

Nanda Sutta – Time Flies

(*Samyutta Nikāya* i, 120 p.)

The purpose of all Buddhist doctrines is to show us the way to gain wisdom which is the main fact that causes us to overcome suffering. The more we listen to what the Buddha taught, the more we learn the way how to overcome suffering. The more we learn the way how to overcome suffering the more our courage increases to get rid of suffering. The more we learn, and practice Buddhism, the more we see the visible results in this life itself. By listening to the Buddha's words, we are able to find the real path to getting rid of suffering. Then day by day we can go forward reaching happiness and overcoming suffering.

Once upon a time, when the Buddha was at Savatthi, a deity came to the Buddha and worshiped him. Standing to one side, that devatā recited this verse in the presence of the Blessed One:

*“Accenti kālā tarayanti rattiyo vayoguṇā anupubbaṃ jahanti,
Etaṃ bhayaṃ maraṇe pekkhamāno puññāni kayirātha sukhāvahānī”*ti.

“Time flies, nights pass by, the stages of life leave us one by one.
Seeing this danger in death, you should do merits that bring happiness.”

Here that deity points out the importance of doing good. The Buddha also, often encourages us to practice good deeds such as generosity, virtue and meditation since he saw the results of its. As the results of doing good deeds we can see a lot of results in this life such as longevity, good complexion, health, good friends etc. However, practicing good deeds (merits) is only a primary technique in Buddhism. It is not the final solution for the *Sansāric* problem.

Even though we do a lot of merits, that is not enough to overcome suffering and delusion completely. In this situation, the Buddha neither accepted nor rejected that deity's statement. However, the Supreme Buddha presented his own idea in another verse.

*“Accenti kālā tarayanti rattiyo vayoguṇā anupubbaṃ jahanti;
Etaṃ bhayaṃ maraṇe pekkhamāno lokāmiṣaṃ pajahe santipekkho”*ti.

“Time flies, nights pass by the stages of life leave us one by one.
Seeing this threat in death, one looking for peace would drop the
world’s bait (attraction).”

In this verse the Buddha emphasized the importance of reducing desire which is the main cause of suffering completely. If someone needs to overcome suffering, he has to eradicate desire or greed (or attachment). He who needs to reduce greed completely has to reduce delusion completely. Hence Buddha often emphasizes to get rid of delusion.

Buddhism in a Nutshell

All the teachings of the Buddha's can be included into two levels which are the teachings cause us to be born in heaven and human worlds and, the teachings cause us to get rid of suffering and attain final bliss of liberation, enlightenment or Nirvana.

When the Buddha preached His teachings, He considered the listeners' intelligence and how long he or she can live. And He has an order in His speech which is generosity, virtue, renunciation etc. First, The Buddha normally preached the path of reaching heaven and human worlds because the biggest risk is the ability to fall into hell in next life. Hence, the Buddha preached the three meritorious deeds which are the importance of practicing generosity, morality and meditation to overcome rebirth in the hell. This is the first level in Buddhism. When someone practices this path, he or she can gain happiness in this life itself. The Buddha says clearly that practicing merits means gaining happiness. If someone has done a lot of meritorious deeds in his or her life, he or she has accumulated a lot of happiness in his life. This behavior causes happiness not only hereafter but in this short life itself. When we fulfill these three meritorious deeds, our mind is pure and calm. That pure mind can gain us longevity, good complexion, comfort, strength and finally happiness. When someone always does wholesome acts in his life, deities and departed relatives also bless him. All of these meritorious deeds cause him to be reborn in the heaven or human world. How every practicing merits is not enough to overcome the Sansaric Journey completely. That's why the Supreme Buddha kindly pointed out the next level.

The second level of the Buddha's teaching is the path for getting rid of all kinds of sufferings and to overcome Sansaric journey. Here the Buddha has pointed out three disciplines which are virtue, concentration (or tranquility) and wisdom. For this path, first we have to gain the knowledge about impermanence (*Anicca*) and the dependent origination (*paticca samuppāda*). If we have a clear knowledge about arising and ceasing of five aggregates, we are ready to practice this path perseveringly. Here, only knowledge is not enough, but reflection (*Yoniso manasikāra*) and practice (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti*) are also important according to the knowledge. When we practice this path, we can see the results as much as we practice. Visible result is the one of the results practicing this teaching.

When we do evil, our mind is polluted. That polluted mind causes suffering in this life and hereafter. That is why the Buddha said not to do any evil. Not doing evil is not enough for happiness, but also we have to cultivate good for the real happiness with a meritorious mind. Buddhism emphasizes the three merits for the happiness. The three meritorious deeds of generosity (*dāna*), virtue (*sīla*) and meditation (*bhāvanā*) cause us to succeed in this life and hereafter. If a person has done a lot of meritorious deeds in this life, it means that his mind is rich in merits. A Meritorious mind can gain happiness. When we do good deeds, it means our mind is pure, calm and quiet. A pure mind can bring happiness to our life. Further we have to understand the cause of suffering and getting rid of suffering in this life itself. That is why the Buddha explained how to purify one's mind.

Virtue, concentration or tranquility and wisdom with understanding of dependent origination cause us to get rid of all sufferings and develop real happiness. Virtue means a very high level of discipline in behavior and speech with right vision. With a good discipline, if a person focuses his mind in a particular meritorious object such as loving kindness or breathing meditation, he can concentrate his mind with pure thoughts. With that concentration, he can reflect on the world reality according to impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and selflessness (*anatta*) in the correct way. As a result, one can live without desire and hatred because there is no delusion. When he investigates that present moment, he has only present moment as nothing comes to the present from the past and nothing goes to the future from the present. The most valuable and interesting explanation in Buddhism is impermanence. It is said in Buddhism; **Not being occurred (in the past) comes to an occurrence. Being occurred (at the present) will not come to (the future) occurrence** (අනුත්ථං සම්භූතං භුත්වා න භවිස්සති). This is the nature of impermanence that Buddhism illustrates. He sees the arising and ceasing of all his experiences at the moment very well. Then he can live as a person seeing the truth of world reality in a new fresh way. This is the ultimate truth that Buddhism teaches us to be able to get rid of all sufferings.

The Main Doctrines in Buddhism

(To practice in our day to day life in the name of happiness)

The Triple Gem :- (The Most valuable things that we received as the result of previous merits)

- The Buddha (Buddha's Enlightenment)
- The Dhamma (Buddha's Teachings)
- The Sangha (Buddha's Noble Disciples)

The Five Precepts :-

1. Abstaining from taking lives (*Pānātipāta veramani*)
2. Abstaining from stealing (*Adinnādānā veramani*)
3. Abstaining from sexual misconduct (*Kāmesumiccācārā veramani*)
4. Abstaining from false speech (*Musāvādā veramani*)
5. Abstaining from taking intoxication drinks and drugs causing heedlessness (*Surāmeraya maddapamādattānā veramani*)

The Three Levels of practicing Buddha's message :-

First level :-

1. Education (*Sippam/ suta*), 2. Economy (*Dhanam*), 3. Health (*ārogya*), 4. Morality (*Samacariyā*)

Second level (Three Meritorious Deeds) :-

1. Generosity (*Dāna*)
2. Virtue or Morality (*Sīla*)
3. Meditation (*Bhāvanā*)

(The Three Friends those who put the treasure inside)

Third Level (Three Disciplines) -

1. Virtue (*Sīla*)
2. Concentration (*Samādhi*)
3. Wisdom (*Paññā*)

The Vision in Buddhism –

1. Understanding of Karmic Law – Not to fall into hell
2. Understanding of the Dependent Origination – To overcome Suffering at the moment

The Mission in Buddhism -

1. Doing Good: Generosity, Virtue and Meditation
2. Practicing Three Disciplines : Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom

The Ultimate Goal of life :- Happiness (Keeping mind away from all defilements)

The Best Friend - Mindfulness (*Sati*)

The Fourfold Mindfulness -

1. The contemplation of matter or body (*Kāyanupassanā*)
2. The contemplation of feelings (*Vedanānupassanā*)
3. The contemplation of mind or consciousness (*Cittānupassanā*)
4. The contemplation of mental formations (*Dhammanupassanā*)

Five Spiritual Faculties - 1. Confidence (*Saddhā*) 2. Energy (*Viriya*) 3. Mindfulness (*Sati*)
(Our real Heritage, Dowry) 4. Concentration (*Samādhi*) 5. Wisdom (*Paññā*)

The Highest knowledge that a person can gain for getting rid of suffering –

1. The Knowledge about the law of the karmic law
(*Kammasakatā Sammāditti*)
2. The Knowledge of the Dependent Origination
(*Ariyasammāditti*)

Enemies that we should get rid of – Greed (*Lobha*), Hatred (*Dhosa*), Delusion (*Moha*)
(Defilements/ Unwholesomeness)
(The enemies those who steal our good internal human values)

Dhamma Reflexion - Loving Kindness/Friendliness (*Mettā*), Honesty (*Uju*), Wisdom (*Paññā*)

The Four Noble Truths –

1. The suffering (*Dukkha sacca*)
2. The cause of suffering (*Samudaya sacca*)
3. The cessation of suffering (*Nirodha sacca*)
4. The path that leads to cessation of suffering (*Magga sacca*)

The Noble Eight Fold Paths – Right Understanding (*Sammā Ditthi*)
 Right Thoughts (*Sammā samkappa*)
 Right Speech (*Sammā Vācā*)
 Right Action (*Sammā kammantha*)
 Right Livelihood (*Sammā ājiva*)
 Right Effort (*Sammā Vāyāma*)
 Right Mindfulness (*Sammā sathi*)
 Right Concentration (*Sammā samādhi*)

Spirit/ Co-re /Base / Heart / Essence of Buddhism

- Dependent Origination/ Cause and effect (*Paticcasamuppāda*)
 (The Foundation to understand impermanence)

Five Aggregates :-

1. Matter (<i>Rupa</i>)	2. Feeling (<i>Vedanā</i>)	3. Perception (<i>Saññā</i>)
4. Mental Formation (<i>Sankhāra</i>)	5. Consciousness (<i>Viññāna</i>)	

How to investigate these five aggregates? As;

1. Arising (<i>Samudaya</i>)	2. Ceasing (<i>Atthamgama</i>)	3. Gratification (<i>Assāda</i>)
4. Dangers (<i>ādinava</i>)	5. Letting go = Liberation (<i>Nissarana</i>)	

Causes to develop wisdom – (*Pannavuddhi Karanani*)

1. Association with a good friend who explains the Buddha's real message
(*Sappurisa sansevo*)
2. Listening to the Buddha's Message (*Saddhamma savanam*)
3. Wise Reflection (*Yoniso manasikāro*)
4. Practice (*Dhammānudhamma patipatti*)

The Buddha's Message in a nutshell

– Get rid of all evil, do what is good, purify one's mind

*'Sabba pāpassa akaranam kusalassa upasampadā,
 Sacitta pariyo dapanam etam buddānasānam.'*

All above doctrines can be ordered in a particle method. They are;

1. *Associating noble friends who explain the Buddha's message (Sappurisa samseva)*
2. *Listening to Buddha's message, the Dhamma (Saddhammasavana)*
3. *Confidence in Buddha's enlightenment (Saddhā)*
4. *Wise investigation (Yonisa manasikāra)*
5. *Mindfulness and clear comprehension. (Sati sampajañña)*
6. *Discipline in senses (Indriya samvara)*
7. *Three Disciplines in mental, virbal and behavioral acts (Thrividha sucarita)*
8. *The Fourfold Mindfulness (Satipatthāna)*
9. *Seven Enlightenment factors (Satta bojjhanga)*
10. *Gaining the full knowledge and liberation from all kinds of sufferings. (Vijjāvimutti)*



May the Triple Gem Bless you!

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May all beings be well, happy and peaceful!

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