

Universal Suffering (Dukha)

-P. G. Yogi

"As of old, O bhikkhus so now I proclaim only this Suffering and the cessation of suffering"

The assertion that suffering besets life in all its ramifications is something fundamental to the world view to which any philosophy worthy of the name would subscribe. The whole creation is beset with vulnerability. If this is a platitude, it is nevertheless a platitude which it is difficult to erase, considering that all are in chains; and each link bears its own particular strain.

As it is said:-

"Wondering afar, solitary, bodiless and lying in a cave is the mind. Those who subdue it, from bondage, are forever freed"

If it is true that suffering besets life in all its ramifications, this fact has however to be viewed in its proper perspective, and not-distorted into some pessimistic nihilism of despair for when an insight into the things as they really are is attained, the realization should also accompany. That the spectacle (of suffering), though shattering, is nevertheless something which is neither defeatist nor fatalistic, since suffering even if universal in scope is not eternal as such.

As it is said:-

"The world, Kaccayana, is for the most part attached to two extremes. Everything exists: that, Kaccayana, is one extreme. Everything does not exist: that, Kaccayana, is the other extreme. Transcending these extremes, Kaccayana, the Tathagata expounds dhamma by way of causes"

Things arise, and things perish. It is this arising and this perishing which in its fundamental amorphousness and ephemerality constitutes what is called suffering. The nuclei of birth, decrepitude, disease and death pervade life wherever life is to be found, often though invisible to normal sight, dormant like seeds deep in the soil, awaiting for favourable conditions to emerge.

Suffering itself can be endured if it is issued in some beneficial end. But it is not worth the enduring if it is merely to issue in a perpetuation of amorphous plurality, with neither an ultimate aim nor purpose. That, life should be at the mercy of this unnecessary suffering at all is the factor which is to be deplored. It is this perpetual state of being a victim which characterizes life as it is that wisdom recommends it as something to be viewed with distaste. For although it may be man's conceit to conceive himself as the master of his fate, he, in reality, remains what he has always been the plaything of impulse and sport of every random contact which upsprings.

The arising of suffering is of course inextricably rooted in that of ignorance (*avitta*). This is because although perversity may impel a man to indulge in activities which he knows will have deleterious repercussions, nevertheless, no sane man desires suffering merely for suffering's sake. It is thus said that ignorance is at the root of all ills for no sane man works against his own benefit. Ignorance here is tantamount to delusion (*moha*) and this is a general malady, a collective one.

People bound together by a delusion, as it were, form a collective cohesive mass. The cohesion of this mass is the world's evil. All the reasonable activity of humanity is directed towards the destruction of this cohesion. But the cohesion of the particles (which form the mass) is not destroyed until the inner force passes from the mass to the particles and obliges them to separate from it. The strength of this cohesion of people lies in a falsehood. The force freeing each particle of the human cohesive mass is truth. Man can attain the truth only by deeds of truth. Only deeds of truth bring light into man's consciousness by destroying the cohesion of deception and separate men one after another from this mass bound together by the cohesion of deception.

Delusion, however, is only the negative aspect. Greed (*lobha*) supplies the impelling force, the acquisitive instinct, to which spatio-temporal life is subjected to, never to be assuaged the more it acquires. Accompanying greed, the ceaseless struggle for personal aggrandizement, anger and hate (*dosa*) comes to play a master part.

These three nucleus, representing the positive and negative ingredients which comprises personality, serve as the basis for perpetuation of amorphous plurality which characterise life wherever life is found. And its appearance proceeds along certain dependent links (*Paticca Samuppada*).

Proceeding from ignorance (*avitta*) as base the aggregates (*Sankharas*) of impressions appear. With the aggregates of impressions as base rebirth-consciousness

(vinnana) appears. With rebirth-consciousness as base the intangible-tangibles (nama-rupa) appear. When this appears, then the sense bases (Salayatana) appear, then contact (Phassa) appears, then feeling (Vedana), then desire (tanha), then grasping and attachment (Upadana), then becoming (bhava), then birth (jati), and then old age and death (taramarana) appears.

Ignorance is, of course, no first cause but merely the negative strata wherein life takes its rise. Anything endowed with consciousness-a consciousness unaware of the true nature of things and how they arise-is an ideal base for the gravitation of deceptive impressions into its field. These deceptive impressions imbued as they are with the cognitive element and possessing little, if any, self-control, exist in a jumble of ill-sorts, with no direct volition over their immediate destiny.

As in the amoebic phenomenon, the intangible (nama) aggregate are perpetuated by the impulsion of an amorphous momentum, beset with a tendency to split off into separate fields of existence the moment opportunity offers. This psychic form of parthenogenesis, through the very nature of its impulsions, adheres for only an indeterminate duration to a particular form (rupa) before it resplits again. This form of psycho parthenogenesis goes on for a longtime.

This is only to be expected, because whenever the cognitive element (Vinnanadhatu) becomes embodied in a formative field such as the body, the tendency is always to establish immediate identity through the sense-bases (Satayatana) and by its environmental contact (Phasa). Environmental contact sets the base for the arising of feeling, the feeling, of persistent personality. Feeling (Vedana) assailed by desire for life (tanha) and its titillations serves as the base for the emotions of grasping and attachment (upadana). Once this form of possessive personality is established through environmental friction, its bundle of impulsions inevitably propel it in the direction whereby it may retaste its accretions to surfeit. This persistent state of potential becoming (bhava) rounds itself off in repetitious birth (Jati), which by its very nature is attended by decrepitude and death (Jara-marana).

Although this continuity of the psycho-physical process may be grasped intellectually, it nevertheless belongs to that class of truths which Buddha himself categorized as 'profound-even in its appearance profound'. And this implies that the process is not merely the delineation of a specific personality's rebirth career, but the veiled fact of how a certain aggregate of impressions (Sankharas) begins, through environmental contact (Phassa), to develop anew and re-split into the psychic amoebae of other completely separate sets of personality-grasping fields (upadanakkhandha), without any immediate knowledge of this origin or parentage.

This, however, shall be dealt with more detail in the chapter on Anatta which follows. For the present, it is necessary to deal more explicitly on the factors which serve as modes for the manifestation of life in a world where even ephemerality arises by way

of conditionality, of which conditions (Paccaya) there are 24 modes: (1) Root-cause (hetupaccaya), (2) Psychic support (aramana-paccaya), (3) Predominance (adhipalipaccaya), (4) Contiguity (anantara Paccaya), (5) immediate contiguity (Samanantara Paccaya), (6) Co-nascence (sahatata paccaya), (7) Reciprocity (annamanna paccaya), (8) Characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya), (9) Decisive dependence (upanissaya paccaya), (10) Antecedence (puretata paccaya), (11) Consequence (paccatata paccaya), (12) Frequency (a sevana paccaya), (13) Volition (Kamma paccaya), (14) Resultancy (vipaka paccaya), (15) Nutriment (ahara paccaya), (16) Controlling faculty (indriya paccaya), (17) Concentrated absorption (Jhana paccaya), (18) Path (magga paccaya), (19) Association (sampayutta paccaya), (20) Disassociation (vippayutta paccaya), (21) Presence (atthi paccaya), (22) Absence (natthi paccaya), (23)-Disappearance-abeyance (vigata paccaya), (24) Appearance continuance (avigata paccaya).

The mutable causes which combine to make anything manifest in spatio-temporal fact, even for a fraction of a second surpass all count. Within the broad framework of these modes, however, all things have their momentary play. Thus, to be more explicit:

(1) **ROOT CAUSE** (hetupaccaya): It is the ethical root cause, ninefold in scope, which is implied here namely as, greed (lobha), hate (dosa) and delusion (Moha) which are adverse conditions (akusala paccaya). These are offset by their opposites- non greed (alobha), non-hate (delusion (amoha), which are beneficial conditions (kusala paccaya). Beyond these are the neutral (avyakata) conditions, namely-neither greed nor non- greed, neither hate nor non-hate, neither delusion nor non- delusion.

(2) **PSYCHIC SUPPORT** (aramana paccaya): This is six-fold in scope, namely-the psychic support of visibility (ruparammana), of audition (Saddarannan), of odours (gandharammana), of flavours (rasarainmana), of tangibles (phothhabbarammana), and of intangibles (dhammarammana). These psychic supports are always accompanied by the concomitants (cetasikas) of contact (phassa), feeling (vedana), perception (sanna), volition (cetana), concentration (ekaggata), vitality (jivitindriya), and consciousness (whether mundane or supra mundane, present, past and future) and the 52 concomitants of consciousness. Of these psychic supports, 52 are sensual (Kamaaramana), 6 of great-extent (Mahaggataaramana) involving the formless concentrated-absorptions of the infinity of consciousness and neither perception nor non-perception, 21 of neuter base (pannatarammana) involving the concentrated-absorptions of form and the formlessness of the infinity of space and voidness, 8 of supramundane status derived from emancipation of mind (nibbana arammana), 20 of general derivation (sabbaaramana) except the supernormal functional consciousness (abhinna-citta), and mind-door emancipated consciousness (manodvararika citta).

(3) **PREDOMINANCE** (adhipati paccaya): Predominance is a mode of conditionality. In view of the fact that all things are composed of numerous forces,

generally existent in a latent states, the factor which predominates at any given moment takes precedence over the rest, relegating all other factors to the background.

(4) CONTIGUITY (anantara paccaya): Any factor which is conditioned by contiguity exerts its potential energy in active force as occasion permits, and determines its perpetuity.

(5) IMMEDIATE CONTIGUITY (samanantara paccaya): Any factor in immediate contiguity possesses the potentiality of direct influence, and as such is more decisive than the preceding mode of conditionality as its potentiality being in the successive contiguity.

(6) CO-NASCENCE (SAHAJATA PACCAYA): That, which exists or manifests simultaneously serves as a mode for connection and interconditionality.

(7) RECIPROCITY (ANNAMANNA PACCAYA): That, which possesses the potential to activate another and be activated in turn thereby partakes of the mode of this conditionality of reciprocity.

(8) CHARACTERISTIC DEPENDENCE (nissaya paccaya): That, which depends upon some characteristic for support manifests under the mode of this conditionality.

(9) DECISIVE DEPENDENCE (upanissaya paccaya): That, which plays a decisive part in the characteristic of any given subject is a condition for manifestation. In its psychological aspect, it is the characteristic habit of mind integrated in a specific field. The function of such character is to perform, to support, to regulate and to decide. Without such characteristic decisive dependence, the mind remains the sport of every random mutable cause that arises. In function, therefore, this mode of conditionality has great significance as being a major factor which decides.

(10) ANTECEDENT (PUREJATA PACCAYA) : That which is antecedent, necessarily plays an essential part in the temporality of any particular manifestation through conditionality.

(11) CONSEQUENCE (PACCAJATA PACCAYA): That, which follows serve as the conditional sequence for all activity and process.

(12) FREQUENCY (asevana paccaya): The frequency of any given factor possesses great potentiality in the determination of manifestation through conditionality.

(13) VOLITION (Kamma paccaya): That causality which any living thing activates of its own accord, and which is either black, white, black-white, or neither black nor white. The last named applies to that kamma which is not induced and therefore tends to be a non-issue. Kammic volitions have their effect (vipaka) in the present life (ditthadhamma vedaniya-kamma), or are experienced in the next (upajjati vedaniya kamma), or continue to manifest in successive births (aparapara vedaniya kairma), or

are unconscious and unintentional. Kamma is as potent as the will (cetana) behind its instigation. There are four aspects which determine its potency, whether for good or ill:- (1) Premeditated intent (burapha cetana), (2) Immediate intention resulting in the act (muncana cetana), (3) Immediate satisfaction after the act (apara cetana), (4) Satisfaction at a recollective removal (aparapara cetana). When all these aspects are complete, the effect for good or ill is strong, as the case may be. If only the first is present and no action follows to support it, only an impress is made on consciousness.

(14) RESULTANCY (vipaka paccaya): That which is the fruition of volitions performed, and as such, may be black, white, black-white, or neither black nor white.

(15) NUTRIMENT (ahara paccaya): There are four forms of nutriment which serve as modes of conditionality; material food (kabalinkarahara), contact (phassahara), volition (maosancetanahara), and consciousness (vinnanahara).

(16) Controlling faculty (indriya paccaya): There are twenty-two potential controlling faculties, serving as bases for conditionality. The controlling faculties of vision (cakkhindriya), of audition (solindriya), of olfaction (ghavindriya), of gustation (jihhindriya), of tactile sensation (Kayindriya), of mentation (manindriya), of femininity (ithindriya), of masculinity (purisindriya), of vitality (fivitindriya), of pleasure (sukhindriya), of pain (dukkhindriya), of happiness (somanassindriya), of grief (domanassindriya), of equanimity (upekkindriya), of faith (saddhindriya), of energy (viriyindriya), of mindfulness (Satindriya), of concentration (samahindriya), of wisdom (Pannindriya), of aspiration to the supramundane (anannata-nassamitindriya), of comprehension of the supramundane (annimindriya), of attainment of the supramundane (annata-vindriya). Their function is to direct, to dominate, to perpetuate, and to achieve. Based on the conditionality of these potential controlling faculties, all things subjective come to rise; whether through desire, through application, or through kamma. Thus because of the dynamism of the potential faculties of vision etc, there arise in rebirth the spheres (ayatanas) of eye etc, respectively. That which remains only in the mode of unrealized potentialities become thus an actual physicalized fact, perpetuating its function there through.

(17) concentrated-absorption (jhana paccaya): A factor extremely potent in the determination of psychological conditionality. There are nine such absorptions of buoyancy and ease accompanied by thought, of bliss, of equanimity, of one-pointedness, of spatial infinity, of conscious infinity, of voidness, of an intermediate state, which is neither perceptive nor non-perceptive, and of the cessation of perception and feeling.

(18) PATH (magga paccaya): The factor which determines the possibility of attainment leading to release.

(19) ASSOCIATION (Sampayutta paccaya): The mode of conditionality which

connects;

(20) DISSOCIATION (*vippayutta paccaya*): The mode of conditionality which disconnects.

(21) PRESENCE (*atthi paccaya*): The factor which exerts influence due to its potential presence.

(22) ABSENCE (*nathi paccaya*): The factor which also serves as a mode of conditionality by its very nature of potential absence.

(23) DISAPPEARANCE- abeyance (*vigata paccaya*): The mode of conditionality which is characterized by disappearance and poised thus in abeyance.

(24) APPEARANCE-CONTINUANCE (*avigata paccaya*): The mode of conditionality which is characterized by appearance and conditionality which is characterised by appearance and continuing as such.

When, therefore, it is said that 'even in this very body, six feet in length, with its sense-impressions, thoughts, and ideas, is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation thereof. The implicit fact is that since all things arise through conditionality, by occasion, and by way of cause, there is nothing in the phenomenal world which subsists as a thing in itself, but that its consistency is forever in flux, and that, since the mind is more potent than matter, it can dominate it and, working its way out of it, be released. The support for the manifestation of the five aggregates of grasping personality (*pancupadanakkanda*) comprising form (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perception (*sanna*), impressions (*sankharas*), and consciousness (*vinnana*), are a composite product of volitions (*kamma*). Activated by desire (*tanha*) and attachment (*upadana*) they become a formidable elements for good or ill.

The five aggregates are the personification in a specific field of three of the four absolutes (*Paramatha*). Form (*rupadhamma*) is the third absolute, feeling-perception-impressions comprise the second absolute (*cetasika*) and consciousness is the first of the absolutes (*citta*). The last absolute is that of release (*Nibbana*).

Why are they termed absolute? Because, beyond them there is nothing. They are absolute in the sense that they are to be found wherever life is found. They are not viewed as absolutes from the individual point, but universally as cosmological ultimates. It is from the fusion of these absolutes (excepting *Nibbana*) that the ideas of personality and identity originate.

CONSCIOUSNESS: (*citta*) is that element *Vinnanadhatu*, which by its very nature is pure awareness. However, since pure awareness never exists by itself but is always yoked to awareness of something, even if this something be nothing more than spatiality,

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consciousness is something which is to be analysed according to a whole gamut of possibilities. There are eighty-nine states of consciousness; eighty-one are mundane (Lokiya), and eight supramundane states number forty, thus totalling 121 states of consciousness in all. These states maybe summarized thus: 21 beneficial (Kusala), 12 adverse (akusala), 36 resultant (Vipaika), and 20 functional (Kiriya). They may be subdivided again into mundane and supramundane.

MUNDANE: (1) Eight initial states based on happiness and equanimity, whether self-induced or otherwise; (2) Three functional states based on happiness and equanimity; (3) Twelve states based on greed, hate and delusion; (4) Twenty-three resultant states based on formless consciousness; (5) Nine initial thanas, or concentrated absorptions; (6) resultant thanas.

SUPRAMUNDANE: (1) Four initial attainments (stream enterer path etc); (2) Four resultant attainment (stream-enterer fruition etc). (3) Eight functional states based on happiness and equanimity, whether self-induced or otherwise; (4) Nine functional thanas.

Consciousness may be classified again under 7 categories of elements (dhatu): (1) Two eye-consciousness elements (cakkhu Vinnana dhiatu); (2) Two ear-consciousness elements (sota vinnadhātu); (3) Two nose consciousness elements (ghana Vinnanadhātu); (4) Two tongue-consciousness elements (firha Vinnanadhātu); (5) Two tactile-consciousness elements (Kaya Vinnanadhātu); (6) One, five sense door elements (Pancadvara Vattana Manodhatu) and two contact receptacle elements (Sampaticchana Manodhatu); (7) Seventy-six mind-consciousness elements (Mano Vinnanadhātu) which may be classified according to planes of existence (bhumi): Sensual Plane (Kama Vacara)- 54 states of consciousness, comprising 8 states of greed (Lobha), 2 states of hate (dosa), 2 states of delusion (moha), 7 states of adverse resultancy (akusala Vipaka), 8 states of beneficial resultancy (kusala Vipaka), 3 states of functionality (Kiriya), 8 states of great benefit (Mahakusala), 8 states of great resultancy (Maha Vipaka), and 8 states of great functionality (Mohakiriya).

Form (Brahma) plane (Rupavacara): It is a state of consciousness comprising 5 states of benefit, 5 states of resultancy and 5 states of functionality.

Formless (Arupa-Brahma) plane (Arupavacar) The 12 states of consciousness comprising 4 states of benefit, 4 states of resultancy, or if classified according to thanic attainments- 20 beneficial and 20 resultant.

The supramundane states of consciousness are the ultimate aim of all effort, and are induced by discipline of mind, by treading the right path, which in its concentrated form is absorption in thana.

With these supramundane states of consciousness as base, the Noble One, even in

the this life, renders extinct all hindrances and unwholesome states and passes beyond (Nibbana).

Concomitants of Consciousness (cetasika): The concomitants of consciousness accompany consciousness and characterize its essence. They are fifty-two in number, and they are classified as neutral, as adverse, and as beneficial.

Neutral concomitants total thirteen: (1) Contact (Phassa), (2) feeling (vedana), (3) perception (Sahna), (4) Volition (cetana), (5) concentration (ekaggata), (6) vitality (jivitindriya), (7) attention (manasikara), (8) application (vitakkha), (9) sustained application (vicara), (10) bliss piti), (11) resolution (adhimokkha), (12) energy (viriya), and (13) zeal (chanda).

There are fourteen adverse concomitants: (1) Greed (lobha), (2) hate (dosa), (3) delusion (moha), (4) consciencelessness (ahirika), (5) shamelessness (anottappa), (6) conceit (mana), (7) biasedness (ditthi), (8) envy (issa), (9) avarice (maccariya), (10) worry (kukkucca), (11), sloth (thina), (12) torpor (Middha), (13) agitation (uddhacca), and (14) doubt (vicikiccha).

Beneficial concomitants number twenty-five: (1) faith (saddha), (2) mindfulness (sati), (3) modesty (ottappo), (4) non-greed (alobha), (5) non-hate (adose), (6) non-delusion (amoha), (7) impartiality (tatramajjhata), (8) tranquility of formations (kaya passaddhi), (9) tranquillity of consciousness (citta passaddhi), (10) adoptability of formations (kayamuduta), (11) adoptability of consciousness (cittamuduta), (12) buoyancy of formations (kaya lahuta), (13) buoyancy of consciousness (citta lahuta), (14) pliancy of formations (kayakammannuta), (15) pliancy of consciousness (cittakammannuta) (16) proficiency of formations (kaya payunnata), (17) proficiency of consciousness (citta payunnata), (18) rectitude of formations (kaya ujukata), (19) rectitude of consciousness (citta ujukata), (20) right speech (samma vaca), (21) right conduct (samma Kammanta), (22) right livelihood (samma ajiva), (23) compassion (karuna), (24) sympathetic joy (mudita), and (25) wisdom (panna).

Formations (Rupa): There are twenty-eight apprehensible categories of formations whether underived or derived.

Underived: The four primaries of earth, water, fire, and air.

Derived-The sensitivities of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, perceptibles, sounds, odours, flavours, femininity, masculinity, vitality, heart-base, bodily intimation, verbal intimation, spatiality, buoyancy of formations, pliancy of formations, adoptability of formations and nutriment,

Spatiality is included as a derived category because the space which is apprehended by the senses is a compounded element and derived. Only that space which is characteristic of Nibbana may be termed un-compounded and underived.

Regarding how the five aggregates of rebirth-personality take relinking (patisandhi) in the human womb, it is important to note that no rebirth fusion is possible if the aggregates do not gravitate and sink to the pit of the mother's diaphragm (in line with the navel), for this is the point of contact between parent and embryo, which originates at this seat inpermeating the ovum. At this initial stage, the formation is termed Kalala-rupa, and is as minute as a speck of oil suspended at a needle's point. After seven days it develops into what is called the ambuddha-rupa. After fourteen days it develops into the pesi-rupa, after twenty-one days into the ghana-rupa. After twenty-eight days have elapsed it develops into the Pasakna-rupa which implies that five offshoots sprout out to form the four limbs and head. After the thirty-fifth days, the optical faculties (cakkhu dasaka kalapa) emerge, to be followed after the forth-second day by the emergence of the auditory group (Sota dasakakalapa), followed after the forty-ninth day by the nasal group (ghana daskakalapa), the process of which is completed by the sixty-third day. The embryo then develops in dimensions until its delivery.

This formation, in its completeness, is termed, "Kaya". And it is so called to forestall identification therewith as a permanent self (atta). Forms are self-devoid, but recur wherever life is found. Therefore, although ephemeral, they are in a certain sense absolute. Ephemeral (sammute) as units, but absolute (paramattha) as universal modes. To borrow Whitehead's terminology regarding colour: "They haunt time like a spirit. They come and they go, but when they come they are the same. They neither survive nor do they live. They appear when they are Wanted".

'They haunt time like a spirit', because they are part to process lacking definite or permanent base. They come and go', because, like wind they rise and subside, having no constant abode. 'When they come they are the same' because they are common to type, possessing the same appearance and shape. 'They neither survive nor live' because nothing that is compounded (whether by matter or mind) survives or lives in the sense of to endure. 'They appear when they are wanted' because desire is their motif and when thus desired thus they appear.

Form, therefore, is termed the third absolute. As an absolute 'self' is abandoned but form is retained.

The assertion that 'even in this body is world and the origin of the world', therefore possesses vast significance, involving in terms of conditionality, profound possibilities. However, since suffering is not the be-all of existence, in the aftermath of enlightenment, the spectacle of origins in all its complexity, though shattering, nevertheless brings with it a new perspective and the prospect that, for the earnest man at least, the certainty of a way to emancipation exists and the attainment of eventual release assured.

"Even In this body.. the cessation of the world, and the way thereto"

However, the cessation and the way thereto must be for involving right concentration.