

Why do we need a spiritual teacher and his teaching?

Even though we have a lot of facilities and have achieved mundane goals, we are mostly unsatisfied in those things. We find new things again and again until we die. When we have enjoyments, and when we are with near and dear and when we are healthy, wealthy and well, we are happy, we enjoy. But when those things change, when we cannot control those things, we suffer, we are in fear, we cry, we lament, we are upset and we blame others. Finally, when we reach the end of our life, we have mostly lived with sorrow.

Especially Buddhism illustrates three reasons that why we have to find a spiritual teacher and a teaching. They are;

Old age
Death
Rebirth

A person enjoys himself when he is in his young age, but he suffers in his old age even though he has a lot of education, money and relatives because most of his near and dear went away, and most of his things are out of his control. The reason is we fully trust in our physical body, complexion, close relatives and friends. When they change and go away, we suffer. This is the first reason that we have to find a spiritual leader, his sublime teaching and practice it in this short life. And we can't live forever. We have to say bye to others, leave all near and dear, all kinds of material things that we earned hard whether we like or not. Then we lament when we lose them. This is the second reason that we have to find a spiritual teacher. If we can finish Sansaric journey after death, it is ok. We can live according to any kind of lifestyle if we have no rebirth after death. But the problem is we have to be reborn after death according to how we lived and how our mental conditions were. According to Buddhism this is the main cause that we have to find a spiritual teacher and practice his doctrines.

If we have nothing to remind with pure mind as wholesome deeds in our lifetime, it is one of the causes that we are unsatisfied. If we have done a lot meritorious deeds in our life like practicing generosity, practicing virtue and practicing meditation we have things that we can be happy with a pure mind. That is why Buddhism explains collecting merits means collecting happiness (*Sukho punnassa uccayo*). If we have done a lot of meritorious deeds, we have lots of things to be happy when we remember them. Our mind is full with merits in all stages in our life as the result of practicing good. On the other hand, we can see a lot of people who we have helped around of us. And if we had a good discipline in our speech and behavior, when we reflect on our life, we have no mistakes which bring tears to our eyes. We can be happy and proud of our life. Further, if we have developed our mind in to a higher spiritual power practicing meditation, we can be unshaken when we face sorrowful and complex situations. That is a great way we can overcome suffering, fear, lamentation and unsatisfactoriness as the Buddha mentioned.

Especially we may have not only tranquility but the ability to reflect on impermanence in all kinds of experiences in our life those we experience through our six senses such as eyes, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. If we can see the arising and ceasing in our experience, we have nothing to suffer, and we won't get strong attachments or hate. Our mind is very pure, calm, quiet and equal among all kinds of good and bad experiences. We have to practice our mind very soon, before we face negative experiences. If we have not trained our mind before sorrowful conditions, it is difficult to control our mind in front of negative feelings. That is why we have to practice our mind when we are strong and healthy.

According to Buddhism, first we have to know clearly what we practice. It is like a map where we are going to. A lot of teachings are there in Buddhism that we have to practice to get rid of suffering and achieve final bliss of liberation. We can group all of them into five groups. They called the five spiritual faculties.

1. **Faith** or confidence in the triple gem; the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha (*Saddha*)
2. **Energy** to practice good (wholesome) deeds and to get rid of evil- unwholesome thoughts (*Viriya*)
3. **Mindfulness** in four ways; body, feelings, mind and mental formations (*Sathi*)
4. **Tranquility** or concentration (*Samadhi*)
5. **Wisdom** (*Panna*)

More and more we listen to the Buddha's message, our confidence grows up in his enlightenment, his teachings and his noble disciples. And when we have a clear knowledge about the path of purification and liberation, our courage and effort to follow this message increases gradually, since it is practical, with visible results and immediately effective. Then we are ready to practice the main teaching, which is the four fold mindfulness, which includes all doctrines in Buddhism. They are,

1. The contemplation of body
2. The contemplation of feelings
3. The contemplation of mind
4. The contemplation of mental formations

When we practice this very important teaching in Buddhism, we understand the nature of ourselves, mind and the body. Then our tranquility also increases little by little. With the concentrated mind and with our clear knowledge about the doctrines, Buddha explains that we see impermanence in our body, feelings, mind and mental conditions. As the result of practicing this clear path we gain full comprehension about our whole life and our experience that we get through our six senses. With this understanding our strong attachment to the world goes away. Then we have no desire, anger or delusion. We are fully enlightened. This is way that we have to attain ultimate goal that final bliss of liberation from all kinds of sufferings.

May The Triple Gem Bless You.

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