

These four principles resulted from the search of Truth, and they changed the entire concept of causality. This Concept of Transitory nature of things leads to the idea of inter-dependent origination, which is the core of Buddhist philosophy. We can understand this idea of interdependent origination or *pratītyasamutpāda* correctly if we can understand the nature of transitoriness of all phenomenon. If we understand the theory of inter-dependent origination correctly, we can understand that there is no I or independence individual self. Belief in an independent individual self leads us to attachment for it, it becomes the cause of misery. We believe that there is an inner self who is the user, consumer, that also is considered to be permanent. These two misconceptions generate desire – the *trṣṇā*; - and this *trṣṇā* is the root cause of all misery. In this way these four cardinal principles become very important. Teaching of four noble truths also wheels around these four cardinal principles. The concepts of *śīla*, *saṃādhi* and *prajñā* are also about the four cardinal principals. The entire teaching of Buddha – the *Buddhavacanas* - they are all originating from these four cardinal principles.

The Cause of production is the cause of decay – this is the idea underlying the theory of Inter-dependent origination. This is a revolutionary idea which frees us from the bondage. By a clear understanding of this idea we reach from the time to timelessness. Samdhong Rinpoche gives an easy example to explain the whole complexity of the concept of *pratītyasamutpāda* or inter-dependent origination. A month in Christian Calendar whether it is of thirty days or thirty-one days, begins with the first day. The first day is the cause of the beginning of the month. It is also the cause its decay, because it reduces the month by one day. The beginning and the end are simultaneous. The moment of cause of the beginning is also the moment of the cause of its decay. An effect is produced by a cause and the effect subsequently functions as the cause for another effect making a chain of causality. This leads to the philosophy of *Śūnyavāda*.

The second cardinal principle is *duḥkha* or misery. The cause of misery is to be eradicated and *nirvāṇa* is to be achieved. The four noble truths are instructions to understand the real nature of misery or *duḥkha*. There are many feelings which we consider to be pleasure. But they go into more pain and more unhappiness. The end of pleasure is pain. All miseries are causality-created and interdependently originated. Therefore it is possible to eradicate them.

-2-

The Tripiṭakas inform us that after attaining enlightenment, Buddha could not immediately made up his mind in favor of delivering his message to the world. He doubted whether his fellowman would understand the significance of the truth which he had discovered for himself. Finally when he made a decision in favour of sharing his insights he had already developed a method for entering into dialogue with his disciples.

Buddha taught his disciples in accordance with their intellectual capacity, aptitude and orientation. He did not maintain a consistent level in his teachings. He candidly accepted the existence of inconstancy in his teaching and guided how to differentiate the

nihitārtha and *neyārtha* or his teaching. In *Sandhinirmocanasūtra* he tells how to differentiate the *nihitārtha* and *neyārtha*.¹

Buddha's dialectical method of discourse

Buddha developed a unique method of resolving contradictions. It seems that he was often criticized for accepting opposite stand-points. He himself is reported to have remarked that he has propounded the doctrines which are *ekāṃśikas* (one-sided) and also the doctrines which are *anekāṃśikas* (many-sided). B.K. Matilal (1981:6) says that 'the word *anekāṃśika* was probably another name for '*anekānta*' and Buddha's method of *anekāṃśika* 'could be taken to be a precursor of the Jaina *anekānta* doctrine.

In *Majjhimanikāya* (sutta 99) Buddha proclaimed that he is not *ekāntavādin*, he is a *vibhajyavādin*. Through *vibhajyavāda*, Buddha presented his own analytical method. *Vibhajyavāda* consisted of division, classification, qualified negations or qualified affirmation. The analysis is to be made by the way of questioning each part of a theory to be discussed, with the acceptance or rejection of each one on a fair ground. Vasubandhu defines a *vibhajyavādin* in the following terms – 'Those who say that everything exists – past, present and future – are *sarvāstivādins*. *Vibhajyavādins* on the other hand say that only certain things exist, viz. – the present *karma* as well as the past *karma* which has not fructified – they exist. The future *karma* as well as the past *karma* which has already fructified does not exist.'

By his analytical method, Buddha classified all the philosophical questions into four categories – *ekāṃśa-vyākaraṇīya* (answerable in affirmative or negative terms), *vibhajyavādena-vyākaraṇīya* (answerable by division and analysis), *Pratiprasnena-vyākaraṇīya* (answerable by putting counter questions) and *sthāpanīya* (to be answered by silence or to be set aside). This was in accordance with his philosophy of avoiding extremes – the *madhyamā pratipat* (the middle path). There can be two aspects emerging out of any theory, and they may form two extremes. Avoidance of these two extremes is *madhyamā pratipat*. Buddha followed the middle path by rejecting the two extremes. In the theory of *anekānta* also, middle path is accepted albeit with acceptance of the two extremes as well. Matilal (1981:18) explains Buddha's way as 'exclusive middle' and the *anekānta* theory as 'inclusive middle.'

Accepting the view of Dalsukhabhai Malvania that the practice of *vibhajyavāda* in later *śramaṇic* traditions culminated into the theory of *anekānta*, Matilal (1981:4) further suggests that the moral doctrine of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) was 'partly responsible for the development of the *anekānta* attitude in Jain philosophy.' The practice of *vibhajyavāda* adopted by Buddha provided the frame work for *anekānta* -- 'the theory of non-one-sidedness' or 'the theory of many-sidedness of reality'.

The way Buddha applied the technique of *vibhajyavāda* in his discourse led to the development of *anekāntavāda*. He not only presented an alternative world-view, he also encouraged arguments and discussions. Before his enlightenment he had met a number of

¹ *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, chapter V, p. 805

philosophers and thinkers of his times. His quest for enlightenment has been termed *ariyapariyesana* (The Noble Quest) in Pali canons. During his restless wandering and search for knowledge, he met Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta.² Sañjaya Kātyāyana, Purāṇa Kaśyapa, Makkali Gosāla and Ajita Keśakambalin - these were Buddha's contemporaries. These philosophers have been raising questions on prevailing norms. Buddha rejected their views. He also launched a crusade against the hypocrisy of the priestly class. Pratap Chandra says - 'There is little doubt that Buddha treated the priestly class with a contempt and rejected their claims of supremacy with disdain. They are always treated as ideal gossipers with no worthwhile contribution to make to general religious debate.'

Āśvaghoṣa narrates Siddhārtha's visit to the city of Magadha and his discussion with the King Bimbisāra there. The king tried to convince the prince that life lies in fulfillment of three aspirations - dharma, artha and kāma; and it is sinful to shun any one of these. Siddhārtha firmly stood against this synthetic view of life. He replied to the king that fear from death is not obliterated even by practicing so-called balanced life, all the three elements of trivarga are momentary.³

Rather than launching a movement for protest, Buddha kept open all the doors for debate and discussion. It was because of the dialogic nature of his discourses, the correspondences between Vedic philosophies and Buddhism were accepted and Buddha was accepted as one of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu. In fact, Buddha did not launch any rebellion against the prevalent religions. A rebel would not consider an established view point he is refuting at par with his own views. In all fairness, Buddha limited all his debates to a fair criticism without being hostile or destructive, never to cause any violence.

Buddha and his followers developed a specific method of indulging in *kathā* (discussion). It has been termed as *paṭipucchā kathā* (*pratipucchā kathā* - delivering a discourse by the way of asking questions). In the *Nāndakavāda Sutta* of *Majjhimanikāya*, Nandaka exemplifies this method of *kathā*. In the same way, the *Anumānasutta* and *Upālisutta* in the same scripture present the concept of inference and *vāda* in the sense of a controversy. The debating skills of the monks like Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja are described in the *Piṭakas* or Buddhist scriptures. Buddha's debate with Saccaka is also described.⁴ The genre of *dhammakathā* (discussion of *dhamma*) was cultivated and practiced with advent of Buddha. The basic tenets of the theory of *kathā* were also evolved with Buddha's discourse on *dhamma*. *Kathāvatthu* in *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* which composed around 255 BC mentions *anuyoga* (inquiry), *Udāharana* (illustration), *paṭiññā* (proposition), *upanayana* (application of reason), *niggama* (conclusion) and *niggaha* (capture or defeat) as various techniques of *kathā*.⁵

3

Buddhist Councils, debates and split

² Pande G.C.: *Studies in the Origin of Buddhism*, p. 377

³ *Buddhacarita*, Cato X

⁴ Solomon, E.A.: 1976:30-31

⁵ Solomon E.A.: 1976:34

Buddha could instill the essence of *vāda*-tradition in the dialogues and discussions he engaged in with his followers. After his final departure, his followers continued his legacy. This necessitated *vādas*. Differences with regard to interpretations of Buddhavacanas surfaced. This led to calling a number of *saṅgītis* (councils). These councils provided platforms for debates and they also caused split in the *saṅgha*.

Raising doubts and questioning must have been a practice in the order founded by Buddha. The repercussions of this practice are reflected in *Kathāvattu*. Sometimes such doubts and questions could also cause a split in the order. One Mahādeva as referred in *Kathāvattu*, had questioned the very authenticity of the *arhat*, alleging that the *arhat* might be sexually tempted, might have a residue of ignorance, might have doubts himself, or may depend upon others for his own enlightenment.⁶

Buddha had a premonition of this situation and had forewarned his disciples of the possibilities of split. The split cannot be caused by reasons external. Monk Nāgasena in *Milindapanho* rightly said – “The house-holders do not break the order, nor a nun, nor a newly initiated nun under probation, nor a novice (*sāmanera*). It is the ordained monk, belonging to the same communion, to the same parish, living within the same boundary, who can break the order.”⁷ In response to a question by Upāli in the Cullavagga of *Vinayapiṭaka* (chapter VII) he enumerates 18 possible causes for the split of the *saṅgha*. There can be a split if the followers of the *saṅgha* start explaining non-*dhamma* as *dhamma*, non-obedience as obedience, attributing things to *Tathāgāta* which he did not say, attributing practices to him which he did not practice, attributing tenets to him which he did not propound, explaining no-offence as offence, slight offence as serious offence, a curable offence as incurable, a bad offence as a good offence; as well as the vise-versas of these nine explanations. These causes are enlisted in the chapter on the split of *saṅgha* (*saṅghabheda*sutta) of *Āṅguttaranikāya* (5.93) in a more compact way, reducing the number to ten.

Saṅghabheda or split in the organization as a category is repeatedly discussed in Buddhist canons. Forming a separate circle for any practice to be done collectively in the *saṅgha* causes *cakrabheda* and *cakrabheda* leads to *saṅghabheda*. The canons differentiate between the division amongst the monks by forming separate circles within the order and the split. The former is called *saṅgharāji*, and the latter is already described as *saṅghabheda*. The *saṅghabheda* will be supposed to have occurred if the total number of the monks raising a dispute exceeds nine. The canons also describe the situations of *cakrabheda* which were already occurring in the *saṅgha*. The causes of

⁶ Ujjawal Kumar: *Grounds of Saṅghabheda: Division or Split in the Saṅgha*, Pāli-Prakrit-Anuśīlanam, Vol. I.2, p. 64

⁷ न गिही संघं भिन्दति, न भिक्षुणी, न सिक्खमाना, न सामनेरो, न सामणेरी संघं भिन्दति, भिक्षु पकततो समानसंवासको समानसमीमायां छित्तो संघं भिन्दतीति. *Milindapanho*, p. 108

split rested either on doctrinal differences or adoption of different practices.⁸

Buddha is reported to have propagated *nairātmya* (the theory of no soul), but even amongst his followers there were reputed philosophers like Sthavira Vatsa who believed in the existence of a soul. Sthavira Vatsa was a contemporary of Kālāśoka (395-367 BC). The followers of Sthavira Vatsa had formed their own school and were known as the *Vatsīputrīyas* or *Sāṃmatīyas* during the rule of Nanda, the grandson of Kālāśoka. There are records to prove that this school continued to exist during the 3rd-4th centuries and became influential during the reign of the King Harṣa (606-47 AD). Harṣa's sister, Rajyaśrī was a *sāmmatīya*.

After Buddha, a number of councils were held to systematize his ideas and precepts. These councils fall in two categories - the canonical and the non-canonical. The sole purpose of the former had been to compile and systematize the *buddhavacanas*. The first council was held in the year of Buddha's death itself in 483 BCE. King Bimbisāra sponsored it by donating a site. Five hundred monks were selected to participate in the proceedings. Upāli, one of the direct disciples of Buddha recited the *Vinaya* texts comprised of the disciplinary rules for monks, and Ānanda recounted Buddha's discourses which were then culled as the *Suttapiṭaka*.

One hundred years after Buddha's *mahāparinirvāṇa* - the final departure, the second council was held at Vaiśālī. Seven hundred monks are said to have attended this council to debate on the issues related to indiscipline in the *saṅgha*. A concord was re-established. A non-canonical council after 137 years of the *mahāparinirvāṇa* was held in Pāṭaliputra, when King Mahāpadma Nanda was requested to mediate in a dispute between rival groups of monks. This council initiated Buddhism as a sectarian movement. The first division in Buddhist *saṅgha* occurred in this council. The monks of Vaiśālī vehemently disagreed with regard to the status of the *sthaviras* (elders), and alienating from the conservative *sthaviras* (the elders); they formed a liberal group of their own. This group can be known as the *Mahāsaṅgha* (the great community) and its members were called the *mahāsāṅghikas*.

The third canonical council was convened by King Aśoka around 250 BC at Pāṭaliputra. Moggaliputta Tissa alias Upagupta supervised over its proceedings. Around one thousand monks are reported to have joined this council. Lively debates between the orthodox *theravādins* and orthodox/heterodox sects concerning various doctrinal points were held in this council. These debates have been recorded on *Kathāvatthu* (points of debate) a Pali text, which forms the fifth book of the *Abhidhammapiṭaka* under the Theravāda tradition.

One of the earliest councils related to *Theravāda* was organized in 25 BC when King Vattagmanī's rule was restored at the Mahāvihāra of Anurādhuram, the capital city of Sri Lanka, to resolve religious unrest in Buddhist community. The compilation of *Tripitakas*

⁸ Ujjawal Kumar: *Grounds of Saṅghabheda: Division or Split in the Saṅgha*, Pāli-Prakrit-Anuśilanam, Vol. I.2, p. 61-62

the Buddhist scriptures- as per the tradition was initiated in this council.

Another important council was organized by Kanishka in the country of Gāndhāra around 100 AD at the instance of Pārśva - a Sarvāstivādin monk. Vasumitra, one of the foremost philosophers of Buddhism presided. The council was attended by 499 monks and Aśvaghōṣa a great Sanskrit poet and scholar of Buddhism actively participated in it. It is also said that under the guidance of Vasumitra commentaries in Sanskrit on all the three piṭakas – *Sūtra*, *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma* were prepared in this council. Composition of a commentary *Mahāvibhāṣā* on *Jñānaprasthāna* of *Abhidharma* was taken up in this council. The *Mahāvibhāṣā* was later on accepted as a standard text on *Abhidharma*. *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu is one of the most important texts in Buddhist literature. It is based on the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

The methodology for discussions and dialogues as envisaged by Buddha continued to inspire and guide his followers for several centuries and it also cast an everlasting impact on India's intellectual traditions.

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- Dr. Radhavallabh Tripathi

(गौतम बुद्ध का सार्वभौम संदेश एवं उनकी द्वन्द्वात्मक (विचार) पद्धति)
- डॉ. राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठी

(इंडियन सोसायटी फॉर बुद्धिस्ट स्टडीज़ के रजत जयंती समारोह में डॉ. राधावल्लभ त्रिपाठीजी के अध्यक्षीय बीज बिन्दु व्याख्यान का सारांश)

यह व्याख्यान तीन खण्डों में विभाजित है। प्रथम खण्ड में उन्होंने बुद्ध को न केवल 'एशिया की ज्योति' बल्कि 'विश्व की ज्योति' निरूपित किया। इसमें उन्होंने बौद्ध दर्शन के चातुर्धर्मोद्दान या चार प्रधान सत्यों का उल्लेख किया है। ये हैं:

1. सर्वेषाम् संस्काराणाम् अनित्यता (सभी संस्कृत धर्म अनित्य हैं।)
2. सभी संस्कृत धर्म दुःखरूप हैं।
3. सभी अस्तित्वमान धर्म आत्मविहीन हैं।
4. निर्वाण शांतिरूप है।

ये चार मुख्य सिद्धांत त्रिपिटक ग्रंथों में बार-बार आते हैं। इनको बुद्ध वचन कहते हैं। ये सिद्धांत सत्य की खोज में आए थे और इन्होंने कारणता के सिद्धांत को पूरा बदल दिया। वस्तुओं के इस परिवर्तनशील स्वभाव से प्रतीत्यसमुत्पाद (सापेक्षिक उत्पत्ति / inter-dependent origination) का विचार सामने आया, जो कि बौद्ध दर्शन का मूल है। यदि हम इसे सम्यक् रीति से समझते हैं तो हम पायेंगे कि कोई भी अहं या स्वतंत्र व्यक्तिगत आत्मा नहीं है। एक स्वतंत्र व्यक्तिगत आत्मा से हमें आसक्ति हों जाती है, इससे दुःख पैदा होता है। हम एक कर्ता, भोक्ता नित्य आत्मा को मानने लगते हैं। इन भ्रांत धारणाओं से इच्छा (तृष्णा) का जन्म होता है, जो सभी दुःखों का मूल कारण है। इन चार मुख्य सिद्धांतों के चारों ओर ही चार आर्य सत्य घूमते हैं। शील, समाधि, प्रज्ञा भी इनके बारे में ही हैं। उत्पत्ति का कारण वस्तुतः विनाश का कारण है। यह क्रांतिकारी विचार हमें बंधनों से मुक्त करता है। इसके यथार्थ ज्ञान से ही हम काल से कालातीत तक पहुँचते हैं। इसी कारणता के विचार से शून्यवादी दर्शन का विकास हुआ है।

दूसरा मुख्य सिद्धांत दुःख है। दुःख के कारण को हटाने से निर्वाण (दुःख का अभाव) प्राप्त होता है। चार आर्य सत्य दुःख के यथार्थ स्वरूप को समझने के दिशानिर्देश हैं। जिन्हें हम सुखद भावनायें समझते हैं, वस्तुतः वे और अधिक दुःख एवं शोक में हमें ले जाती हैं। सभी दुःख प्रतीत्यसमुत्पन्न (कारणजनित) हैं और पराश्रिततः उत्पन्न होते हैं। अतएव उनका निरोध संभव है।

बुद्ध के उपदेश की द्वन्द्वात्मक (Dilectical) पद्धति

बुद्ध ने विरोधों को दूर करने के लिए एक अद्वितीयपद्धति का विकास किया। ऐसा लगता है कि उनकी प्रायः विरोधी दृष्टिकोणों को स्वीकार करने के लिए आलोचना की गई। ऐसा कहा जाता है कि उन्होंने स्वयं एकांशी (एक पक्षीय) एवं अनेकांशी (अनेक पक्षीय) सिद्धांतों को प्रतिपादित किया। प्रसिद्ध दार्शनिक श्री बी. के.

मतिलाल कहते हैं - अनेकांशिका शब्द 'अनेकान्त' शब्द के लिए शायद एक अन्य शब्द था और बुद्ध की अनेकांशिका पद्धति को, जैन दर्शन के अनेकान्तवाद के पूर्वगामी के रूप में लिया जा सकता है।

मज्झिमनिकाय (सुत्त 99) में बुद्ध उद्घोष करते हैं कि वे एकान्तवादी नहीं, वरन् विभज्यवादी हैं। विभज्यवाद के माध्यम से बुद्ध ने अपनी स्वयं की विश्लेषणात्मक पद्धति प्रस्तुत की। विभज्यवाद में भेद, वर्गीकरण, सोपाधिक निषेध या सोपाधिक विधि (स्वीकरण) शामिल है। किसी चर्चागत सिद्धांत के प्रत्येक भाग पर प्रश्नों के माध्यम से एक ठोस आधार पर, विधि या निषेध के साथ विश्लेषित किया जाता है। वसुबन्धु विभज्यवाद को निम्न पदों में परिभाषित करते हैं - 'जो यह कहते हैं कि सबकुछ अस्तित्व में रहता है - भूत, वर्तमान एवं भविष्य - वे सर्वास्तिवादी हैं। दूसरी ओर विभज्यवादी कहते हैं कि केवल कुछ वस्तुयें ही अस्तित्व में रहती हैं जैसे - वर्तमान कर्म एवं भूतकाल के भी वे कर्म जो फलित हो चुके हैं, वे अस्तित्व ही नहीं रहते हैं।' (अभिधर्मकोषभाष्य, अध्याय 5, पृ. 805)

अपनी विश्लेषणात्मक पद्धति के द्वारा बुद्ध ने सभी दार्शनिक प्रश्नों को चार श्रेणियों में विभाजित किया - एकांश व्याकरणीय (विधि या निषेध के पदों में उत्तर दिए जाने योग्य), विभाज्यवादेन व्याकरणीय (भेद एवं विश्लेषण द्वारा उत्तर दिए जाने योग्य), प्रतिप्रश्नेन व्याकरणीय (प्रतिप्रश्न पूछकर उत्तर दिए जाने योग्य) और स्थापनीय (मौन या एकतरफ रखकर उत्तर दिए जाने योग्य)। यह उनके चरम स्थितियों से बचने के दर्शन - मध्यम प्रतिपद (मध्य मार्ग) के दर्शन के अनुकूल थी। किसी सिद्धांत में से दो पहलू निकल सकते तो और वे दै चरम स्थितियों का निर्माण कर सकते हैं। इन दो चरम स्थितियों का परिहार ही मध्यमा प्रतिपत्त है। अनेकान्तवाद ही भी मध्यम मार्ग स्वीकार किया जाता है हालांकि दोनों चरमस्थितियों को भी स्वीकार किया जाता है। मतिलालजी बुद्ध की पद्धति को 'विशिष्ट मध्य' (exclusive middle) और अनेकान्तवाद को 'समावेशी मध्य' (inclusive middle) के रूप में समझते हैं।

दलसुखभाई मालवानिया के इस विचार को कि बाद की श्रमण परम्पराओं में विभज्यवाद का उत्कर्ष अनेकान्तवाद में हुआ, मतिलालजी आगे सुझाते हैं कि 'जैन दर्शन में अनेकान्त की प्रवृत्ति के विकास में अहिंसा का नैतिक सिद्धांत अंशतः उत्तरदायी था। बुद्ध द्वारा विभज्यवाद के अभ्यास को अपनाने ने ही अनेकान्त - (अ-एकपक्षीय सिद्धांत) या सत् के बहुपक्षीय सिद्धांत के लिए रूपरेखा उपलब्ध करायी।

अपने उपदेशों में जिस रीति से बुद्ध ने विभज्यवाद की तकनीक को अपनाया, उसने अनेकान्तवाद के विकास का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया। उन्होंने न केवल एक वैकल्पिक विश्व-दृष्टि प्रस्तुत की बल्कि उन्होंने तर्क एवं विमर्श को भी प्रोत्साहित किया। अपनी संबोधि के पूर्व वे अपने समय के बहुत सारे दार्शनिकों एवं चिन्तकों से मिले थे। पालि प्रस्थान ने बुद्धत्व प्राप्ति के लिए उनके अनुसंधान को 'अरियपरियेसन' (आर्य शोध) संज्ञा दी है। अपनी अविश्रांत परिवर्जना और सत्य की खोज के दौरान, वे आलार कालाम एवं उद्दक रामपुत्त से मिले। (जी. सी. पांडे : स्टडीज़ इन ऑरोजिन ऑफ बुद्धिज़्म, पृ. 377)

संजय कात्यायन, पुराण कश्यप, मङ्कालि गोसाल एवं अजित केशकम्बलिन - ये बुद्ध के समकालीन थे। ये दार्शनिक प्रचलित नियमों पर प्रश्न उठा रहे थे। बुद्ध ने उनके विचारों को अस्वीकार किया। उन्होंने पुरोहित वर्ग के पाखंड के विरुद्ध भी धर्मयुद्ध छेड़ा। प्रताप चन्द्र कहते हैं - इसमें थोड़ा ही संदेह है कि बुद्ध ने पुरोहित वर्ग के साथ अवमानना पूर्ण व्यवहार किया और उनके श्रेष्ठता के दावों को तिरस्कारपूर्वक अस्वीकृत किया। उनके साथ अच्छे चुगलखोर के जैसा ही व्यवहार किया जाता, जिनको सामान्य धार्मिक विमर्श में कोई मूल्यवान योगदान नहीं देना होता था।

अश्वघोष ने सिद्धार्थ के मगध नगर के दर्शन और वहाँ राजा बिम्बिसार के साथ उनकी चर्चा के बारे में लिखा है। राजा ने राजकुमार को इस बात के लिए सहमत करने का प्रयास किया कि धर्म, अर्थ एवं काम ; इन तीन पुरुषार्थों को पूर्ण करने में ही मानव जीवन निहित है और इनमें से किसी एक का उल्लंघन करना पाप है। सिद्धार्थ जीवन के प्रति इस संश्लेषणात्मक दृष्टिकोण के विरुद्ध दृढ़ता से खड़े हुए। उन्होंने राजा को उत्तर दिया कि इस तथाकथित संतुलित पूर्ण जीवन यापन से भी मृत्यु का भय दूर नहीं होता, त्रिवर्ग के ये सभी तत्त्व क्षणिक हैं। (बुद्धचरित, अध्याय, 10)

प्रतिरोध का एक आन्दोलन चलाने के स्थान पर बुद्ध ने चर्चा एवं विमर्श के लिए सभी द्वार खुले रखे। यह उनके उपदेशों का संवादात्मक स्वरूप ही था कि वैदिक दर्शनों एवं बौद्ध दर्शन के मध्य संवादों को स्वीकार किया गया। वस्तुतः बुद्ध ने प्रचलित धर्मों के विरुद्ध कोई विद्रोह नहीं किया। एक विद्रोह, एक प्रतिष्ठित दृष्टिकोण पर विचार नहीं, जिसका वह अपने स्वयं के विचारों से खंडन कर रहा हो। बुद्ध ने कभी भी हिंसा किए बिना, अपने सारे शास्त्रार्थों को बिना द्वेषपूर्ण और खंडनात्मक हुए बिना, एक स्वच्छ समीक्षा तक सीमित रखा।

बुद्ध और उनके अनुनायियों ने कथा (चर्चा) कहने की विशेष पद्धति का विकास किया। इसे 'परिपुच्छा कथा' से अभिहित किया गया है -(प्रश्न पूछने की रीति से व्याख्यान देना)।