cetanā*” is derived from Pali word as ‘*cetiī*’ to cause, to think, the causative of *cinteti*, from the root *cita*. *Ceto* and *cetasika* are derived from the same root, the former meaning ‘mind’, the latter mean ‘mental property’. *Cetanā* means the causal principle thought. And ‘will, in Buddhism, is the chief element of causation in karma.

\(^96\) A. III. p. 63.

“Monks, I say that determinate thought (cetanā) is action. When one determines, one acts by deed, word or thought”.  

In the words of Herbert V. Guenther: “Cetanā, to state it plainly, is something that corresponds to our idea of stimulus, motive, or drive. Especially this latter concept of drive, as a stimulus arousing persistent mass activity, assists in explaining the origin of activity as well as that which is excavated and is forthwith active. That which is aroused to activity is the sum total of all potentialities”. In other words, cetanā is not a matter of will alone, but also involves the impulse or drive to carry through with what is intended. Deliberate intention to do a deed plays an essential role in determining the ethical quality of that deed. Thus, a person who commits accidental manslaughter is not subject to kammic consequences as serious as those suffered by the perpetrator of a premeditated murder. In the same vein, throughout the Vinaya Piṭaka the penalties which are laid down for intentional violations of the monastic rules are more severe than those exacted for violations committed unwittingly. Likewise, temporary insanity is considered a mitigating circumstance by the Vinaya.

The meaning implies all other kammas except the mechanical one, which is evidently without any volition whatever. This view of the Buddha was misunderstood by Paribbājaka Potaliputta, who took it to

98 A. III. p. 415. “Cetanāhaṁ bhikkhave kammaṁ vadāmi, cetayitvā kammaṁ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā”.

99 Herbert V. Guenther, Philosophy and Psychology in the Abhidhamma, 1957, p. 66.

mean that according to him (the Buddha) *manokamma* is a true act and neither that which is vocal nor that which is bodily.\textsuperscript{101} The emphasis on volition, which is one of fifty-two *cetasikas* arising with every kind of *citta* in performing all activities, to be *kamma* is accepted as the Buddha’s contribution to the *kamma-doctrine*.

The existence of an experience and the unfailing experience of *kamma* is gain asserted by the Buddha in an explicit way in “I do not teach, Monks, the coming to an end of accumulated *kamma* intentionally done without being experienced, and this has to occur either in this very life or in another turn of existence. And I do not teach that there is any making an end of pain without having experienced the accumulated *kamma* intentionally done”.\textsuperscript{102} The words, “intentionally done” (*saṅcetanikaṁ*) presuppose the freedom of choice of the moral agent and his consequent responsibility.\textsuperscript{103}

In *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa defines *kamma* thus:

“*Kamma is the name of moral and immoral volition or consciousness*”.\textsuperscript{104}

The *Vinaya Piṭaka*, or the disciplinary code fully confirms that criminal intent was considered an essential ingredient of an offence. Thus the *Pārājika III* enjoins that the *Bhikkhu* who willfully deprives a human being of his life is guilty of a cardinal sin.\textsuperscript{105} Likewise *Pācittiya LXI* enjoins that a *bhikkhu* who willingly or knowingly deprives any other

\textsuperscript{101} M. III. p. 207.

\textsuperscript{102} A. IV. p. 345.


\textsuperscript{104} Vism. p. 614.

\textsuperscript{105} Vin. I. p. 70.
being of his life is guilty of a manner offence. Will or intention is an essential ingredient.\footnote{Vin. III. p. 123-24.} Again in the Cullavagga of the Vinaya Piṭaka the Saṅgha acquits a monk of blame and grants forgiveness, where the bhikkhu acts without full consciousness.\footnote{Vin. V. p. 80.} And a bhikkhu is not held liable for acts done under a fit of insanity and when out of mind.\footnote{Vin. V. p. 81.}

Buddhism is a path and a way and it is far more than a mere notion of the \textit{kamma-doctrine}, which is, as we have seen, not only recognized as a part of the law of \textit{Paṭiccasamuppāda}, but also as one of the twenty-four \textit{paccayās}. This amounts to saying that the \textit{kamma-doctrine} is closely related to, and is as important as the law of \textit{Paṭiccasamuppāda}. That is, the \textit{Paṭiccasamuppāda} describes all the \textit{kamma-process} and the \textit{kamma-result} in accordance with the Three Cycles (\textit{vatta}),\footnote{It is also called the triple round (\textit{vaṭṭa}), the three are as follows:}

\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textit{Kilesa-vaṭṭa}: Round of defilements
  \item \textit{Kamma-vaṭṭa}: Round of Karma
  \item \textit{Vipāka-vaṭṭa}: Round of Results.
\end{enumerate}

\footnote{\begin{enumerate}
  \item \textit{Kilesa-vaṭṭa}: Round of defilements
  \item \textit{Kamma-vaṭṭa}: Round of Karma
  \item \textit{Vipāka-vaṭṭa}: Round of Results.
\end{enumerate}}
existence or the past kamma. The fundamental law of kamma is retold by the Buddha in the Saṁyutta Nikāya. He says:

“A man is whatever he makes of himself; he himself reaps the results of that which has been sown by him, whether good or bad.”\(^{110}\)

Kamma and its result are invariably compatible just as every object is accompanied by its shadow. As kamma may be good or bad or neutral, so does the vipāka. It may be noted at the outset that the neutral kamma (abyākata), according to Nikāyas, means good deeds of the Arhants called Kiriyākamma (ineffective action), but according to the Abhidhamma it also covers kammavipāka (karmic result) as it is a result in itself and is not productive of another result.\(^{111}\) With reference to the cause or origin of kamma, the Buddha states that the origin of wholesome kamma (kusala-kamma) are three: non greed (alobha), non hatred (adosa), and non delusion (amoha) and the origin of unwholesome kamma (akusala-kamma) are three: greed (lobha), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha).\(^{112}\) In the kusala-kamma, wholesome action has happiness as a result, and akusala-kamma, unwholesome action has suffering as a result.\(^{113}\) The experience of the result may be in the present life, in the next life or in the future life. According to Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the cause of kusala-kamma refers to sobhana-cetasika, which means beautiful or

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\(^{110}\) S. XI. I. p. 10.

\(^{111}\) Narada Mahathera.1979, A Manual of Abhidhamma, pp. 22, 158.

\(^{112}\) A. I. pp. 134, 263, 264.

\(^{113}\) A. III. p. 338.
good type of psychic factors. They are altogether twenty-five in number. On the contrary, akusala-kamma refers to akusala-cetasika with immoral psychic factors. These are fourteen in number and available with all the twelve types of immoral consciousness akusala-citta).

The law of kamma (kammaniyāma) is self-subsistent in its operation, ensuring that willed deeds produce their effects in accordance with their ethical quality just as surely as seeds bear fruit in accordance with their species. The direct products of kamma are the resultant cittas that arise when kamma finds the right conditions to bear fruit. Kamma also produces a distinct type of matter in the organic bodies of living beings, called kamma-born matter.

At a more comprehensive level it also connotes the motivation behind the action and the objective set of consequences following from it. Thus, three factors are important in the study of kamma: first, the motivational impulsion, which determines the course of action; second,

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114 Sobhana-cetasika: Good types of psychic factors. The factors that are found in good types of consciousness are called sobhana. There are altogether 25 and have been classified under four categories namely: 1) Sobhanasādhārana Cetasika 19, factors that are essentially present in all the types of good consciousness, 2) Viratiyo 3, 3) Appamaññā 2, 4) Paññindriya I; Comp. 96, Cf. J. Kashyap. Abhidhamma Philosophy, Part I & II. Delhi: Bharatiya Vidaya Prakashan, 1996, p. 48.

115 Akusala-Cetasika 14, immoral, or unwholesome mental factors; There are two groups: 1) Sabbākusala Sādharana Cetasika 4: universal immorals, the primary. 2) Pakinnaka akusala Cetasika 10: Particular immorals, the secondary, See Comp. 95.

116 Akusala-Citta 1: immoral consciousness, there are three groups: 1) Lobhamūla Citta 8; 2) Dosamūla Citta 2; 3) Mohamūla Cita 2. See Comp. 82-83.
the specific physical and instrumental steps followed; and, third, and the
process of consequences (vipāka, or maturation, and saṁkhāra, or
impressions of actions, or disposition) that ensue from the action.\textsuperscript{117}

2.4.2 The Diversity of Action (Kamma)

*Kamma* is Sanskrit word that literally means “action”. The word is
used to refer to volitional acts as well as the forces that arise from these
acts. The Sanskrit word “is *Kamma*” in *Pāli* language”. It means
“action” or “doing”. Whatever one does, say or thinks is *Kamma*.

The Hindu and Buddhist concepts of *Kamma* are quite similar,
although Hinduism makes a further distinction between different types of
*Kamma*, such as present *Kamma* (Prābudha), latent *Kamma* (Sañcītta) and
future *Kamma* (Sañcīyamāna), but there is not much difference in its
theory. The law of *Kamma* describes the connection between actions and
the resulting forces.

In Buddhism, the term “*Kamma*” is used specifically for those
actions which spring from “mental intent” (Cetanā). In the *Anguttara
Nikāya*, the Buddha says:

“*Intention (Cetanā), monks is Kamma, I say. Having willed one
acts through body, speech, and mind.*”\textsuperscript{118}

Acts done with volition impulses or mental formation comes under
the category of *Kamma*. Good or bad *Kamma* in previous life give rise to
the stream of consciousness beginning with rebirth consciousness in a
new life. This arising of rebirth is the result of good or bad *Kammas* by

\textsuperscript{117} V.P. Varma. *The Origins and Sociology of the Early Buddhist Philosophy of
University of Hawaii Press, p. 27.

\textsuperscript{118} A.N. III, p. 415.
those with are not yet free from defilements. The Buddha said that wholesome action (*Akusala kamma*) lead to happiness and unhappiness respectively.

*Kamma* is the law of moral causation. It is the answer to the question of inequality in this world that is found at every step of life. Now the question arises that, whether this inequality of mankind has a cause or is it by chance? No sensible person would think of attributing this diversity, this inequality or this unevenness to blind chance or pure accident. In this world, nothing happens to a person what he does not deserve. Generally, men cannot comprehend the actual reason for this diversity because the invisible cause or cause of this visible effect is not necessarily confined to the present life but it may be traced to an immediate or remote past birth.

According to Buddhism, this inequality is not because of heredity or environment only but also because of *Kamma*. Better to say, it is the result of our past action as well as our present doings. We ourselves are responsible for our good or bad future. We are the architect or designer of our future and our life goes on, the way we design it, we make heaven or hell for ourselves. It is our karma that differentiates us from others. If the deed is good, it will yield favorable result and if it is bad then unfavorable result is produced. The general formula of causation is applied to the theory of *Karma* as being good, it conditions pleasant fruit and on being contrary unpleasant fruit is conditioned.

Thus, we see that theory of *Kamma* is based on the theory of causation. If the cause (*Kamma*) is pleasing then the effect (result) will also not be different from its cause. Besides this, as the causal chain of dependent origination starts with ignorance giving rise to mental
formations and as such the cycle of twelve links goes on. Such link becomes effect of previous link and cause of further link. In this way, the theory of cause and effect keeps going. Such is the theory of *Kamma* also where the actions, good or bad, done in previous birth cause happiness or unhappiness in our present birth and the deeds done in our present birth will not only form our present but also our future. Lack of clear understanding of causal theory leads to either externalism (*Sassata-ditthi* -soul is eternal) or annihilationist (*Ucchedaditthitthi* -nothing is permanent). The belief in annihilation after death is due to ignorance of cause and effect.\(^{119}\) Wholesome or unwholesome *Kammases* in previous life give rise to the stream of consciousness beginning with rebirth consciousness in a new life.

Confused by seemingly inexplicable, apparent dissimilarity that existed among the mankind, a young follower approached the Buddha and questioned him regarding this problem of inequality. Why do we find amongst mankind the short-lived and the long-lived, the health and the diseased, the ugly and the beautiful, the weak and the powerful, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born, and the ignorant and the wise? In reply to this, the Buddha said, “It is *Kamma* that differentiates beings into low and high.” Depending on this difference in *Kamma* is the difference in birth of beings, high and low, base and exalted, happy and miserable. Difference in the individual features of being as beautiful or ugly, well built or deformed is also based on the difference in *Kammases*. Different worldly conditions of beings, such as gain and loss, blame and praise, happiness and misery is also due to difference in *Kammases*.

Although we are indebted to our parents for our physical appearance, the accumulated *Karmic* tendencies inherited in the course of previous lives, play a far greater role than the hereditary parental cells and genes in the formation of both physical and mental characteristics. The Buddha, for instance, inherited like every other person, the reproductive cells and genes from his parents. But mentally, and intellectually there was none comparable to him in his long line of Royal Ancestors. He was certainly an extra-ordinary creation of his own *Kamma*. Thus, from a Buddhist perspective, our present mental, moral, intellectual, and temperamental make up is due to our own actions, both past and present, and this makes the difference.

An understanding of the theory of *Kamma* helps encourage a person or makes a person do good deeds and then to wait with ultimate certainty for its fructification. He knows that the results of good and evil, however long delayed, are never wasted or lost. It also strengthens a person’s faith in the Buddha’s Enlightenment and his proclamation of law.\(^\text{120}\) Theory of *Kamma* makes a person optimistic for he is never depressed or pessimistic over the failure thinking it to be a result of some past bad deeds. With such a reasonable faith, with full determination he keeps treading on the path of the *Dhamma*.

The quality of actions that we do can be described ethically as either good or bad, or both good and bad, or indifferent. The ability of discriminating between good and bad also varies from person to person. It depends upon the mental state of a person. A wise person at high level of mental development can clearly distinguish between good and bad,

whereas a deluded person is unable to do so. Delusion, greed and aversion are the three defilements that increase the level of confusion in an individual or a group. Consequently, the present defilements cause the low level of skill in distinguishing between the good and the bad actions. Thus, it is logical to say that we have skillful (good) and unskillful (bad) acts, thoughts and words.

The law of *Kamma* states that there is a connection between the moral quality and the resulting states. Our present is determined by what we did, thought or said in past and our future will be designed by what we are doing, thought or said in past and our future will be designed by what we are doing, thinking, or saying now. The deeds of past, present and future are connected by the law of cause and effect.

*Kamma* is understood as a natural law in Buddhism. There is no higher instance, no judgment, no divine intervention, no Gods that steer man’s destiny, no partiality or favoritism, but only the law of *Kamma* itself, which works on a global time frame. Deeds yield results either in the next second, in the next hour, day, month, year, decade or even in the next second, in the next hour, day, month, year, decade or in another distant life time.

Theory of *Kamma* removes superstitious beliefs also. Nothing is more auspicious than action. Superstition means the view which expresses that auspicious action should be done at auspicious time.\(^{121}\) The Buddha teaches mankind to have faith in action and not in superstition. If we wait for proper astrological moment, the good

\(^{121}\) A.N. K, p 294.
opportunity will slip off our hands. Teachings of the Buddha make one do virtuous deeds.\textsuperscript{122}

Although Buddhism attributes the variation in human beings to \textit{Kamma}, as being the chief cause, it does not, however, assert that everything is due to \textit{Kamma}. According to this view, our happiness and suffering does not arise only because of our previous actions, done in the previous lives. In that case, if only \textit{Kamma} is accepted to be the determining factor of our future then we will not have any other choice left for us as we are already bound by our past actions. If the present is totally conditioned or wholly controlled by our past actions, then, it will certainly be fatalism, or determinism, or predestination. If this were true, freewill would be an absurdity. Life would be purely mechanical just like a machine. Such a fatalistic doctrine is not the Buddhist law of \textit{Kamma}.

Buddhism is not rigid in case of \textit{Kamma}. Though our previous \textit{Kamma} is seen in a process of cause and effect, we are, at my moment, free to initiate a new \textit{Kamma}. \textit{Kamma} is the most important factor that forms our future, but it is not everything. The theory of free will of Buddhism gives a scope to optimism. What was previously mistaken, knowingly, or unknowingly done wrong in the past very well be changed afterwards.

P.A. Payutto\textsuperscript{123} gives an example, in this regard, of a man climbing upstairs. When he reaches the third floor, it is impossible for him to touch the ground from there or drive a car up and down there, having reached there, it is up to him, being exhausted, and whether to continue climbing

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\textsuperscript{122} D.N. II, p 227.
\textsuperscript{123} P.A. Payutto, 1993, \textit{Good, Evil and Beyond : Kamma in the Buddha’s teaching}, p. 86.
\end{flushright}
upstairs or taking rest and come downstairs. Similarly, although new action is still open for the individual, human being is free to choose the process of Kamma. Because of this free will, we are not merely the slaves of the past.

According to Buddhism, there are five orders or processes (Niyāma) which govern the physical and mental realm. They are:

1. *Utu-Niyāma* - physical inorganic order, e.g. seasonal phenomena of winds rains.

2. *Bīja-Niyāma* - order of germs and seeds (physical organic order) e.g., rice, grain, fruits etc. are produced from its seeds. The theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins is due to this order.

3. *Kamma Niyāma* - the cycle of deed and effect is a natural process like the path of the planets that revolve round the sun.

4. *Dhamma Niyāma* - Gravitation and other similar laws of nature, the natural reason for being good and so on, may be included in this group.

5. *Citta Niyāma* - order of mind and psychic low. In the process of consciousness, arising and perishing of consciousness, constituents of consciousness, power of mind etc. including telepathy, premonition, clairvoyance, clairaudience etc. come under this category.

We find that Kamma is only one of these above mentioned five orders. Of these five, the *Bija Niyāma* (physical organic order) and *Dhamma Niyāma* (order of norm) are more or less mechanical, though they can be controlled to some extent by human effort and power of the mind. For example, fire only burns, and extreme cold freezes, but one can do meditation without clothes on Himalayan snow. Psychic law (*Citta Niyāma*) is also equally mechanistic, but Buddhist training aims at control
of the mind, which is possible by right understanding and skilful volition. *Kamma* law also operates quite automatically, and when the *Kamma* is powerful, man cannot interfere with its inexorable results though he may desire to do so. Here also right understanding and skilful volition can mould the future. Good *Karma*, persisted in, can reduce the influence of bad *Kamma* or prevents the reaping of bad *Kamma*.

The discipline of *Kamma* is purifying and remedial. Its operation is the energizing of a vital law. It is the business of man to order his life so as to bring it into harmony with this law. The world was, is and will be ruled by righteousness.\(^{124}\)

The doctrine of the law of *Karma*, besides being the law of cause and effect, is a great asset for self-emancipation.

Literally, the term *Karma* or *Kamma* especially refers to the will or volition that is behind all action, be they physical, verbal or mental. But in general, it can be used to mean all deeds, words and ‘thoughts’ including emotions and all other mental operations, both good and evil.\(^{125}\)

The *Dhamma Vibhaga* has given the meaning of *Karma* as follows:

“The term Kamma has a neutral meaning and may become good or bad in accordance with the adjective qualifying it. When the English word thought is used to interpret mental actions or Mano-kamma, it must be understood to include emotions. Kamma can also be divided into good and evil or merit demerit or as some scholars prefer, wholesome and

\(^{124}\) S. Radhakrishman, 1929, *Indian Philosophy*, p. 45.

According to the Buddhist doctrine of Kamma, not all actions are called Kamma, only those that are performed with an intention, or volitionally, are called Kamma. As the Buddha says:

“Monks, I call volition Kamma, Monks, I say the intention is kamma, when one intends, one acts by deed, word or thought,”

Kamma can be performed through three “door” or “channels”:

1. **Kaya-Kamma**: Bodily actions or deeds.
2. **Vacī-Kamma**: Verbal actions words.
3. **Mano-Kamma**: Mental action or Thoughts.

An action is either or bad; a good action is called *Kusala-Kamma* (wholesome) and a bad one, *Akusala-Kamma* (unwholesome). Thus *Kusala-Kamma* means actions that are good, wholesome, skillful, and meritorious and *Akusala-Kamma* means those that are bad, evil, unwholesome, unskillful, and demeritorious.

The Buddha has classified these good and bad actions according to the three doors through which they are performed. They are as follows:

**The Ten Wholesome Actions**

**Three kinds are Bodily Actions (Kāya-kamma)**

1. Abstention from killing or injury
2. Abstention from stealing or cheating
3. Abstention from misconduct with regards to persons or things dear to others (or sexual misconduct).

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126 H.R.H. the late supreme Patriarch Prince Vajirañāṇavarorasa, 1975, *Dhamma Vibhāga*, p.50
127 A.II. p. 82.
128 M.I. p. 373.
Four kinds are Verbal Actions (*Vacī-Kamma*)
1. Abstention from false speech
2. Abstention from slandering
3. Abstention from harsh speech
4. Abstention from frivolous speech.

Three kinds are Mental Actions (*Mano-kamma*)
1. Not coveting and wanting things belonging to others.
2. Not being vindictive and intending harm to others.
3. Right understanding which accords with the path of *Dhamma*.

The Ten Unwholesome Actions (*Akusala-kamma*)\(^{129}\) are

as follower

A. Three kinds are bodily Action (*Kāya-kamma*)
1. Killing or injuring (one self or others)
2. Stealing or cheating
3. Wrong behavior in regard to sex

B. Four kinds are verbal Action (*Vacī-kamma*)
1. False speech
2. Slandering or malicious speech
3. Harsh speech
4. Rambling speech and nonsense.

C. Three kinds are Mental Actions (*Mano-kamma*)
1. Coveting and wanting things belonging to others
2. Intending harm to other
3. Forms of understanding which are wrong and at variance with the path of *Dhamma*.

\(^{129}\) D.III. p. 290.
Buddhism emphasizes the law of *Kamma* that man will be good or bad, depending on his own action. It does not play down the ability of human beings by sex, colour, nativity, tribe, ancestry etc. According to Buddhism, goodness or badness depends on one’s action. A person who is born in a royal house becomes despicable fellow if his action is bad, whereas a person who is born in the country side, and is poor, can be a great man by his good action. Thus good and bad action arises from man. In Buddhism, the measure of a man’s goodness is in virtue or morality, and the purity of his mind. A good man ought to be praised, but a bad man ought to be blamed.

The Law of *Kamma* is one of the main Buddhist teachings. It teaches man to rely on himself for his rise or fall. He must, therefore, know the good and realize that he can raise himself by his moral deeds alone. As the Buddha says:

“Purity or impurity is of doer, nobody can make other one to purify.”

The Law of action is a natural, impersonal law. Man must obey it, whether he knows it or not and whether he likes it or not. Hence, there is advantage of those who know and conform to it over those who are ignorant of it and who do not behave in conformity with it. As the Buddha says:

“Just as whatever plant he sows, so its fruit he gains. A good doer gains good fruit, a bad doer gains bad one.”

The Law of action is, in fact the Law of cause and effect in the moral sphere. It means that there is no effect without a cause and vice

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130 Khu.Dh. p. 37.
131 S.I. p. 333.
versa and that this is true no less on the spiritual plane than the material one. The point or essence is directed to the mind, the volition or will or motive lying underneath each and every action, physical, verbal and mental. An action, good or bad, produces a result or results sometimes the consequences are immediate and explicit; sometimes they are not. But it is always true that good actions produce good results and bad actions brings about the bad ones. We should therefore, try to do good and avoid evil.

There are a lot of the characteristics of the Buddha’s teaching such as, the Four Noble Truth (Cattāri Ariyasaccānī), the Dependent Origination (Paticca-Samuppā), the Five Aggregates of Existence (Pañca-Khandha), the Three Characteristics of Existence (Ti-Lakkhana) etc. The educator can study and research from many Buddhist texts. However, all Buddha’s teachings can be summarized into three Admonitions (Buddha-Ovāda) as follows:

1. Not to do any evil (Sabbapāpassa-akaranam)
2. To do all kinds of good (Kusalasūpasampadā)
3. To purity one’s mind (Sacittapariyodapanam).

2.4.3 Kamma’s Vipāka; (the Consequences)

The doctrine of Kamma Vipāka was developed by the Buddhist, the Jains, and the Brāhmanas by relating the type of birth (human or non-human), length of life (long or short), happiness and suffering etc. experienced as being the consequences of particular acts done by a being in his previous existence. The destruction of Kammass and detachment lead to emancipation, the cessation of transmigration whereas the

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132 Kh.dh. p. 40.

performance of Kammas leads to repeated births in five or six planes of existence. The duration of life in those planes of existence, the quality of life such as ill or good health, wealth and poverty, pleasure and pain etc. all depend upon the maturity (Vipāka) of the Kammas.

The doctrine of Kamma Vipāka is a natural and apparently logical development of the basic law of Karma. It deals with the mechanism of operation of the law and specific punishments and rewards for particular evil and good deeds.

The law of Kamma operates just like the vegetable world. As all seeds sown in the soil don’t grow and bear fruit, so some Kammas also become unproductive and ineffective. But if the seed of a bitter gourd is sown, it will have sweet fruits like apple or a mango, so it is clear from this that one is not bound to reap all that one has sown in just proportion. As fried seeds do not germinate, so the actions done by an Arahant or Akhīnāava do not bear any fruit. Only those actions are capable of producing fruit which are done under the influence of some desire.

According to Kathāvatthu commentary, in the working of Kamma its most important characteristic is Citta (mind). If mind is distracted no physical, vocal or mental deed can be done. All our words, deeds, and thinking are colored by mind or consciousness that we experience at that particular moment. In Dhammapadada, it is also said, “If one speaks or acts with a wicked mind, pain follow one as the wheel, the hoof of the drought-ox.”

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The Buddha admits a deed of mind as more important than of the body and speech, because the mental *Kamma* is the starting point of each *Kamma*. One always thinks before doing and speaking. The mental actions include belief, view, and theory, technically called *Ditthi* (view). If a view is wrong, speech and action will automatically be wrong.

Buddhism is a psychological religion. On the basis of psychology, it declares the foundation of the living world as:

"*Kammasakatā, mānava, sattā Kammadāuadā Kammayoni Kammabandhu Kammapatisarana Kammaṃ satte vibhajjati yadidaṃ hinappani tatāyā ti."\(^{139}\)

This world is totally based on *Kammas*. These *Kammas* play different role in moving the wheel of this universe. They are *Kamma sakatā, Kammadāyāa, Kammayoni, Kammabandhu, and Kammapaṭi saraṇa*.

A. *Kammasakatā* means volitional actions alone are the properties of their beings. Other materialistic things acquired by people remain here in this world after the death. Nobody can take his belongings with him but it is *Kamma* which goes with us in another world too.

B. *Kammadāyāda* means that beings inherit all the volitional actions done by them in their past and present existences. So, they are the heirs to their own *Kammas*.

C. *Kammayoni* means that all being are the descendants of their own *Kamma*.

\(^{137}\) M.N.I, p. 373.


D. **Kammabandhu** means that *Kamma* alone is the relative of all beings. Other friends and relatives are temporary but *Kamma* is the permanent relative that never leaves the being alone.

E. **Kammapāpaṭisaraṇa** means that *Kamma* alone is the real refuge of all beings. Volitional actions are refuge of all beings which accompany them in their life in continuity for many world-cycles.

Thus, we see that as the present *Kammas* become the source of income or livelihood, people are called *Kammasakatā*. Because of inheriting these present *Kammas*, they are called *Kammadāyadā*. The present *Kammas* being the root causes of the modes of generation, the people possessing them are called *Kammayoni*. As these present *Kammas* are their relatives, they are called *Kammabandhu*. The *Kammas* being the refuge, the masters of those *Kammas* are called *Kammapaṭsaraṇa*.\(^{140}\)

According to Buddhist Philosophy, the animate and inanimate world is dependent upon *Kamma* itself. The doer of a deed is to face its consequences, be it good or bad. The Buddha says, “Both moral and immoral deeds which a person commits in this world go with him in the next world”.\(^{141}\)

*Kamma* and its results are invariably compatible just as every object is accompanied by its shadow. As *Kamma* may be good or bad or neutral, so also is its reaction. *Kamma* consists of a man’s acts and their ethical consequences. Human actions are held to generate a force which is the motive behind the cycle of rebirth and death and which is to be faced by an individual until he attains liberation.

\(^{140}\) Kewal krishan Miltal, *‘Perspectives on Karma and Rebirth*, 1992, p. 196.

The Tathāgata explains that men pass from existence to existence in accordance with the nature of their deeds. Men are heirs to what they do.  

2.5 The Cycle of Action (Kamma)

We have seen from our previous discussion what the Buddhists mean when they speak of rebirth and how it is different from the conception of transmigration of the orthodox Brahmanical systems. Now our discussion will be focused on the consideration of the cause of rebirth according to Buddhism. According to doctrine of kamma, good conduct brings on a pleasant and happy result, while bad conduct brings on an evil result. Birth or rebirth is a phenomenon and it, therefore, depends on cause or conditions. The causes of rebirth are, according to Buddhism, the three kinds of craving (tanhā) mentioned in the second Noble Truth of the Four Noble Truths. They are:

1. Craving for sensual pleasure (kāmatanhā)
2. Craving for becoming (bhavatanhā) and
3. Craving for annihilation (vibhavatanhā).

Now, let us look closer at the three cravings as mentioned above. The term “kāma” means the sense object and the desire in that sense object. It is lustful, or desirous of sensual objects, namely, form or visible object (rūpa), taste (rasa), odour (gandha), sound (sadda) and touch

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144 These three kinds of craving are listed also at Vin. I. p. 10f., and in these passages: D. II. p. 61, 308: D. III. p. 216, 275: S. III. pp. 26, 158.
(phoṭṭhabba)\textsuperscript{146} which are agreeable, delightful and pleasurable, e.g. to look at a nice form, to hear a melodious sound, to have a delicious food, to touch a smooth figure etc. The above mentioned cases are the cause of attraction and due to that, passion arises in our mind, which is called Craving for Sensual Pleasure (kāmataṅhā) that it is subject to sensual object or sexual intercourse, which is a wrong understanding. In Dhamma, there are two types of Kāma. They are:

i) Vatthu-kāma or Objective Sensuality: It means form, sound, odor, taste and touch which are agreeable, delightful and pleasurable. Sexual pleasure is, therefore, a part of this sensual pleasure.

ii) Kilesa-kāma or Subjective Sensuality: It means passion, which is the condition of requirement, desire, and wish, anxiety in mind or deep sleeping in mind.

Bhavatanhā: It is the desire to have a long life or to be born in the special plane of existence or craving for existence with life or plane of existence. The desire to be something (for existence, most people will to be that, to be this, to be a rich man, to be powerful, etc.) is included in this kind of craving. The statement of the Buddha regarding tanhā point out that, usually common people are full of thought or will to be this and that with the variety in different aspects spreading with the power of tanhā. Later, many confusion arise, because tanhā causes adherence in unhappy existence (Apāya), evil states (Duggati), bad falling (Vinipāta) and the round of rebirth (Samsāra). The Buddha has made a comparison of tanhā with the net of a hunter. The birds are stuck in the loop of hunters due to the desire for food. The birds cannot take themselves off from the loop. In the same way, common people are stuck and struggle in

\textsuperscript{146} It is also called “Kāmaguṇa”. M. I. pp. 85, 173.
the world endlessly due to the power of tanhā. So, they continuously suffer from repeated existence. Thus, Bhava-tanhā refers to desire of existence or desire to be rich continuously.

We can say that the will to be stable in honor, renown and domination or will for becoming, e.g. in heaven and in the Brahma world etc., are called bhavatanhā. It is not possible to fix the beginning of bhavatanhā. But the cause factor of tanhā is avijjā. The word “Avijjā” here means ignorance. It is the root cause or factor of bhavatanhā. There is sutta which bhavatanhā is explained together with avijjā. Suttantikaduka (Dhammasaṅgani Abhidhamma Pitaka) deals with bhavatanhā immediately after it has defined ignorance as follows:

“What is the craving for rebirth?

The desire, the passion for coming into being, delight in coming into being, craving, fondness, for coming into being, the fever, the yearning, the hungering to come into being, which is felt concerning rebirth”.

Being associated with ignorance it leads one to state of suffering. This cause becomes painful because of Avijjā. Therefore, ignorance becomes the main root of evil which plays an important role, paving the way for all types of immoral states growing immorality. Avijjā works together with kāma and bhavāsava. They are immoral dhammā which lead man’s mind to undeveloped state. On the other hand, (I) Kāmāsava means mental intoxication of sense-desire, (II) Bhavāsava means mental intoxication of becoming and (III) Avijjāsava means mental intoxication of ignorance. In other words, Avijjā has been a mental-block of realizing this point of view, it is said that:

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148 Dhs. p. 318.
“Monks, one thing, if practiced and made much of, Ignorance (avijjā) is abandoned, knowledge arises, the concept of “I” is abandoned, the lurking tendencies come to be rooted up, the fetters are abandoned”\(^{149}\)

The ignorance remains of immoral and polluted Dhamma, with its nature, dark and dull styles: give the mind unable to know the means of action. And as the matter of fact, a man can kill, takes what is not given by others and so on. Avijjā comes into existence, giving darkness through a man’s mental function, not knowing the Noble truths which consist of four types, namely: not really understanding the suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. It works together with Āsava (mental intoxicant), gives a chance for further development of immoral dhamma. It can be said that; if there is no āsava, there should be no avijjā. In this way, Āsava is the factor for arising of Avijjā. And avijjā comes into appearance because of Asava. When mental intoxication is destroyed, ignorance is in the same situation. The destruction of mental intoxication means the disappearance of ignorance.

**Vibhavatanhā** or Craving for Self-Annihilation (Non-Existence): The desire for annihilation or the wish for annihilation means the wish for extinction of life at death. Thus, a person may think that this body is composed of the primary elements. Of them, the solid elements unite with the earth, the fluid elements unite with the water and so on when death occurs. Besides that there is no rebirth. So, it is the desire for not to be or not to remain in such condition but to go away from it. Thus, the term “Vibhavatanhā” means craving for non-becoming or Vibhava. The

\(^{149}\) A. I. p. 40.
Purābhedasutaniddesa explains the meaning of Bhava and Vibhava as follows:
i) Bhava (becoming) means Bhavadiṭṭhi (view or belief in becoming) and Sassatadiṭṭhi (eternalism).

ii) Vibhava (non-becoming) means Vibhavadiṭṭhi (view or belief in non-becoming) and Ucchedadiṭṭhi (annihilationism).

In the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhavatāṇhā has been explained thus:

“Therein what is craving for non-becoming? Lusting, infatuation of consciousness accompanied by annihilationistic view. This is called craving for non-being”.

In other words, each of the three kinds of craving is explained as below:

1) Kāmatāṇhā (craving for sensual pleasure) is the delightfulness of six objects regarding the objects of sensual enjoyment (kāmaguṇa) as imperishable.

2) Bahvataṇhā (craving for existence): it is a craving for sensual pleasures associated with the view of externalism enjoying pleasure thinking that they are imperishable. Thus, it is a desire coming from the belief in externalism (sassatadiṭṭhi). We receive form, sound, odor, taste and touch with the view that these objects are constantly stable without understanding the rising and falling of these objects.

3) Vibhavatāṇhā: It is the craving from the view of an nihilism about six objects, that the six objects are living or non-living things in this world but they cannot perpetually be stable. This view makes us adhere to the six objects. In another sense, anyone after death is annihilated i.e. non-rebirth. He has pleasure in false named Vibhavatāṇhā. It is said in Pali that “nabhavatītivibhavo” which means non-becoming or no-rebirth.

150 Khu.Nd. p. 420 TPC.
151 Vbh., p. 365.
It means that everything perishes after death. After death, extinction of
rebirth is named Vibhava, i.e. Ucchedadiṭṭhi (annihilationism). “Vibhavoca so taṇhā-cātivibhavatanā (va) vibhavetaṇhāvibhavatanhā”. It means craving associated with the belief that six objects cannot be
constantly stable or that there is no permanent self.

Taṇhā or craving is sometimes classified into six types corresponding to the six sense objects. They are craving for form or visible (rūpataṇhā), craving for sound (saddatāṇhā), craving for odor (gandhatāṇhā), craving for taste (rasatāṇhā), craving for tangible objects (phoṭṭhabbatāṇhā) and craving for cognizable objects (dhammatāṇhā). This classification is made just to distinguish the objects of desire; it does not really add to the number of cravings mentioned in the second Noble Truth as in each of these six types of craving involves, in fact, all the three kinds of the previous classification. In the case of Gandhatanā or craving for smell, for example, to desire for pleasant smell and cling to it is the role or Kāmatanā, to desire for that smell to remain as long as possible is the role of Bhavatānā and to desire for the undesirable smell to vanish is the role of Vibhavatānā. Thus, each of the three cravings always has its role in each of the six sense objects of desire.

In other words, these three kinds of craving are regarded in the Four Noble Truths as the cause of suffering (dukkhasamudaya). With regard to rebirth, the Buddha says that:

“It is that craving that leads downwards to rebirth, along with the lure and the lust that lingers longingly now here, now there, namely the

152 D. II. pp. 244, 280; S. II. p. 3; Vbh. p. 102.
craving for sensation, the craving for rebirth, the craving to have done with rebirth”.153

This is indicated that in Buddhism, rebirth is caused by Tanhā. Taṇhā makes us long for pleasure, and then cling to the pleasant objects. Such state is the cause of a new becoming. As long as these cravings have not been eradicated rebirth and other attendant sufferings are unavoidable. The cycle of rebirth goes on continuously unless and until the cycle of tanhā is cut off. Because the psycho-physical process of existence continues as long as unsatisfactoriness in life goes on. There is no more continuing of this psycho-physical process of existence after the death of an Arahant who has overcome all kinds of craving and there is no more suffering for him. Therefore, it should be definitely understood that craving is the origin of ever continuing, the arising of suffering in the lives of all beings, throughout all of their existences.

The unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth. The Buddha compares desire with the house-builder; because of not finding the desire, he had hurried through the rounds of many births.154 Besides, desire is also compared with one’s ties, and by destroying desire, one attains Nibbāna.155 In support of this, the Samyutta Nikāya acknowledges: “The man is tied by desire, by eradicating the desire he is free, and by abandoning the desire every bond is severed utterly”.156 It is generally regarded that craving (tanhā) and ignorance (avijjā) are the cause of rebirth or re-becoming in accordance with the law of paciccasamuppāda.

155 S. I. p. 9.
156 S. I. p. 79.
As mentioned above, these three kinds of craving are the causes of suffering in human beings. They operate as the conditions of rebirth, since as long as they have not yet been totally uprooted, a person will never be emancipated; he will suffer birth and death for indefinite period of time. From this point of view, we come to know *Avijjā* that it has the food to grow in immoral way. In *Saṁyojana Sutta*,\(^{157}\) *Avijjā* is combined with other fetter (*Saṁyojana*), binding human being to the wheel of transmigration. Buddhism has a definite explanation of the conditions or causes of rebirth when it speaks of the impurity of the mind as *Saṁyojana*. This *Pali* term literally means wheel of birth and death. *Saṁyojana* or fetter as mentioned in the *Pali* Texts\(^{158}\) is classified into ten types as:

1. *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*: This is The egoistic view or the speculation as to the eternity or otherwise of one’s own individuality. It is a false view (*micchādiṭṭhi*) upholding the existence of the permanent soul or self (*attā*).

2. *Vicikicchā*: Doubt or uncertainty about the Noble Truths, especially about the Four Noble Truths and *Nibbāna*.

3. *Sīlabbataparāmāsa*: It is the attachment to a mere rule and ritual. It is a wrong view holding that a certain ritualistic performance can lead to salvation.

4. *Kāmachandha*: This is the feeling of enjoyment in or clinging to, sensual pleasures.

5. *Byāpāda*: Ill-will or malevolence including the feeling of anger.

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\(^{157}\) A. V. p. 17.

6. **Rūparāga**: The lust for form or visible object. It is sometimes explained as the lust after rebirth in the realm of form.

7. **Arūparāga**: The lust for the formless or incorporeal objects such as attachment to happy feeling (*sukhavedanā*): it is also explained as the lust after rebirth in the realm of the formless gods.

8. **Māna**: Pride or conceit.

9. **Uddhacca**: Distraction or confusion of the mind.

10. **Avijjā**: Ignorance, especially, absence of proper knowledge of the Four Noble Truths.

The above ten fetters are divided into two groups. The first group consisting of five fetters, namely, *Sakkāyaditthi, Vicikicchā, Sīlabbataparāmāsa, Kāmachanda* and *Byāpāda*, is called *Orambhāgiyasamyojana*, the lower or rough fetters. The second group consisting of other five fetters, namely, *Rūparāga, Arūparāga, Māna, Uddhacca* and *Avijjā*, is called *Uddhambhāgiyasamyojana*, the higher or subtle fetters.

The analysis of the abandoning of various defilements, stated in these terms, goes back to the *Nikāyas*. The *Nikāyas* hold that the path of stream-attainment (*Sotāpanna*) abandons the first three fetters (*samyojana*), those of “identity-view” (*sakkāyaditthi*), “doubt” (*vicikicchā*) and “clinging to precepts and vows” (*sīlabbataparāmāsa*). The once-returner (*Sakadāgāmi*) abandons the first three and further weakens greed, hatred and delusion. The non-returner (*Anāgāmi*) abandons the first or lower five. The *Arahant* abandons all ten.\(^{159}\)

According to Buddhism, we have seen that the conditions or causes of rebirth of man are not external factors of any kind but the impure elements of his own mind. These mental impurities may, however, be

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called differently as craving (*taṇhā*), canker (*āsava*), latent dispositions (*anusaya*) or fetters (*saṁyojana*), yet their role is one, that is, to bind man to the wheel of birth and death (*samsāra*). They are the root causes of suffering experienced by man from the first moment of his birth to the last moment of his death. As long as these impure elements have not been rooted out he will never be free from bondage. Buddhism affirms that mental defilements (*kilesa*), the conditions of rebirth, can be limited and extirpated by following the Noble Eightfold Path or the Path leading to the end of suffering expounded in the Four Noble Truths. Thus, according to Buddhism the number of a person’s future births is determined by the number of his fetters extirpated. He who has broken all the ten fetters will undergo no more birth. He will, on the dissolution of his body, pass away into the blissful state of *Nibbāna*.

To stop rebirth one has to extinguish all desires, and to eradicate desire one has to destroy ignorance. Through the utter cessation of ignorance extinguishes all kinds of *kammas* and their fields.\(^{160}\) When ignorance is destroyed, the worthlessness of every such a re-becoming is perceived and the paramount need for the repeated births is entirely destroyed. In other words, it can be said that his consciousness is not reborn, because its cause, i.e. ignorance has been destroyed. As the Buddha declares:

“*Through the cessation of ignorance, karma-formations cease; because of the extinction of karma-formations, consciousness extinguishes: through the cessation of consciousness, mind-and-matter ceases*...”\(^{161}\)

\(^{160}\) A. II. p. 157.
\(^{161}\) M. II. pp. 63-64.
And becoming is the cause of rebirth again. With regard to this, the Buddha says:

“That which we will, Brethren, and that which we intend to do and that wherewithal we are occupied: this becomes an object for the persistence of consciousness. The object being there, there comes to be a station of consciousness. Consciousness being stationed and growing, rebirth of renewed existence takes place in the future, and here from birth, decay-and-death, grief lamenting, suffering, sorrow and despair come to pass. Such is the uprising of this entire mass of ill.

Even if we do not will, or intend to do, and yet are occupied about something, this too becomes an object there, there comes to be a station of consciousness. Consciousness being stationed and growing, whence birth of renewed existence takes place in future, and here from birth, decay-and-death, grief, lamenting, suffering, sorrow and despair come to pass. Such is the uprising of this entire mass of ill”.

Furthermore, the Buddha says that:

“That which we will, Brethren, and that which we intend to do, and that wherewithal we are occupied: — this becomes an object for the persistence of consciousness. The object, being there, becomes a station of consciousness. Consciousness being stationed and having grown, there comes a bending, there being a bending, there is going to a coming, there is a going to a coming, there is decease and rebirth, there being decease and rebirth, old age-and death happen in

^162 S. II. p. 45.
the future and grief, lamenting, suffering, sorrow and despair, even such is the uprising of this entire mass of ill”.

The above mentioned teaching of the Buddha is about the source of suffering of Pañcakkhandha or the life of all beings. If a monk or a thoughtful man thinks of any object which is delightful and pleasurable, these things are the objects of clinging (Ārammaṇapaccaya). If those objects are clanged, they are the basis of karma-consciousness. After the karma-consciousness is developed, a new becoming arises. If there is the becoming, there is birth, i.e. the birth of Pañcakkhandha which is followed by decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. The thought whether it is associated with intention or not, the condition of tanhā which is the cause of becoming and rebirth latter is followed by suffering. Hence, it is seen that the birth of man is the result of tanhā.

In technical terminology of Dhamma, the term “rebirth” is called “saṁsāravatta”. It is the nature or the process of becoming. But this process is related or interlinked with three factors i.e. defilement (kilesa), action (kamma) and consequence (vipāka). This means as long as a being is covered with ignorance, craving and clinging, he does immoral deeds and their result (vipāka) is also immoral, which gives rebirth. Hence, as long as one has defilement, his process of becoming goes on indefinitely.

When ignorance, craving and clinging arise to anyone, his mind becomes full of desires for pleasurable things. The strong defilement of mind cannot be controlled easily due to results of immoral deeds. The deeds, which are done with the power of defilements, are the result of birth in different becoming in order to suffer called vipāka i.e. the rebirth of a next becoming. If there is rebirth, it does not mean that there is no

163 S. II. pp. 46-47.
defilements. In fact, the defilements are still present. As long as the defilements are present, they force to do immoral deeds continuously and the process of becoming goes on. Hence, it is called Samsāravatta i.e. a round of rebirth. As long as there is birth, there must be suffering. The birth may be of any kind, the life of that kind has to face suffering. Thus, more or less suffering depends on the quantity of deeds done in the past. Hence, it is clear from the above facts that the becoming or the existence is conceived by us under two aspects: (a) action (kamma) and (b) result (vipāka). The active side of becoming is, for us, the life of action; the present life in which a man performs various actions by way of thought, speech and deed, moral and immoral, pious, spiritual and intellectual, determining thereby his character or shaping the nature of future existence.

In addition, Kamma is as the cause of rebirth, whereas the rebirth is proof of the validity and truth of kamma. Buddhism regards rebirth as a corollary to the law of kamma. One’s present life is a sum total of his actions performed in the past. What he is and what circumstances he finds himself in are dependent upon what he was and what he did in his past life. In the same way, what he will be and how he will be, circumscribed in the future, will depend upon what he is and what he does at present. If there is no karma and its result, rebirth will never occur. The influence of kamma is, therefore, dominant in determining the future birth of man. The Buddha, when asked by Ānanda Thera as to what are the causes of rebirth, replies that it is caused by the kamas of their respective nature, that is, the kammas of sensual nature produce sensual planes: the kammas of meditation-levels based on Form produce the planes of Form; and the kammas of the nature of meditation based on Formlessness produce the
planes of Formlessness. Therefore, *kamma* is comparable to a field, consciousness (*viññāṇa*) to a seed, desire (*tanha*) to the sap or life-force within the seed. For, *kamma* or volition of beings hindered by ignorance and bound by desire, takes place in sensual planes, material planes or immaterial planes. Thus there is repeated rebirth.\textsuperscript{164}

It is evident from the above discussion that re-becoming is made possible through the combined functions of three conditions, namely, *kamma*, desire and consciousness. It is consciousness that is reborn. As it is said, it is the seed that will grow if planted in the soil of *kamma* and watered by desire – and if some external conditions are also present. The Buddha also comments that through the entry of the consciousness of a departed person into a womb of a suitable woman, the personality of a new individual is reborn.\textsuperscript{165} Dealing with the process of rebirth, the Buddha states that where there are three conditions combined together, there a germ of human life is planted, that is, mother’s ovum, father’s sperm and there is being-to-be born (*gandhabba*). According to Nyanatiloka Mahathera, the *gandhaba* is none other than *kamma-vega* (karma-energy), which is sent forth by a dying individual at the moment of his death. He said:

\textit{“The dying individual, with his whole being convulsively clinging to life, at the very moment of his death, sends forth karmic energies, which, like a flash of lightning hit at a new mother’s womb ready for conception. Thus the so-called primary cell arises”}.\textsuperscript{166}

It may be noted that Theravāda Buddhism denies an indeterminate-state being existing between death and birth. This being

\textsuperscript{164} A. I. pp. 222-224.
\textsuperscript{165} D. II. pp. 62-63.
\textsuperscript{166} Nyanatiloka Mahathera, *Karma and Rebirth*, 1964, pp. 2-3.
the case, Piyadassi Thera maintains that *gandhabba* is simply term for the rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāna*) rather than for a discarnate spirit of any kind.\(^{167}\) It can really be said that human beings are born from *kamma*, while parents merely provide them with a material layer. But this should not make us misunderstand that parents do not have any merit at all.\(^{168}\) Since they do much for children – they bring them up, nourish and introduce them to the world – they are teachers of old, worthy of offerings; they are *Brahmā*.\(^{169}\) It is, however, said that at the moment of conception *kamma* conditions the initial consciousness or *gandhabba* which vitalizes the fetus.\(^{170}\) It would not be out of place to note here that the meaning of “*gandhabba*” as presiding over child-conception differs from “*gandhabba*” derived from *gandharva*, meaning “celestial musician” or “divine physician”.\(^{171}\)

Now, we may conclude that the role of *kamma* is vital in determining the future birth of an individual. In what form he will be and where he will be reborn depend on the nature of *kamma* performed by him in the past and at present. A person whose good deeds exceed evil deeds is naturally liable to be reborn in the happy realm of existence while he who indulges most of the time in evil actions is to be born in miserable conditions. But the regular performance of good or evil deeds is still not enough to be a criterion for predicting a person’s future birth since the function of karma is too complicated to be easily comprehended by one who lacks proper insight. Buddhism maintains firmly the justice of the law of *kamma*. No matter whatever and however the case may be,

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169 A. I. p. 131.
171 D. III. p. 212.
under no circumstances a bad *kamma* will bear a sweet fruit of happiness and a good *kamma* will produce a bitter fruit of suffering. From the Buddhist point of view, nobody who is still in bondage is perfectly virtuous or absolutely vicious. A common man whose cravings (*tanhā*) have not yet been totally exterminated is likely to accumulate both good and evil *kamma* in his struggle for existence. Thus, according to Buddhism, if an apparently vicious person is, after death, reborn in heaven it is because his virtuous deed performed in the past takes the foremost chance to produce its effect at the time of his death or because at that crucial moment his mind turns towards right view (*sammādīṭṭhi*) of the universal truth. Similarly, it is not because good *kamma* turns out to be evil and brings some apparently virtuous person to rebirth in hell, but because evil deed done by him in the past takes its course to ordain its fruit or because his mind turns towards wrong view (*micchādīṭṭhi*) at the crucial moment of his death.

However, even though a rogue dies and is reborn in heaven, it does not mean that he can escape his evil *kamma* done in his human life. Whenever his meritorious deed which sends him to a happy birth becomes exhausted his evil *kamma* will take its turn pulling him down from his happy bed and throwing him into the abyss of suffering. There he will suffer the burning consequences of his evil *kamma* as long as its power lasts. The *Saṁyutta Nikāya* states:

“According to the seed that’s sown, So is the fruit ye reap there from Doer of good (will gather) good. Doer of evil, evil (reaps). Sown is the seed and planted well, Thou shalt enjoy the fruit thereof”. ¹⁷²

¹⁷²  S. I. p. 227.
Kamma is a law in itself which operates in its own field without the intervention for any external, independent ruling agency. Inherent in kamma is the potentiality of producing its due effect. The cause produces the effect, the effect explains the cause. The seed produces the fruit, the fruit explains the seed, and such is their relationship. Even so are kamma and its effect.\textsuperscript{173} The Buddhist general statement concerning the law of kamma is true eternally.

2.6 The Summary of the Chapter

In conclusion, the origin of human live in Buddhism is that which are as follows: life etymologically is the state of being or the moments of continued existence. It is the collection of all phenomena that are parts of life i.e. which is ordinarily called life. In other words, life is the collected unit of all life factors.

The life as described in the Suttanta-piṭaka, consists of five Khandhas: Rūpa, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa. And in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka embodies three factors of absolute truth (Paramatthadhamma), i.e., Rūpa, Citta and Cetasika, and the relation between Body and Mind which are the essential factors of Human’s life.

And thus, life is a result of the unification of these five aggregates. If these five aggregates are separated individually, there will be no life remaining any longer, just or a motorcar would be called a motorcar (Ratha) only when all the parts are collectively assembled. If all its parts are disassembled, then the car will not exist anymore.

\textsuperscript{173} \textit{About Kamma: Selected Sutta and Selected Article}, Myanmar: The Department of Research and Compilation Sītagū International Buddhist Academy, 2003, p. 73.
The main factors of human life are classified into two parts, i.e., Body and Mind, which are the essential component parts. The body cannot sense or perceive anything, but the mind can. If human life consisted of only, it would be something like a matter, which cannot think, perceive, or deal anything at all, and as such, if the body exists without mind, then human life would have nothing to do with phenomena like rationality, morality, religion etc. The Buddha says, Kāya is significant only in so far as it is the abode of Citta. Thus, both Kāya and Citta are mutually dependent on each other.

The Nature Law takes place on account of the regular conjunction of Cause and Effect (Idappaccayatā), i.e., the law of nature (Dhamma-miyāma) which regulates the mode of world life. This law is there, it belongs to none.

Therefore, life which is the combination of five Khandhas, i.e., Rūpa, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra and Viññāna is subject to the Law of Dependent Origination. The life is changing in cycle such as arising, remaining and extinguishing; it is a state of going on in continuous succession.

All things human or animal, concrete or abstract, corporeal or mental, being or non-being, are subject to the law of cause and effect or so to say, the natural law.

The natural law and the truth have same characters, i.e., it is in line with the cause and effect, but it may be different according to its particular relative characters which may be quite easy to study. It can be summed up into five groups in the form of natural basis for the orderliness which is usually called Niyāma. It is the Utuniyāma, Bijaniyāma, Cittaniyā, Kammaniyāma and Dhammaniyāma.