

Jaṭā Sutta

(Samyutta Nikaya I, Brahmana samyutta, 294 p)

(The Path how to overcome tangles within and outside)

The all teachings that the Supreme Buddha explained focus on how to achieve real happiness overcoming all kinds of sufferings. While the Buddha was investigating the path to liberation, he always found how to overcome suffering. After he attained the final bliss of liberation, he tried to preach this enlightenment path to the world with kindness and compassion.

Once upon a time, when the Buddha was at Savatti, a Brahman, named Jata came to the Buddha. After exchanging greetings with the Buddha, he sat beside the Buddha. As he was sitting there he addressed the Buddha with a verse:

*Antojaṭā bahijaṭā Jaṭāya jaṭitā pajā,
Taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi Ko imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭaṃ”ti.*
“A tangle inside, a tangle outside,
This generation is entangled in a tangle.
I ask you this, O Gotama,
Who can disentangle this tangle?”

As the answer for the question of the Brahman, the Buddha explained these verses.

*“Sīle patiṭṭhāya naro sapañño Cittam paññañca bhāvayaṃ;
Ātāpī nipako bhikkhu So imaṃ vijaṭaye jaṭaṃ”.*
A man established in virtue, discerning,
developing discernment & mind,
a monk ardent, astute:
he can untangle this tangle.

*“Yesaṃ rāgo ca doso ca avijjā ca virājitā;
Khīṇāsavā arahanto tesam vijaṭitā jaṭā”.*
Those whose passion, aversion, & ignorance
have faded away,
arahants, their effluents ended:
for them the tangle's untangled.

*Yattha nāmañca rūpañca asesam uparujjhati;
Paṭighaṃ rūpasaññā ca etthesā chijjate jaṭā”ti.*
Where name-&-form,
along with perception
of impingement & form,
totally stop without trace:
that's where the tangle
is cut.

According to this answer that the Buddha has given here, we can understand how to overcome tangles in our life. In the very first stanza, three disciplines are pointed out for the liberation. They are;

1. Virtue
2. Tranquility (or concentration)
3. Wisdom

The very first step of getting rid of tangles is virtue. With the understanding of the Path of cessation from suffering, we form self-discipline in our speech and behavior as virtue. According to this virtue, before we do or speak something, we reflect on it again and again whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, wholesome or unwholesome. As much as we have this discipline in our speech and behavior, we have no mistakes. We can remind our life which we spent with pleasant mind because of our good behavior. This discipline in our behavior and speech helps us to go forward in the path of purification practicing meditation purifying mind. Virtue or moral conduct is the foundation of the spiritual path. Therefore the Buddha has mostly pointed out the importance of practicing virtue. Discipline in senses is also very important and useful for a successful moral life. Also moral life helps us to face any society without fear and doubt. Spending a virtuous life is more beneficial in the personal life and social life as well further beneficial in this life and life after death.

The second step to overcome tangles is tranquility (or concentration). We mainly use two meditation techniques that are tranquility (or concentration) and insight meditation. In the tranquility meditation, we keep our mind with a particular good thought. Here we purify our mind from negative thoughts such as craving, anger and delusion. As a result of concentrated mind, we can live for a long time without suffering and stress, but it is not permanent and it can be changed. Here we practice and develop our awareness especially in mind and body. We practice to do all kinds of activities mindfully. Mindfulness is one of the most important qualities that we have to develop for purification of our mind. Also mindfulness helps us to keep our mind in the present moment. The nature of our mind is going to the past and future without awareness. By practicing tranquility meditation, we train our mind to live in the present moment with mindfulness. And when mind goes to the past or future, we are aware of the mind. There are forty techniques in Buddhism to develop mindfulness like breathing meditation, loving kindness meditation. When we practice those techniques with right understanding, we don't stop in concentration. We go forward seeing world reality as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and egolessness.

Concentration is not enough to eradicate defilements completely. That is why Buddhism says us to develop another step that is insight meditation for permanent happiness. Here, with the concentrated mind, we reflect on all kinds of things that mental and physical on three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ).

They are;

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| i. | Impermanence, | අනිත්‍ය |
| ii. | Unsatisfactoriness | දුක්ඛ |
| iii. | Selflessness | අනාත්ම |

We do reflection again and again on these three characteristics of existence (ත්‍රිලක්ෂණ). As a result of practicing this world reality, we develop wisdom with the knowledge of impermanence. Simultaneously, we develop five qualities which are confidence (සද්ධා), effort (වීරිය), mindfulness (සති), concentration (සමාධි) and wisdom (පඤ්ඤා). As the result of practicing The Noble Eightfold Path with mindfulness and wisdom, we gradually reach the real happiness increasing defilements especially desire, anger and delusion. The real success or happiness of our life depends on how far we have eradicated craving or desire, anger or ill will and delusion or ignorance. Final experience of practicing mindfulness and wisdom is living in the present moment with full awareness seeing arising and ceasing without any desirable attachment or destruction. It means we have overcome all tangles, unsatisfactoriness and suffering. As soon as we get any experience in our senses, we are able to see them as impermanent. When we understand that it was not in anywhere before experience, and also after we experience something, it doesn't remain. Every moment of our experience those are five aggregates (*Panchupadanakkhandha*) or mind (*Nama*) and matter (*Rupa*) arises when conditions are together, and also the experience ceases when conditions separate. This is the ultimate truth that we have to realize for the ultimate goal that is the final bliss of liberation, *Nibbana*.

In the discourse of Jata, the Buddha explained the real path that leads to get rid of tangles as practicing of virtue, concentration and wisdom. If we can develop these three things to maximum level, we are clever to overcome all kinds of sufferings and lamentations. Then we are the luckiest persons in the world since nobody can disturb our peace of mind. Then we have real freedom from all kinds of difficulties, problems, sufferings and tangles. For that we should try to dedicate our all efforts and energies, as much as we can.

When this was said, the brahman Jata Bharadvaja said to the Blessed One, "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to show the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. Let me obtain the going forth in Master Gotama's presence, let me obtain admission."

Then the brahman Jata Bharadvaja received the going forth & the admission in the Blessed One's presence. And not long after his admission — dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute — he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for him in the here & now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And so Ven. Bharadvaja became another one of the arahants.

Notes

(Tuesday Dhamma Discussion of Los Angeles Buddhist Vihara in Pasadena)