

# Nature of Reality Taught in Early Buddhism

Ven. Mahawela Rathanapala

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මුල් බුදුසමය තුළ ඉගැන්වෙන යථාර්ථාවබෝධය හෙවත් ලෝකෝත්තර මාර්ගය න-උත්තරානුභූතික යථාර්ථයකි. එය ඉන්ද්‍රිය ප්‍රත්‍යක්ෂයට ගෝචර වන අතර ම එකී දැනුම භාෂා මාධ්‍යයෙන් ප්‍රකාශ කළ හැකි බව මුල් බුදුසමයේ ස්ථාවරය යි. එතෙක් භාරතීය දර්ශනයේ භාවිත නොවුණු පටිච්ච සමුප්පාදය යන වචනය භාවිත කරමින් ස්වකීය නව්‍ය අවබෝධය පිළිබඳ බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේගේ පැහැදිලි කිරීම තත්කාලීන දර්ශනවාදයන් තුළ පිළිගැණුනු උත්තරානුභූතික සත්තාව ප්‍රතික්ෂේප කරන්නක් විය. න-උත්තරානුභූතික අවබෝධයේ ස්වභාවය වඩාත් ප්‍රකටව පෙනෙන්නේ උත්වහන්සේගේ වර්යාව හා ආකල්ප මගිනි. මන්ද යත් වාග් ව්‍යවහාරය තුළ අදානග්‍රාහී දෘෂ්ටි ගැනීම සිදුවනුයේ පුද්ගල ආකල්ප හා වර්යාවන් හේතු කොටගෙන ය. ඒ අනුව අනාත්මතාව පිළිබඳ දාර්ශනික අවබෝධයන් සමග වෙනස් වනුයේ භාෂාව නොව භාෂාව භාවිත කරන පුද්ගලයාගේ ආකල්පය යි.

යතුරු පද: න-උත්තරානුභූතික, බුදුරජාණන් වහන්සේ, භාෂාව, මුල් බුදුසමය, යථාර්ථය

**Keyword:** *Non-Transcendental, The Buddha, Language, Early Buddhism, Reality.*

## Introduction

Buddhism teaches that the reality of the world disintegrates the limits of conventionality, which means composite entities do not exist. Thus, in the final analysis, composite entities do not have real existence; they are just given names or designations. Hence, the Buddhist ontological standpoint establishes the idea that "All that exists is contained in the lists of *dharmas* or elements of existence. The objects that make up the phenomenal world are constituted of these *dharmas* but do not truly exist. We nonetheless believe that they exist, on account of the words of our language." (**Bronkhorst, 2011, p.22**). In this discussion of reality depicted in Early Buddhism, it is necessary to have a brief explanation of theory of knowledge and theory of reality as both of them have a soteriological aim.

The theory of knowledge explains the means of acquiring knowledge of truth and reality in contact with the world. "Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, what it consists of, how we get it and how we may defend and justify our knowledge. Traditional epistemology includes a number of key questions: (1) What is knowledge? (2) What kinds of knowledge are there? (3) What are the sources of knowledge? (4) What is the structure of our body of knowledge? (5) What are the limits of what can be known? (6) What are the devices by which we gain knowledge? (7) How is knowledge related to belief and justification? (8) How ought we proceed in order to acquire knowledge?" (**Stausberg and Engle, p. 40**).

The Buddha rejected his predecessors' standpoints of epistemology as traditionalism, rationalism and experientialism. Instead of those Buddha heightened the value of direct knowledge in the process of acquiring knowledge. This clearly indicates through a frequent statement traceable in the canon as; "he declares this world with its gods, its Māras and its *Brahamās*, this generation with its recluses and Brahmins, its princes and its people, which he has himself realised with direct knowledge. (*Sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedeti*) (MN I. p.178).

### Research Problem

This article intends to investigate on early Buddhist teachings on nature of reality.

### Aims of the Research

This academic endeavor is oriented towards make an enquiry into Early Buddhist standpoint of relation between language and reality. Reality discussed in Early Buddhism is a non-transcendental in nature and it does not go beyond of the limit of experience. This very precisely explain the fact that reality taught in Buddhism is effable through medium of language.

### Review of literature

Nature of reality taught in Buddhism and lingual mechanism applied by the Buddha in expression of reality has been extensively documented by **K.N. Jayatilaka (1963)**, **Ven. Katukurunde ñāṇānanda (1973)**, **D.J. Kalupahana (1999; 2007)**, **Asanga Tilakaratne (1993)**, **Y. Karunadasa ( 2013)** and **G.D. Sumanapala (1999)**. The stated objectives of these scholarly accounts were to analyze, nature of reality taught in Buddhism and nature of language utilized by the Buddha in expression of reality. Among these, Asanga Tilakaratne' s contribution entitled as *Nirvana and Ineffability; A Study of*

*Buddhist Theory of Reality and Language*, exclusively focuses on the nature of transcendental discussed in Early Buddhism and its effability. But on the contrary, K.N. Jayatilaka, recognizes the *Nibbāna* the Buddhist counterpart of the transcendental is linguistically inarticulatable.

### **Research Limitations**

There are several potential limitations of this research. Mainly this research focuses only on the nature of reality taught in Early Buddhist teachings. Commentarial explanations are not taken into serious consideration in this research due to vastness of subject matter. But commentarial discussions have been consulted as a pertinent approach for in depth discussion of several subject matters where they are necessary.

### **Discussion and Results**

An oft-recurring statement in Pāli nikāyas as *Jānaṃjānātipassampassati* (knowing and seeing) reveals and important aspect of the Buddhist theory of knowledge. With the attribution of these qualities, the Buddha is known as *Jānatopassato* (the knower and seer) which are stressed as important qualities need to be possessed by the disciples of the Buddha following the path prescribed by him. Further in the *Koṭṭhitasutta* of the *Anguttaranikāya* it is stated that "Even those who follow the holy life prescribed by the Buddha is expected to do so. So that they may know, see, attain, realise, and comprehend what they have not so far known seen, attained, realise or comprehended." (AN IV. p.384).

### **Buddhist Epistemology: Sensory and Extra Sensory Perception**

Buddhist epistemology accepts the empirical base. In this empirical base, Buddhism appreciates both sensory and

extrasensory perception. According to the *Samgāravasutta* regarding the holy life advocated by the Buddha, he himself, claims that;

"Bhāradvāja, I am one of those recluses and Brahmains who, having directly known the dhamma for themselves among things not heard before, claim (to teach) the fundamentals of the holy life after having reached the consummation and perfection of direct knowledge here and now." (MN II. 211).

Further, an interesting dialogue regarding the concept of reality taught in Buddhism contained in the *Kimatthiyabrahamacariyasutta* in the *Samyuttanikāya*. Here the Buddha explains that, if one would question about the goal of this noble conduct prescribed in the teachings of the Buddha, he should reply that, the purpose of noble conduct is understanding or realising the sensory experiences.

"*Bhikkhus*, if wanderers of other sects ask you; for what purpose, friends, is the holy life lived under the ascetic Gotama? Being asked thus, you should answer those wanderers; thus; it is friends for the full understanding of suffering that the holy life is lived under the blessed one. Then *Bhikkhus*, of those wanderers ask you: What, friend, is that suffering for the full understanding of which the holy life is lived under the ascetic Gotama? Being asked thus, you should answer those wanderers accordingly;

The eye friend is suffering: it is for the full understanding of this that the holy life is lived under the blessed one. Forms are suffering; it is for the full understanding of them that the holy life is lived under the blessed one. Eye consciousness is suffering,... eye contact is suffering...whatever feeling arises

with eye contact as condition, whether pleasant or painful or neither painful nor pleasant-that too is suffering; it is for the full understanding of this that the holy life is lived under the Blessed One." (SN IV. p.138).

This process of sensory perception is well explained in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*.

"Visual consciousness brethren arises because of the eye and material shapes; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement; because of sensory impingement arises feeling; what one feels one perceives; what one perceives, one reason about; what one reason about; one turns into mental proliferation. What one turns into mental proliferation, with what one has mentally proliferated as the source, perceptions and notions of mental proliferation beset a man concerning past, future and present cognisable through the eye." (MN I. p.111).

The extrasensory perception is recognised as the higher knowledge needs to be acquired through the rapture of deep mediation. Early Buddhism enumerates following six forms of superior knowledge as *abhiññā* or *extra sensory perception*.

- i. *Iddhividha* (psychokinesis)
- ii. *Dibbasota* (clairaudience)
- iii. Paracittavijānana (telepathy)
- iv. Pubbenivāsānussati (retrocognition)
- v. Dibbacakkhu (Clairvoyance)
- vi. Āsavakkhaya (knowledge of the destruction of defiling impulses) (MN I. 132).

Some essential requirements for this sensory and extrasensory perception have been stressed in the *Mahāhatthipadomasutta* as;

- i. Internally eye is intact (*cakkumaparibhinnaṃhoti*)
- ii. External form comes into its range (*rūpañcaāpāthamāgacchati*)
- iii. There is a corresponding engagement. (*Tajjosamannāhāro hoti*)
- iv. There is the manifestation of the corresponding section of consciousness (*Tajjassa viññāṇabhāgassa pātubhāvo hoti*) (MN I. p.190.).

Anyway, the Buddhism does not indicate apprehension of any mystic object through these extraordinary institutions. As illustrated by P.D. Premasiri;

" In Buddhism, these super-cognitive powers are valued merely because they are believed to augment our factual knowledge of the world which is ordinarily restricted due to certain natural limitations in our sensory capacities. However, Buddhism does not consider these cognitive powers as inherently capable of leading to infallible truths about the nature of existence." (Premasiri, 1990, p.106)

In this context, it is required to understand the fact that, the Buddha did not utilise his higher knowledge or the extrasensory perception as the end of the knowledge as his predecessors. "In fact, the Buddha did not consider the content of this knowledge to be identical with any ultimate reality. Nor did he consider such knowledge as constituting salvation. Whatever knowledge one obtains through extrasensory perception was looked upon by the Buddha as a means to an end, not as an end in itself. According to the Buddha, such knowledge, when coloured by one's likes

and dislikes, leads to all forms of dogmatic beliefs that prevent one from seeing things, as they are (*yathābhūta*) and attaining perfect freedom through non-grasping (*anupadāvimutti*). But this intuitive knowledge, when not obstructed by likes and dislikes provides one with insight into the nature of things so that one is able to conduct oneself accordingly and attain perfect freedom." (Kalupahana, 1996, p.18).

In its ultimatum Buddhist theory of epistemology lead the path to the ethical accentuation of person. The *āsavakkhayañāṇa* indicates, the last of *abhiññā* bridges the theory of knowledge to the soteriological end. In this connection P.D. Preamsiri is in the opinion that;

"*Āsavakkhayañāṇa* which is claimed to be unique to Buddhism is itself not a mysterious vision into a supersensible or absolute reality. But a cognitive approach or perspective with reference to experiential reality which tends to bring about a certain psychological and attitudinal transformation. It is a constant meditative reflection on certain observable realities, observable even by the methods of ordinary observation." (Preamsiri, 1990, p.106).

*Abhiññāsutta* in the *catukkanipāta* of the *Aṅguttaranikāya* is also very vital in this connection. The *sutta* postulates that,

"*Bhikkhūs*, there are four things, what four? There are things to be fully understood by direct knowledge (*dhammā abhiññāpariññeyyā*). There are things to be abandoned by direct knowledge (*atthi, bhikkhave, dhammā abhiññāpahātabbā*), there are things to be developed by direct knowledge (*atthi, bhikkhave, dhammā abhiññābhāvetabbā*). There are things to be realised by direct knowledge (*atthi, bhikkhave, dhammā abhiññāsacchikātabbā*).

And what *bhikkhūs*, are the things to be fully understood by direct knowledge? The five aggregates subject to clinging. These are called the things to be fully understood by direct knowledge.

And what are the things to be abandoned by direct knowledge? Ignorance and craving for existence. These are called things to be abandoned by direct knowledge.

And what are the things to be developed by direct knowledge? Serenity and insight. These are called things to be developed by direct knowledge.

And what are the things to be realised by direct knowledge? True knowledge and liberation. These are called the things to be realised by direct knowledge. " (AN II. p.246.).

### **Nature of Reality taught in Early Buddhism**

It has been very clearly illustrated in Early Buddhism that, through the development of sensory perception one will be able to verify the true nature of existence, a certain aspect of which is not wholly accessible to ordinary sense perception. Further, it posits the fact that understanding of the reality of the ontology and attaining to the final emancipation through the theory of knowledge is explained through the *Abhiññā*.

Therefore, while Buddhism accepts the validity of Both sensory and extrasensory perception at the same time, it points out that due to the lack of understanding of limitations of sensory and extrasensory perception people tend to fall into the net of speculative views (*ditthijāla*) which posits non-existent as existent.

For instance, Man is a designation given for a particular combination of name and corporeal elements, but in reality, there is no man only a composition of aggregates. A precise description in this connection can be traced in the *Vajirāsutta* of the *Bhikkhūṇisaṃyutta*. The sutta contains a discussion held between *Bhikkhuṇī Vajirā and Māra*. The Māra questioned *Bhikkhuṇī Vajirā* as;

By whom has this being been created? Where is the maker of the being? Where has the being arisen? Where does being cease? (SN I. p.135).

Bhikkhuṇī Vajirā answered the Māra as;

"Why now do you assume a being, māra is that your speculative view. This is a heap of sheer format. Here no being is found.

Just as with an assemblage of parts. The word chariot is used so when the aggregates exist. There is no convention, a being." (SN I. p.135).

This discussion makes explicit that; reality explained in Buddhism is inter-dependent and inter-related phenomena. Aspects of reality, subject and object have a close relationship with each other. This relationship is established by presenting the subject as a combination of perceptual dynamics and the object as what make references to perceiving subject possible. In this connection Asanga Tilakaratne points out that; Buddhist analysis of subject may be presented through the concept of *Nāmarūpa* (name and form) and *Pañcakkhandha* (five aggregates). But the Buddhist concept of *Nāmarūpa* is not used identically with the Upaniṣadic usage of terms *Nāma-rūpa*. In this connection he further affirms that;

"Although Buddhism may have taken the initial idea from the Hinduism, it uses the term to denote human personality without assuming there is such an essence as soul. And as important distinction between two traditions is; Hinduism uses the dual form (*nāmarūpābhyām*) which indicates that name and form are two different phenomena; Buddhism uses the singular form (*nāmarūpaṃ*) because it understands the term as denoting human personality which cannot be divided sharply into name and form." (Thilakarātne, 1993, p.45).

This *Nāma* and *rūpa* (psycho physical elements) are dependent and exist based on each other. As depicted in the theory of dependent co-origination, this *Nāma-rūpa* (psycho-physical combination) is conditioned on *viññāṇa* (consciousness). A detailed account in this connection can be traced *Naḷakalāpīsutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya*. The *Naḷakalāpīsutta* states that, the relationship of psychophysical combination is a reciprocal one, and they depend upon each other for existence.

" It is just as if there stood two sheaves of reeds leaning one against the other. Even so, personality comes into being conditioned by consciousness conditioned by personality." (SN II. p.113).

Further, a precise description of the *Nāmarūpa* (psychophysical factors) contains in the *Vibhaṅgasutta* of the *Nidānasamyutta*, according to which this psychophysical combination is just a synthesised function of five different material and immaterial components.

"Oh monks, what is the psycho-physical combination? Feeling, perception, volition, contact and attention; this is the name. The four great elements and their dependent

form. Thus, this name and this form, this is what is called psychophysical combinations." (SN II. p.03).

With respect to the psychophysical factors, sutta-s explain five sub categories. Nāma is divided into four as Feeling, perception, volition, contact, and the form comprises great elements and their dependent forms (*upādānarūpa*).

Here the name (*nāma*) is recognised as an organising activity that shapes sense data into a self-within-a-world, then form or body (*rūpa*) is what is shaped. Here form or body (*rūpa*) is defined as; "One afflicted by? One is afflicted by cold, heat, hunger, and thirst; one is afflicted by contact (*samphassa*) with snakes, wind, heat, mosquitos and gadflies. One is afflicted. Therefore one calls it "body." (SN III. p.86).

Buddhist world view accepts the perceiving world. A world that we perceive is a composition of name and form. In other words, world what we perceive is a mere subject-object composition. The *Lokasutta* in the *Nidānavagga* of the *Samyuttanikāya*, substantiate that;

"Because of eye and martial objects, brethren arises visual consciousness; the meeting of the three is sensory impingement, because of sensory impingement arises feeling; because of feeling, craving; because of craving; grasping; because of grasping; becoming; because of becoming, birth and because of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering and despair arise. This is the arising of the world." ( SN II. p.72).

The *sutta* precisely stressed the fact that the Buddha was not tempted in searching self within and the reality outside as practised by Upaniṣad thinkers. Instead of that, Buddhist teachings deal with reality within the scope of experience.

As depicted in the sutta, *Nāma-rūpa* discussed in early Buddhism is a representation of and wholly consistent with the basic premise of the Buddha's ethical path. Further, the idea is confirmed in the *Sabbasutta* (discourse of everything). *Sabbasutta* construes the concept of everything as;

"What o monks, is everything/ eye and form, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and contacts and mind and concepts. This O monk is everything. Of one were to claim that he would reject this everything and establish another everything. His claim would be (just) babbling, nor would be able to convince upon being questioned. Furthermore, he would be frustrated, the reason, O monks, is the such is beyond one's perceptualism." (SN IV, p.15).

As per the Buddhist point of view, both enlightened and unenlightened perceive the same world. But the enlightened one possesses the passionless, hatless and non-ignorant vision of the world. Moreover, in the *Rohitassasutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya*, it is explained that "in this fathom size very body endowed with perception and mind I make known the world arising of the world, cessation of the world and the path to the cessation of the world. " (SN I. p.62).

By nature, the world inherited arising and cessation. Arising occurs due to the compounding (*saṃkhāra*) and grasping (*upādāna*) of the Dhamma. For Cessation, one need to do non-compounding and non-grasping

These discourses precisely indicate that reality is not something entirely outside of what we experience. So, Buddhism explicitly mentions that the reality is comprising or decently originated phenomena (*Paṭiccasamuppāda-dhamma*) and Reality is clearly within the scope of experience.

The Buddhist point of view is very obvious in this connection that, the subject-object combination we experience is the world and which is like disintegration. (SN IV. 51). This disintegrable subject-object world depends on the act of experience.

Knowing the true nature of this subject-object world is called as the reality in Buddhism. The knowledge of the world arises through the means of experience. This process of experience is delineated precisely in the classification of six sensory organs and their corresponding objects. Among these six organs, *mano* (Mind) is also recognised as a distinct organ with a very specific function of dealing with mental phenomena as its object. The *Uṇṇānābhasutta* of the *Samyuttanikāya* explains that; all faculties such as eye, ear, nose, tongue etc. take mind as its refuge. (SN V. p.217).

But the point needs to be highlighted here is; Buddhism does not confine itself into the experience of sensory perception. It accepts the validity of extra-sensory perception also as a means of knowledge. "Thus, the reality, according to Buddhism, is what is given by sensory and extra sensory perceptions, and no matter what the source may be-this reality, invariably, is subject to causation." (Thilakaratne, 1993, p.50).

Thus, apart from the function of ideation mind fulfils the function of coordinating the perception of other faculties using mental phenomena which are known by the name of the concept. This concept construction process is known as *Papañca* (mental proliferation). A detailed account of the repertoire of epistemology can be traced in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* of *Majjhimanikāya*; In answer to the question raised by Daṇḍapāṇī śākya, Buddha declares that:

"One does not quarrel with any one in the world with its gods, it's *Māras* and its *Brahmās*, in this generation with its

recluses and Brahmins, its princess and its people; in such a way that perception no more underlies that Brahmin who abides detached from sensual pleasure, without perplexity, shorn of worry-free from craving for any kind of being." (**M I. p.108**).

In this statement, the phrase "*saññānānuseti*" (perception no more underlie) reveals an important aspect of conceptuality and reality. The *Majjhimanikāya* commentary comments upon the term as "*saññā'ti kilesasaññā*" (perception means the perception of defilements). (**PPS II. 73**).

Here the term *saññā* indicates *papañcasaññā* (proliferation tendency). In order to the explanation in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta*, *papañca* is the final stage of sensory perception. The etymology of the term *pa+pañc* conveys the meaning as; spreading out, expansion, diffusion and manifoldness." (**Ñāṇānanda. 1971, p.04**)

On this account, Kalupahana illustrates that; here the term *saññā* implies synthetic knowledge while the term *viññāṇa* implies discriminative knowledge. Further, he states that; " it is in the synthetic means that stimulation is now placed on a wider horizon involving most of the cognised events with relations as well as conceptualisations. It is in fact a synthesis of the activities of both consciousness and mind." (**Kalupahana , 1999, p.39**)

In experiencing the world being obsessed with the view of self-substantiality, the person tends to classify the world as like and dislike. This process is known as arising of perceptions. These perceptions can pledge the reality to a great extent. Due to these perceptions, the person will either like or dislike to the subject-object world, which makes it difficult for him to understand the reality. A further illustration of the point can be

traced in the *Chaphassāyatanasutta* in the *Salāyatanasam̐yutta* of the *Sam̐yuttanikāya*.

"Being endowed with the sense perception, human beings whose consciousness is characterised by the prolific tendency, approach sense-objects (mentally) by proliferation conceptually. Giving up all that is mind-made and is appertaining to household life; he resorts to that which is connected with renunciation." (SN IV. p.68).

The sutta implies that; the prolific tendency manifests itself through the craving, views and conceit lead person to be entangled with the subject-object world. This egoistic ideology makes them unable to understand the reality of the world.

It is further explained in the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* that, this prolific tendency entirely depends on the attachment of sensory perception being obsessed with egoistic ideology. Thus;

"If O monk one neither delights in nor asserts nor clings to, that which makes one subject to concepts characterised by the prolific tendency, then that itself is the end of proclivities to attachment, aversion, views, perplexity, pride, ignorance and attachment to becoming. That itself is the end of taking the stick, of taking, the weapon, or quarrelling, contending, disputing, accusation, slander and lying speech. Here it is that all these evil unskilled states cease without residue." (MN I. p.109).

Further, it is explained in the *Yavakaḷāpīsutta* in the *Sam̐yuttanikāya* how this egoistic ideology conceals the reality of the subject-object world. The sutta explains nine proportions as;

"I am', This am I, I shall be, I shall not be, embodied shall I be' Formless shall I be... I shall be conscious... unconscious

I shall be.. neither conscious nor unconscious shall I be...  
 an agitation, palpitation, conceptual proliferation, conceit."  
**(SN II. p.400).**

Each of this proposition is qualified with by adjectives as; *Maññita* (imagination), *iñjita* (agitation), *phandita* (palpitation), *papañcita* (conceptual proliferation), *mānagata* (conceit). In this respect Ven. Katukurunde ñāṇānanda asserts that "the proposition *asmi* is the foremost *papañcita* and the *Madhupiṇḍikasutta* has already shown us why it is to be reckoned as a product of *papañca*. The other propositions portray perhaps more clearly, the prolificity of the realm of ideation-the individuating, generalising, particularising and dichotomising tendencies which provide the scaffolding for theoretical superstructures. The particular context in which *papañcita* occurs in this sutta thus lends colour to the assumption that *papañca* signifies the inveterate tendency towards proliferation in the realm of ideation." (Ñāṇānanda, 1971, p.16).

This assertion posits that in order to the Buddhist explanation of reality, the one who perceives the reality is the person who is free from mental proliferation. Because the elusive nature of sense data is such that as soon as one thinks in order to them, he is estranged from reality, this elusive imagination process is explained in the *Dvayatanānupassanāsutta* of the *Suttanipāta*. "In whatever egoistic terms they think of an object, ipso facto becomes otherwise. And herein, verily, lies its falseness, the puerile deceptive phenomenon that it is." (SN. p.146). In this vein, Ven. Katukurundeñāṇānanda declares;

"From the standpoint of the average worldling, there is ego as the agent or mentor behind the sum-total of sense experience. In existence is postulated based on a wide variety of soul-theories, and its reality as an incontrovertible

self-evident fact of experience is readily taken for granted. Even at the end of a thorough introspection, he is often tempted to agree with Descartes in concluding *Cogito-ergo sum* ( I think therefore I am). Thus behind the data of sense experience conditionally arise, there looms large the illusion of an ego as the agent. It is the root of *Papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*, and its eradication, the aim of the spiritual training in Buddhism." ( **Ñāṇānanda, 1971, p.32**).

In the context of reality, it is mandatory to understand the fact that, the perception of the nature of reality in Buddhism is a consequence of the Buddha's enlightenment. Here the locus of reality depends on non-substantiality, non-prolific tendencies (*nippapañca*), a state free from concepts, and impermanency.

Further in answering the question raised by Ven. Kaccāna, the Buddha replies that this world depends on the polarity of existence and non-existence. But none of these polarities leads a person to the understanding of reality.

"This world, Kaccāna, for the most part, depends upon a duality—upon the notion of existence and the notion of nonexistence. But for one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world." ( **SN II. p.16**).

Both of these views have been condemned by the Buddha as extremist views. Both of these views make real unreal. So the Buddha elected the Middle way to sort out this dichotomy. This middle way explains the dependent nature of signifier and signified. The same *Sutta* delineates that,

" All exists': Kaccana, this is one extreme. 'All does not

exist’: this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the middle: ‘With ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness.... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness.... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’ (SN. p.16).

This deconceptualization process and its relevancy for the final emancipation is highly evaluated in the *Uragasutta* of the *Suttanipāita*.

" who neither transgresses nor lags behind, who has transcended all this conceptual proliferation; that monk quits bounds both here and hereafter even as the snake it's worn-out skin." (Sn. p.02).

In this connection, Asanga Thilakarathne makes a very interesting note that " the existence of reality makes suffering possible and the non-substantiality of the reality makes *Nirvāna* possible; the non-existence of soul doesn't make reality unreal any more than the existence of subject and object makes it substantial." (Thilakarathne. 1993.p.52).

On this account, it is emphasised in the Buddhism that, "it is within this reality both suffering and cessation of suffering -*samsāra* and *nirvāna* are available. Therefore, for a Buddhist, there is no need for a transcendent reality that arises upon making the experienced reality unreal. Since for Buddhism, the reality is the experienced (experienceable) reality, the need for transcendental does not arise." (Thilakarathne. 1993.p.51).

This delineates that according to the Buddhist teachings both enlightened and non-enlightened perceive the same world. But while the enlightened one is free from mental proliferation non-enlightened one is enslaved by the prolific tendencies. In other words, while the enlightened one possesses the passionless, non-hatred and non-ignorant vision of the world non-enlightened one is entangled with passion, hatred and ignorance. Therefore, for non-enlightened, it is difficult to be real in reality.

### **Conclusion**

Discussion so far delineates that, Buddhism dose not state about a transcendental reality or reality goes beyond the limit of experience. Buddhism rejects the ontological transcendence. In other words, reality need to understand being inside the reality.

In conclusion, reality taught in Buddhism is dependently co-originated one, there is no independent existence of reality. This implies that reality is changing and it is not a source of everlasting happiness. But the way one reacts upon reality can transform it into a source of happiness.

### **References**

#### **List of Abbreviations**

AN	Anguttranikāya
DP	Dhammapada
IT	Itivuttaka
ITA	Itivuttaka Aṭṭhakathā
Mn	Mahāniddeśa

MN	Majjhimanikāya
MV	Mahāvaggapāli
PPA	Pañcappakaraṇaṭṭhakathā
PPS	Papañcasūdanī
SN	Samyuttanikāya
Sn	Suttanipāta
SnA	Suttanipāta Aṭṭhakathā
TG	Theragāthā
Their.G	Therīgāthā
UP	Udānapāli

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