

**KRTAPRANĀŚA AND AKRĪTĀBHYĀGAMA : AN ANALYSIS,
DEFENCE AND RATIONALE OF
THE BUDDHIST THEORY OF ACTION**

Introduction

For many centuries the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist trends of philosophical thought remained in existence almost side by side in the Indian subcontinent. Adherents of them entered into prolonged debates and controversies and brought forth charges against their opponents. In some of these debates the normally acknowledged distinctions between the so-called orthodox and heterodox schools are watered down to such an extent that they are held to be of no serious consequence. For example, adherents of the different non-Buddhist philosophical trends of thought, which flourished in the Indian subcontinent, repeatedly levelled two prominent charges against Buddhism in general with reference to its theory of human action. In so doing, the advocates of non-Buddhist trends under consideration held differences among followers of Buddhism to be immaterial, in so far as all of them subscribed to certain important common features of it. The charges under consideration were repeatedly levelled against Buddhism and fine points of their implications discussed to bring to the notice of the concerned that Buddhism cannot present an intellectually satisfactory account of the relationship between action (*kriyā*) and its results and consequences (*phala*) with reference to the doer (*kartā*) of the former. It was also further sought to be impressed upon the concerned that although

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it does seem to accept generally that action lead to results and consequences (*karmavipākā*), nonetheless, Buddhism makes caricature of the deterministic relationship between actions and their consequences (*karmaphala*). This is because of its double fault. On the one hand, it refuses to accept any permanent doer (*kartā*) and/or enjoyer (*bhoktā*). On the other hand, it allows actions to perish without their results being connected with them, or else seeks to connect any action whatever with any result, no matter whether the said action is done by the said doer or not. That is, the result one is satisfied with or suffers for (*bhunakti*) may not be the result of an action performed by him. If the charges under consideration¹ viz. *ḥṭapraṇāśā* (an action perishes without its doer coming to enjoy or suffer for its results, since neither the doer nor the actions are static) and *Akṣtābhyāgama* (results of such actions accrue to one which he has never performed) are held to be true, then, it is alleged, Buddhism cannot be in a position to give a satisfactory account of voluntary action and consider appropriately the question of its responsibility. In addition, the charges under consideration, if true, are also said to have certain epistemic, ontological and social implications, leave alone logical implications of what could be alleged to be methodological incoherence.

In the present paper,² we intend to concentrate on some of the important aspects of the charges under consideration and controversy concerning them. We do not intend to be comprehensive in our consideration, it being needless for our present purpose. The main task that we address ourselves to in this paper is two-fold : (a) to state the charges in their prominent features and spell out the rationale by which they are backed, and (b) to analyse the prominent features of the Buddhist approach, articulate its rationale and spell out its implications.

This is sought to be done with a view to showing that the Buddhist approach concerning relationship between actions and their results and consequences is not irrational and indefensible as it is very often said to be. It is needless to say that it is also neither outrageously ridiculous nor outrightly trifling either, so that it may not deserve any serious cognizance of it.

The entire essay has four sections. The first is given to briefly stating the chief differences between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist philosophical perspectives which have significant bearing on their respective approaches and their rationales. As we shall see, here again the so-called division between heterodox and orthodox would turn out to be inconsequential. The second and the third sections are devoted respectively to articulating the non-Buddhist and the Buddhist perspectives concerning relationship between actions and their results and consequences, along with the respective rationales by which they are backed. The last section is directed at bringing out that at least in some respects the Buddhist approach seems to be richer and profounder in comparison with its non-Buddhist counterpart and that we could afford to ignore it only at the cost of our being myopic in vision and dogmatic in approach.

I

Chief Differences Between the Buddhist and the Non-Buddhist Perspectives

There are some points of sharp differences of opinion, perspective and focus between Buddhists. We have discussed some of them elsewhere.³ In spite of such differences they also share certain common concerns, some of which we have outlined elsewhere⁴ in so far as they unfold a shared civilizational bond between them. This kind of stance of agreement on certain

points combined with sharp difference concerning certain others, between Buddhists and non-Buddhists, is also noticeable with reference to the way they account for the phenomenon of human action. For instance, both Buddhists and non-Buddhists unequivocally agree that there must be some way of relating human world on the one hand and the world of things on the other. Otherwise, human i.e., anthropocentric-world will remain segregated from the world outside, i.e., cosmocentric-world. Indeed, very sharp and uncompromising segregation between them would make them very difficult to understand. Hence, there must be some connecting link between them. However, the controversy between Buddhists and non-Buddhists arises with reference to the determinative principle/s of such a relation, the nature, structure and constitution of the relata, the reasons behind advocating their respective stand-points and perspectives etc., which play an important role in their respective stands. These issues have a telling impact on the framework within which they are arguing. Hence, before we analyse their respective arguments, a brief discussion of the concerned determinative principles would provide an appropriate background.

Especially with reference to furnishing satisfactory account of human actions in their different aspects, the stances which the Buddhists and non-Buddhists adopted seem to bring forth five main points of difference between them. They are :

(i) *Common Structural Features* : According to Buddhists as well as non-Buddhists certain structural and constitutive features are common to the world of things and the world of humans. According to non-Buddhists – both orthodox and heterodox – some kind of stability, staticity or permanence is indispensable. On this view everything does not ever come to be destroyed. Anything, whether human or non-human, has some or the other stable nucleus which withstands the shocks of change – real or

apparent. Orthodox trends like *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Vedānta*, *Sāṃkhya* etc., hold that given such a stable nucleus of anything, change is either only functionally real or else it is fictitious altogether. *Paramāṇus* and *Ātmā* of *Nyāya*, *Prakṛti* and *Puruṣa* of *Sāṃkhya*, *Brahman* and *Jīva* of *Vedānta*, or *Ātmā* and *Apavarga* of *Mīmāṃsā* are such stable elements/principles.

The unorthodox strands like *Cārvāka* and *Jainism*, which oppose Buddhism, also share this kind of approach, though with a fundamental difference between them. *Cārvāka* holds that the same stable elements, viz. *Aṇus* of *Prthivi*, *Āp*, etc., are structurally determinative of both humans and non-humans like. *Jainism*, on the contrary, holds that different kind of stable elements are at work in animate and inanimate world. Both of them, however, seem to accept change only to be functionally real and never at the cost of stability.

Thus, the non-Buddhist strands seem to hold some kind of stability to be absolutely essential in our account of anything. Those strands of them which accept change ensure that it is not accepted at the cost of stability – full or partial. That is, change is not allowed to make such a deep in-road into stability that the latter would either be weakened considerably or jeopardised and negated altogether.

Closely connected with the consideration of the importance of stability there is another in which non-Buddhist opponents of Buddhism – both orthodox and heterodox – are unanimous. It consists in holding that we shall never be in a position to account for continuity of anything – with or without change – independently of stability or permanence. Thus, according to them continuity of anything would be available only if and in so far as stability of it – in strong or weak sense – is neither threatened nor rejected. It is this kind of clue which enables

them to relate the human and the non-human worlds with each other.

In contrast to this, the Buddhists – irrespective of differences among them – seem to hold that change and impermanence are inalienable structural features of anything–human or non–human, and that continuity of it has nothing to do with its stability. Thus, Buddhism, instead of permanence or stability, considers change and impermanence to be essential and structural features of anything.⁵ And, it also holds that although continuity of anything may be functionally significant, it has nothing to do with structural features of it. This means that continuity could be made satisfactory sense of independently of stability, and that it is not epistemically incoherent with change and impermanence as structurally inalienable features of anything.

In this way, both the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist strands seem to connect human and non-human worlds with each other but in a fundamentally different way. We shall have in the sequel an occasion to study bearing of this difference on their respective theories of action.

(ii) *Methodological/Theoretical Coherence V/S Absense of Counter-intuitivity* – The Buddhist and non-Buddhist strands seems to differ from each other very fundamentally in yet another respect. It may be held that while advancing a theory or putting forth a knowledge–claim what needs to be paid preponderant, if not exclusive, attention to is methodological/theoretical coherence. In order not to weaken or jeopardise such a coherence, facts, to satisfactorily account for which the theory under consideration has been brought forth, need to be ‘seen’, ‘read’ or interpreted in the light of the theory. As a result of this, it may be held that facts have such and such a structure, or that we have such and a knowledge of them, or that we are in a position to com-

municate in such and such a way about them in so far as they have such and such a nature, structure and constitution. In this way, inter-relationship between world (human or non-human) and word (language and communication), or that between world and our knowledge of it – our cognition and interpretation of facts – is held to be decisively determined by overwhelming consideration of theoretical and/or methodological coherence. Approaches of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Sāṃkhya*, Jainism etc., as opponents of Buddhism, seems to be determined by such predominant concern for theoretical and/or methodological coherence.

On the other hand, it may be held that mere theoretical and/or methodological coherence is not the only thing that should be held to be a matter of exclusive concern. It also needs to be ensured that the theory we advance and interpretation of facts which we give in the light of it does not remain counter-intuitive. For, exclusive insistence on theoretical coherence may make us inclined either to disregard the facts in so far as they clash with our cherished theory. Or else, twist them in such a way that they would be given such an interpretation as would coherently fit with the theory under consideration. Both these alternatives are intellectually suicidal and hence unacceptable. Buddhists seem to insist that counter-intuitivity of a theory is a serious flaw of it and hence an appropriate effort needs to be made, while putting forth any theory, that it does not remain counter-intuitive. This consideration, too, is a major point of difference between the non-Buddhist and the Buddhist approaches concerning satisfactory account of human actions. It has important implications with reference to allocation of responsibility of a voluntary action as well as an appropriate theory of punishment. We shall have an occasion later on to take into account some of them.

(iii) *Objectivity V/S Uniqueness* – Thirdly, according to the non-Buddhist schools consideration of anything, no matter whether human or otherwise, needs primarily and decisively to be shaped and determined by taking into account objective, shareable common and hence communicable features alone. This enables us to study it as a kind or type of thing or entity, feature etc. Such a kind of it displays its nature without any residue, and the only way in which one thing or entity differs from another is because and in so far as it possesses smaller or larger number of such features in contrast to another, though each of them should in principle be shareable. Thus, on this consideration, uniqueness of anything does not depend so much on possessing non-shareable feature as not possessing a certain shareable feature, however contingently it may so happen. That is, uniqueness is a (contingently) resultant feature. In so far as such a contingency is removed the so-called unique thing will lose its uniqueness and would become similar to at least one thing other than itself. But in so far as this happens to be the case, the very basis of uniqueness would be lost. The *Brahman* of *Vedānta*, which is considered to be the only thing of its kind, is unique perhaps in this sense of the term.

This means admission of preponderance of cosmocentric perspective over anthropocentric or an outright reduction of the latter to the former. Let us take the first alternative of them bit seriously. Considered this way, approaches of the *Sāṃkhya* and the *Advaita Vedānta* seem to advocate this view to the extent to which they seem to consider the differential aspects of the anthropocentric, from the cosmocentric, to be irrelevant and incosequential for the consideration of the latter. Taking the second alternative seriously seems to be the advocacy of at least *Mīmāṃsā* and *Jainism* in so far as they seem to tailor the cosmocentric to the anthropocentric, and yet understand the

latter only in its objective or shareable sense, which was sketched above. That is why, perhaps, those considerations of the cosmocentric which could not be shown to have bearing on human life were sought to be sliced off from both these strands. Thus understood, in *Mīmāṃsā* only those features of the cosmocentric were considered to be significant which have ritualistic bearing on human life. Or, in *Jainism* an individual is held to be completely subsumable under society and hence possessing every feature which is shareable.⁶ On the *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* approach, on the contrary, the cosmocentric and the anthropocentric seem, by and large, to be taken as isomorphic with each other, and hence whichever way one looks at, the same shareable features would have to be taken into account.

In contrast to this, the Buddhists' approach seems to hold that objectivity and shareability is different from uniqueness and *vice versa*, and that the latter means possession of at least one non-shareable feature by nature of the case.⁷ This means that uniqueness is determined by *Svabhāva*, and not by contingency of non-possession of a shareable feature as is alleged to be the case by the non-Buddhist opponents of it. This consideration of decisive significance has important implications, some of which we shall have an occasion later on to brobe into, in so far as they influence formulation of the theory of action put forth by the advocates of the respective strands.

(iv) *Sakāraṇatā* V/S *Sahetukatā* - Differences between cosmocentric and anthropocentric, as advocated by Buddhists and their non-Buddhist opponents, could be understood along another salient point of controversy between them.

Irrespective of whether what happens in the world is short-lived or long-lived, it could be held that cosmocentrically everything happens only causatively. Thus, on this view, there just

cannot be an uncaused event. For, to say that there is such an event, however accidentally it might be, would be irrational and hence indefensible. That is, causal explanation of events is the only way of satisfactorily accounting for them rationally. It may further be held that since nothing happens irrationally in the world, nothing can happen in it which is uncaused. Such a kind of causal account of an event is a satisfactory explanation of it and it should, in principle, be capable of being given, sooner or later. Events may happen accidentally or regularly. But none can happen without its being caused. Extending this consideration to the anthropocentric, it may be held that nothing happens in the human world as well which is not caused. This kind of extension amounts to holding that happenings in the cosmocentric and the anthropocentric worlds are similarly causal in character and could, therefore, be explained in the same way. Non-Buddhists generally seem to adopt this stance. It is further irrelevant to consider how they actually effect it. For, consideration of this kind would gather decisive importance provided detailed account of a single stand and its defensibility were our primary concerns here.

The Buddhists, on the contrary, seem to make an important distinction between the cosmocentric and the anthropocentric in so far as they hold that while whatever happens cosmocentrically is causal (*Sakāraṇa*) in character,⁸ that which happens in human world is purposive (*Sahetuka*) in nature.⁹ This means that the cosmocentric and the anthropocentric fall apart from each other in a certain decisive respect, and their satisfactory accounts need to be given differently to avoid either reduction or distortion. This also means that whatever is caused need not be necessarily purposive in character, while whatever is purposive in character need not necessarily be causally accountable. Additionally, it could be held that while whatever happens causally

is in accordance with a rule (*Avinābhāva*), that which happens purposively may be so at the most only contingently. Thus understood, to tailor purposes to causes would be one kind of distortion, while to read causes in purposes would be another. Both of them are counter-intuitive in character. Number of happenings in human life could be dispensed with provided imposed or imbibed purposes are got rid of, making an allowance only for those which happen causally. For, since they happen by the nature of the case we have no way to stop them, as we cannot change nature of things at will.

The fundamental sort of difference that we sketched above makes it clear why the upholders of the non-Buddhist strands insist upon presenting highly deterministic account of happenings in human life, analogous to the account of happenings in the world of things. In one sense of it, it would amount to holding that doer of an action is analogous to a thing which behaves in a certain way, since both of them are subject to the same kind of rule-governance. The Buddhists, on the contrary, would oppose such a move since it would amount to reduction of the human to the cosmocentric without any residue. This sort of difference, too, would have important implications, some of which we shall have an occasion later on to consider.

(v) *Doer and Enjoyer : Identity V/S Difference* – Lastly, coming to the issue of allocation of responsibility and the relation of actions to their results and consequences on the one hand and the doer of actions and/or enjoyer of or sufferer for the results and consequences of actions on the other.

The Buddhists seem to accept, by and large, the following – First, as nothing is permanent, so too an action, the doer, the enjoyer/sufferer, results and/or consequences of actions are not permanent. Secondly, the relation between action and its result/

consequence is governed by an indispensable rule such that there can be no result/consequence of an action independently of action and that every voluntary action is purposive in character. This is especially because there is no question of considering anybody responsible for an action which he has not willed. Thirdly, the doer of an action and the one who enjoys or suffers for the results and/or consequences of an action need not necessarily be the same. Hence, the question of allocation of responsibility cannot be settled mechanically as is often sought to be done by opponents of Buddhism.

The non-Buddhist opponents of Buddhism, on the contrary, hold that (a) the doer of action and the enjoyer must be the same and this is determined by the stability or permanence of *Ātmā* (self) (b) No one can be held responsible for actions which he has not done, and one is entitled to enjoy fruits of only those actions which one voluntarily undertook—either in this or previous life, since it is permanent *Ātmā* that passes through chain of lives in order to suffer/enjoy results of actions undertaken by it. Difference of this kind also has enormously significant consequences and implications, some of which we shall have an occasion to study in the sequel.

On this background of the important differences between the Buddhist and the non-Buddhist approaches, we proceed in the next section to present an outline of their respective theories of human action, bring out their important features, and spell out their rationale as we proceed. Out of non-Buddhist and Buddhist approaches concerning human action and its satisfactory explanation we take up the former first for consideration. For, that will enable us better to articulate the salient features of the Buddhist approach, spell out lines of the defence of its rationale, and study its important implications.

II

An Analysis of Non-Buddhist Theory of Action

It is quite obvious that action (*kriyā*) needs to be distinguished from movement, especially because the latter is quite mechanical and non-volitional in character. Further, with reference to giving a satisfactory account of actions only those sort of actions—individual or collective—need to be taken into account which are neither undertaken under compulsion nor are performed out of ignorance. This is not because the latter kinds do not involve a doer. Nor again because they do not lead to results and consequences. It is rather because they are not consciously willed and thus are bereft of any choice. Accordingly, any attempt to present a satisfactory account of human actions needs to concentrate on consciously willed actions.

It is further clear, without much ado, that actions which human beings perform are not ends in themselves. They are rather means to ends. And since any end or goal that one may aspire to realise may not be a legitimate and worthy of being realised, goals worthy of being realised are sought to be discriminated from the unworthy ones. Similarly, granting actions are proper means of enabling the desirous to realise legitimate goals, those actions which are properly instrumental to the realisation of legitimate ends are sought to be discriminated from those which are either not so instrumental, or else are of the nature of positive hindrance or obstacle in the realization of the desired legitimate goal. Advocates of various philosophical trends of thought have emphasised the need and importance of living human life in a worthy way. They have also denounced any mode of living human life in an unworthy way. Thus understood, various sorts of discriminations are sought to be instituted, elaborated and justified for reasons too numerous to

be gone into in the present paper. It is also needless to be done for the present purpose at hand.

Of the different non-Buddhist philosophical trends which flourished in the Indian sub-continent, adherents of four trends have registered prolonged and concerted opposition to the Buddhist account of human actions. Therefore, we need to concentrate on them in the present context, although adherents of other trends also came to trade later on along the path paved by the former for one reason or the other, directly or indirectly. It is, therefore, needless to be exhaustive in our consideration of their oppositional relation to the Buddhist approach. Instead, it would be expedient and economical to concentrate on the four major trends. They are: (a) *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika*, (b) *Mīmāṃsā*, (c) Jainism and (d) *Advaita Vedānta*.¹⁰ Of them, further, the objections raised by *Advaita Vedānta* are basically epistemological and ontological in character,¹¹ and since in the present essay we shall not primarily be dealing with epistemological and ontological aspects of human action, we hardly need to deal with objections raised by *Advaita Vedānta* seriously. A remark in passing, however, should not be considered out of place concerning the sort of objections which *Advaita Vedānta* has raised. As according to it knowledge alone is instrumental to the realization of the legitimate end, it is enough for it to point out that the Buddhist account of human life does not furnish the sort of epistemological and ontological basis which is conducive to the former. Its opposition to Buddhism, therefore, runs along epistemological and ontological route, rather than confronting its theory of action.

Adherents of the remaining three non-Buddhist trends of thought, viz. *Nyāya* (although we earlier mentioned *Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika* as a combined approach, this feature of it arose much later, especially after *Vaiśeṣika* as an independent trend of

thought ceased to be and was taken over by later *Nyāya*, starting with Udayanācārya. Elaborate discussion of the stand of the school and concerted opposition to the Buddhist theory of action is found only [in the works written by *Naiyāyikas*), *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism have opposed the Buddhist theory of action and its implications, and levelled charges mentioned above against Buddhism elaborately and quite repeatedly. They, in turn, have shouldered the responsibility of articulating an alternative theory of human action and defending it with ingenuous arguments marshalled in its support. Here, again, opposition between the so-called orthodox and heterodox systems has been considered to be unimportant.

Coming then to *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism. As remarked above, of them, the last is heterodox in character and refuses its theory of action to have any allegiance with the *Vedas*, while the former two, apart from other considerations, seek to present their theory of human action with clear anchorage in one or the other consideration originating from the *Vedas*.¹² In fact adherents of *Nyāya* often proclaim themselves to be interested in defending the tradition (*Parṃparā*) against onslaughts on it,¹³ may they be originating from adherents of like-minded or unlikeminded trends of thought.¹⁴ Thus understood, adherents of *Nyāya* could be considered to be self-styled home-guards of the tradition, protecting it from internal insurgency or external aggression. Adherents of Jainism also assume similar self-appointed role, but we will return to it in proper context later. The tradition that *Nyāya* seeks to safeguard and defend is concerning theory of action originating from the *Vedas* as outlined by *Mīmāṃsā*.¹⁵ This sort of leaning of *Nyāya* and *Mīmāṃsā* upon each other is reciprocal in character although for different reasons. Whereas *Nyāya* is indebted to *Mīmāṃsā* for the foundation of theory of action, the latter is indebted to the former

so far as appropriate ontological basis of it is concerned. We need not enter into the details of the issue here, as it falls outside the scope of the present paper.

Adherents of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism accept in agreement that actions are required to be undertaken for the realisation of the desired legitimate goals, as former are instrumental to the latter. Such actions lead to results and consequences (*phala*), since there is an inalienable tie (*karmavipākā*) between the two as the latter would not be available independently of the former. This point, as observed earlier, is also acceptable to Buddhism. From this point onwards violent differences between Buddhist and non-Buddhist approaches concerning theory of action begin to surface. It is further held by adherents of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism that every action presupposes a doer of it, since action independently of the doer would just not be done at all. As conception of action is related with that of doer of action, so too the fact of action, i.e., action as an event, is related with doer of it i.e., agent. This is alright as far as it goes. But the adherents of the schools under consideration bring forth at least five major points in their theory of action around which prolonged debates and controversies (between adherents of Buddhist and non-Buddhist theories of human action) revolved for centuries. They are :

(a) *Results of Action Connected with Stable Kartā* - As stated above, that any action which is performed - good and bad - leads to results and consequences, or that every action that is performed necessarily presupposes some or the other doer - individual or group - of it is quite clear. But this in itself would not establish connection between doer of an action on the one hand and result/s and consequence of it on the other, especially if the doer is not stable and permanent. For, result of an action may

emerge after a long time since action is performed. To ensure non-severance of relation between the doer (*kartā*) of an action and result (*phala*) of it, adherents of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism hold that the doer (*Kartā = Ātmā*) is stable or permanent. Any change that occurs in it, as Jainism clearly accepts it to be the case, since everything according to it is liable to undergo change, is considered to be non-constitutive in character so that essential nature of *Ātmā* does not come to be jeopardised. This means, any change with reference to *Ātmā* is external to it and is more of the sort of an adjunct. Given this, via stability of *Ātmā* as *Kartā*, anchorage and bearing of (*Sāmānādhikarāṇya*) of action as well as its result could be established on the doer of action and thus through action its result could be connected with doer of it via its stability. Thus considered, neither action nor its result stands segregated from the doer of action. But with this, sufficiently strong coherent foundation comes to be laid not only for theory of reward and punishment but also atonement (*prāyaścitta*).¹⁶ We shall return to this point a little later.

(b) *Identity of Kartā and Bhoktā*—We saw above that an action presupposes doer of it and that any action leads to result. The result and consequences which follow from an action that is performed, would not make sense in the context of a theory of action unless they come to the lot of somebody. For, as action needs to be related to human life so too its result. But who could be that somebody with whom the results of an action are to be related? In principle, it could be anybody, irrespective of whether such a person is also the doer of the concerned action or not. But then, as we shall see below, it would make nonsense of an accepted theory of reward and punishment. In order to ensure that nothing of the kind happens, adherents of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism establish identity

of doer (*kṛtā*) and enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of an action via constancy of it. The *bhoktā* is actually the *bhoktā* of results and consequences of action. But since no result or consequence follows independently of an action that is performed, enthymematically it is said that he (i. e. doer) is *bhoktā* of an action. We said this is not merely indirect and derived way of establishing connection between results of an action and doer of an action. It is rather enthymematic, because it presupposes identity of the doer with the enjoyer or *vice-versa* via its permanence, so that doer of an action itself turns out to be the enjoyer of the results of an action, whatever may be the duration of time which may elapse between its being doer (i. e. performance of an action) and an enjoyer (i. e. emergence of results and consequences of action). This consideration has one important implication and we shall return to it in the sequel.

(c) *Reward and Punishment*— Results and consequences which originate from action could be considered either to be good, beneficial and hence satisfying or else as bad, evil and hence annoying. We saw earlier that results and consequences are directly related to the one to whose lot they come. But why should benefit accrue to anybody or why should an annoyance come to anybody's lot? The answer that adherents of *Nyāya*, *Mīmāṃsā* and Jainism give is because the enjoyer is the same as the doer, and therefore they (i. e. results and consequences) are related to the doer via his actions. Thus understood, beneficial results are rewards, while annoying ones are matter of punishment awarded to the doer for the sort of actions he undertook. Considered this way, there can be no result unconnected with doer's action, and anybody could be held responsible only for those actions one has performed, since in the context of theory of action only voluntary actions need to be taken into account. But since one has performed an action voluntarily and

since doer of an action and enjoyer of its result is the same, the doer cannot help being held responsible for the sort of results which come to his lot. The permanence and constancy of the doer and its identity with the enjoyer make doer of action alone the nucleus around which consideration of reward and punishment revolves. And in this way internal coherence of the theory on which account of reward and punishment is based and responsibility is allocated does not come to be jeopardised, weakened or destroyed. Similarly, propitiatory, repentive and atonemental actions (*Prāyaścitta*) too, on this theory, would be related with the doer of those of actions of his in the performance of which some mistake or flaw had emerged such that it is required to be rectified for smooth allocation of responsibility. This sort of internal coherence of the theory is considered to be its asset and strength.

(d) *Determinism* – We saw above that advocates of non-Buddhist theory insist on the satisfaction of the condition of theoretical internal coherence and completely disallow any compromise with it on whatever ground, however weighty. This, however, brings forth one more point of great significance in the theory of human action advanced by the adherents of the trends under consideration. It amounts to upholding an uncompromising determinism, making no allowance for chance and contingency. If there is any likelihood of any sort of experience or fact going contrary to the dictates of internal theoretical coherence and determinism, then it is sought to be twisted and re-interpreted in such a way that neither determinism nor internal theoretical coherence is made any compromise with. To be able to see the point we are labouring to put forth and comprehend its implication, it needs to be made clear that in an attempt to satisfactorily account for human actions what one needs to concentrate

upon are the actions performed in the present life of an individual or group concerned, and nothing else. But since in many cases restricting only to the life-span of an individual concerned does not necessarily enable the advocates of internal theoretical coherence combined with uncompromising determinism to satisfactorily account for results and consequences coming to one's lot, they bring in a hypothesis of chain of lives, both preceding and following the present life. Although this move enables the concerned advocates to save their uncompromising determinism combined with internal theoretical coherence they so valiantly seek to defend, yet it opens another Pandora's Box, to the consideration of which we turn below.

(e) *Infinite Regress and/or Platonism* - Such a series of lives lived by an eternal doer and permanent enjoyer which is identical with it is no doubt consistent with constancy of the doer and its identity with the enjoyer. For, it could be claimed that number of lives through which *Ātmā* passed in the past and would pass in future would not make any difference to the essential nature of it. This is fair enough as far as it goes, especially because no change is held to be structural in character. Thus, internal theoretical coherence is not jeopardised, and determinism also is not compromised. But what is the original important question with which the investigation under consideration commenced? It is surely understanding the enigma of the present life and giving a satisfactory account of actions performed by a human being during it. But in the process one has brought in double danger: on the one hand, to preserve internal theoretical coherence and to keep uncompromising determinism in tact, infinite regress is dragged in - regress extending infinitely both backward and forward starting from the present life. Can one say infinite regress is methodologically preferable to effect acceptability of either determinism or internal coherence? On

the other hand, one is concerned about the present life and actions performed in it. Their satisfactory account is the problem. But realising that it cannot be given within the limit of the present life one has brought in many lives and innumerable kinds of actions performed in them. How can indulgence into this kind of rampant Platonism be held to be a satisfactory solution of the problem ?

As mentioned in the beginning, advocates of the non-Buddhist trends of thought basically level two main charges against Buddhist theory of action, viz. *kṛtapraṇāśa* and *Akṛtābhyāgama* and hold that in so far as the Buddhist account is susceptible to these charges it is unacceptable.¹⁷ The advocates of the concerned non-Buddhist trends of thought no doubt succeed in ensuring that the account of human action they present circumvents the charges the Buddhist theory is, according to them, susceptible to. But they articulate, in turn, such a theory of human action which, methodologically speaking, is open to serious charges of indulgence into infinite regress and avoidable Platonism. The former of these makes satisfactory account of any life and actions performed in it almost well-nigh impossible, while the latter seems to multiply the problems to be tackled with a view to dealing with the limited number of them which confront one in so far as one proceeds to satisfactorily account for the present life and actions performed in it. Thus, on the latter count it makes us swallow the bitter pill of Aristotle's charge against Plato, even though we are suffering from no disease for the cure of which the said pill is administered to us. Over and above these two charges, the said account also turns out to be counter-intuitive in character. But we propose to humbly return to it after we have presented an outline of Buddhist theory of action, to which we turn in the next section.

The reason of this, we earnestly hope, will become clear as we proceed.

III

An Analysis and Rationale of the Buddhist Theory of Action

It would be highly misleading to suppose that adherents of Buddhism are not serious in presenting their theory of human action. It is not the case that while non-Buddhist opponents take their task in all seriousness, adherents of Buddhism are flipant in their approach and hence given merely to flirting with their task. Such a view would be highly partisan, dogmatic and one-sided. It is, nonetheless, true that both Buddhists and non-Buddhists put forth different account of human life and present variant theory and analysis of human action. Such a difference between them does not emerge out of sheer love of novelty. In the case of non-Buddhist adherents of different trends of philosophical thought we saw above that their theory and analysis of human action is based upon and backed by certain important considerations—be they ontological, epistemic or methodological or otherwise. Likewise, in the case of Buddhist analysis and theory of human action it needs to be noted carefully that there are certain vital considerations such that if they are overlooked or ignored, it will not enable us to comprehend the Buddhist theory of human action in its principal aspects. This would, in turn, bring in such distortions of it as were articulated by non-Buddhist opponents of it. In order to save ourselves falling into such a trap, it is necessary to look to some salient and decisive aspects of the Buddhist theory of human action so that in their light its marked contrast with non-Buddhist theory would become clear and in the light of it we would not miss its seminally significant implications. It is this twin task to which we address ourselves in the present and the

next section. For reasons too obvious for being stated, we take them into account in the same order in which we have mentioned them. Coming, therefore, first to the salient features of the Buddhist theory of action.

(a) *Result and/or Consequence of Action Necessarily Presupposes an Action*: We had observed earlier that Buddhists accept a kind of necessary connection by way of a rule between actions and their results and consequences. When they talk of actions they do not confuse them with movements, especially because while the former are purposive and volitional in character, the latter are non-purposive and mechanical in nature. The sort of invariable relation that is at stake between actions on the one hand and their results and consequences is such that every result and consequence of an action is inconceivable independently of action performed by some agent or the other. Further, such an agent may be individual or collective in character, and even when it is of the latter kind, the same kind of necessary connection between action and its result holds as when the agent is an individual. Thus understood, the general format of the relationship between action and its result would remain the same, no matter whether acting agent is an individual or a community. The relation between action and its results and consequences holds invariably only one directionally, i.e., from results and consequences to action, and not reciprocally. This is for two reasons :

(i) We cannot guarantee that just because an action has been performed, it would necessarily lead to some intended result or consequence, since it is a fact that some actions turn out to be abortive in character. For instance, one may begin sinking a well with the intention of ensuring water-supply but may give up mid-way for whatever reason it might be.

(ii) Secondly, every volitional action necessarily presupposes appropriate volition, but volition in itself does not guarantee that it will result into action commensurate with it. For example, I might intensely will to stand first in examination, but may be too sloth and indolent to study very hard. In this context it is further noteworthy to consider that the same result might arise out of alternative courses of action, and, therefore, it would be too rash to invariably connect certain result only with certain action. For example, I may will to have enough money with me, and I may come to have it through honest hard work, winning a lottery ticket or a jack pot or through charity or will of somebody, however I may not deserve it. Taking such kind of contingencies into account the only thing that could be accepted without any reservation is that any result or consequence of an action would not emerge independently of an action and that such a connection, although only one-sided, between action on the one hand result and consequence of it on the other, could and needs to be understood only generically. This ensures that it would not collapse in face of whatever kind of contingency, which might force any other kind of relation between them to be either modified or rejected altogether. Acceptance of this kind of relation between them enables adherents of Buddhism to circumvent two lures which otherwise may force one to put forth a different sort of relation between actions and their results. One of them is of distorting facts and contingencies while the other is of disregarding them in so far as they seem to go contrary to the accepted methodological orientation.

(b) *Anityatā of Everything* – It was observed earlier, although passingly, that according to adherents of Buddhism impermanence (*Anityatā*) is a structurally inalienable feature of both things and organisms, including human. It is such a feature of anything that in face of it any kind of constancy and stability –

no matter whether structural or functional, central or peripheral—as an essential and indispensable feature of anything would simply be inconsistent with it. Given this, everything in cosmocentric as well as anthropocentric world is necessarily and exceptionlessly impermanent, no matter whether it is action, agent, doer, enjoyer, *Ātmā*, result and consequence, *dharmā* (feature) *pudgala* (material component), *saṃghāta* (cluster) or anything else. In this way *Anityatā* takes everything within its sway however dear or alien it may be. An illusion of constancy and stability, however dogmatically and ingenuously it may come to be defended and however accustomed and indoctrinated we might be by it, is simply misleading. Hence it needs to be got rid of so that we do not distort or ignore facts, being otherwise than what we are inclined to think of them. As argued elsewhere,¹⁸ this kind of *Anityatā* may be understood in either of the two senses, viz. in the sense of anything (i) not lasting more than a moment, or (ii) lasting at least for a moment. In whichever sense it is understood, it remains structural feature of anything that is real and can be disregarded only at the cost of misunderstanding that which is the case. Thus, *Anityatā* opens up permanent possibility of change and becoming, and precludes any stability or constancy in so far as it goes against such a possibility. In this way, *Anityatā* opens up the entire sphere of variability and is simultaneously non-satisfiable with any kind of constancy, although it does not preclude flow or *Saṅgāna*, a chain of becoming. When combined with action, agent, doer or enjoyer *Anityatā* has many important implications, some of which we hope to consider in the sequel.

(c) *Sahetukatā*, *Tṛṣṇā* and *Vāsanā* — The Buddhist insistence on the distinction between the context of *Sakāraṇatā*, i.e., cosmocentricism and *Sahetukatā* i.e., anthropocentricism is vitally significant. Any attempt to compromise with it will not only

distort the Buddhist point of view but also would lead to our distorted understanding of facts as we encounter them in our lives. Happenings and events which occur as per *Sakāraṇatā* are governed by rule and could be made sense of only in accordance with native nature (*svabhāva*) of anything. But events occurring in human life are due more to craving (*trṣṇā*) and feelings (*Vāsanā*) connected with goals which we seek to realise in our lives and could only be understood with reference to the distorted picture we have of ourselves. To seek to understand *sahetukatā* in the light of *sakāraṇatā* is one kind of distortion, while to connect the former with one or the other kind of stability is another. The former of them amounts to reducing *sahetukatā* to *sakāraṇatā*, without realising that many events, which could be satisfactorily explained with reference to *Sahetukatā*, or many happenings in our life have no causal explanation of them, although they are connected with certain goals—however illegitimate—which we seek to realise. The latter kind of distortion, on the contrary, is not only inconsistent with *Anityatā* but is also counter-intuitive in the sense that it amounts to either wishing away change or else considering it to be irrelevant and peripheral. A move of this kind may be consistent with the theory one seeks to advocate, but is, nonetheless, distortive of facts as we encounter them and hence is counter-intuitive in character. The Buddhist insistence, however, on demarcating the context of *sakāraṇatā* from that of *sahetukatā* does not amount merely to bring to our notice that human world differs from the world of things in an important respect. Nor does it amount to holding that nothing whatever happens in our life which is *sakāraṇa*. For instance, our physical growth is very much a *sakāraṇa* phenomenon, although anything connected with our life is not necessarily *sakāraṇa* in this way. Dogmatic refusal to adopt this line of demarcation leads to certain kind of gross misunderstandings

concerning human life as we shall see in the sequel, which cannot be taken care of merely by looking to internal theoretical coherence of the approach one is bent upon adopting.

(d) *Insistance on Primacy of this Life and Happenings in it*—The philosophical problem of pain and suffering coming to human lot, its satisfactory analysis and appropriate resolution with reference to human life needs to present such a theory which looks primarily to this life, the sort of actions we undertake, and the events and happenings we come to be confronted with. As there are events which are causally explainable, likewise there many others which are not so explainable, in so far as they are fraught with contingency and accidentality, no matter whether occasioned in terms of simultaneity (*yaugapadya*) or succession (*krama*).¹⁹ Neither mere simultaneity nor succession, however cleverly and ingeniously interpreted, can take away accidentality they are beset with. Likewise, many of the events and happenings in our life—individual or social—are accountable solely in terms of our cravings, greed, sentiments and emotions, however intensely they seem to originate. If such varied phenomena are to be explained satisfactorily it cannot be done either turning back to experience or ignoring contingency. Similarly, change and impermanence of everything cannot be sacrificed on the altar of presumed permanence. What the opponents of Buddhism seem to be doing is doubly dubious : on the one hand, since the contingencies cannot be easily wished away, to convert them into certain kind of necessity, they are sought to be connected with previous lives. For example contingencies of certain rewards and punishments coming to our lot in this life. On the other hand, to make change and impermanence irrelevant and unimportant it is sought to be veiled and hidden under the carpet of one or the other sort of permanence and stability. Thus, it is sought to be denied or wished away. Against this, Buddhism insists that

unless we learn to face exigencies of contingencies and risks of unpredictability, our understanding of present life cannot be alright. And where and in so far as our understanding of the present life and happenings in it is inadequate, even if the present life comes to be connected with a series of lives extending both backward and forward, our understanding of human life as a whole not only cannot be respectably viable but is bound to be fraught with illusion and superstition as well. What we do in this life and whatever comes to our lot should be explainable solely with reference to the present life as the only reference point. If in our life we meet with contingencies and accidentalities, then we need to accept them to be so and proceed to make sense of our life together with them rather than independently of them. If some other life is conceived and if it is modelled after the present life, then that too cannot be free from an element of contingency, for the simple reason that contingency is a fact in the present life. Ignoring risks, contingencies and accidentalities creates a gross misunderstanding of the present life and such a misunderstanding cannot be removed by hinding it behind a chain of lives backed by permanence of self which passes from one life to another. It brings in determinism and through it a sense of security. But both of them stand on the basis of a systematic and well-contrived illusion, and therefore should be considered to be unacceptable according to Buddhists.

(e) *Anityatā and Non-identity of Doer and Enjoyer*—Earlier we had an occasion to outline principal points concerning *Anityatā*. We also talked about the the sort of contingencies and accidentalities we are confronted with. If and in so far as these two considerations are brought to bear upon each other, it brings forth certain points of seminal concern in the Buddhist analysis and theory of human action. Such points seem to originate from

different directions. First, even if our voluntary actions are purposive in character, there is no guarantee that the doer of actions will last till the realization of the end for which the action under consideration was instrumental. This is for two reasons : (i) as everything is impermanent and liable to change, so is the doer of action. (ii) There is no guarantee that the result of an action will arise immediately after, if not while performing, the action. This sort of impermanence with which both the doer and action are fraught necessarily brings forth two important points. First, result of an action may emerge after action has ceased to be. Secondly, the doer of an action, too, being impermanent, may cease to be by the time result of it emerges and thus it may not come to the lot of the doer himself. The first of them entails that an action is related with result only variably in two senses : (a) even if an action is performed, result may not follow and the said action may turn out to be abortive, as remarked earlier. (b) The same result could possibly be produced adopting alternative courses of action, although no result can follow independently of any action whatever. This is the sort of inevitable relation (*Avinābhāva*) between result and action we talked of earlier.

Anityatā applied to the doer, on the contrary, brings forth different considerations. Since the doer of an action may not last by the time its result emerges, such a result which has emerged may go to the lot of someone else, however accidentally and unintentionally this may happen. Given this, identity of the doer and the enjoyer/sufferer turns out to be dubious and the message sought to be delivered by the proverb 'reap as you sow'—questionable. In so far as this is the case, it makes little sense to say that the chain of action and its results can be terminated only through the doer of action enjoying or suffering for the results of it. For either the initiator of the chain of

actions i.e., the doer of the action, may have ceased to be, or action too might cease to be. Further, the series of results of an action in principle interminable. That is, result of an action fails to be necessarily connected with the doer of it. This is the essence of the charge of *kytapraṇāśa* often levelled against Buddhism. On the other hand, as results of an action performed by one may go to the lot of someone else, this brings in another consideration. It amounts to holding that the results which may come to the lot of someone may not have anything to do with the actions performed by him. This is the heart of another charge viz. *Akṛtābhyāgama* levelled against Buddhism. Thus, through combining *Anityatā* with doer and enjoyer respectively, Buddhism questions two important implications of the above-mentioned proverb, viz., in order to come to reap particular sort of benefit one must sow the seeds of performing only certain kind of action, and the sort benefit or suffering that has come to the lot of someone can be understood only on account of his having acted in a particular way. Through dissociation of the relation between results of an action and constancy of the doer of them, Buddhism questions the first implication of the proverb under consideration and the rationale by which it is backed. In so doing, it does not jeopardise or annihilate relation between actions and their results. Even non-Buddhists should not have compunction in accepting that the same sort of result could in principle be accomplished through adopting alternative courses of action. It also means to bring to the notice of the concerned that when a given agent acts, other individuals too act, and therefore the result of an action cannot be related to a particular agent in isolation from others. On the other hand, through dissociation of the relation between actions and constancy of enjoyer Buddhism questions the second implication of the above-mentioned proverbial wisdom. This does not, nonetheless, threaten the necessary relation between result of an action and

the action in so far as it is accepted that no result of an action would be forthcoming unless action is performed. Even non-Buddhists should have no reservation in accepting this. But through bringing to bear *Anityatā* alike on both doer as well as enjoyer, Buddhism questions identity of them and thus removes the very foundation on which the rationale of its opponents stands. This means that Buddhism is presenting an alternative analysis and theory of human action. The two theories viz. the one presented by opponents of Buddhism including adherents of Jainism, and the other presented by Buddhism, are such that they cannot be true together. Nor does dogmatic acceptance of and subscription to one of them automatically falsify the other. In spite of this, it is very strange to note that some adherents of Jainism have assumed self-styled responsibility of mediating between Buddhism and its opponents so far as analysis and theory of human action is concerned.²⁰ This sort of self-aggrandised role of mediator of them is doubly dubious : on the one hand, since they themselves are partisan subscribers to the non-Buddhist theory, their arbitration cannot be neutral and impartial. On the other hand, since the two theories cannot be true together, they are trying to reconcile that which cannot be reconciled. Of course, both the theories under consideration could be false. But if this is what the adherents of Jainism under consideration are seeking to establish, then their move is suicidal. But in addition, since they fail to provide a viable alternative to the two already in vogue, discharge of the self-assumed responsibility enables them to cut no ice at all. Even if the move under consideration is prompted by the subscription of the concerned to the doctrine of *Ahiṃsā*, it needs to be very clearly understood that application of *Ahiṃsā* in theoretical considerations and practical sphere of human life is backed by different sort of rationale, and one is not simply mechanical extension of the other.

Consider likewise the matter originating from the consideration of contingency and accidentality. Concentrating merely on the present life we do notice that in the case of some individuals either the result that comes to their lot is just not commensurate with their efforts, though we know it full well that the concerned persons did not shirk from trying as much hard as they should have. This kind of incommensurability may be seen in either way : On the one hand, actions, even when undertaken over a prolonged period of time, turn out to be abortive and just fetch no desired result at all. For instance, someone might sit in the same examination a dozen times and yet success may not smile at him even once. On the other hand, considered over a comparatively short span of time, the quantum of efforts put in and that of the result reaped may be completely disproportionate. For example, a farmer may do everything within his power to get a good crop. But cruel weather may strike such a heavy blow that after the harvest the quantity of grain that the farmer may get must be utterly negligible.

On the other hand, we also notice two-fold accidentality of another kind. While there are some who are rewarded disproportionately to the efforts they have put in, there are others who have been rewarded or received benefits in spite of utter absence of any effort on their part. We not only notice persons born in a filthily rich or extremely poor families, but also those who are born with disabilities of various kinds. Within the limit of the present life there indeed are such contingencies and accidentalities. There are cases and instances of extreme and prolonged suffering. What sort of theory of reward and punishment can explain such phenomena satisfactorily ? Given the theories of punishment which are in vogue retributive theory looks to commensurability between quantum of crime committed and the quantum of punishment awarded. The deterrant theory is more

concerned with the possible criminals and seeks to prevent them from committing crime. The reformatory theory, on the contrary, looks more to the future of the criminal and possibility of dissociation between his future life and his inclination to commit crime. But what about the lot of innocent sufferers? Are we to say that either they are non-existent or that they do not suffer at all? Or else, are we to hold that their suffering is immaterial? But either of these attitudes would be equally deceptive and hence unacceptable. Buddhist analysis and theory of human action seems to open our eyes to such realities of human life which starkly gaze in our intellectual eyes for their satisfactory analysis. Instead of giving due credit to Buddhism for drawing attention of the concerned to some enigmas regarding human life and actions which men perform, it is futile to complain (i) that its approach concerning human action does not make satisfactory sense of reward and punishment in so far as it seeks to question many important presuppositions concerning human action as well as the rationale by which its satisfactory analysis and theory is backed,²¹ or (ii) that the normal patterns of behaviour and relations adopted either individually or collectively or the whole pattern of human life (*lokasthiti*) anchored in them would be threatened.²² If an illusion is perpetuated, it does not automatically become converted into truth. We should rather be thankful to Buddhism for drawing our attention to some of the flaws inherent in the analysis and theory of human action then in vogue, in the self complacent and dogmatic justification of which some scholars had taken great pains.

IV

Implications of the Buddhist Analysis and Theory of Action -

We presented above an outline of the Buddhist analysis and theory of human action and brought out some of the contrastive

features of them in comparison with outline of the analysis and theory of human action presented by non-Buddhist opponents of it. On this background we proceed to present below some implications of the Buddhist approach :

(i) *Majority is not Determinative of Truth* : The non-Buddhist analysis and theory of action has not only been in vogue over centuries in this sub-continent but it also has been a very formidable force to reckon with. It was accepted, elaborated and defended by adherents of a great majority of philosophical strands which flourished in this country. Taking this into account, a misconception may happen to be generated that that is the only way of making sense of human action and present an analysis as well as satisfactory theory of it. It may further be held that it suffers from no defect of any kind especially since it is supported by varied strands and large number of people. Buddhism pricks the bubble of this view and brings to our notice two important points of seminal concern : First, an alternative account of human action could be presented which successfully avoids such major flaws of the majority view as counter-intuitivity and subscription to unrestricted Platonism. Secondly, the account of human action which Buddhism presents is also free from determinism and dogmatism. So far as internal theoretical consistency and coherence is concerned, advocates of Buddhism seek to impress upon the concerned that on this count the theory advanced by their opponents scores no precedence over the theory advocated by Buddhism, and that internal theoretical coherence need not be considered to be their exclusive monopoly, such that in so far as the Buddhist approach lacks it, it could be denounced without examination. It rather emphasises that even after strong efforts it cannot be dismissed on the ground of internal theoretical incoherence, unless one is to be dogmatic and irrational in doing so.

(ii) *Demarcation between Cosmocentric and Anthropocentric*

It similarly urges upon the concerned not to overlook or ignore, for whatever reason, including concern for simplicity, two important considerations. First, there is a fundamental difference between cosmocentric and anthropocentric world. Given this, to either thingify organisms and/or human beings or to anthropomorphise the world are the moves which are equally intellectually perilous in character, although for different reasons. The former consists in reducing organism or man to things, while the latter seeks to elevate things to the level of organisms or human beings. It is to emphasise this sort of difference between the two worlds under consideration that Buddhism invokes the distinction between *Sakāraṇatā* and *Sahetukatā*.

Secondly, while presenting analysis and theory of human action it is enough to concentrate upon the present life only. Accordingly, assumption of a chain of lives either preceding or following the present one is both redundant as well as questionable. Further, analysis and theory of human action presented with reference to variability of action and impermanence of both agent/doer and enjoyer/sufferer along with rejection of the identity of the latter two is more flexible and insightful. This could be seen especially if it is understood that whereas the theory advocated by opponents of Buddhism accommodated and paved way for fatalism and indolence, that of Buddhism did not. From this two points seem to follow : First, accepting human action to be a fact and proceeding to present analysis and theory of it does not make it inevitable to accept *karma-phala*-theory as advocated by the opponents of Buddhism. Secondly, opponents of Buddhism seem to present an ingenuous rationalization of pain and suffering coming to human lot. Buddhism, on the contrary, through its teaching that it originates from *Tṛṣṇā*,

Vāsanā and *Sahetukatā* seeks to impress upon us the need of changing our attitude towards it and face it courageously in so far as, however contingently, it has come to our lot.

(iii) *Abhorance of Counter-intuitivity - Plight of Innocent Sufferers* - Buddhist analysis and theory of human action is abhorant of counter-intuitivity. What our experience teaches us is something which is not to be wished away or disposed of through clever and ingenuous rationalization. Instead of making fetish out of theories of reward and punishment already in vogue, Buddhism seems to take plight of guiltless sufferers and innocent victims far more seriously than any other trend. This sort of concern for them seems to have originated right from the Buddha himself. It is no small wonder that he is called *Mahā-kāruṇika*.²³ It is such innocent sufferers who alone can be objects of legitimate *karuṇā* or pity. It is not merely a matter of formal sympathy or emotional empathy. It is rather a matter of great concern for their plight and efforts to help them bear the burden of it with courage and determinism. It must not have been for nothing that at one time multitudes embraced Buddhism, although no palpable material benefit accrued to them. Importance of *karuṇā* can especially be understood provided it is seen that it is opposed, on the one hand, to the attitude of rewarding the undeserved, and punishing the innocent, on the other.

(iv) *Possibility of Others Suffering because of us* - It seeks to emphasise as much as it needs to be that though actions are initiated by individuals or groups, for whatever reasons they might be, their results and consequences are limited by no fiat or contrivance only to the doers of those actions. Nor do results and consequences of actions undertaken by us necessarily arise during our life time. It is not, therefore, merely enough to insulate our life from pain and suffering coming to our lot. In so

doing, we cannot be either blind to the possibility or oblivious of the fact that we might make others innocent victims of the results and consequences of our actions. To put the responsibility of such results and consequences on the sufferers themselves is both inhuman and unjustifiable. It is inhuman because it refuses to consider various individuals on par and accept their equality irrespective of whether it is willed by God or not and irrespective also of whether it is sanctioned by any such authority as *Vedas* or not. But it is also unjustifiable because it mistakes clever rationalisation for satisfactory account of anything.

(v) *Changeability and Contingency* – Through emphasising transitivity and impermanence of everything it seeks to bring to the notice of the concerned that nothing is immunised and insulated from liability to change and destruction, inclusive of a social order. In face of the possibility of perpetual change it seeks to teach the concerned to learn to take life in all its aspects courageously and face boldly the risks that it enfolds. Accordingly, though stability, security and non-changeability are sought to be questioned along with complacency, continuity and flow are not allowed to be sacrificed on the altar of discreteness as is sometimes alleged.²⁴ Nor is *Anityatā* sought to be understood in terms of its rigid sense viz., not literally lasting more than a moment as is made out to be the case by opponents of Buddhism,²⁵ although that, as a coherent possibility, is not ruled out altogether.

We are aware that many of the points we have made above need much more elaboration than is done here. But it would be beyond the scope of a single paper to be elaborate and comprehensive on various issues connected with human action from the point of view of Buddhism. That is why we decided to delimit ourselves to presenting an outline of the Buddhist analysis and

theory of human action. Even if the present essay serves as prolegomenon to Buddhist theory of action we should feel our efforts to have been rewarded.

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NOTES

1. (For Jainism) Malliṣena; *Syādvādamāñjarī* with Hemacandra's *Anyayogavyavacchedikā-dvātrimśikā*; K. 18, pp. 122-126; Dhruva, A. B., (ed.); Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune 1933.
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(For *Vedānta*) Śankarācārya; *Bṛhma-sūtra-Bhāṣya*; II. i. 36.
2. I am deeply indebted to Prof. M. P. Marathe who helped me at various stages in writing this paper.
3. "Some Thoughts on Significant Contributions of Buddhist Logicians"; Chinchore, M. R.; *Journal of Indian Philosophy*; Vol. 15, 1987, pp. 155-171.
4. "Lost Buddhist Texts : The Rationale of Their Reconstruction in Sanskrit"; Chinchore, M. R.; *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*; Vol. 17, No. 3, 1990, pp. 285-312.
5. Dharmakīrti; *Pramāṇa-vārtika*; Ch. I, K. 68-69, Swāmi Dwarikada Shastri, (ed.); *Bauddha Bharati*, Varanasi, 1968.
6. Jainism considers only two main types of actions to be undertaken, viz either by *Srāvakas* or *Sramaṇas*, see for details, *Acārāṅga* and *Thaṅgāṅga*.

7. Dharmottara; *Nyāya-bindu-tīkā*; p. 15, Shastri, Chandrasekhara, (ed.); Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, Varanasi, 1954.
8. Chandrakirti; *Prasannapadā* (with Nāgārjuna's *Madhyamaka Śāstra*) p. 20; P. L. Vaidya, (ed.), Mithila Institute, Darbhanga, 1960.
See also, Dharmakirti; *Pramāṇa-vārtika*, Auto commentary on *Svārthanumāna pariccheda*; K. 25, pp. 10-11; Dalsukhabhai Malvania (ed.); Hindu Vishwavidyalaya Sanskrit Publications Board, Varanasi, 1960.
9. Chandrakirti; *Prasannapadā*, pp. 4-5. See also, Dharmakirti; *Pramāṇa-vārtika*; Autocommentary on *Svārthanumāna-pariccheda*; K. 270, pp. 93-94.
10. Kāśmīra Śaivism also joined them later on. See for further details : Utpaladeva; *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*; p. 158; Nirnaya-Sagar Press, Bombay, 1918.
I am grateful to Dr. S. S. More of our Department for bringing this reference to my notice.
11. Śankarācārya; *Bṛhma-sūtra-Bhāṣya*; II, ii, 18-32.
12. See for details : Gautama; *Nyāya-sūtras*; I. i. 1. 4. 1. 19, 4. 1. 60 - 4. 2. 1 and its various commentaries upto the *Pariśuddhi*.
See also Kumāṛila : *Śloka-vārtika t Codanā-Sūtra-pariccheda*.
13. Gautama; *Nyāya-sūtras*; 4. 2. 50-51.
14. *Ibid*; 1. 2. 1-3.
15. Jayanta Bhatta; *Nyāya-Maṅjarī*, Part I, Anhika 4, pp. 213-220.
16. Cf. various *Dharma-sāhitas*. See *The Dharma Śāstra : Hindu Religious Codes*, Vols. I-V, Text and English translation by M. N. Dutta, Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1979.
17. *Loc. cit.*, note 1.
18. Chinchore, M. R.; "Some Epistemological and Social Implications of Kṣāṇikatā"; *Annals of the Bhadarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. LXVII, 1987, pp. 57-76.
19. Dharmakirti; *Vādanīyā*, p. 9.
20. Prabhacandra; *Prameya-kamala-mārtanda*; *Jaya-parājaya-vyavasthā-pariccheda*. See also, Malliṣena; *Syādvādamaṅjarī*; K. 20 & 30. See also Hemachandra's *Anyayogavyavacchedikadvātrīṅśikā*, pp. 154-155, 174.

21. Kumārila ; *Śloka-vārtika* ; *Atma-vāda prakaraṇa* ; pp. 488-493.
22. Utpaladeva ; *Isvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī* , p. 103.
23. Dharmakīrti ; *Pramānavārtika* , I, 36-134 and Manoratha Nandi's and Prajñākara Gupta's Commentaries on it.
24. Ratnakīrti ; *Kṣārabhangasiddhi* in the *Ratnakīrti-nibandhāvali* ; Anatalal Thakur, (ed.), Kashi Prasad Japaswal Research Institute, Patna, 1975, pp. 67-95.
25. *Loc. cit.*, note no. 18. See also Udayanācārya ; *Atmatattvaviveka*, especially the section in which the theory of *Kṣārabhaṅga* is criticised.