

## The Philosophy of Relations in Buddhism (2)

### THE THEORY OF RELATIONS AND THE TWELVE FACTORS OF THE LAW OF DEPENDENT ARISING

THE theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) with its twelve factors is, no doubt, anterior to the theory of Relations (*paccaya*) as is evident from the Nikāyas. Taking into consideration their outward forms they may appear to be two different theories. It is wrong to suppose them to be two different theories in view of the discovery of the Buddha, according to whom causality is the one reality of the sensuous world and there cannot be two theories. As is evident from a previous discussion<sup>1</sup> these two, i.e., the theory of Dependent Arising and the theory of Relations are two facets of the same doctrine. The former describes the things that are related and the latter, the ways in which things are related. Therefore the two constitute one consistent whole, the one supplementing the other.

Again the theory of Relations is the final development of the theory of causality discovered and propounded by the Buddha. And it was also said that the theory of Relations was formulated by the Ābhidhammikas in an attempt to place the theory of Dependent Arising on a more philosophical foundation. To find out how far the attempt of the Ābhidhammikas had been a success is the purpose of the present chapter.

Taking the theory of Dependent Arising in its reverse order (*paṭiloma*), let us see how decay (*jarā*), death (*maraṇa*), grief (*soka*), lamentation (*parideva*), suffering (*dukkha*) and dejection (*domanassa*) are related to birth (*jāti*). Birth, in the first place is related to the rest by way of effect-condition (*vipāka-paccaya*) for the latter are nothing but the fruitioning of the cause which is birth. It also serves as a contiguous condition (*anantara-paccaya*) for immediately after birth the rest follow because of impermanence or dissolution which it passes on to the immediately following psycho-physical personality

1. See U.C.R. Vol. XIX, No. 2. p. 188.

as *paccaya satti*. Then as pre-existent-condition (*purejāta-paccaya*) and also absence (*natthi*) and abeyance (*vigata*) conditions, birth serves the consequent suffering etc.

The relation that exists between becoming (*bhava*) and birth (*jāti*) too appears to be that of effect (*vipāka*) for it is the effectiveness of becoming of the desire to be born that is manifested in the birth of a new being. Therefore becoming too assists the arising of a new psycho-physical personality by way of effect. Clinging (*upādāna*) serves as food or sustenance (*āhāra*) for becoming (*bhava*). If one does not continue to cling on to this or that state of becoming, then there would be no rebirth. On the other hand craving (*taṇhā*) serves clinging as a root-condition (*hetu-paccaya*) for just like the root of a tree which draws up sap from earth and water and carries it up to nourish the tree and as a result the tree blossoms forth and bears fruit, even so craving rooted in desirable objects draws up the essence in the form of pleasure so that at last man clings (*upādiyati*) to those pleasurable objects. Craving (*taṇhā*) also serves as sustenance-condition (*āhāra-paccaya*), and also as a dominance-condition (*adhipati-paccaya*) for dominated by the strong desire for pleasurable objects one clings on to them.

Sensation (*vedanā*) while giving rise to craving (*taṇhā*) assists its arising in many other ways. It serves as a nourishing-condition (*āhāra-paccaya*) ; for craving to arise and develop it must be fed by pleasurable feeling. It also assists the arising of craving by way of controlling-condition (*indriya-paccaya*), since craving is controlled or determined by the pleasurable nature of the object. If the object is a less pleasurable one, then the degree of craving that one develops is very slight. If on the other hand it is an object from which one is able to derive an immense lot of pleasure, one's craving for that object would be unlimited. If the object is a detestable one then one develops no craving at all for it. Lastly sensation may appear to be a continuance-condition (*avigata-paccaya*) because once the pleasurable sensation is absent one does not crave for it.

Contact (*phassa*) is said to result in sensation. The relation of contiguity (*aiantara-paccaya*) appears to prevail here. Immediately after contact there arises sensation. There seems to be no gap or pause between the two. And on the other hand, the nature of the contact, whether it be pleasurable (*sukha*), detestable (*dukkha*), or indifferent (*adukkhamasukha*), is passed on to sensation as *paccayasatti*. Contact also serves as the dependence-condition (*nissaya-paccaya*) for the arising of sensation, for, the latter cannot arise

without having a foot-hold on the former. The relation that exists between sensation and craving, that is, the relation of control (*indriya*), is also obtained here, since the nature of the sensation is determined by the nature of contact.

According to the formula, contact (*phassa*) is said to be due to the six spheres of sense (*salāyatana*), and these in their turn are due to the existence of the psycho-physical personality (*nāma-rūpa*). The sequence in which these three factors are given in the formula should not be given serious consideration. On the other hand contact is due to the simultaneous existence of the six spheres of sense and the psycho-physical personality. It is more the clash between the individual and the external world represented by the six spheres of sense. These six spheres of sense serve the individual as an objective support (*ārammaṇa*) and contact as an objective-condition (*ārammaṇa-paccaya*). On the other hand the individual, i.e., the percipient, may serve as the pre-existent condition (*purejāta-paccaya*) for it is with the focussing of the mind of the individual on the external world that he becomes aware of it.

Then comes the relation existing between the psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) and consciousness (*viññāna*). In the first place a relation of reciprocity (*aññamañña*) is obtained between these two, for the one cannot exist without the other. Then consciousness serves as food (*āhāra*) for the development and growth of the psycho-physical personality. This psycho-physical personality, on the other hand, serves consciousness as a support (*nissaya*) on which to stand. Consciousness also serves as a dominance-condition (*adhipati-paccaya*) for the nature of the psycho-physical personality depends or is dominated by the nature of the consciousness. Consciousness wherein bad volitions are accumulated would give rise to an individual with evil dispositions. Nay even the very physical framework that the individual inherits, the material body itself, could be moulded for the better or for the worse, by the nature of consciousness which influences it. Hence the relation by way of kamma is also obtained among these. Lastly, consciousness and the psycho-physical personality are related to each other (*aññamañña*) by way of the relations of association (*sampayutta*) continuance (*avigata*) because there must be continuous association; otherwise the individual will perish.

Dispositions (*saṅkhāra*) assist the arising of consciousness (*viññāna*) by being a kamma-condition. It is the activity of the volitions that gives rise to consciousness. Finally, ignorance (*avijjā*) serves as the dominance-

condition (*adhipati-paccaya*) because the accumulation of volitions is always dominated by ignorance. Dominated by ignorance one performs actions and then accumulates dispositions.

The above remarks would clearly bring into light the relation existing between the theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) with the twelve factors and the theory of Relations (*paccaya*). The attempt of the Ābhidhammikas to place the theory of Dependent Arising on a more firm philosophical foundation had thus been proved to be a success. With the formulation of the theory of Relations, the problem raised by some<sup>2</sup> as to how the things that are given in the theory of Dependent Arising are related and in what way, is very consistently solved.

### The Synthetic Value of the Relations

The foregoing analysis of the individual relations reveals one very important characteristic of the Buddhist theory of causality. The main interest of the Buddhists, as is evident from it, lies in psychological causation. They were not at all interested in explaining how the universe came into existence or in any such other problem. Their main attempt was to show how psychological life is causally conditioned. The causality of the physical body of the individual is referred to only whenever they felt the necessity of doing so with a view to explain psychological causation more clearly.

From the earlier discussion it becomes very clear that the theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) explains only the causality of suffering (*dukkha*). Since the Buddhists considered this entire psycho-physical personality to be a machine of suffering, they in their attempt to explain the causality of suffering were led on to explain the causality of this psycho-physical personality. Again, the average man would revolt against the view that this personality is nothing but suffering, because he sees an immense quantity of pleasure, of lust, of the purer joys of family life, in nature etc., that life offers. How dare one overlook all these things? How can one shut one's eyes to it? According to him not everything in life is suffering. In spite of the suffering that is there, the world is beautiful and worthy of being enjoyed.

According to the Buddha, the average man has made a terrible mistake in his judgement of the content of life according to its actual value. This

2. Vism. p. 532.



of course is quite true. For, the question of life's value cannot be answered off-hand simply from clear and pure perception, in which everything is fixed and certain. But this judgement represents only a bringing together of the material offered by percept on into a relationship of concepts by means of the activity of reason. The part that error plays in the action of reason is immense; and knowing this the Buddhists had to analyse the process of perception showing how thirst (*taṇhā*) and hence clinging (*upādāna*) to worldly things are caused. Wrong grasping depending on wrong perception is thus the cause of this entire mass of suffering. The theory of Dependent Arising with its twelve factors therefore explains only the causality of the individual life-process along with the causality of perception giving rise to attachment and clinging thus paving the way for the cycle of repeated births, which itself is suffering.

In the previous chapter we made an attempt to show how far the theory of relations (*paccaya*) supplements the theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). But a careful examination of the theory of relations would reveal that it explains fully, by itself the causality of the individual life-process, and the causality of psychological life.

### I—Psychological Life

The analysis of the psychological life or mental facts into discrete moments, though it enabled the Buddhists to show the futility of believing in the existence of a permanent entity such as a soul, yet created immense problems. The analysis of mental phenomena into four aggregates reveals clear traces of overlapping. As Mrs. Rhys Davids has correctly pointed out consciousness (*viññāna*), which itself is one of the aggregates, includes within itself all the other three aggregates. This is nothing but due to the actual nature of mental facts. Consciousness, as pointed out earlier, is homogeneous, a continuous whole or a continuum. It is something that cannot be broken up into separate parts to be labelled as feeling, tooth-ache, languor, determination etc. This homogeneous nature of consciousness is fully explained by the relation of association (*sampayutta-paccaya*). Thus a problem created by the analysis of mental phenomena into various states in the Nikāyas and followed up in the Abhidhamma, can thus be explained.

Consciousness according to the theory of relations has to have a basis for its arising. The bases (*āyatana*) of sense are, therefore, said to assist the arising of consciousness by way of dependence (*nissaya*). This alone is not

enough, for according to Sumangala,<sup>3</sup> even with the existence of conditions like dependence (*nissaya*), and immediate contiguity (*samanantara*), there cannot be consciousness without an objective support. Consciousness is defined by him as the knowledge of the object.<sup>4</sup> It has the characteristic of being aware of an external object.<sup>5</sup> That which assists the arising of consciousness is thus the objective-condition (*ārammaṇa-paccaya*). This relation preserves the Realism of early Buddhism and refutes the claims of the Idealists<sup>6</sup> who hold that consciousness can arise without an objective support.

The greatest problem with regard to psychological life is not yet solved. Not only Buddhism, but even other orthodox schools of thought in India recognized that the immediate objects of our willing, the objects of the external world are transitory without exception, because here the continual change, the incessant dissolution is evident. But the matter becomes quite different when the immediate manifestation of our willing, in that which we call our personality, comes into question. This personality, said the Upanisadic seers, is the only thing in the world which lies outside the realm of transitoriness, either entirely and to its whole extent, so that man, neck and crop, as it were, would be immortal, or partially so, if at least its kernel should be permanent and thus imperishable. This kernel they said is the soul (*ātman*): others as Schopenhauer and his disciples, said is the *will* manifesting itself in the personality. As against this substantialist position, Buddha, from the very outset, took every imaginable trouble to make clear that everything connected with personality, and therewith personality itself, is without exception subject to the iron law of transitoriness, and thereby, of dissolution and decay, therefore painful throughout its whole extent. On the other hand the Buddhists recognised the continuity of psychological life. Reconciliation of the doctrine of change or transitoriness with that of continuity was a problem, a colossal problem indeed, that the Buddhists had to face.

Thus being compelled to psychologize without a "psyche" the Buddhists explained the thought process; how thoughts arose one after the other without an interval yet not giving up their characteristics by means of the relations of contiguity (*anantara*), immediate contiguity (*samanantara*) and

3. Abvn. p. 39—Sati'pi nissayasamanantarādipaccaye na vinā ārammaṇena cittamuppajjati'ti tassa taṃ lakkhaṇatā vuttā.

4. *ibid.* p. 30—Visayavijānanalakkhaṇaṃ cittaṃ.

5. *ibid.*—Ārammaṇaṃ vijānāti'ti attho.

6. *ibid.* p. 40—Etena nirāmbanavādimataṃ paṭikkhittaṃ hoti.

continuance (*avigata*). While the last mentioned relation accounts for the unbroken continuity of consciousness the other two explain how one thought moment gives rise to the other without a pause or a gap. The thought moment that becomes the contiguous-condition (*anantara-paccaya*), i.e., the preceding consciousness, is able to cause such states of consciousness as are similar to its own to succeed in the immediately following instant. Thus though the preceding thought moment passes away, yet all its features and characteristics are passed on to the succeeding thought moment so that in appearance there is hardly any difference between the two thought moments. In this manner psychological life flows on changing yet without a break or a pause. The philosophic importance of the relations of contiguity and immediate contiguity is thus immense, for they enable the Buddhists to dispense with the conception of an unchanging imperishable entity, which according to the Buddha, is detrimental to religious consciousness.

The explanation of the causality of psychological life in the above manner would lead to a deterministic view of psychological causation. Since it is the commonly held view that "Determinism is the doctrine that every event which has occurred, is occurring or will occur was, is, or will be, completely determined,"<sup>7</sup> then the above analysis would lead to the view that determinism reigns supreme in psychological life, as it is in physical life, with the result that there would be no freedom of will, a view of life advocated by thinkers like Makkhali Gosāla.<sup>8</sup> But this inconsistency is removed by the formulation of the relation of kamma (*kamma-paccaya*) which explains the part played by volitional activity in the arising of thoughts, i.e., in psychological life. It has been observed<sup>9</sup> "Volition is not something that belongs to the past. It is a faculty that is ever present. This volition is a factor in the determination of events. If volition does not itself participate in the bringing about of events then it can be said that all such events are mechanically caused. To the extent that volition also has a part to play in this matter of human behaviour, to that extent events cease to become mechanical or deterministic." Thus with the formulation of the relation of kamma, determinism in the sphere of psychological causation is refuted and instead freedom of will is made possible. Once freedom of will is recognised to be a feature of psychological life, then the stage is made

7. Korner, S.—*Kant* (Pelican Books), London, 1955, p. 132.

8. D. I. 53—*Natthi attakāre n'atthi parakāre n'atthi purisakāre n'atthi balaṃ n'atthi viriyaṃ n'atthi purisathāmo n'atthi purisaparakkamo. Sabbe sattā sabbe pāṇā sabbe bhūtā sabbe jivā avasā abalā a-viriyaṃ niyati-saṅgati-bhāva-pariṇatā . . . . . etc.*

9. U.C.R. Vol. XVII. p. 87.

ready for the introduction of another theory which accounts for the possibility of training the mind gradually to attain perfection, thus cutting off the normal flow of consciousness.

There are yet two other problems with regard to psychological life that the Buddhist had to solve. First is the problem of memory and the second, the possibility of gradually perfecting or training the mind. The importance of the relation by way of habitual recurrence (*āsevana*) becomes quite evident on account of the consistent manner in which it explains the phenomenon of memory. To quote the simile of a man reading a book, every time he reads the book he gathers more and more knowledge of the contents of that book. Every other reading of the same book helps the reader to gain more and more proficiency. Every reading imparts a certain amount of energy and force because of which what he reads is registered in his mind. Repetition, according to the Western psychologists,<sup>10</sup> is helpful for the establishment of what they call the habit-memory-power. The power of remembering a person, a place, or a thing is in some way improved by repeatedly perceiving the object in question. Thus in the case of the simile quoted above each reading serves as a habitual recurrence-condition (*āsevana-paccaya*) to the knowledge that he has gathered subsequently. This relation therefore explains causally the phenomenon of memory in a very consistent and realistic manner.

The analysis of mental phenomena into aggregates, in the Nikāyas, created yet another problem which the Ābhidhammikas had to solve. It is this analysis of the psychic life into several aggregates that prompted Mrs. Rhys Davids<sup>11</sup> to make certain remarks which she would not have dared to make if the Buddhists had not analysed the personality in that manner. The analysis alone, without the synthesis, appears to have misled Mrs. Rhys Davids, inasmuch as she was unable to see how this personality, consisting of several aggregates could attain to growth and perfection. Hence she was forced to make the following statement. "With the rejection of the divinity in the self, the self himself, the man, the person, the spirit using mind and body was also rejected."<sup>12</sup> How these several aggregates attain divinity was a problem that had to be solved. Once again the relation by way of habitual recurrence (*āsevana*) comes to the rescue of the Buddhists. Without recognising the existence of a permanent

10. Broad, C. B.—*The mind and its place in Nature*. p. 225.

11. *Book of Kindred Sayings*. Vol. III, viii.

12. *ibid.*

self, the spirit or divinity in man, which being potential becomes actual, the Buddhists, with the help of the relation by way of habitual occurrence explained how man, consisting of the five fleeting aggregates, could attain to such divine stature as Buddhahood, by a process of gradual training.

It is true that man or personality could be dissolved into transient and insubstantial aggregates, but manly zeal and effort, which themselves are fleeting and transient, could, if exerted for a long period of time, develop this personality consisting of the five aggregates to such a degree that anything could be accomplished. Taking the same simile, quoted earlier, let us say a man who knew nothing of philosophy wanted to gain a special knowledge in that subject. With great determination he would continue to read all books written on the subject (starting from very elementary ones). With the reading of every book he would gather new information and new vistas of thought would be open to him. And if he goes on to cultivate this habit of reading books on that subject, in no time he is sure to gain a specialized knowledge of that subject.

In the same way a man is able to train his mind gradually and attain such great powers as may appear to the ordinary man to be wonders. Therefore the relation of habitual recurrence explains how many great and difficult labours have reached complete accomplishment and how even Buddhahood has been attained.

From this it becomes clear how the theory of relations (*pacaya*) has gone beyond the theory of dependent arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) in solving all the important problems pertaining to psychological life.

## II—*Doctrine of Personal Continuity*

The doctrine of personal continuity which was a corner-stone in Buddhist thought and on which the whole of religious consciousness was dependent, found treatment in the theory of dependent arising, as was shown earlier. The same problem was once again taken up for examination and elucidation in the Abhidhamma theory of relations.

In the first place, the causality of the psycho-physical personality that comes into existence at the moment of conception (*okkantikkhaṇe*) is fully explained by the relation of kamma. According to it, depending on the activity of past volitions, the individual consisting of mind (*nāma*) and body (*rūpa*) arises. Even if the present psycho-physical personality is due to the

working of past kamma, how is one to account for the continuity of the traits of the character of the previous existence. This problem was easily and consistently solved by the relations of contiguity and immediate contiguity (*anantara* and *samanantara*). It was pointed out earlier how each thought moment passes away leaving the stamp of its character in the succeeding thought moment. In the same way the dying thought (*cuti-citta*) of an individual serves as a contiguous-condition (*anantara-paccaya*) for the rebirth consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*) of the being who comes into existence. All the characteristics of the dying thought by virtue of its being the condition for the arising of the rebirth consciousness, is passed on to the latter so that the consciousness of the newly born babe inherits all the features and characteristics of the individual that preceded him. This continuity is kept going, each thought moment being conditioned by the previous one. How mind (*nāma*) and body (*rūpa*) which constitute the individual and which have come into existence in the above manner, are related to each other are explained in detail by the relations of co-existence (*sahajāta*), reciprocity (*aññamañña*), dependence (*nissaya*), post-existence (*pacchājāta*), effect (*vipāka*), presence (*atthi*) and continuance (*avigata*). Lastly the sustenance of this individual is explained by the relation of food (*āhāra*).

### III—Causality of Ethical Life

Three very important relations have been formulated by the Ābhidhammikas to explain the causality of moral behaviour or ethical life. They are the relations of sufficing-condition (*upanissaya*), of kamma, and of habitual recurrence (*āsevana*).

The first describes how behaviour moral as well as immoral, is conditioned by several factors, internal as well as external. In the analysis of the relation of sufficing-condition it was pointed out that there are three forms of this relation, to wit, object-sufficing condition, immediate sufficing-condition and natural sufficing-condition. Out of these the first and the last describe the way in which factors external to the individual condition moral behaviour. A man who practices charity etc. may reflect thereon with due regard. He may reflect on his past good behaviour and these objects of thought may give rise to other forms of thought and behaviour which too are moral. Thus by conceptions which appear to be objective his moral behaviour is conditioned.

Again the natural sufficing-condition also accounts for the causality of moral as well as immoral behaviour. The hopes of acquiring happy existences and wealth, and attaining the fruits of Nibbāna serve as natural

sufficing conditions, related to the present generation of men for the cultivation of meritorious deeds such as charity, beneficence, virtue etc. Another person, by way of respecting the traditions of his beloved predecessors who had given alms to the poor, looked after the welfare of the down-trodden, would also perform similar virtuous deeds. In these instances, moral life is conditioned by these external circumstances which serve as natural sufficing conditions. In both these cases there is no volitional activity from within which prompts the cultivation of the ethical life but on the other hand the instinct comes from without. Therefore these relations account for the automatic forms of consciousness (*asañkhārika*)<sup>13</sup> which are wholesome (*kusala*).

On the other hand the immediate sufficing-condition (*anantara-upa-nissaya-paccaya*) as well as the habitual recurrence-condition (*āsevana-paccaya*) describe how ethical life is determined from within. According to the first, a preceding thought moment, whether moral or immoral, serves as the immediate sufficing-condition to a succeeding thought moment which had just arisen. The preceding thought moment, if it is moral (*kusala*), according to the relation of contiguity (*anantara*) passes its characteristics on to the succeeding thought moment. The latter inherits all the features and characteristics of the former. Thus a moral thought moment may once again give rise to another moral thought moment and in this manner, the continuity of moral consciousness is preserved. The same applies to immoral forms of consciousness. According to the relation by way of habitual recurrence (*āsevana*) an instance of moral deed helps another subsequent instance of a moral deed by way of proficiency. These relations, therefore, describe how ethical behaviour is conditioned internally. But an examination of these would reveal that the real function of these conditions is not giving a new impulse to moral actions but just a preservation of the continuity of moral or immoral consciousness. Therefore these too may appear to be automatic forms of consciousness (*asañkhārika*).

If the Ābhidhammikas had been satisfied with this explanation, it would have been incomplete. The importance accorded to volition in moral as well as in immoral behaviour, in the Nikāya texts, was so great that they had to formulate some theory to account for the same. This was done by the formulation of the relation of kamma. That which serves an instance of behaviour, bodily, verbal, or mental, by way of kamma is thus considered by them to be a kamma-condition (*kamma-paccaya*). This is nothing but

13. Abhs. p. 1.

volition (*cetanā*). It is volitional activity that instigates or prompts the performance of some deed.

Thus by the formulation of the relation of kamma they were able to account for the internal impulse as opposed to the external impulse, to action. The process called volitional consciousness (*sasāṅkhārika-citta*) is thus explained causally.

#### IV—Problem of Moral Responsibility

Along with the problem of the causality of moral behaviour the Ābhidhammikas had to explain the problem of moral responsibility. The question may be raised: "It is true that behaviour, moral as well as immoral, is causally conditioned, but how is it that a man suffers on account of his own previous bad behaviour, or enjoys happiness as a reward for his past good behaviour because it is a new personality (*nāmarūpa*) that comes into existence after death?"

In the theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) an attempt was made to explain the problem of moral responsibility. This is evident from the addition of two more factors<sup>14</sup> to wit, dispositions (*saṅkhāra*) and ignorance (*avijjā*), to the formula which earlier consisted of ten factors.<sup>15</sup>

Here dispositions (*saṅkhāra*) are said to give rise to consciousness (*viññāna*).<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere in the Nikāyas, it is said that by performing actions, both good and bad, one accumulate volitions<sup>17</sup> which, depending on their nature, could mould or give individuality to consciousness. The influence of this consciousness on the psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) of the new existence<sup>18</sup> accounts for the suffering or happiness which the newly born being has to undergo.

A similar explanation is given by the Ābhidhammikas. In the first place they, like the earlier Buddhist teachers,<sup>19</sup> recognised the continuity of consciousness, and explained that continuity by the formulation of the relation of contiguity (*anantara*) as pointed out above. This consciousness

14. S. II. 1.

15. D. II. 34-35.

16. Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññānaṃ.

17. M. I. 389 f.

18. D. II. 32-33.

19. D. III. 105— . . . . . viññāṇasotaṃ pajānāti ubhayato abbhocchinnāṃ idhaloke patiṭṭhitaṃ ca paraloke patiṭṭhitaṃ ca



which preserves an unbroken continuity then depends on and is depended on by the psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*). On the dissolution of the earlier psycho-physical personality at death, if this consciousness were not to gain a foothold on another personality (*nāmarūpa*) then consciousness would not grow or exist. On the other hand personality (*nāmarūpa*) is continuously fed by consciousness ; otherwise it would not continue to exist. Therefore according to the Ābhidhammikas there is to be found a relation of reciprocity (*aññamañña*) between these two factors. If consciousness (*viññāna*) serves the being (*satta*) as food or nourishment and if there is an unbroken continuity of consciousness, then it follows that the newly born being must be affected by the nature of the present consciousness which in its turn is determined by past consciousness. Just as a tree, which gets a regular supply of good manure etc., grows well and bears fruit, even so a being who is fed by healthy or wholesome (*kusala*) consciousness would be of healthy disposition and enjoy the fruits of virtuous conduct. Thus the happiness or suffering of the newly born being depends on the nature of consciousness that feeds his psycho-physical personality. If his consciousness is full of evil dispositions then he would suffer in this life and if it is full of good dispositions he is bound to be happy. According to the Ābhidhammikas the form of this material body itself is moulded by volitional activity which they considered to be a kamma-condition (*kamma-paccaya*). Volitions have the power or potentiality to give individuality not only to consciousness (*viññāna*) but also to matter (*rūpa*). Therefore they said that the present psycho-physical personality (*nāmarūpa*) is the result (*vipāka*) of the previous volitions.

The Ābhidhammikas were thus able to explain the problem of moral responsibility very consistently with the help of the theory of Relations, without positing an unchanging, permanent entity which is considered to be the doer (*kartā*) as well as the enjoyer (*bhoktā*), as the Upanisadic thinkers did.

#### V—Causality of Social Behaviour

The theory of Relations (*paccaya*) accounts for another very important question which is not treated in the theory of Dependent Arising. The contribution of the Ābhidhammikas lies in this that they explained not only the causality of the individual existence (*attabhāva*) but also gave causal status to social evolution and religious consciousness.

Society according to the Buddha is neither a haphazard phenomenon where events occur without being related to the past, nor is it a creation of

God. The first is, popularly known as Fortuitous Origination (*adhicca-samuppāda*) and the second refers to the dogma of divine creation (*issara-nimmāṇavāda*) both of which are condemned by the Buddha. "He countered the Vedic dogma of divine creation of society with a doctrine of the popular and functional origin of kingship,"<sup>20</sup> and emphasised the evolution of society. His was a dynamic concept of society rather than a static one, as it was with the Vedic Brahmins.

While showing the absurdity of the current theories, the Buddhists applied the universal theory of causation to explain the evolution of society. This is done by the formulation of the relation of sufficing-condition (*upaniṣaya-paccaya*). Our fore-fathers, in their respective capacities as parents, teachers, wise monks and brahmins, eminent kings, are causally related to the succeeding generations by way of natural sufficing condition, either for the cultivation of good or of evil, or for the experience of pleasure or of pain. They established various laws and sayings, moral and immoral, and also worldly institutions both for the welfare and otherwise of the succeeding generations. The future generations also follow their paths and adopt their customs by doing acts of charity by observing the precepts and so forth; by practising the moral and social laws of the world; by adhering to various religious beliefs; by taking up various kinds of occupations; by studying various branches of arts and science; by governing hamlets, villages and towns; by being agriculturists in the field and on the farm, and by seeking for and accumulating wealth. Thus the world has developed unceasingly.

This shows to what extent the past traditions influence the evolution of present social consciousness. It does not point to a preservation of the old tradition and thus give a static conception of society. On the other hand it shows how the past leaves an impress on the mind of the present generation so that they could improve upon it and thus bring about a change in it.

This relation brings into light another salient feature of early Buddhism i.e., the supremacy and pre-eminence of the mind in regard to human behaviour. The world is led by the mind: *cittena nīyati loko*.<sup>21</sup> It is true that the individual is influenced by his environment but then influence does not mean that he is solely governed by that environment. The past, which

20. U.C.R. Vol. XVII. p. 190.

21. S. I. 39.

exists only in the form of memory and concepts, also exerts its own influence on the evolution of society. This evolution is very clearly explained by the relation of sufficing condition (*upanissaya-paccaya*).

#### VI—Religious Life

Lastly the religious life starting from rational faith (*saddhā*) and culminating in the attainment of Nibbāna, the highest state of spiritual perfection, by a gradual course of training, is given causal status in the Abhidhamma.

Faith (*saddhā*), the initial step on the path to realization is also causally conditioned. The tradition about the Buddha who had attained great spiritual powers serves as a sufficing-condition to the mind of the people who are confined to various forms of suffering in this saṁsāric existence. This initial faith which is so very essential as an inducement for the embracing of the higher life is thus conditioned, the tradition of the Buddha and his disciples serving as a sufficing-condition. The rest of the Buddha's teaching then serves as the sufficing-condition for the attainment of other stages in this gradual path to spiritual perfection. The relation by way of path-condition (*magga-paccaya*) too serves in the same manner. It has been observed earlier that each preceding stage in the Noble Eightfold path serves as the path-condition for the attainment of the succeeding stage. Lastly, the factors of contemplation (*jhānaṅga*) serve the religious life by way of contemplation-condition (*jhāna-paccaya*) as a result of which one is able to develop the higher contemplations and thus attain spiritual perfection by the culture of the mind.

From the foregoing account it would become evident that the theory of Relations (*paccaya*) while placing the theory of Dependent Arising (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) on a more philosophical basis, also includes it within itself and contains something more, in that it also explains the evolution of society as religious consciousness culminating in Nibbāna.

The theory of Relations (*paccaya*) also presents itself as an answer to the problems created by the analysis of phenomena, mental as well as physical. The Buddha analysed phenomena into discreet moments in order to counteract the substantialist position of the Upanisadic thinkers. But we see that the substantialist position gathered momentum even in the Upanisads contemporary with early Buddhism. Knowing fully well that it is the substantialist view of man that gave rise to ego-consciousness which in its turn was the root cause of all the suffering in the world, the later Buddhists,

carried the analysis of phenomena to a greater extent than the Buddha did. The accusation levelled at the activities of the later Buddhists by Mrs. Rhys Davids, when she said that with the analysis of man into component parts the divinity that lay concealed in him came to be denied would have been well founded if the Ābhidhammikas were to rest satisfied only with the analytic method. But the importance of the theory of Relations is everlasting in that it solved all the problems created by an analysis. The analytic method of exposition of the Ābhidhammikas, therefore, should be supplemented with the synthetic method that is given in the *Paṭṭhāna* and then only can we gain a real understanding of the Buddha's philosophy. As remarked earlier, whatever was the attitude adopted by the Ābhidhammikas towards leading the religious life and teaching their fellows how to live, they had done their best to *think* and they have *thought well*.

### Verification of the Truth of the Causal Law

Before making any attempt to see how the truth of the causal law is verified, a word must be said about reality and the nature of the causal law.

It was pointed out in an earlier discussion<sup>22</sup> that the dhamma, the truth that the Buddha discovered, was beyond the realm of reasoning (*atakkāvacara*). Therefore the Buddha made an attempt to describe the salient features at least *approximately*, for such a description was so essential for convincing the ordinary man about the nature of reality and thus lead him on to the virtuous path. Reality according to the Buddha is seen in its proper perspective (*yathābhūtam*) by the development of the extra-sensory powers (*abhiññā*). It could be reached by religious experience only. The philosophy of the Buddha begins with the attempt to state the problem i.e., to put down in language as approximately as possible, the truth that is open only to religious experience.

This gives rise to another problem. If reality is something that cannot be described by words, if it does not come under the sphere of logical thinking, then what is the value that could be attached to the causal law that we had been discussing so far? If the causal law describes reality only approximately then it becomes evident that it does not represent reality *as it is*. This leads us to another problem i.e., the problem of the content of knowledge imparted by a descriptive language which is based on sense perception. "This type of knowledge," according to a modern

22. U.C.R. Vol. XIX. No. 2. p. 173.

philosopher,<sup>23</sup> "would be quite intelligible if we were either wholly active or wholly passive, if we either created the objects of knowledge by representing them, or alternatively, if these objects merely impressed their likeness on us and our mind did not actively add to the representation but merely accepted what was given. But neither is the case—our mind is partly active in that it assumes the applicability, to things, of its own laws of thought, partly passive in that it cannot have knowledge unless it has data given from without."<sup>24</sup> The same philosopher then draws the conclusion that concepts like substance and cause are essential factors in all knowledge, yet neither substance nor cause is given as data of sense, therefore we must suppose them to be laws of thought. After drawing this conclusion he raises still another problem, "If they are only laws of thought, how can we justify their application to a reality external to our individual selves?"<sup>25</sup> And lastly, he makes an inference which does not seem to be so compatible with the conclusions to which he came earlier, for he says "Such concepts seem neither to produce nor be produced by the objects to which they are applied."

The view held by the Ābhīdhāmmikas appear to be quite different from this. According to them there are two degrees of reality, i.e., the empirical (*lokiya*) and the transcendental (*lokuttara*). The first comprehends within itself mind (*citta*), mental co-efficients (*cetasika*) and matter (*rūpa*) while the second is the supra-mundane state called Nibbāna. Even the empirical reality, as pointed out earlier, was perceived in its proper perspective by the extra-sensory faculties. Then the Ābhīdhāmmikas go on to analyse the reality of concepts which they call *paññatti*. They were led on to this in the analysis of language, the medium of representation of the concepts. Analysing the concepts they said that there are certain concepts which point to some reality (*atthapaññatti* and *vijjamānena vijjamānapaññatti*).<sup>26</sup> But in describing them we cannot explain them as reality for reality cannot be presented by symbols. On the other hand such presentations should be called actuality. Actuality (fr. Lat. *actus*) refers to the reaction of the external stimuli on the mind. Therefore in what is actual we find not only the reality but also the activity of the mind. Therefore, in speaking on the concept of cause, it cannot be said that it seems neither to produce nor to be produced by the objects. On the other hand, it is

23. Ewing, A. C.—*Kant's Treatment of Causality* (London) 1924, p. 37.

24. *ibid.*

25. *ibid.*

26. *Abhs.* p. 39.

something that is produced by the activity of the objects which can be called reality, and since the activity of the mind which orders or arranges (*kalpanā*, fr. *klp*=to arrange) this reality is also to be found we can more appropriately call it actuality. Thus causality is the actuality of this world as opposed to reality (cf. Latin *res*=what exists).

With this view of causality and reality we can go on to analyse the way in which the truth of the causal law is verified. Accordingly to Western philosophy the truth of a causal law is verified by applying the principle of induction. "If in a great number of instances, a thing of a certain kind is associated in a way with a thing of a certain other kind, it is probable that a thing of the one kind is always associated with a thing of the other kind and as the number of instances increases, the probability approaches indefinitely near to certainty."<sup>27</sup> Hence according to them it is the principle of induction, rather than the law of causality which is at the bottom of all inferences as to the existence of things not immediately given. Bertrand Russell says that "With the principle of induction all that is wanted for such inferences can be proved; without it all such inferences are invalid."<sup>28</sup>

It must be mentioned that this is not the case with the Buddhist theory of causality. The Buddhist theory of causality is not one that is formulated depending on the principle of induction, nor is it verified by the method of induction. As was said earlier it was formulated only after seeing things in their proper perspective (*yathābhūtaṃ*) by the development of extra-sensory powers. But to the man who has not developed such powers and who could not see reality eye to eye, the principle of induction becomes the method of verification. Buddha recognised only one epistemological standpoint, i.e., extra-sensory perception, as being valid. But at the same-time he clearly foresaw the difficulties that lay before an ordinary man in the perception of truth. He knew that realization would not come all of a sudden. According to him, only by a gradual process of training the mind (*anupubbāsikkhā anupubbakiriya anupubbapaṭipadā*)<sup>29</sup> one is able to gain an insight into the nature of reality. Hence the recognition of the existence of degrees of knowledge in Buddhism. Therefore, seeing the practical value of other sources of knowledge such as perception and induction (*yoniso manasikāra*), the Buddha recognised them as partially valid sources of knowledge. Though these forms of knowledge have their own limitations yet for the sake of the ordinary man, the Buddha recognised their

27. Bertrand Russell—*Our Knowledge of the External World*. p. 225.

28. 156 *ibid.*

29. M. I. 395; 479; II. 213; S. II. 224 etc.

validity. Thus induction or *yoniso manasikāra*<sup>30</sup> was considered by the Buddha to be the method by which the ordinary man could get a glimpse into the deepest truth which is seen only by extra-sensory perception. The truth of causality could best be verified only by this.

We see therefore that the Buddhist theory of causality does not depend on induction but is only made clear by that.

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30. D. II. 31 ff.

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