

## **The Way To Happiness: Buddhist Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Buddhism is a religion and philosophy which comes from the philosophies of the Buddha. Buddhism is one of the oldest religions of the world. What does 'Happiness' mean in Buddhism? According to Buddhism, to live a person happy life one must follow numbers of things. The main purpose of Buddhism is to be free from suffering. Accordingly, one must attempt to help others in eliminating from their lives. We cannot live a happy life unless we are free from suffering. This can be possible through good deeds. Example- as giving to those who are in need of help and also through abstaining from bad deeds. For example- stealing, lying, cheating and adultery. Moreover, compassionate is one of the key virtues of good life in Buddhism. 'Sila' is also very important part of Buddhist teaching which means a Buddhist should not destroy and harm others life. Because, According to Buddhism nothing is permanent in this world. Everything is ever changing. It simply changes form, that means everything consist of same material only. Accordingly, if we destroy others, it means it destroy ourself.

### **Keyword-Suffering, Good deeds, Sila, Compassionate And Impermanent.**

Gautama Buddha was convinced that the life of human is full of suffering. The aim of Buddha is to be free the humans from suffering and to achieve happiness. Happiness is most important of a person in life. There is no doubt that all of us desire happiness. Prince Siddartha left his luxury life in search of truth. He perceived the grief hidden underneath. It was a great lesson for Siddartha when he saw the first three incident in his life of that a sick, the old and finally the death. Thereafter, he thought regarding the permanent happiness of life. Are we happy? If not, what is the path to achieve happiness in life? While he was searching for the truth, he found four noble truths. These are, 1. There is suffering 2. There is the cause of suffering 3. There is a cessation of suffering and 4. There is the path leading to cessation of suffering. The whole teaching of Buddhism is ingrained in the four noble truth.<sup>1</sup> The life of human is full of suffering. There is no human who is not suffering in his life.

None can deny the existence of suffering in life and the consequent need for release from this suffering. However, Buddha accepts the reason of suffering. If there is suffering, then there must be the reason of that suffering that we should eliminate from our life. According to Buddha, there is cessation of suffering which is called 'Nirvana'. *Nirvana* literally means 'blown out'. There is the final aim of human striving. *Nirvana* is such a state wherein no pain, desire and any prospect of rebirth. *Nirvana* is considered as the state of the permanent happiness which is wholly indescribable.

In order to achieve the *nirvana* or happiness, Buddha mentioned of eight-fold noble path by which *nirvana* can be achieved in this life. These paths are-

1. Right views (*samyagdrsti*): Right view is considered as the correct knowledge about the four noble truth.
2. Right resolve (*samyagsankalpa*): The second mark is right resolve. A mere knowledge is useless unless one resolve to reform life in their light. Therefore, we must have the right resolve in order to get free from suffering.
3. Right speech (*samyagvak*): We should speak right words. Right determination should be able to guide and control our speech.
4. Right conduct (*samyagkarmanta*): Right conduct consists of *Panca-Sila* the five vows from killing, stealing, sensuality, lying and intoxication.
5. Right livelihood (*samyagajiva*): Renouncing bad speech and action is called *samyagajiva*. One should earn his livelihood by honest means not by harming others.
6. Right effort (*samyagvyayama*): Right effort is something while a person tries to live a reformed life through right views, resolution, speech and action etc.
7. Right mindfulness (*samyaksmriti*): Our mind should concentrate constantly. One should constantly remember and contemplate the body as body, sensation as sensation.
8. Right concentration (*samyaksamadhi*): One who has successfully achieved these seven steps and thereby freed himself from all passion and evil thoughts is fit to enter step by step into the four deeper and deeper stages of concentration that gradually take him to the goal of his long and arduous journey-cessation of suffering. These are the eight fold-path of Buddhism through which a person can achieve *nirvana*.<sup>2</sup>

Everyone desires a life of happiness. The happiness in *Pali* dialect is called *Sukha* which is used both as a noun meaning "happiness," "ease," "bliss," or "pleasure," and as an adjective meaning "blissful" or "pleasant." To understand the nature of happiness, a brief discussion of

feeling is necessary. Feeling (*vedana*) is a mental factor present in all types of consciousness, a universal concomitant of experience. There is feeling which comes from eye-contact, feeling born of ear-contact and feeling born of nose-contact, etc. Feeling is also divided by way of its effective tone either into three or five classes. On the threefold division there is pleasant feeling (*sukhavedana*), painful feeling (*dukkhavedana*), and neither pleasant nor painful feeling (*adukkhamā sukhavedana*), i.e. neutral feeling. The pleasant feeling may be subdivided into bodily pleasant feeling (*kāyika-sukha*) called “pleasure” (*sukha*) and mental pleasant feeling (*cetasika-sukha*) called “joy” (*somanassa*). The painful feeling may also be subdivided into bodily painful feeling (*kāyikadukkha*) called “pain” (*dukkha*) and mental painful feeling (*cetasika-dukkha*) called “displeasure” (*domanassa*). Buddha enumerates contrasting types of mental happiness: the happiness of the household life and that of monastic life, the happiness of sense pleasures and that of renunciation, happiness with attachments and taints and happiness without attachments and taints, worldly happiness and spiritual happiness, the happiness of concentration and happiness without concentration, mental happiness, happiness without joy, happiness of equanimity, happiness not aimed at joy, and happiness aimed at formless object. Happiness associated with the wholesome roots produced by the renunciation of sensual enjoyments is spiritual happiness (*nirāmisasukha*) or the happiness of renunciation (*nekkhammasukha*). The happiness of *Jhāna* is a spiritual happiness born of seclusion from sense pleasures and the hindrances (*pavivekasukha*). It is also a happiness of concentration (*samādhisukha*). There are many ways of bringing happiness. “Friends bring happiness when a need has arisen; pleasant is contentment with whatever there might be; merit is pleasant at life’s ending; and happiness means the destruction of all suffering. Happy is the state of Brahman. Happy is age-long virtue and happy is confidence well-established; happy is the gaining of wisdom and happy it is not to do evil. “Happy is the arising of the Awakened Ones; happy is the teaching of the Good Law; happy is the unity of the group and happy is the ascetic life of the united.”

It is recorded in the history that Siddhartha Gotama was enlightened under the Bo tree. What he said and did have been recorded in a colossal document called *Thripitaka*, Pali canons. On the other hand, how can we achieve the happiness since the Buddhist philosophy is so pessimistic? According to Buddhist philosophy, Life is precious of all beings, all are scared of violence, pain and death.<sup>3</sup> Buddhist philosophy is understood as pessimistic. Goutama Buddha realized that everything in the world is based on impermanence. Everything in this

world is ever changing. Nothing is permanent. As nothing is permanent, we should not be attached with the object. We should give up the sensual pleasure to achieve the permanent happiness. We should know the path to happiness. When you realize the actual nature of grief, there is no matter to worry. One can well argue then happiness is confined to sublime humans such as *arahants*. The term *arahant* (Pali) means a person who has reached a state of perfection and enlightenment. Literally, *Arahant* is a 'worthy one' and has reached the highest of four levels of awaking recognised in early Buddhism and become totally free from defilements beyond the rebirth in any form. *Arahants* are happy beings and certainly, having given up all the worldly pleasures. But that does not mean happiness is something the ordinary cannot afford. The laity too can achieve happiness, but it is a little harder for laity. It needs practice and patience far more than reading or listening to heaps of Buddhism.

***Pancasila***: The five precepts or *Panchasila* are also important part of Buddhist ethics without which a life of happiness is impossible for a person. These are -

- 1) Don not kill,
- 2) Do not steal,
- 3) Do not commit adultery,
- 4) Do not tell a lie, and
- 5) Do not take intoxicating drinks.<sup>4</sup>

These five moral precepts are the five principles of Buddhism that an ardent Buddhist must follow in daily life to attain happiness in life. This dwells upon the relationship of an individual with the outside environment, other people, other things, without encroachment. These make up the basic foundation of co-existence on friendly terms with others in society. Lord Buddha has prescribed five precepts for the householders. Some scholar calls it as 'virtue of man'. Technically, in Pali dialect called *Pancasila*. It is the simplest compendium of the Buddhist morality to achieve the happiness.

All of us have the urge for happiness within us. It, however, is buried beneath for the negative thought within us such as hatred, jealousy, tension, anxiety, worry and many other negative states of mind. We need to remove our negative thought from our mind to find out the root of happiness. We need to cultivate and nourish the roots of happiness. If a person thinks of killing a person and desires happiness, would he be happy ever? Similarly, if a person desires happiness by stealing, committing sensual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicating drinks and drugs causing infatuation, would he really be happy? Certainly, a person is not happy, for

the reason that his mind is confused by what he is doing. No person can be happy by disrupting others happiness. If one does wrong then subsequently our mind becomes confused with our action. How can a man who is full of hatred, greed and delusion be happy? Buddha said that one can never be happy with anger, hatred and jealousy, etc. He said, happy is without being angry among the anger. To live unafflicted among the afflicted is happy. To live without ambition among the ambitious is happy. To live without possession is a happy life like that of the radiant gods. Therefore, according to Buddha, "Our actions are all led by the mind, mind is their master, and mind is their maker. If one acts or speaks with a pure state of mind then happiness follows like a shadow that trails constantly behind." Our mind by our right action generates happiness. However, our mind should be purified to generate the happiness. Impure mind cannot generate happiness. Good action with good deeds is the source of our happiness. In this regard, he has given an example that "If a man does good, let him do it again and again and let him take delight in it; the accumulation of good causes happiness." He further said, "The wise man, rejoicing in giving, becomes happy by that in the hereafter." One can achieve the happiness by giving up the sensual pleasure. Sensual pleasure cannot be the real happiness as it has more unhappiness. Therefore, "By giving up a little pleasure, if one sees much happiness, the wise man would relinquish that little pleasure in view of the great pleasure." Therefore, one can conclude from the teaching of Buddha that the happiness is the total absence of unhappiness. He is known as peerless physician (*bhisakko*) and the supreme surgeon (*sallakattoanuttaro*), as he examined our sickness, and diagnosed its cause, analyzed the finding, and prescribed a treatment to free us from the suffering and affliction and to make us happy. He never considered sensual pleasure as the actual happiness rather he said that "One should know how to judge what happiness is; having known how to judge what happiness is, one should be intent on inward happiness." When someone achieves the complete freedom from all types of bondage then he experiences the real happiness which is called happiness of calmness (*Upasamasukha*). Two types of happiness are there -such as experiential (*vedayita*) and non-experiential (*avedayita*). The non-experiential happiness is considered as highest type of happiness for it does not change. The experiential happiness is placed in lower degree for it changes. The non-experiential happiness is attained when all the defilements are eradicated. However, the experiential happiness is attained without destroying them. Unless and until all defilements including hindrances are not destroyed, the highest happiness is not possible to achieve and subject to

change. The highest happiness, of course, is Nirvana wherein all defilements are destroyed and any sorrow cannot touch. *Nirvana* is beyond suffering, death, and birth.

*Nirvana*, the highest happiness is not considered to be a feeling (*Vedana*) to experience, for it is feeling that generates desire. For instance, if the feeling happens to be pleasant, desire arises in the mind for obtaining over and over again what is felt. All happiness derived from any feeling may be the cause of unhappiness. If happiness turns into unhappiness, then what we experience is suffering (*dukkha*). True happiness is the happiness attained by eliminating *dukkha* which is called *Nirvana*, i.e., highest happiness.

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