Universal Suffering
(Dukha)

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

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

As it is said:

"Wandering after, solitary, huddled and lying in a cave is the mind. Those who substitute it from bondage, are forever freed"

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

As it is said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proceeding from ignorance (avijjā) as base the aggregates (Samkhāras) of impressions appear. With the aggregates of impressions as base rebirth-consciousness
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(vinnaana) appears. With rebirth-consciousness as base the intangible-angles (nattt-
rupa) appear. When this appears, then the sense bases (Sahajvayucca) appear, then
contact (Phassa) appears, then feeling (Vedana), then desire (Tanha), then grasping
and attachment (Upadana), then becoming (Bhava), then birth (Jati), and then old
age and death (marana) appears.

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

As in the amelioric phenomenon, the intangible (natta) aggregate are perpetu-
ated by the impulsion of an amorphous momentum, beset with a tendency to split off
into separate fields of existence the moment opportunity offers. This psychic form of
parthenogenesis, through the very nature of its impulsions, adheres for only an inde-
terminate duration to a particular form (rupa) before it reverts again. This form of
psycho parthenogenesis goes on for a lifetime.

This is only to be expected, because whenever the cognitive element
(Vijnana-adhata) becomes embued in a formative field such as the body, the tendency
is always to establish immediate identity through the sense bases (Satyaatma) and by
its environmental contact (Phassa). Environmental contact sets the base for the arising
of feeling, the feeling, of persistent personality. Feeling (vedana) assailed by desire for
life (tanha) and its utilizations serves as the base for the emotions of grasping and
attachment (upadana). Once this form of possessive personality is established through
environmental friction, its bundle of impulsions inevitably propel it in the direction
whereby it may retain its accretions to store. This persistent state of potential becom-
ing (bhava) rounds itself off in repetitions birth (jati), which by its very nature is
attended by decrepitude and death (jara-marana).

Although this conunary of the psycho-physical process may be grasped intellec-
tually, it nevertheless belongs to that class of truths which Buddhism herself categorized
as “profound—even in its appearance profound.” And this implies that the process is not
merely the delineation of a specific personality’s rebirth career, but the veiled fact of
how a certain aggregate of impressions (Sankhara) begins, through environmental
contact (Phassa) to develop new and re-split into the psychic amoeba of other
completely separate sets of personality-grasping fields (upadana-khandhata), without
any immediate knowledge of this origin or parentage.

This, however, shall be dealt with more detail in the chapter on Anatta which
follows. For the present it is necessary to deal more explicitly on the factors which serve
as modes for the manifestation of life in a world where even ephemeraity arises by way
of conditionality, of which conditions (Paccaya) there are 24 modes: (1) Root-cause (jhetupaccaya), (2) Psychic support (arammanapaccaya), (3) Predominance (adhipasapaccaya), (4) Contiguity (anatara paccaya), (5) Immediate contiguity (sammanasanna paccaya), (6) Co-nascence (kharamanapaccaya), (7) Reciprocity (arammanapaccaya), (8) Characteristic dependence (nissaya paccaya), (9) Decisive dependence (upanissaya paccaya), (10) Antecedence (puretattva paccaya), (11) Consequence (paccattatta paccaya), (12) Frequency (a sevata paccaya), (13) Volition (kamma paccaya), (14) Resultancy (vipakka paccaya), (15) Instrument (dhatu paccaya), (16) Controlling faculty (indriya paccaya), (17) Concentrated absorption (jhana paccaya), (18) Path (magga paccaya), (19) Association (sambuddha paccaya), (20) Disassociation (viniputta paccaya), (21) Presence (aviti paccaya), (22) Absence (nati paccaya), (23) Disappearance-appearance (vipajja paccaya), (24) Appearance-continuance (avijjapaccaya).

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

(1) ROOT CAUSE (jhetupaccaya): It is the ethical root cause, ninefold in scope, which is implied here namely as, greed (lobha), hate (dosa) and delusion (Moha) which are adverse conditions (kulasala paccaya). These are offset by their opposites: non-greed (alotha), non-hate (amoha), and non-delusion (anuṭha). Beyond these are the neutral (ayusikata) conditions, namely: neither greed nor non-greed, neither hate nor non-hate, neither delusion nor non-delusion.

(2) PSYCHIC SUPPORT (arammanapaccaya): This is sixfold in scope, namely: the psychic support of visibility (rupsarattana), of audition (saṇḍharattana), of odours (gandharattana), of tastes (rasarattana), of tangibles (phoṭhābharattana), and of intangibles (dhāmatrattana). These psychic supports are always accompanied by the concomitants (cetasikas) of contact (phassa), feeling (vedanā), perception (sanna), volition (cetasā), concentration (cakāgata), vitality (pivenindriya), and consciousness (whether mundane or supramundane, present, past and future) and the 32 concomitants of consciousness. Of these psychic supports, 52 are sensual (kumarottarattana), 6 of great-sensate (Mahagotuttara-ramanā) involving the formless concentrated-absorptions of the infinity of consciousness and neither perception nor non-perception, 21 of ruster base (pannattarattana) involving the concentrated-absorptions of form and the formlessness of the infinity of space and vividness, 8 of supramundane status derived from emancipation of mind (nibbana arahattana), 20 of general derivation (sabba-arattana) except the supernormal functional consciousness (abhinnā-cita) and mind-door emancipated consciousness (manomuccha-cita).

(3) PREDOMINANCE (adhipasapaccaya): Predominance is a mode of conditionality. In view of the fact the all things are composed of numerous forces,
generally exist in a latent state, the factor which predominates at any given moment takes precedence over the rest, integrating all other factors to the background.

(4) CONTINGENCY (anattā pañcaya) Any factor which is conditioned by contiguity exerts its potential energy in active force as occasion permit, and determines its perpetuity.

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

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

(7) RECIPROCITY (annāṇamana pañcaya) That, which possesses the potential to activate another and be activated in turn thereby partners of the mode of this conditionality of reciprocity.

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

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

(10) ANTecedent (purējata pañcaya) That which is antecedent, necessarily plays an essential part in the temporality of any particular manifestation through conditionality.

(11) CONSEQUENTIAL (paccaya pañcaya) That, which follows serve at the conditional sequence for all activity and process.

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

(13) VILITATION (kamma pañcaya) That causality which any living thing activates of its own accord, and which is either black, white, black-white, or neither black nor white. The last named applies to that kamma which is not induced and therefore tends to be a non-issue. Karmic volitions have their effect (vipakka) in the present life (ādhibhūtikamma vedanā-kamma), or are experienced in the next (upātāvatilokanāya kamma), or continue to manifest in successive births (āsavapāpa vedanāya kāyana), or
are unconscious and unintentional. Kamma is as potent as the will (cetana) behind its instigation. There are four aspects which determine its potency, whether for good or ill: (1) Premeditated intent (bhutaphala cetana), (2) immediate intent resulting in the act (mancara cetana), (3) Immediate satisfaction after the act (apara cetana), (4) Satisfaction as a recollective remembrance (aparipāra cetana). When all these aspects are complete, the effect for good or ill is strong, as the case may be. If only the first is present and no action follows to support it, only an impetus is made or consciousness

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

(15) NUTRIMENT (ahara paccaya): There are four forms of nutriment which serve as modes of conditionality: material food (kāhalinākātā), contact (phāsādha), volition (manuṣaccināhā), and consciousness (cittanāhā).

(16) Controlling faculty (khiḍriya paccaya): There are twenty-two potent controlling faculties, serving as bases for conditionality. The controlling faculties of vision (cakkhādhiya), of audition (saṅgādhiya), of olfaction (ghāthādhiya), of taste (pahādhiya), of tactile sensation (ṣāṇadhiya), of sensation (masadhiya), of femininity (sīhiḍhiya), of masculinity (purissadhiya), of vitality (ājīvadhiya), of pleasure (ukkhandhādhiya), of pain (dakkhādhiya), of happiness (somanassadhiya), of grief (domanassadhiya), of equipoise (upekkhādhiya), of faith (aduddhādhiya), of energy (vasanadhiya), of mindfulness (sīsanadhiya), of concentration (samādhiadhiya), of wisdom (barsanadhiya), of aspiration to the supramundane (anathacakramaccinādhiya), of comprehension of the supramundane (anatavādhiya), of attainment of the supramundane (anatavādhiya). Their function is to direct, to dominate, to perpetuate, and to aniccate. Based on the conditionality of these potential controlling faculties, all things subject to come to rise, whether through desire, through application, or through kamma. Thus because of the dynamism of the potential faculties of vision etc., there arise in rebirth the spheres (ayatanas) of eye etc., respectively. That which remains only in the mode of unrealized potentialities become thus an actual physicalized fact, perpetuating its function as through.

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

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

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

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(20) DISOCIATION (nippaya paccaya): The mode of conditionality which disconnects.
(21) PRESENCE (saddha paccaya): The factor which exerts influence due to its potential presence.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONSCIOUSNESS (citta) is that element Vinnanavatthu, which by its very nature is pure awareness. However, since pure awareness never exists by itself but is always yoked to awareness of something, even if this something be nothing more than spatially,
consciousness is something which is to be analysed according to a whole gamut of possibilities. There are eighty-nine states of consciousness; eighty-one are mundane (lokaïya), and eight supramundane states number forty, thus totalling 121 states of consciousness in all. These states may be summarised thus: 21 beneficial (kusala), 12 adverse (aksala), 36 resultant (vipaka), and 20 functional (kiriya). They may be subdivided again into mundane and supramundane.

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

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

Consciousness may be classified again under 7 categories of elements (dhana): (1) Two eye-consciousness elements (cakkhu Vinnana dhana); (2) Two ear-consciousness elements (sota vinnadhatu); (3) Two nose consciousness elements (ghana vinnadhatu); (4) Two tongue-consciousness elements (firha vinnadhatu); (5) Two tactile-consciousness elements (kaya vinnadhatu); (6) Onu, five sense door elements (Pancadharo Vattana Manodhatu) and two contact receptacle elements ( Sampatirohano Manodhatu); (7) Seventy-six mind-consciousness elements (Mano vinnadhatu) which may be classified according to planes of existence (bhumi): Sensual Plane (Kama Vacara)- 54 states of consciousness, comprising 8 states of greed (loha), 2 states of hate (dosa), 2 states of delusion (moha), 7 states of reverse resultancy (ahimsa vipaka), 8 states of beneficial resultancy (kusala vipaka), 3 states of functioning (kiriya), 8 states of great benefit (Mahakusala), 8 states of great resultancy (Mahatma vipaka), and 8 states of great functioning (Maha-kiriya).

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

Formless (Aprupa Brahma) plane (Apravacara): The 12 states of consciousness comprising 4 states of benefit, 4 states of resultancy, or if classified according to dhamic attainments- 20 beneficial and 20 resultant.

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

With these supramundane states of consciousness as base, the Noble One, even in
the this life, renders extinct all hindrances and unwholesome states and passes beyond (Nibbana).

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

Neutral constituents total thirteen: (1) Contact (Phassa), (2) feeling (vedana), (3) perception (Sahna), (4) Vibration (cetana), (5) concentration (ekaggata), (6) vitality (jivandriya), (7) attention (masarikara), (8) application (etathada), (9) sustained application (vicari), (10) bliss (pu), (11) resolution (adhimokkha), (12) energy (vinya), and (13) zeal (chanda).

There are fourteen adverse constituents: (1) Greed (lobha), (2) hate (dosa), (3) delusion (moha), (4) consciousness-lessness (cahirika), (5) shamlessness (anatappa), (6) conceit (manna), (7) bizarreness (dhutu), (8) envy (issu), (9) suave (maccariya), (10) worry (kankhawca), (11) foolishness (thina), (12) torpor (Middha), (13) agitation (uddhacca), and (14) doubt (siddhihca).

Beneficial constituents number twenty-five: (1) faith (saddha), (2) mindfulness (sati), (3) modesty (ottappa), (4) non-greed (lobhahita), (5) non-hate (dosahe), (6) non-delusion (mohahita), (7) impartiality (tanamahjithata), (8) tranquility of formations (katya passaddhi), (9) tranquility of consciousness (citta passaddhi), (10) adoptability of formations (kayamadutta), (11) adoptability of consciousness (cittamadutta), (12) buoyancy of formations (kaya laluta), (13) buoyancy of consciousness (citta laluta), (14) placidity of formations (kayabudhmanata), (15) placidity of consciousness (cittakumahmanata), (16) proficiency of formations (kaya payanamata), (17) proficiency of consciousness (citta payanamata), (18) rectitude of formations (kaya upakata), (19) rectitude of consciousness (citta upakata), (20) right speech (samma vaca), (21) right contact (samma kammanata), (22) right livelihood (samma ajiva), (23) compassion (karuna), (24) sympathetic joy (mudit), and (25) wisdom (panna).

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

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

Derived-The sensitives of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, perceplables, sounds, odours, flavours, femininity, masculinity, vitality, heart-base, bodily intimation, verbal intimation, spatiality, buoyancy of formations, placidity of formations, adoptability of formations and nutrition.

Spatiating is included as a derived category because the space which is apprehended by the senses is a compounded crave and derived. Only that space which is characteristic of nibbana may be termed uncompounded and undivided.

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

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

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

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

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

“Even in this body, the cessation of the world, and the way thereto”
However, the cessation and the way thereto must be for involving right concentration.