

TRUTH OF THE WAY TO PRACTICE IN BUDDHISM

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ABSTRACT :-

The Buddha was not primarily an ethical teacher and reformer, not a metaphysician. He disliked metaphysical discussions devoid of practical utility. Instead of discussing metaphysical questions, which are ethically useless and intellectually useless and intellectually uncertain, the Buddha always tried to enlighten persons on the most important questions of sorrow, its origin, its cessation and the path leading to its cessation. The answers to these four questions constitute the essence of the Buddha's enlightenment. These have come to be known as the four noble truths.

KEYWORDS :- religion, social, ethic.

INTRODUCTION :

The Buddha's Teaching is based on the Four Noble Truths. To realize these Truths is to realize and penetrate into the true nature of existence, including the full knowledge of oneself. When we recognize that all phenomenal things are transitory, are subject to suffering and are void of any essential reality, we will be convinced that true and enduring happiness cannot be found in material phenomenal reality, we will be convinced that true happiness must be sought only through mental purity and the cultivation of wisdom.

The Four Noble Truths are a very important aspect of the teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha has said that it is because we fail to understand the Four Noble Truth that we have continued to go round in the cycle of birth and death, in the very first sermons of the Buddha, the Dhammachakka Sutta, which He gave to the five monks at the Deer park in Sarnath was on the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. What are the Four Noble Truths ? They are as follows:

- (1) The truth of suffering
- (2) The truth of the cause of suffering,
- (3) The truth of the end of suffering and
- (4) The truth of the path leading to the end of suffering.

According to more detailed expositions found in other discourses, the first of the four noble truths relates suffering to physical events such as disease and death, and to the mental displeasure which arises from being unable to satisfy desire and wishes. As the same first noble truth points out, all these forms of suffering can in the final count be traced to the basis fivefold clinging at existence by way of the aggregates.

The Truth of Suffering

When the Buddha began preaching, his first lesson was about the nature of suffering. This teaching is preserved in a discourse called the Dhammacakka pavattana-sutta, (Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion). The term Dhamma here has the meaning of the teachings of a Buddha. The text is an indication that the teachings and all the Buddha in the future will teach a similar teaching. The Buddha's analysis of the religious path rests on the idea that suffering is an

inescapable aspect of all human, animal and godly existence. From the lowest life form to the highest heavenly realm, suffering is an inescapable part of experience.

Here is what the Buddha point out about suffering that “Now this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to get what one desires is suffering. This Noble Truth of suffering should be perceived.”

Although the Buddha placed much emphasis on suffering, this does not mean that his analysis of reality was only concerned with the negative aspects of existence. In fact, and understanding of suffering and its arising leads on the the third and the fourth noble truth, which are concerned with the positive values of freedom from suffering and the practical path leading to that freedom. As the Buddha himself expressly stated, a realization of the four noble truths will be accompanied by happiness, and the noble eithtfold path is a path productive of joy. This goes to show that understanding suffering is not necessarily a matter of trustration and despair.

The first noble truth is the full understanding of suffering. Of course, in an obvious way, people are aware of suffering and know when they have unpleasant sensations such as hunger, cold; or sickness and recognize these as things that one does not like. But the first noble truth includes awareness of all the remifications of suffering because it encompasses the very nature and essence of suffering. This includes knowledge of the subtle and the obvious aspects of suffering. The obvious aspect of suffering is immediate pain or difficulty in the moment. Subtle suffering is more difficult to understand because it begins with happiness. But by its very nature this happiness must change because it cannot go on forever. Because it must change into suffering . then subtle suffering is the non-permanence of pleasure. So, the Buddha’s description on the nature of his teachings; “Whether or not the Tothagata appear, O Bhikkhus, it remains a fact, an established principle, a natural law that all conditioned things are transient (anicca), sorrowful (dukkha) and that everything is soulless (anatta). This summarizes that all conditioned things are transient, sorrowful, and that everything is soulless.”

The Buddha saw suffering as suffering and happiness as happiness. This is not what unenlightened minds would see. Generally, most people dislike having to face the true of facts life. They full themselves into a false sense of security by day-deaming and imagination, taking the shadow for the substance. Many never see, know or even care to find out the fact of life, preferring to live a humdrum existence in the world to which they are born. If we examine the actual state of humanity, it is clear that this state is marked by unsatisfactoriness throughout. Evry living being, human or otherwise, throughout the whole universe is struggling for existence through a never ending battle for survival. The brief moments of happiness come to an end with the onset of sickness, old age and death.

The Truth of the Cause of Suffering

If we wish to cure ourselves from suffering, we must first identify its cause. Buddhists study that the Buddha learnt this just like a doctor learns about what’s wrong with his patient by listing their symptoms, finding out what makes them worse and studying other cases before prescribing a cure. By watching people Buddha found out that the causes of suffering are craving

and desire, and ignorance. The power of these things to cause all suffering is what Buddhists call The Second Noble Truth.

What are things we crave for ? Food we love to eat, entertainment, new things, popularity, money, beauty, holidays and so many more things and experience, depending on who we are and where we are. Craving can be explained as the strong desires that people have for pleasing their senses and for experiencing life itself. Buddhists believe that anything that stimulates our sense or our feelings can lead to craving. The Buddha said that in khuddaka Nikaya, at the Dhammapada pali “Craving is a fire which burns in all beings” every activity is motivated by desire. They range from the simple physical desire of animals to the complex and often artificially stimulated desires of the civilized man. To satisfy desire, animals prey upon another, and human beings fight, kill, cheat, lie and perform various forms of unwholesome deeds. Craving is a powerful mental force present in all forms of life, and is the chief cause of the ills in life. It is this craving that leads to repeated births in the cycle of existence.

People everywhere crave for their favorite tastes, but we all know that not even the best sweets and our favorite meal lasts forever. Soon it is finished and there can be no more to enjoy, and then it is forgotten as though it never even happened. None of the pleasures we crave for ever give us lasting happiness or satisfaction. This is why people can crave to repeat these experiences again and again, and become unhappy and dissatisfied until they can satisfy their craving.

Visakha, at Savatthi, One day she came to the Buddha at noon with her hair and clothes wet with water. She said that she came back from the cemetery for the funeral of one of her beloved grand children and that she could not console herself for the great loss. When the Buddha asked her if she knew the reason for her great despair, she admitted that she did not know. The Buddha pointed out that it was due to the attachment to her dead child.

In the world, many heart-broken lovers are laid in bed without any appetite to eat or drink. Some commit suicide. Some people who are financially ruined also commit suicide. How great is suffering caused by the attachment due to greed or craving in this very life !

Tanhaya jayati soko, tanhaya jayati bhayam.

Tanhaya vippamuttassa, natthi sako kutobhayam.

From craving springs grief; from craving springs fear;

For him who is wholly free from craving;

There is no grief, much less fear.

The Truth of the End of Suffering

Once we have realized the cause of suffering, we are in the position to put an end to suffering. So, how do we put an end to suffering ? Eliminate it at its root by the removal of craving in the mind. This is the Third Noble Truth. This truth is also explained thus; “Now, this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. It is the complete separation from, and destruction of, this very craving (tanha), its forsaking, renunciation, the liberation therefrom, and non-attachment thereto... this Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering should be realized.”

After suffering, the Buddha taught, there is supreme happiness. Every step of the way to removing the causes of unhappiness brings more joy. On the path to the end of suffering, which is path that Buddhists may spend their whole lifetimes practicing, there are levels of happiness and freedom from craving and ignorance that can be achieved. In the beginning the happiness might be through better material conditions; like more contentment, or better spiritual conditions, more peace and enjoyment of life. These are the reasons Buddhists can live happily without greed even among people in cities overcome with craving and desire. They can live happily without anger even among people harboring ill will. These kinds of happiness make life more rewarding and bring a sense of freedom and joy.

The Buddhist teachings say that the more people free themselves from desire, ill will and ignorance, the greater their happiness is no matter what is going on around them. When they have completely removed desire, ill will and ignorance the Buddha says they will experience the same supreme happiness he discovered.

The second fruit of the end of suffering is what Buddhists call supreme Enlightenment. Enlightenment can be called liberation a total, absolute and permanent end of all suffering. It is the ultimate and final goal of Buddhism. There are many qualities to enlightenment, but the most important are perfect wisdom and great compassion. These are the extraordinary qualities that only Buddha perfected. They are the result of complete freedom from craving and from ignorance and the tremendous transformations from ordinary life that Buddha's teachings exemplified. Through perfect wisdom He understands the real nature of all things. Through great compassion. He is able to help countless beings overcome their suffering.

The experience of Enlightenment or Nirvana, as it is also called, is very difficult to explain. Even when Buddhists describe it as supreme happiness and perfect wisdom they are not really explaining it completely, Nirvana cannot be put into words imagine explaining the color blue to a person who has always been blind, or the sound of a bird of deaf man. Enlightenment is an experience that a person has to have for themselves to understand. Buddhists believe that the Buddha's teaching will lead them to Nirvana and trust his teachings of the Four Noble Truths to take them to their goal.

The Buddha has described Nirvana in different ways. He has called it supreme happiness, peace, immortality. He also described Nirvana as uncreated, unformed, as beyond the earth, as beyond water, fire, air, beyond the sun and moon, unfathomable, immeasurable. It is also described as freedom from conflict and selfishness, the eradication of craving, hatred and delusion.

The Buddha said, and demonstrated through his own life, that Nirvana can be achieved in our lives, while living it is not a place to which we go after death. Buddhists believe that we can eradicate all the causes of suffering in this life, and achieve enlightenment live in bliss, if we follow the Buddha's teachings.

The Truth of the Path Leading to the End of Suffering

An outstanding aspect of the Buddha's Teaching is the adoption of the Eightfold Path is the Middle Path. The Buddha advised His followers to follow this Path so as to avoid the extremes of sensual pleasures and self-mortification. The middle Path is the righteous way of life which does not advocate the acceptance of decrees given by someone outside oneself. A person practices the

Middle Path, the guide for moral conduct, not out of fear of any supernatural agency, but out of the intrinsic value in following such an action. He chooses this self-imposed discipline for a definite end in view; self-purification.

The Middle Path is a planned course of inward culture and progress. A person can make real progress in righteousness and insight by following this Path, and not by engaging in external worship and prayers. According to the Buddha, anyone who lives in accordance with the Dhamma will be guided and protected by that very Law. When a person lives according to Dhamma, he will also be living in harmony with the universal law.

The Middle Path is the Buddha's treatment for the problem of suffering in all of our lives. In the time he spent learning about the cause and nature of suffering he learnt also about its cure and set out to teach it. Buddhists describe the teachings as a formula which is described in simple steps and includes both physical and mental treatment for ridding a person of suffering. Like all Buddhist teachings, this formula, which is called the Noble Eightfold Path, can only work if a person chooses to apply it to their lives, and takes full responsibility for following the steps. The Noble Eightfold Path, they are as follows

- (1) Right Understanding
- (2) Right Attitude,
- (3) Right Speech,
- (4) Right Action
- (5) Right Livelihood,
- (6) Right Effort,
- (7) Right Mindfulness and
- (8) Right Concentration

Following the Eightfold path leads, ultimately, to a life free of suffering. This is the fruit the most dedicated follower of the teachings might hope to enjoy, however along the way to this goal the Eightfold Path helps Buddhists in other ways.

Right speech is a unique gift of man. It is a power which, when properly used, helps to bring harmony happiness and wisdom. If it is abused it can bring ignorance, delusion, pain and deceit. Right Speech is about controlling the abuse of speech and cultivating its best potentials. Students of the Eightfold Path learn to control their words. They avoid lies, tale-bearing, harsh words and nonsense while practicing speaking truth, gentle words, and speaking sensibly and meaningfully.

Right Action is concerned with what we do; avoiding actions that damage ourselves and others and taking action that improves our sense of self, adds to a healthy society and brings goodness and culture, which lay the foundations for Mental Development and Wisdom.

Right Livelihood shows the way for a person to choose in which way to become a useful, productive citizen who contributes to his or her own welfare and the welfare of others as well as bringing about social harmony and economic progress. Buddhist Teachings advise against harmful professions such as trading in weapons, living beings, flesh, intoxicants and poison. Buddhists also avoid occupations of soldiering, fishing, hunting, and teach against cunning and persuasive practices as well as cheating and gambling.

Right Mindfulness focuses us on the truth about what is happening in the body, in feelings, with the mind, and through our ideas, thoughts, etc. Right Concentration is a

development of this attention, enabling a Buddhist student to develop one-pointedness of the mind which brings many strengths and freedoms, including the clarity of mind and calmness to stay on the path of Good Conduct.

Right Attitude and Right View are the practice of developing Right View is about distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, and leads to a complete understanding of the Four Noble Truths. Right View is free from delusion and ignorance and moves very easily into deep wisdom, clear sightedness and acceptance.

Freedom from negative thoughts which distract, debilitate or lead to wrong speech, actions, effort, mindfulness or concentration is what Buddhists call Right Attitude. A follower of the Eightfold Path who follows Right view and Right Attitude may achieve the wisdom to understand things as they are, to perceive the relationship between cause and effect and thus to remove ignorance and craving and experience the end of suffering. This is the ultimate goal of the Eightfold Path and all eight ways of practice must be followed in order to attain it.

CONCLUSION :

The Noble Eightfold Path is a very systematic and methodical approach to solving the problem of suffering in life, and achieving a state of wisdom, peace and Nirvana. The programmed first develops character and personality, and then develops ethical conduct and restraint which promote concentration. Concentration and mindfulness help make the mind free of hindrances that block it from blossoming into wisdom and accessing higher knowledge. Higher knowledge brings a clear understanding of the truth about how things really are. This leads craving and desire to turn into detachment, detachment brings freedom from suffering and the end of suffering brings Supreme Happiness.

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